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UNIVERSITY of



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## NEWS RELEASE

### UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON FOUNDER, PROMINENT GRADUATES TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE DAYTON WALK OF FAME

DAYTON, Ohio — "I have no money now, but St. Joseph will pay."

With those words and a promise to pay \$12,000, the Rev. Leo Meyer, S.M., handed a St. Joseph medal to landowner John Stuart on March 19, 1850 — the Feast of St. Joseph. In return, the French priest received a 120-acre farm that he renamed Nazareth and turned into a boarding school for 14 boys and the first settlement of the Society of Mary (a Roman Catholic teaching order) in the United States. Today, that school is one of the largest Catholic universities in the nation.

As the University of Dayton celebrates its sesquicentennial, it's fitting that Meyer and a handful of other prominent Dayton citizens with UD ties will be installed in the Dayton Walk of Fame this year. Among the 10 inductees:

- Arthur Fisher, the first black elected judge to Montgomery County Common Pleas Court, who received a bachelor's degree in communication in 1948 and an honorary degree in 1996 from UD. He also served as a navigator and bombardier with the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II;
- Edward G. Breen, former Dayton mayor, Montgomery County commissioner and U.S. Representative, who graduated from UD's preparatory school (a high school) in 1926; and
- Gerald "Fuzzy" Faust, former Chaminade High School football coach, who earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1930.

The other new names that will be etched into granite blocks on the floor at the Dayton International Airport: Jeanne M. Comer, Auguste F. Foerste, Edward "Al" Johnson, Ervin J. Nutter, Charles E. Taylor and Mitchell "Booty" Wood. An induction ceremony will be held at Sinclair Community College on July 18. Inventing Flight sponsors the Walk of Fame.

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Kenneth Kuntz, chair of UD's sesquicentennial celebration team, originally nominated Meyer in 1996 during Dayton's bicentennial, but knew he could make a stronger case during UD's anniversary year. His impact on the region — and the world — is immeasurable, according to Kuntz, who said Meyer's legacy "can best be measured by the reputation of the institute he founded, the Marianist philosophy of servant-leader and the local to international contributions of UD's graduates."

Brother Victor Forlani, S.M., a lecturer in management and marketing who worked with Kuntz to nominate Meyer, called the honor overdue. "It's our sesquicentennial. It's fitting. The recognition adds to the lore and reputation of the University of Dayton," he said.

Approximately half of UD's 80,000 alumni live in Ohio with a fourth residing in the greater Miami Valley. "While their career fields vary, UD graduates are unified by their distinctive education and its emphasis on community and service, which Father Meyer established as a tradition for the institution he founded. UD graduates have provided leadership for the region as well as the nation," said Kuntz, pointing to such prominent alumni as Nobel Prize winner Charles Pedersen, bar code inventor Paul McEnroe, humorist Erma Bombeck and ESPN anchor and TV icon Dan Patrick.

UD archivist Kerrie Moore credits Meyer's "early leadership and vision" for laying the groundwork for changing the boarding school for boys into what eventually became the University of Dayton, the largest independent university in the state.

During Meyer's 13-year tenure, the school also doubled as a "self-sufficient farming operation," according to Moore. "In addition to their duties at the school, the Marianists were expected to help run the farm."

Despite Meyer's influence, his name is hardly a household one. "It's great that one of the founders of the University of Dayton is being recognized by the city of Dayton for the contributions the University of Dayton has made in 150 years," Moore said.

In 1997, the North American Center for Marianist Studies published *Father Leo Meyer's 13 Years at Nazareth*, which traced the early history (1849-1868) of what became the University of Dayton.