

6-11-2009

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### Recommended Citation

"Marianist Service Award: Larry Burgess" (2009). *News Releases*. 1439.  
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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## Marianist Service Award: Larry Burgess

06.11.2009 | Catholic

Photographer Larry Burgess, who receives a 2009 Marianist Service Award June 17, has always been able to do a lot with a little. It's one of several of his traits so well-aligned with the University's Marianist heritage.

In his first job out of college at the *Morning Journal* in Lorain, Ohio, most of his work was on the fly, with only his camera bag, a pencil and a notebook. He did his own processing and printing, and his tiny studio had only a seamless backdrop and some scarce equipment. It prepared him well for his job at UD, where for many of his years on campus, colleagues sat for portraits on the third-floor landing in the north stairwell of St. Mary's Hall.

To process film, Burgess first shared a lab in the Mechanical Engineering Building with beginning photography students. As they agitated, developed, dried and printed their film alongside him, they often asked for help, and he always provided it.

When he moved to a different lab that was "about the size of a closet," he said, it was a move up since he didn't have to share the space with so many people. Soon, he moved again to the basement of Zehler Hall, where along with a developing room, he also had a small space for portraits and other studio work. When that space was no longer available, the stairwell studio came about.

Then, with the advancement division's July 2008 move to the College Park Center, Burgess got his own photography studio — and with the advancement of digital technology, he no longer had to process film.

He still does a lot with a little, now producing images for a wider variety of media than he ever envisioned — from glossy magazines and news releases to online blogs, plaza banners and the popular "Where's Larry?" feature for Campus Report.

Burgess discovered photography somewhat by accident his sophomore year at Bowling Green State University, where he majored in mass communications. Up to that point, his life's ambition was to be a rock 'n' roll disc jockey. He signed up for an elective course in photography.

"Once I saw my first print come up in the developer," he said, "I was hooked."

Soon, he climbed into his 1972 Chevy Nova and drove to J.C. Penney in Toledo for his first camera, "a Minolta SRT 201 35 mm SLR with a 50 mm fixed-focal-length lens." Before he graduated, he'd taken every photography class offered at Bowling Green.

At the newspaper, Burgess shot everything from fires and car wrecks in Lorain to the Cleveland Browns, Cavaliers and Indians. Since coming to work at UD in the fall of 1990, he's recorded move-ins and move-outs; construction and demolition; learning and teaching; technology transformation; rural and urban plunges; politics and politicians of every stripe; and the full spectrum of social action and interaction.

The Marianist spirit has been evident to Burgess since his first interview, he said.

"It's all about how you feel when you first step foot on campus," he said. "Everyone is so friendly and caring."

He illustrates from his first months on campus: "I remember Father Raymond Roesch," he said of the University's president from 1959 to 1979. "When I would be coming or going to or from St. Mary's for an assignment, I would see him walking, and he always had a serene, smiling face. He would look at me, probably harried at the time, and he would smile. He was always so calm and so sincere."

Since then, Burgess said, he's tried to emulate Roesch's action and the attitude that went with it.

It seems he has.

*Editor's note: Burgess is designating his Marianist Service Award honorarium to the student organization REACH, in which his daughter Laura '09 held several leadership posts. REACH, which is devoted to building awareness of mental health issues, is*

*best known for its popular spring M-Fest event, featuring bands, food, social interaction and the arts.*