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Bro. Thomas Poitras, S.M. Honored for 70 Years Service in the Society of Mary

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DAYTON, Ohio, May 23, 1969 — Bro. Thomas Poitras, S.M., doesn’t look or feel his 87 years. He’ll reach that age on November 4. Possessed of a sharp step, quick wit and an interest in things around him, Bro. Poitras is living his retirement years at the University of Dayton with the vitality of a younger man.

He credits this vitality with the continuous interest he has taken in his Society of Mary work over the past 70 years. That’s right, 70 years. Bro. Tom joined the Society on April 2, 1899.

Because of this longevity of service his fellow religious in the University of Dayton community are going to honor him Friday, May 30, along with two other Society members who are celebrating jubilees. Rev. Raymond A. Roesch, S.M., UD President, is celebrating his 25th year as a priest. He was ordained at Mt. St. John’s, now UD’s East Campus, on May 30, 1944. Bro. Ralph Mravintz, S.M., UD’s Admissions Director, is marking his 25th year in the Society. He took his first vows at Beacon, New York, August 20, 1944.

The celebration will take the form of a concelebrated mass at 11 a.m. in the Brothers Chapel of Alumni Hall and a dinner at 12 noon. It is a private affair for the religious on the UD campus.

Father Roesch, Rev. Norbert Burns, Director of the UD religious community; and Rev. James McKay, an ordination classmate of Father Roesch’s from Pittsburgh’s North Catholic High School, will concelebrate the mass with Rev. George Barrett, UD’s Vice President, giving the homily and Bro. John Emling of the School of Education serving as master of ceremonies.

Bro. John Lucier, Chairman, Department of Chemistry, will pay tribute to the Jubilarians at the dinner. Bro. John Perz of the Department of Languages will serve as master of ceremonies.

Bro. Poitras, born in St. Ignace, Canada, November 4, 1882, came to St. Mary’s Institute, now University of Dayton, in July, 1904. He divided his time from then until 1909 getting his degree and teaching at St. Michael’s high schools in both Chicago and Pittsburgh, and at St. Ignace. He went to Cincinnati for one year and then prefect of novices at Mt. St. John’s, now UD’s East Campus, in Dayton and then taught music at his alma mater from 1915 to 1922.

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He spent six months in Manitoba, Canada, teaching and returned to UD in December of 1922 to continue his music teaching until 1933. During this period he managed to study at Pius X School of Liturgical Music in New York and got his master's degree from the Catholic University of America in 1934. He also taught French at UD from 1934 to 1937, leaving the University at that time to study at the Sorbonne, Paris, France.

He completed his latest studies in 1939 and was caught in Europe at the start of World War II. He managed to get home via Italy and was assigned to the Marianist Prep at Beacon, New York. In August, 1940, he returned to UD and taught music until 1954. He was assigned to St. Anselme, Canada, for two years of teaching, spent two years at Beacon, over to Chaminade High School in Dayton, back to Anselme, to Emmanuel Church in Dayton and then retirement in 1963 on the campus of his alma mater.

Father Roesch, born in Jenkintown, Pa., on September 16, 1914, entered the University in 1932, graduated in 1936, taught at Cathedral Latin High School, Cleveland, until 1941 when he started preparation for the priesthood at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. in 1941. He completed his seminary studies at Mt. Meinrad Seminary, Indiana, in 1944 and was ordained at Mt. St. John's on May 30, 1944.

He taught at Chaminade High School, Mineola, Long Island, for four years. He came to the University of Dayton in 1951 as an instructor in psychology and was chairman of that department when he was appointed president of the University by the late Rev. James M. Darby, S.M., then Cincinnati Provincial of the Society of Mary and Chairman of the University's Board of Trustees.

Father Roesch's graduate degrees are master of arts in psychology from Catholic University, 1945, and doctor of philosophy (psychology) from Fordham University in 1954.

As UD's president he has held several national, state and local positions including Board of Directors of Winters National Bank & Trust Company, Dayton. He has been very active in statewide activities and organizations for the independent colleges in Ohio. During his tenure as UD's president the student body has more than doubled in size to more than 10,000; graduate programs have been introduced including a doctoral in biology and the physical plant has added four buildings with four others under construction.

Brother Mravintz, born in 1925 in Pittsburgh, has been Admissions Director of UD since 1965. He received his bachelor's degree from UD in 1950 and his master's from Pittsburgh in 1955. He also has done graduate work at the University of Cincinnati and Western Reserve University.

He has taught in Brooklyn, Cincinnati, Hamilton, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh before coming to UD. He also served as counselor, athletic director and assistant principal during various periods in those schools.

He took his first vows on August 20, 1944, and final vows on August 24, 1947.