

History of the St. Ignatius High School Alma Mater  
and a Review of The First Quarter Century  
of  
The Saint Ignatius High School Band

By Jack - '57, Graham - '90, and John -'77 Hearn

In *Years in Passing*, an anecdotal history of the first 100 years of Saint Ignatius High School published in 1986, it was stated that "In October of 1930, the Ignatius Band, which had many tentative beginnings over the years, became a reality" - in truth, that particular pep band lasted no longer than most of the previous "tentative beginnings. However, Instrumental music was very much alive at West 30th. in the early 20th. century in the form of the Saint Ignatius College - later John Carroll University - Orchestra under the direction of Fr. Victor Winter, SJ from 1915 to 1929. The orchestra, which included Ignatius students, grew from ten to ninety members over the years and gave as many as seven concerts during 1925-26 including one at Public Auditorium. By 1929, Fr. Winter was reassigned to Rockhurst College in Kansas and the Carroll News regretted his leaving and expressed concern that his successor was having little success in recruiting talent.

It was then that John Carroll University decided to "hire" the Parmadale Orphanage boys' band to represent the university at football games and activities where instrumental music was desired. A year earlier, in November of 1928, John Phillip Sousa had come to Cleveland to help dedicate Music Hall with his 124-member Sousa Band that was on a world-wide tour - Sousa invited the well known orphanage band to join his band on stage and play two of his marches - he then presented the Parmadale Band and its director, Jack T. Hearn, with the famous Sousa Silver Cup which was given to only several bands in America. For the next two years, Parmadale was JCU's band - for many more years, they led all Cleveland parades, represented the University of Notre Dame when they played at Cleveland Municipal Stadium, and were the musical ambassadors for Catholic Charities. In 1931, the orphanage raised the fee for the band's performances to \$75 and JCU opted to form their own band, hired Jack Hearn as director, and invited interested Ignatius students to join the Blue Streak marching and concert bands. The combined high school/college band made their inaugural performance that fall wearing West Point style uniforms.

While the university was preparing to move to University Heights in 1935, Fr. James L. Colford, S.J. principal at Saint Ignatius, asked Mr. Charles Tomkins, S.J. and Jack Hearn to form a high school band if there was sufficient interest. The following twenty-five Ignatians reported for an organizational meeting on April 3, 1935 - also included are the instruments they intended to play: Trumpets - Dominic Iammarino, Joseph Mazanec, Joseph Nagy, Richard Dechant, Raymond Walsh, Lloyd Boymer, Paul Hussey, and Jack Carroll; Clarinets - Henry Joyce and Clement Zielinski; Trombone - Jack Nealon; Tuba - Jack Corrigan and Gregory Repede; Bass Clarinet - Bob Miller; Baritone - Anthony Laheta; Mellophone - Thomas Nageotte; C. Melody Saxophone - Bob Kaiser and Edward Hannan; Drums - Jack Sweeney, Bill Scharf, Albert Moran, Jack Murray, John Stark, Jack Hughes, and Francis Hausmann.

Not all of the above individuals appeared on the first day of practice in September of 1935 but the first Ignatius band practiced on Monday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. on the first floor of the two-story house at 2901 Lorain Avenue. The band participated in two concerts that school year and band parents held several card parties at St. Patrick Hall to raise monies for instruments and new uniforms. In May of 1936, the field for drum major narrowed to five individuals - Peter Corrigan, William McAleenan, William Johnson, Philip Kerwin, and Robert W. Donnelly and on June 6th, the band made its first public appearance in uniform at an open air band festival at Parmadale.

The following fall, the band made its marching debut on Saturday, September 26th., 1936, at Rhodes Field. The Eye gave front page coverage to the band's apparel that day as they were led on to the field by the school's first drum major - Peter Corrigan: "Their blue, gold and white uniforms had a very pleasing effect upon the eye as they marched across the field. Their sweaters are blue while the cape is blue on the outside and gold underneath. The white pants harmonize perfectly with the rest of their outfit." The used blue and gold capes and the blue overseas caps were inherited from Toledo St. John High School after it had closed its doors. The pants and sweaters were purchased by the students and the music lyres on the sweaters were provided by the school.

In the spring of 1937, Fr. Gerald Garvey, then assistant principal and himself a musician, asked Jack Hearn to prepare words and music for an Alma Mater. At that time, Jack was in his second of a twenty-five year career as the Ignatius band director and had just completed the Alma Mater for rival Holy Name High School where he was also the band director. During the summer months, band member Bob Kaiser, '38, remembers Jack pulling musicians aside before and after practices to experiment with different instrumental parts for an undisclosed song he was preparing. - the students were unaware of any text. By early August, the desired word "forevermore" presented too many difficulties for the composer and it eventually gave way to "forever" - the rhyme scheme then quickly fell into place: graces/faces;

hearts/imparts; sever/forever; old/gold. By late August of 1937, the band played the completed musical score made up of seventeen different parts, for the first time.

During the first week of school, Fr. Garvey, now principal, was given a private performance of the proposed song - liked what he heard - and declared "this song has found a home - this is the Ignatius Alma Mater." With the school year in full swing, Fr. Garvey organized several staff members to visit classrooms and train the student body in the singing of the Alma Mater. The Rev. Glen A. Williams, '41, longtime counselor at the school, remembers Jack Hearn coming to his freshman class to familiarize the students with the new song.

The setting was John Marshall football field - Friday afternoon, October 1, 1937. There were no lights, scoreboard, or public address system at the stadium that day. At halftime, the Ignatius band took the field wearing uniforms befitting the Great Depression and were again led by Drum Major Peter Corrigan - Class of '39. The band performed several precision marching drills before forming the Block I - and then a "moment" in the history of the school occurred. Rather than exiting the field playing the Notre Dame Victory March, the band came to a halt, raised their instruments on high - and gave the first public performance of "the new song" - The Saint Ignatius High School Alma Mater.

Unlike most high school songs, the Alma Mater was written specifically for Saint Ignatius - each word has a very specific reason for being included. Seventy-three years later, it has long been heralded as the best sung high school alma mater in Ohio and it features a very singable melody and an extremely relevant text which often evokes strong emotions. More importantly, it found a home at a school steeped in tradition - the song has become a symbol for a school that elicits considerable pride from its supporters. Whether it is performed in a chapel, stadium, gym, or in Severance Hall with the world famous Cleveland Orchestra, the Ignatius Alma Mater is sung well - and with fervor and respect. In 1958, permission was granted to St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati to use the Ignatius Alma Mater. The music remains intact and the lyrics are unchanged for the first five lines - their version then closes with "ties of old days from the new, We're Xavier men forever, as we hail the white and blue."

On the occasion of the school's 100th Anniversary in 1986, The Rev. Nelson Callahan, Class of '45, with Jim Toman, prepared the above mentioned anecdotal history of Saint Ignatius entitled Years in Passing. Taking its title from the text of the Alma Mater, the book describes how the song rekindles memories of yesteryear in the minds and hearts of the alumni::

...even to this day, whenever Ignatius men gather together, whether at a class reunion or at a son's wedding, or more frequently now, at the funeral of a classmate, the men of Ignatius, older, heavier, perhaps more thoughtful, join in the singing of that ancient

hymn. And the men always cry, sometimes with pride, sometimes with glimpses of old comrades and classmates who have gone before them, sometimes with a sadness and a haunting nostalgia for an age of unworried innocence, for a time and a place which cannot ever return except in the memories which come forth, unbidden, whenever they sing the Alma Mater together.

The Rev. Robert J. Welsh, S.J., Class of '54 and President of Saint Ignatius High School for twenty-one years began singing "that ancient hymn" over fifty years ago as a freshman. He will long be remembered for guiding the school to magnificent heights during his presidency - he will also be known for having led the singing of the Alma Mater more than any other individual in the school's history. To him, the song reflects several important aspects of the school:

We have a motto at Saint Ignatius - 'Men for Others.' We want our students to emulate the first Man for Others, Jesus Christ, and it is our hope that the Ignatius experience will serve them well as they serve others. Ignatians are encouraged to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, to be open to growth, intellectually competent, loving, religious, and committed to doing justice. I know of no other Alma Mater that directly speaks to "the faith" a school imparts. It also reminds us that lessons learned from our "famed" school will permeate our hearts - forever. And lastly, I believe our Alma Mater is a song of gratitude - a musical tribute to the unforgotten faces that have contributed so much to each of our lives. When we stand and sing our Alma Mater, they are with us because "We're All Ignatius Men - Forever."

Suffice to say, when the Alma Mater was first performed at John Marshall before several hundred fans - many had no idea what the band was performing nor why the music was "so slow" given that audiences had become accustomed to marches played at 120 beats per minute - had there been a PA system, fans could have been given a hint as to what was to follow. The inaugural performance of the Alma Mater was clearly an inauspicious occasion at the time - no one present that day could have foreseen that it would become a symbol - an audio symbol - of the school - somewhat like the tower has become a visual symbol.

The 1937-38 school year was indeed unique for many reasons - The Rev. Gerald B. Garvey, S.J. became the new principal, the effects of the Depression were wearing off, enrollment was on the rise, and the band had a new moderator,

Mr. William A. Sullivan, S.J. The Golden Tornado football team, later to be known as the Wildcats, joined the Cleveland Athletic Senate and would hold membership in that league for forty-two years. On the day of the inaugural playing of the Alma Mater, Ignatius defeated Marshall 7-0 giving new football coach Lenny Brickman his first victory and the only win that season - the year's accomplishments were recorded in the pictorial edition of the Eye - the equivalent of a yearbook put out by the newspaper staff. The Depression had taken its toll on the publication of yearbooks during the 1930s. Fr. Garvey's pride and joy, the band, closed out the school year with another first: On May 20, 1938, the band unveiled new blue and gold uniforms providing one more source of identity for the school.

October 1, 1937 at John Marshall Field was also a convergence of legends - Fr. Garvey sat in the bleachers and listened to his pride and joy play the school's Alma Mater - the song he had requested be written. He would eventually become president of the school in the 40s, founded the Alumni Association, and personified the Ignatian ideal of continuing service and giving of self - he became one of the great names in the school's history. On the field that day standing to the left of the football bench at halftime was a young scholastic that was the highly successful moderator of the band - he watched their maneuvers with a keen eye. After his ordination, Fr. Sullivan returned to Ignatius and was athletic director for twenty-three years - his accomplishments in that position are also legendary and the Sullivan Gym is named in his honor. Coach Lenny Brickman was one of the school's greatest athletes and the coach that took Ignatius to the Charity Game in 1945 playing before over 51,000 fans - a far cry from his first year when several hundred fans were considered a good turnout. Jack Hearn became known as Music Man of Cleveland for directing bands, glee clubs and orchestras at seven schools - John Carroll, St. Ignatius, Holy Name, Parmadale, Benedictine, St. Joseph Academy, and Marymount High School. For many years he was at all seven schools simultaneously - directing both bands at halftime when Holy Name, Benedictine, and Ignatius played each other.

During the 40s, the band moved to several practice locations on campus finally locating on the third floor of St. Mary's Grade School (now the two-floor Loyola Hall). Three times the band combined with Benedictine and Holy Name in combined concerts at Music Hall and also played for the National Music Educators Convention in Public Auditorium. A band alumni organization was formed to financially assist the band program and a Military Ball, with the young men from six different schools wearing their band uniforms while their dates wore formals, became one of the major social events of the school calendar.

The 50s saw the band improve in size and quality - by September of 1956, the band appeared in their new West Point uniforms that replaced the traditional uniforms first worn in May of 1938. Practices continued to be held on the third floor of St. Mary Elementary School - by then known as the Annex. The marching band improved immensely when lines resembling a football field were painted on the asphalt parking lot in back of the main building - however, it seemed the major challenge was to have their newly established "field" devoid of cars by the time 3:00 p.m. practice commenced. The 50s also saw the band performing at Pop Concerts - first at St. Patrick's Catholic Club and then back at Ignatius when the new gym was constructed - both locations were decorated to resemble night clubs and individuals sat at tables rather than the typical auditorium seating. The band was one of 14 high school bands to take part in the annual Catholic Band Festivals at John Carroll. All musicians were seated on a gym floor, each band performed two numbers, and then the fourteen organizations joined in several massed band renditions. At the end of each year, the band played for the graduation and played from the orchestra pit of Music Hall - held a banquet the following Monday - and then began once a week rehearsals the following evening to prepare for the next marching season. It was at the banquet following the 1960 graduation that Jack Hearn announced he had directed the Alma Mater for the last time - the following October the Alumni Association awarded him the John J. Rossing Award which is annually given to the faculty member who, through the years, has provided unusual service to the school and outstanding inspiration to the students. The award was a fitting conclusion to the musician who guided the Saint Ignatius High School band through its first twenty-five years.