



April 9, 2024

Dear Friends,

It is with great sadness that I write inform you of the death of The University of Scranton's 21<sup>st</sup> President, Rev. William J. Byron, S.J., H'84. Father Byron passed away earlier today at the age of 96. He was one of our most prominent Jesuit leaders and a prolific writer of books on Catholicism and faith. He will be greatly missed.

As I wrote in my campus reflection for Easter, I recently had the privilege to visit Father Byron in Philadelphia after learning he was in hospice care. As I walked into his room at the Jesuit infirmary, Father Byron was sitting up in his chair, alert but struggling. He managed to ask if I was the President at Scranton now. When I nodded yes, he said "take good care of it."

On the drive home, I kept hearing the echo of his words about our beloved University, directed at me but meant for all of us: *take good care of it.*

Father Byron is among those who have given greatly to build a solid foundation for our mission and success at Scranton on which we continue to flourish to this very day.

During his tenure as President at Scranton from 1975 to 1982, the University's operating budget doubled and a multi-million-dollar capital campaign was launched. A new college, the School of Management, was created and new programs in nursing and physical therapy began. Also, during his tenure, two blocks of Linden Street were closed to vehicular traffic, allowing for our first "z-bricks" to be installed and "the Commons" walkway to begin.

Father Byron left Scranton in 1982 to become the first Jesuit President of the Catholic University of America, where he served for a decade. Later, he served as Acting President at Loyola University of New Orleans and as President of his high school alma mater, St. Joseph's Preparatory School. In addition, he was a Professor at Georgetown University, as well as Rector of the Jesuit community and Director of the Center of Advanced Study of Ethics at Georgetown. He was a Professor of Economics at Loyola College Baltimore and as Professor Emeritus of Business and Society at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. He served on the Board of Directors of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities and the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, and as Chair of the Board of Directors of Georgetown University Hospital.

Father Byron was also a compassionate pastor, respected scholar, author of nearly a dozen books, and a long-time syndicated bi-weekly columnist for the Catholic News Service.

He received numerous awards during his distinguished career, including 30 honorary degrees, the 1999 Council of Independent Colleges' Academic Leadership Award and the 1999 Association of Catholic

Colleges and Universities' Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for his contributions over the years to the advancement of Catholic higher education. In 1982, The University of Scranton conferred an honorary doctorate on Fr. Byron and in 1986 the William J. Byron, S.J., Recreational Complex was dedicated in his honor.

Father Byron holds a doctorate in economics from the University of Maryland, two theology degrees from Woodstock College, a bachelor's in philosophy and master's in economics from Saint Louis University, and a certificate in educational management from Harvard. He also served in the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the United States Army in the Second World War. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1950 and was ordained in 1961.

We will share details regarding funeral services once they are available.

Please remember Father Byron in your prayers.

*Eternal life grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*

Yours faithfully,

Rev. Joseph G. Marina, S.J.  
President