

SPOTLIGHT

By FR. JAMES SOLARI, O.S.B.



FATHER RAPHAEL BRIDGE, O.S.B.

Father Raphael Bridge A History Professor And A Numisatist

In this issue of *Crossroads* we wish to single out for deserved recognition one of the members of the Benedictine community whose contributions to the college span the last thirty years--Father Raphael Bridge, O.S.B. His story began in the town of Latrobe, Pa.--the same spot from which the founders of Belmont Abbey set out a century ago. Son of Rabanus and Catherine Bridge, Fr. Raphael has two brothers and five sisters, two of whom are Benedictine nuns. He attended prep school and the first two years of college at St. Vincent's Archabbey, the motherhouse of the Belmont monastery. He arrived in Belmont in 1943 with the desire to join the community in what was considered "missionary territory" by comparison with western Pennsylvania. Abbot Vincent Taylor sent him for novitiate training to St. Benedict's Abbey in Atchison, Kan., where he remained after pronouncing his simple vows to complete his senior college work in the field of history. Returning once more to Belmont, he commenced studies in the seminary.

Four years later on June 11, 1950, he was ordained to the priesthood. During the summer months after ordination, he was assigned to St. Patrick's rectory in Elizabeth, N. J. in order to gain pastoral experience in a busy urban parish. Over the years he has exercised his ministry on weekend missions and parochial assistance in the Carolinas. In June of 1975 he celebrated his silver jubilee with the good wishes of his confreres and embarked upon another quarter century of the Lord's service.

Fr. Raphael's first teaching assignment was in the prep school at the Abbey in 1946. He was also given the duties of prefect in the dormitory--a job he kept until 1957. Students who came under his supervision during those times respectfully nicknamed him "Sarge"--there are still many alumni who are convinced that he learned his trade as a Marine D.I. at Parris Island! The knack for eliciting order and discipline earned him a new office in the college: from 1957 to 1960 he served as Dean of Students. This was

followed by a year's teaching at Benedictine High School in Richmond, Va. Once again he was summoned to Belmont, this time to be Chaplain to the students and instructor in the department of history.

From 1963-1968 he was an assistant in the Treasurer's office while continuing to teach a survey of Western Civilization to the Freshmen. Then the Abbey had need for a director of plant maintenance, so he moved into this post and took on these responsibilities for the next three years, doing a creditable job with scant previous preparation in this area. All of this points up the versatility of his contributions. Within the Benedictine community he has likewise been entrusted with positions of responsibility, for three years he was the Subprior and currently is one of the elected members of the Senior Council.

Since his days in the prep school, Fr. Raphael has been closely associated with the athletic program of the school and has been named Faculty Representative and Athletic Moderator for many years. An avid sports fan, he cheers the Crusaders with gusto, and with equal zest expresses his displeasure at what he considers to be inept officiating.

He is a numisatist--for those readers who have forgotten their Greek--a collector of coins! He collects U. S. mintage mostly but has managed to acquire some choice foreign coins also. What got him started in this hobby? He just began to save Indian Head pennies as a boy and has never stopped. He estimates that the collection has risen in value to \$10,000 or more. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, he likes to throw in a lure for largemouth bass at Lake Norman. Through patience and perseverance he is now beginning to have some success at the angler's art. It should also be added here that he has an interest in printing. For a number of years he was actively engaged in the work of the Belmont Abbey Press. He managed to teach himself much of the printing craft and worked hard to keep the shop alive--unhappily the combined pressures of modern technology and inflation brought an end to the operation.

Belmont Abbey

Welcomes Four

New Faculty

Four new faculty members have joined the staff at Belmont Abbey College for the 1976-77 academic year.

Dr. Bennett M. Judkins has taken over the reins of Chairman of the Department of Sociology, a post left vacant with the departure of Mr. Terry Tomazic to pursue his doctorate.

After receiving his B.S., M.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology, all from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Dr. Judkins then went on to teach. He has been an associate professor and instructor of Sociology at A and T State University, Greensboro; Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia; University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Ohio University, Portsmouth, Ohio. Dr. Judkins served in the National Guard from 1969-75 and was a VISTA volunteer working on migrant opportunity programs in Arizona. He has also done research on the conditions of nursing homes in West Virginia, under an H.E.W. program.

Dr. James Jackson, has joined the Biology Department as an assistant professor. He has a B.S. in biology from Alabama College, Montevallo, Ala., and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Florida, Gainesville in zoology. Dr. Jackson has done research in evolutionary

ecology at Museu de Zoologia Universidade de Sao Paulo Brazil as a post-doctorate fellow.

Also, he was resident scientist at the Museu de Biologia Mello-Leitao, Santa Terzeza, Brazil. He got this position while in the Peace Corps under a program run in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institute. Dr. Jackson was also an assistant professor of biology at the University of Florida.

Also, among the new faculty are two members of the Belmont Abbey monastic community, one who is beginning his first year of teaching.

Brother Kevin Canty, O.S.B., will hold the position of instructor in the department of history. He earned both his A.B. and M.Ed. from the University of Georgia, Athens majoring in history. Bro. Kevin previously has taught at H. V. Jenkins High School in Savannah, Ga. and Benedictine High School, Richmond, Virginia.

Brother Robert Hagan, O.S.B., is assuming his first teaching position at Belmont Abbey, in the Foreign Language Department, teaching Latin. Graduated from the University of Virginia at Charlottesville in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Medieval Studies, he also works in the Admissions Office of the College.



Standing left to right: Bro. Kevin Canty, O.S. B. and Dr. Bennett M. Judkins. Seated left to right: Bro. Robert Hagan, O.S.B. and Dr. James Jackson.