

SPOTLIGHT

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

Editor Note: As Fr. James Solari, O.S.B. has resigned from his position as academic dean of Belmont Abbey College, this will be his last "Spotlight"

column. The editor would like to thank him for the many columns he has written over the years. Many alumni have indicated how much they have

enjoyed his column, and I'm sure they will miss the unique way in which he has "spotlighted" the Belmont Abbey College faculty.

Dr. Mike Reidy: A Man On The Move

What weighs in at 210 button-popping pounds, stands 6'4", and runs the mile in a blistering 12:03? If your answer was Dr. Mike Reidy, chairman of the recreation department of Belmont Abbey College, you are correct! New York City's sights and sounds provided the atmosphere in which he grew up, one of seven children in an Irish family. A product of parochial school and the 'maturing' process of Bronx playground sports, Mike attracted both attention and a basketball scholarship to Al Hallows High, conducted by the Christian Brothers. These highly respected teachers and disciplinarians were not overawed by Mike's size and managed to keep him on a reasonably short leash. Actually, Mike finished his high school at the perennial basketball power, DeMatha High in Washington, D. C. During this year in the nation's capital he landed a job at Lido's restaurant out near College Park, Md. In the summertime he was employed by Pelham Manor, a special school for disadvantaged children. These provided some income to finance tickets to pro football games.

As a senior, Mike was scouted and recruited by several colleges, and he finally decided to accept a scholarship to Campbell College in Buies Creek, a Baptist-related liberal arts college, located in

the pine woods of central North Carolina. He became a standout on the Camel's squad which defeated the Abbey Crusaders several times during his stay there between 1960 and 1964. Mike majored in physical education and recreation and was a Dean's List student. Returning home during the summers, he went to work for the Youth House for delinquent boys in the Bronx.

It was while he was at Campbell that he met and began to date a fair young lass, Miss Bonnie Peoples, from Henderson, N. C. Bonnie was a history major and was active in campus life as a student government representative. She was chosen May Queen in her senior year. Fellow students at the College agreed that this was the story of 'Beauty and the Beast' come to real life! Bonnie and Mike eventually would decide to make theirs a permanent partnership and were married.

Upon receiving his bachelor's of science degree, he set out to explore career possibilities, and accepted a teaching position at Mullins High School in South Carolina. He then moved on to Hartsville Junior High for two further years. In 1967 he took a position as counselor for the South Carolina Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Deciding at this point that he really was suited to teaching and enjoyed working with young people, Mike enrolled in

the graduate program at Appalachian State University in Boone, N. C. As a graduate assistant he was involved in the intramural program there. In 1969 he was awarded his Master's degree.

It was at this time that Belmont Abbey College offered him an appointment as an instructor in physical education with the responsibility for the campus intramural sport program. In addition to instruction, he has also assisted Coach Bobby Hussey with Crusader basketball. He holds a water safety instructor's rating from the Red Cross and has coached an Abbey swimming team. Currently he is tennis coach with a promising young squad in tow.

In 1971 Mike began his quest for the doctorate at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, La. It constituted a major financial struggle to take graduate work there each summer, and he fulfilled his residency requirement during a leave of absence from the college in 1976-77. He had been particularly interested in developing a degree program in recreation for the Abbey. With the able assistance of Mrs. Pam Allison, he designed the major and introduced it in 1975-76. He has now received the Ed.D. and is concentrating on building a solid program. Already the new recreation major is attracting a number of students; career prospects look



DR. MIKE REIDY

promising for our graduates.

Besides his administrative and advisement duties as department chairman, Mike also serves on the College's Disciplinary Committee and is the moderator for the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity. To show their appreciation for his interest and help, the brothers have dedicated their renovated house in his honor.

A quiet-spoken man of congenial personality and good humor, Mike was named recipient of "An Outstanding

Young Man of America" award in 1974. He is a member of the National Recreation & Parks Association. With typical civic-minded generosity, he contributes a large portion of his free time to coaching basketball with the Boys Club in Gastonia. He has taken up gardening as a hobby and has set a project for himself of growing the greenest thumb in his neighborhood! His colleagues at Belmont Abbey wish him great success in this endeavor with the ancient Latin word: Vigoro!

Alumnus Publishes First Book

Ed Finn, a 1972 graduate of Belmont Abbey College is in the process of having his first book published by Dorrance & Co. of Philadelphia.

His creation, "Windswept Dreams," is a book of prose and free verse. It contains eight pen and ink illustrations by Sandra Long, a professional artist from Blacksburg, Va.

Finn has been a resident of Blacksburg since August 1974, and has been employed for three years by Hop-In Food Stores, Inc., a chain of convenience food stores. He is presently an assistant manager in one of their Blacksburg stores.

Of "Windswept Dreams," Albert Tarquinto, editorial director of Dorrance & Co., has previously stated to Finn: "You begin one of your poems 'tonight my friends - we shall ride the wind together' and I can think of no better way to describe your work. You travel from the 'soft sands below the waters' to 'yesterday's stillness' and paint scene after scene with rich images and careful language... This ability to provide vivid description while remaining soft-spoken is your strongest point."

Of his accomplishment, Finn stated: "My prose and free verse is written in a rather



ED FINN

simplified manner. In having done so, I feel, as does Dorrance, that it will appeal to a wide range of people and an equal range of age groups. I have two other books which are yet in early stages of development: another composed of prose with photography (hopefully) by Phil Nofal (BAC '75) of Florence, and a children's book with illustrations by Sandra Long."

"Windswept Dreams" is expected to be on the market by late March of this year.



An illustration (above) and free verse (right) from "Windswept Dreams," Ed Finn's new book.

somewhere in the distance
could be heard a gentle
melody
inspired by the mind of a
great musician -
high-pitched notes of a
flute,
soft, mellow drumbeats
(or perhaps it was simply the
winds
blowing through the valley
accompanied by distant
thunder).
foretold by the crackling of
twigs
and silent echoes
resounding off the blank walls
of the mountains,
a man roamed the forests.
about his neck he wore a
talisman
of bloodstone wreathed in
silver lacing.
not only a pendant of good
omen,
this very stone has been
sought
by mystics for centuries.
how he came upon it, no one
knew;
not even the shadows
of his very soul could
determine the reason
he was chosen to wear it
within him was sphere of peace
and without him a feeling of
contentment.
he'd traveled the countryside,
been given the love of many,
and now searched the man or
people -
The birthplace of this pendant;
-
which had made claim of his
spirit.