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COURIER-JOURNAL

An 'almost impossible' dream comes true for McQuaid grad

By Teresa A. Parsons .

Mark Ouweleen's initial reaction to winning a Rhodes Scholarship last week wasn't very different from his reaction to losing one the year before.

When you lose, you take a good deep breath and you ask yourself, 'Well, what next?' and then you shake a few hands and get out of there," he said. "When you win, you take a deep breath and you pinch yourself, and then you shake a lot of hands and think to yourself, 'Now what next?'"

Which is not to say that the 22-year-old graduate of McQuaid Jesuit High School and Georgetown University is not rejoicing at being one of 32 Americans to be awarded the prestigious scholarship this year. Chosen from among more than 1,000 applicants in the United States after he applied unsuccessfully last year, Ouweleen will spend the next two years living out a dream of studying English language and literature at Oxford University in England.

Established in 1902 by British politician Cecil John Rhodes to promote world understanding, the Rhodes Scholarship recognizes young men and women around the world for outstanding intellectual achievement, character, leadership and physical vigor.

Several other Georgetown graduates were also selected as Rhodes scholars this year, but administrators at McQuaid believe that Ouweleen is the first of that school's graduates to win such recognition.

The son of Gina Ouweleen of Irondequoit and the late William F. Ouweleen, Mark believes the committee chose him the second time around because he "grew up a lot in the past year.

"I've experienced a lot of things that have given me more of a sense of direction, and I think that came across in the interview," he said. "This year, I started to live out some of the things I'd always believed. I found out that I wanted to study for a reason - to make myself capable of making a difference in the world."

After earning a bachelor's degree in English from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. last spring, Ouweleen began work as a Jesuit Volunteer at Buffalo's Housing Assistance Center in August. There, he is one of six rental counselors who each work with approximately 2,000 individuals or families per year. Half of the center's clients, he said, live in substandard housing, while the other half are or are about to become homeless.

As a counselor, Ouweleen informs tenants of their rights and negotiates for them with landlords and social service agencies. He helps those who are homeless sign up for benefits, find apartments and organize their households.

'There is just not enough decent, affordable housing to go around in Buffalo,' he said. "People move from one substandard apartment to another. It's like a mean game of musical chairs."



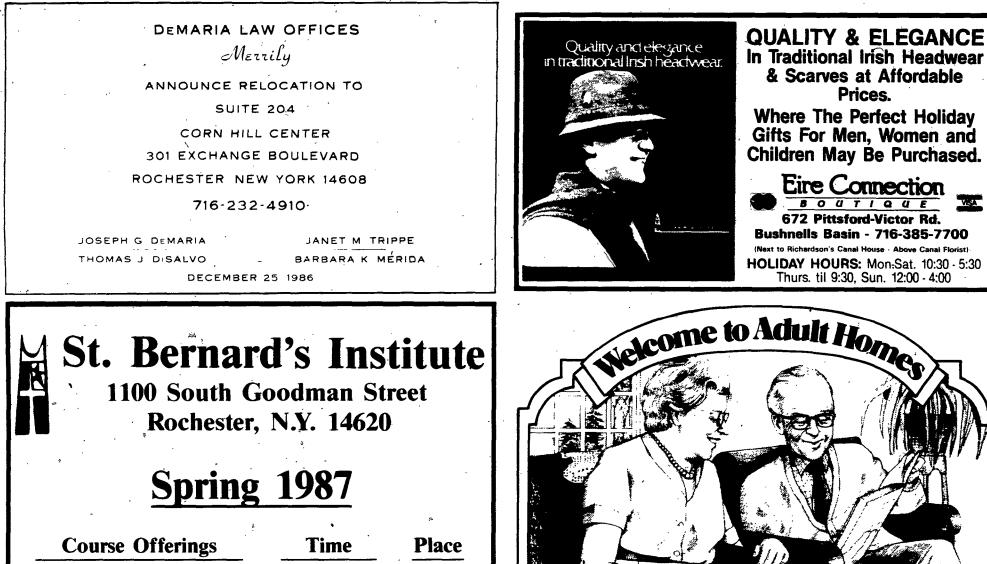
Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal Rhodes-scholar-to-be Mark Ouweleen will leave for two years of study at Oxford University next October. Currently, he works as a Jesuit volunteer for a housing agency in Buffalo.

said

Jesuit volunteers also live in community with one another to provide support and the opportunity for spiritual growth. "It's a great way to encourage people to get involved and to see that there really are people with families, not making very much money, who are dedicating their lives to being Christians and helping others," he

One of the first things Ouweleen recalls learning about the Rhodes Scholarship was how unlikely he was to win one.

"I knew it was almost impossible to get, but I figured Oxford would be the place to study English literature," he said. "It was **Continued on Page 17**



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Justice in the Church (Mich)	Thurs. 2:15-5 p.m.	Rochester
Death and Resurrection (Hart)	Wed. 2:15-5 p.m.	Rochester
Ministrys as Leadership & Community Building (Mich)	Mon. 7-9:45 p.m.	Rochester
Canon Law (McKenna)	Wed. 2:15-5 p.m.	Rochester
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