

Attempts to save Cardinal Mooney fail in final hour

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

GREECE — Cardinal Mooney High School will close as scheduled in June, despite a last-ditch effort to save the school by concerned parents, alumni and faculty.

The "Save Mooney Committee" offered no plan to the Holy Cross Brothers and the diocese that could secure the school's future financial health, according to Brother Paul Rahaim, chairman of Mooney's board of trustees and provincial of the Holy Cross Brothers, the order that operates the school.

On Wednesday evening, May 10, Brother Rahaim and Father John Mulligan, diocesan moderator of the pastoral office, met for three hours with 16 representatives of the "Save Mooney Committee" to discuss the rationale for the school closing and the possibility of keeping Mooney open.

School officials announced last month that Mooney would be closed because of its \$700,000 operating deficit and declining enrollment. Enrollment fell from 1,302 in 1985-86 to less than 700 this year, and the enrollment projected for next year would have been only 454 students.

Brother Rahaim noted that school officials had previously explored several of the plans committee representatives presented at the May 10 meeting. Among those plans was a proposal to merge Mooney with another Catholic school, and another to operate the school in one half of the Mooney building while leasing the other half in or-

der to offset the school's deficit.

The committee representatives also brought with them pledges of nearly \$50,000 from the Mooney community. But such an amount was far from what the school needs, Brother Rahaim remarked. "It costs \$100,000 just to keep the building empty," he said, citing insurance and utility bills as well as operating expenses.

David Michael Barry, chairman of the "Save Mooney Committee," remarked that his group knew it was unlikely the decision to close the school would be reversed, but the committee had hoped the diocese might step in to save the school.

"We really hoped that the diocese would take an active role in this crisis, but that's not forthcoming," Barry said.

But stepping in to save Mooney would go against standard diocesan policy regarding operation of diocesan secondary schools, Father Mulligan said, noting that Mooney is operated independently by the Holy Cross Brothers and that the diocese has no authority to interfere in the closing of the school.

Father Mulligan said that the diocese would convene a task force to study concerns about Catholic secondary education in northwestern Monroe County, where Mooney is located. The task force, to be named in the next few weeks, will include a representative from Mooney's executive committee and/or a parents' representative, he said.

Police

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aggressive," said Crimi, who served as first assistant United States attorney from 1961 to 1964. "There may also be victims who are saying that the police aren't being aggressive enough."

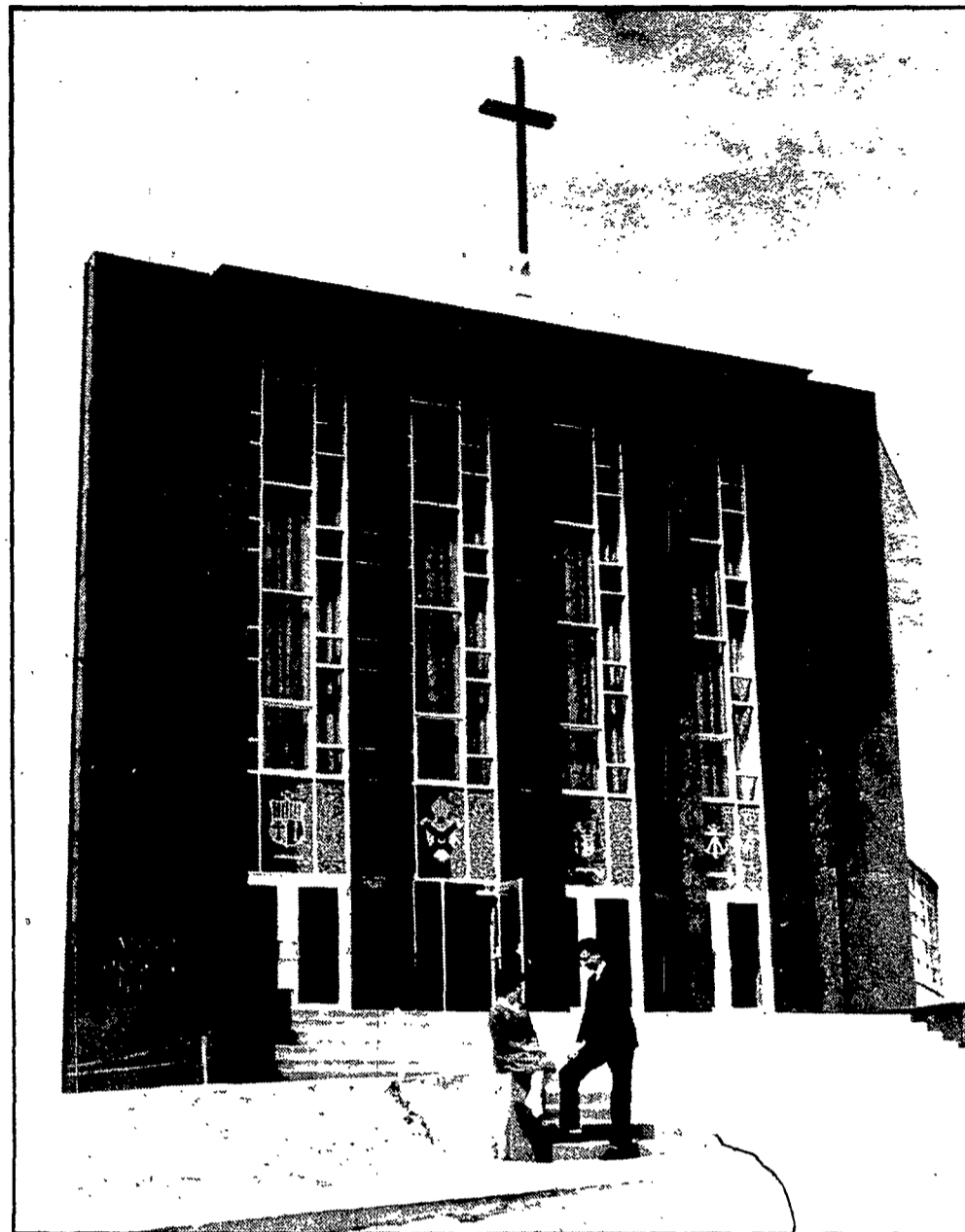
Wethers said that one way of improving relations between police and the community would be to have more minority police officers on the force. Another way of helping ease tensions might be to have more identifiable police officers in the neighborhood.

"We have an officer here, her name is Lucille Everett, and she is involved with

the D.A.R.E. program (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) here at St. Monica's," Wethers said. "She is a large part of our school community. The children see her as a role model."

Two of those children are Wethers' son and daughter, David and Catherine, who both go to school at St. Monica's. Wethers doesn't want them to grow up in a world where problems exist between the police and the people they are trying to protect.

"As a mother I am concerned. The reason I work on the task force is for future changes," Wethers said. "If the system doesn't work and it is correctable, then we have to try and change it. It's positive something is being done rather than nothing at all."



This photo, which appeared in the Courier Journal of May 3, 1963, showed George Shayler and Louise DeNeve, two of Cardinal Mooney's "more than 400 'pioneer' freshmen," looking ahead to dedication ceremonies for the school on Sunday, May 5.

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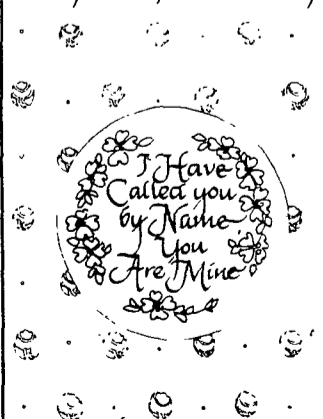
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