

DIOCESAN NEWS

Pickett resigns as Fisher president

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Dr. William L. Pickett, president of Rochester's St. John Fisher College since 1986, will leave behind an institution strengthened by his vision, according to Jack Palvino, chairman of Fisher's board of trustees.

Pickett announced in a joint statement with Palvino Oct. 23 that he will leave his position next June. In a phone interview with the *Catholic Courier*, Pickett, 54, could only speculate on his future next year, but said that he was leaving his position after pondering this summer whether he wanted to commit to it for another three to five years, as he would have been required to do by the college.

"I didn't want to make that kind of commitment at my age," Pickett said.

In the joint statement, Palvino praised Pickett's contributions. "We are fortunate that Dr. Pickett elected to renew his contract with us twice, and we are pleased to have had him here longer than we initially expected," Palvino stated. "The college is in a strong position, thanks to his vision and leadership."

A search committee — chaired by Wayne LeChase, vice chairman of the board of trustees, and comprising other members of the board, college administrators, faculty, students and alumni — will convene in the next few weeks, according to the joint statement. The committee will recommend candidates to the board following a nationwide search, and a new president should be selected by next summer, college officials said.

Pickett said that he may remain affiliated with Fisher through the creation of a leadership institute which would offer non-credit courses in organizational leadership. The institute would also conduct research, publish studies and possibly be home to a library, he said, although he emphasized that such plans are tentative.

Pickett, the college's first lay president, was vice president for university relations at the University of San Diego when he was named to succeed Father Patrick Patrick O. Braden, CSB, Fisher's president from 1980-86. Pickett's hiring broke



File photo
Dr. William L. Pickett, president of Rochester's St. John Fisher College since 1986, announced he will leave his position next June.

a string of Basilian presidents who had overseen the college since it officially opened in 1951.

"I encountered very little opposition to me as a non-Basilian," Pickett recalled.

During his tenure at Fisher, the college's net assets almost doubled from \$18.4 million in 1985 to \$34.4 million in 1995. That increase is due in part to new buildings on campus, renovations to several existing buildings, expanded computer facilities and an endowment fund that grew from \$4 million to \$16 million.

Meanwhile the college added graduate and undergraduate nursing programs.

But of all his achievements, Pickett stated that he was proudest of the college's mission statement, drawn up in 1987, which he noted was the result of a joint effort of the school's faculty and administration.

"We all came together to agree on what our ideals would be," he said. "It's not just a catalogue statement."

Pickett probably became best known to diocesan Catholics outside the Fisher community when he chaired the Commission on Reorganization of Catholic Schools which oversaw the closing and consolidation of several Monroe County Catholic schools in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In addition to his work chairing the commission, Pickett has been involved in many other groups in the Rochester area, including the Blue Ribbon Commission on Monroe County Finance, the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of Greater Rochester, the Urban League and Aquinas Institute.

In 1994, he was elected treasurer of the board of trustees of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in New York state. Pickett noted that the fate of the state's independent college system deeply concerns him. Small, private colleges like Fisher have had to become more aggressive in recruiting students than they were when he began his academic career in the 1960s.

"Much more of my time and energy goes into marketing," he observed. "It certainly wasn't that way 30 years ago when I got started."

He added that because there are more seats in the nation's college classrooms than students to fill them, students are far choosier about where they will go for a higher education than they once were.

"They are certainly aware that they have more options than they did 20 to 30 years ago," he commented.

Pickett said the fact that state colleges and universities have become more popular to affluent students over the last decade at first boded ill for private colleges. However, he noted that as state schools' tuition rates rise, and as they become more selective in their admissions process, private schools — especially those with extensive financial aid programs — may begin to look attractive again to students who initially only considered the state school system.

Boston Brass scheduled to perform at SSJ benefit

ROCHESTER — Boston Brass, an ensemble that performs a variety of brass chamber music, will perform at 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 12, at Nazareth College Arts Center, 4245 East Ave.

The concert is the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester's fifth annual holiday benefit. Money will go to their ministries.

The nationally known quintet will perform "American Journey," featuring music by George Gershwin, Benny Goodman, Thelonious Monk, Scott Joplin, Glenn Miller and many others.

Tickets are \$25 for general admission, \$50 for patrons, and \$15 each for groups of five or more. Tickets may be reserved by calling 716/586-1000, ext. 151, or may be purchased at Borders Books, Music Lovers Shoppe or the Village Green Bookstores.

Whittaker, Welk singers set for holiday concerts

ROCHESTER — The Founders Club of the Sisters of Mercy has scheduled two holiday concerts. Roger Whittaker in Concert is slated for Saturday, Nov. 18, at 8 p.m. at the Theater on the Ridge, 200 Ridge Road West.

A Christmas celebration featuring stars of the Lawrence Welk Show is scheduled for the Eastman Theater, 26 Gibbs St., on Sunday, Dec. 3 at 3 p.m. Singers will include Joe Feeney, Ava Barber and Dick Dale; and dancers, Bobby Burgess and Elaine Balden. Tickets are priced at \$19.50, \$24.50 and \$29.50, and may be obtained from the Founders Club, 716/288-4817.

Dinner will raise funds

ROCHESTER — Mount Carmel Church, 53 Ontario St., will hold a pasta dinner fund-raiser on Sunday, Nov. 5, from 1-5 p.m., in the parish hall.

Tickets are \$5 and will be available at the door. Takeout dinners will also be available.

For information, call 716/232-1133.

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Internationally famous composer,
recording star & entertainer
ROGER WHITTAKER
in concert...

Saturday, Nov. 18th 8:00 p.m.
Theater on the Ridge, Rochester

A Christmas Celebration with the
**STARS OF THE
LAWRENCE WELK SHOW**

(a wunnerful, wunnerful program featuring
Joe Feeney, Ava Barber, Dick Dale, Bobby
Burgess, Elaine Balden & others)

Sunday, Dec. 3rd 3:00 p.m.
Eastman Theatre, Rochester



For information & tickets, call (716) 288-4817

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Bring Forth the
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Several years ago, Ann Bojdak began leading spiritual retreats for women. Today, she is actively involved in implementing Synod Goal 4: to promote the growth of Small Christian Communities (SCCs). "I saw that I could get close to God in small groups," says Ann. Through your gift to the Thanks Giving Appeal, you help fund this and other synod goals. Ann believes that SCCs "help foster our hopes for realizing a better Church of Rochester and a better world."

Closer to
God

