

reorganization, noted Bishop Hickey's ability to assemble a team that could get the job done.

"Bishop Hickey was a great organizer for good causes who made sure things were done well," Hare said. "He knew so many people and their skills, and would utilize their talents in unison to get many worthwhile activities accomplished at the *Catholic Courier* and elsewhere.

"He would orchestrate the activities and step back to let others take the credit," Hare continued. "It has been a gift I will always cherish to have known him and to have worked with him."

The ad hoc reorganization committee's first chore was hiring a new editor for the newspaper. Karen M. Franz, who had been copy editor for Wolfe Publications (now Messenger-Post Newspapers), was hired in April 1985. Bernie Puglisi (advertising), Jeff Goulding (photographer), Teresa Parsons (staff writer, later associate editor), Emily Morrison (associate editor), Mary Bittner (office manager) and Patricia McCabe (circulation coordinator) joined the staff during the next few weeks.

Bishop Clark pointed out that Bishop Hickey — with the help of the ad hoc reorganization committee — assembled a staff "that within two years had won the top prize (general excellence) in the Catholic Press Association. I considered that not only a tribute to the talents of the staff, but more importantly to the great work of the bishop."

The *Courier* was scheduled to move to Buffalo Road in 1986, and renovations of the former kitchen area of the old St. Andrew's Seminary began in late 1985. Bishop Hickey conducted a Pastoral Center tour for his new staffers, and before they made it halfway around the building they had acquired three nicknames: the Kennedy Cabinet, the Whiz Kids, and Snow White and His Seven Dwarfs.

The ad hoc committee's original plan had been to hire a general manager for the newspaper. But their search failed to surface a candidate who combined the necessary background and a willingness to take a chance on what must have appeared a very risky venture. In addition, the struggling newspaper could scarce afford another line on the payroll. So the *Courier* board soon "hired" Bishop Hickey to be the newspaper's (unpaid) general manager.

In that capacity, he pleaded with vendors — who had not been paid in months — to continue providing service while he arranged financing. He negotiated with pastors to continue supporting the paper as the new staff members struggled to find their "sea legs."

And he became a patient, affirming mentor to his young charges, some of whom had no prior newspaper experience.

"I'll never forget going into Bishop Hickey's office in the basement at 114 S. Union St. and expressing a concern over how we would manage things or get answers to certain questions," Puglisi recalls. "I'll never forget his reply. I thought he might say that we'll call someone

with expertise in the field or do a little research, but he simply said, 'Bernard, the Lord will provide.'"

That answer was typical of Bishop Hickey's positive, patient attitude. Chapman, an attorney with the Rochester firm Harris Beach & Wilcox, said one of the late bishop's greatest qualities was "his persistent good humor and even temper in the face of events that would give agita to other people."

Moll, who worked with Bishop Hickey in a variety of diocesan projects for nearly 50 years, concurred.

"It would be a rare circumstance if you were to find someone who had the same depth of faith and the same ability to convey his feelings in such a way that people came to be in agreement," he remarked. "And for that reason, he was able to smooth over a lot of situations that would have been unpleasant otherwise."

"I was always so fond of (Bishop Hickey) because, in spite of the condition we were in at the time, he had an ability to look forward and never look back," observed William H. Kedley, treasurer of the *Courier* board since 1985.

"He was certainly a mentor to us (on the board)," continued Kedley, business manager of Harris Beach & Wilcox. "His ability to never dwell on the past was an inspiration."

"He was (the board's) guiding light and mainstay to rejuvenate the paper and take it to new heights of excellence," Chapman added. Trying to revitalize the *Courier* "was a challenge and an

Continued on next page



Bishop Hickey chats with Mike Latona (center) and Bernie Puglisi in November 1997.

He was such a tremendous resource for us. He traveled, even though he was technically retired, and had his finger on every pulse of the diocese. He would constantly point out stories we might want to look into, from far-reaching parts of the diocese. We'd come out of a news meeting (where we planned the next week's issue) not knowing whom to approach. Within a couple hours Bishop Hickey would have a name and number.

I admired him so much. Here's an auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Rochester, and he had no ego at all.

Richard A. Kiley,
Courier reporter and
managing editor 1986-95

They don't get any better than Bishop Hickey! He was the Courier's No. 1 advertising supporter ... but he never asked for a commission! He did everything he could to try to help out the newspaper.

Bishop Hickey was truly a wonderful man and boss ... Whenever I think of what a priest should be, I think of Bishop Hickey. To me, he epitomizes everything and more that someone sworn to service to God should be.

Bernie Puglisi, Courier
advertising manager 1985-95

When I was hired as the secretary/receptionist, I began updating the priest biographies we had on file. I asked Bishop Hickey one day if he would be able to give me any information regarding these priests. We went through the dozen or more names in a matter of minutes. There was not one question that he was not able to answer.

Later ... I realized just how generous Bishop Hickey was. At any given time, he was paying for the subscriptions of 10-12 retired priests. Bishop Hickey also purchased copies of Father McNamara's revised history of the diocese for several priests at local infirmaries.

Donna Stubbings,
circulation manager

My first meeting with Bishop Dennis W. Hickey occurred in the same way, I imagine, as it did for thousands of other diocesan Catholics: He bestowed the sacrament of confirmation upon me.

The date was April 28, 1974, at Our Mother of Sorrows Church in Greece. It would be 17½ years before we would cross paths again, when I began as a staff writer at the Catholic Courier.

Over the next eight years, I looked immensely forward to that cheerful voice saying "Good day" as Bishop Hickey passed through the Courier doorway. He'd then instigate some banter that would always end in laughter all around.

In fact, he would sometimes get so revved up that a look of concern would suddenly cross his face and he'd sheepishly say to our staff, "I don't want to hold you up; I know you're busy." Truth be told, I don't think anyone was ever too busy to chat with Bishop Hickey.

Earlier this year, as I did a massive house-cleaning in preparation for my September wedding, I discovered my confirmation certificate from 25 years ago. I brought it in for the bishop, and he got a big charge out of that.

I enjoyed seeing Bishop Hickey outside the Pastoral Center as well, often at weekday Mass at Holy Name of Jesus Church in

Greece. I'll never forget how last year, as he was coming down the aisle at the end of Mass, he stopped and whispered "Happy Birthday" to me. He never forgot the Courier employees on their birthdays or at Christmas, mailing them a card and generous gift. This occurred even after he had retired as general manager.

If he ever missed more than a couple days of stopping into the Courier, someone would invariably say with concern: "Did anyone see the Bishop lately?"

A few months ago, his visits did begin to decrease and that's when word spread that he was sick. Never one to draw attention to himself, he did not convey the seriousness of his

illness.

The week before he moved out of the Holy Family Church rectory, where he had lived for many years, I witnessed a scene that captured the essence of Bishop Hickey for me.

While interviewing Sister Donna Del Santo in the convent building, I looked out a third-floor window to see Bishop Hickey walking slowly across the parking lot. He was reading from a prayer book. As residents swirled by on bicycles and pushing baby carriages, it seemed to me that the face of God was shining through Bishop Hickey on the inner-city neighborhood. What an emotional and difficult time it must have been, what

with his illness and impending move. And here the great bishop was, putting it all in God's hands.

I wondered if I should say hi, or refrain from interrupting his prayerful moment. But I did later pull up and greet him. He looked a bit startled at first; then came a big grin of recognition. After a few minutes of chatting I drove off, knowing that a special moment had just occurred.

I felt like a million bucks, and wondered how many lives Bishop Hickey must have touched with that sweet smile.

Thank God my life was one of them.

Mike Latona, Courier
staff writer



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