

# HEALTHY RETIREMENT

## Chili man is still on the job at 91 years old

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

CHILL — Think your boss has been slow in giving you that raise? Well, don't expect much sympathy from Lou Murphy: It took more than 20 years at his current job before he even got paid.

Not until about five years ago, when he was well into his 80s, did Murphy begin drawing a paycheck for his work as groundskeeper for St. Pius Tenth Parish. But don't hold the church responsible: Murphy, now 91, emphasizes that he never sought money, wishing to work on a volunteer basis. Yet his dedication was so thorough that Father Gerald Connor, St. Pius Tenth's former pastor, insisted on adding him to the payroll.

"He decided he wasn't going to watch me go around every day and not get paid for it," Murphy said.

Murphy is still earning his keep. He patrols the grounds at St. Pius Tenth every weekday morning, driving a parish-owned truck so he can tend to his many chores. There's no set pattern to his work days, he said: "If I see something to do, I just do it."

Due to unusually warm weather and occasional high winds this past winter, Murphy has made frequent trips around the expansive St. Pius Tenth campus to clear limbs and twigs. On more seasonal days, he has brushed snow off cars belonging to the seven nuns who reside at the parish convent — "all nice people," he said. He also does some work at the parish cemetery that's located a couple of blocks from the church.

Murphy begins many of his weekdays by attending 7 a.m. Mass at St. Pius Tenth; then he pops into work between 8:30 and 9 a.m. and toils until about noon. He also works Saturdays, moving indoors to help wash dishes because there's no housekeeper on duty then. Other times, if the housekeeping appliances break down, Murphy is the man who takes them to be repaired.

Murphy assists the parish's office staff as well. On a recent Thursday he eyed stacks of envelopes for a parish mailing that were ready to be taken to the post office: "This is tomorrow's job," he remarked.

Murphy became a St. Pius Tenth parishioner in 1967. He began doing maintenance work in 1977 the year after he re-



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Lou Murphy shovels snow outside the rectory at St. Pius Tenth Parish in Chill March 6. Murphy, 91, has worked at the parish for more than 20 years.

tired from a lengthy career in the bakery industry. At first, he recalled, he used manual clippers to keep the hedges at St. Pius trimmed, but has since been provided with electric shears.

His long-term job began during the pastorate of the late Father Donald Murphy (no relation) and continued through Father Connor's 20-year tenure. He now works for Father Foster Rogers, who replaced the now-retired Father Connor in 1998.

A lifelong resident of the Rochester area,

Murphy was born Nov. 12, 1910, in Honeoye Falls. His family moved to Rochester when he was a child; he grew up in St. Boniface Parish. He admits to his fair share of pranks during those years, such as when he and his friends would pull a trolley car down the street when the conductor wasn't looking.

He attended games at the old Rochester Red Wing baseball field on Bay Street, which actually predated Red Wing Stadium (later called Silver Stadium) that was

home to the Red Wings from 1929-96. Murphy especially remembers some acrobatic outfielders at the tightly fenced-in Bay Street facility who would "run right up the porch" to make catches.

Murphy never finished high school, and was working his first steady job by age 13. Married in 1940, he joined the U.S. Army three years later and served until 1946 in New Guinea, the Philippines and Korea.

Murphy noted that as a young adult, he bought a brand-new Chevrolet — fully equipped — for \$900. And, he added, "I never made more than \$12,000 a year. You can't believe how times have changed."

Murphy has three children and nine grandchildren, with his 10th great-grandchild due to arrive in June. His second wife, Rosemary, died two years ago after 49 years of marriage. All of his children are by his first wife, Beatrice, who died in 1950.

These days, Murphy looks forward to his duties at St. Pius Tenth: "It keeps me busy. Everybody is really nice to me; they go out of their way to be halfway decent," he said.

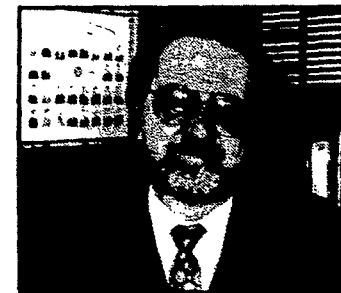
Murphy's daughter, Kathy O'Neil, said the job helps preserve some needed vitality. "I think that's what keeps him going — if he didn't have this job, I don't think he'd be as healthy as he is. He loves being with people," said O'Neil, who works as a secretary at St. Pius Tenth School.

Murphy has tussled with back ailments for many years, and can't do as much lifting as he used to. "I've had my share of troubles, but the Lord's been good to me," he said.

Good enough that Murphy has no plans to scale back his regimen at St. Pius Tenth. He said he'll stay on board "until I can't move."

"One of these days, when they get tired of seeing me, they'll throw me out," he added with a chuckle.

### Thoughts to Consider



**EDWIN SULEWSKI**  
Funeral Director

**What are some ways to help a child who has lost a parent?**

First it is important to make sure the child is honestly included in all information and planning. This means being honest about the death and answering the child's questions. It also means allowing but not forcing children to go to the funeral or visitation as they wish. Secondly, a child needs love and security. Let a child know they will be cared for, take an interest in schoolwork and include them in play. Some children resent being pressured to accept burdens beyond their reach. "Taking over for Dad or Mom" may be too much responsibility. Naturally, changes will occur but a child needs time and help in adjusting to them.

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