

Hawaii Catholic Herald

Newspaper of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu



Photo by Lehia Apana

Msgr. Daniel Dever displays his honorary degree of Doctor of Human Letters he received from Chaminade University of Honolulu, Jan. 27, in the Neal Blaisdell Arena. From left, he is joined by the superintendent of Catholic Schools Carmen Himenes, Chaminade professor Regina Pfeiffer and Bishop Larry Silva.

Former superintendent honored at educator gathering

By Patrick Downes
Hawaii Catholic Herald

Wearing white and black academic robes and a shy smile beneath a gold-tasseled velvet tam, Msgr. Daniel J. Dever stood in the center of the stage of the Neal Blaisdell Arena, Jan. 27, to receive the degree Doctor of Humane Letters, *Honoris Causa*, from Chaminade University of Honolulu.

Extending an enthusiastic standing ovation was an audience of 900 Catholic school teachers and administrators, many of whom began their careers during his 43 years as Hawaii superintendent of Catholic Schools.

The occasion was the annual Conference of Catholic Educators for the Diocese of Honolulu.

The degree was conferred after a Mass celebrated by Bishop Larry Silva and a recognition of Catholic school educators who, this year, are marking 20, 30 and 50 years of service.

The honor was conferred by Chaminade president Sue Wesselkamper, executive vice president provost Marianist Brother Bernard Ploeger, Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts David Coleman, and the assistant to the director of the Master's of Arts in Pastoral Leadership Regina Pfeiffer. Also assisting was the superintendent of Catholic schools, Carmen Himenes. The presentation had not been previously announced or listed in the program.

The university's executive committee, acting on behalf of its board of regents, authorized the award in recognition of Msgr. Dever's 52 years of educational and pastoral service to the Diocese of Honolulu. He is

now retired.

Coleman read a citation that praised a lifetime of contributions to Hawaii extending far beyond the priest's educational title. Msgr. Dever was recognized for nurturing ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, for co-founding the Institute for Religion and Social Change, and for his role as an advisor and guru to many in Hawaii working in politics, collective bargaining, social ethics, medical ethics and other areas of social transformation.

The 79-year-old monsignor accepted it all graciously, with a characteristic hint of self-deprecation.

"You will be pleased," he said in a hoarse voice, "that my doctor told me not to speak in public."

"However, if I were to give a speech," he continued, "I would say how amazed and astonished I am to find myself standing here."

He thanked Wesselkamper, the university, the present superintendent of Catholic Schools Carmen Himenes, the bishop, and then everyone else.

"I thank you," he said. "I appreciate all that you are and all that you do. Thank you."

In his homily, Bishop Silva likened the work of the teachers to "prophesy" performed simply and humbly.

"The work that you do is extremely important," he said "It is essential to form and shape and guide young minds."

The bishop said that while a Catholic educator's labor may be "unglamorous" and "underpaid," it is made even more important by its goal to teach children "to know the risen Christ and to know his Spirit."

After Mass, 23 teachers and administrators were recognized for 20, 30 and 50 years of service in Hawaii.

Congratulated for 20 years of service to Hawaii Catholic Schools were Sacred Hearts Sister Irene Barboza, Deborah Kula, Wade Okamura and Miriam Slate of Sacred Hearts Academy; Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet Leone Drexler of St. Anthony Jr./Sr. High School; Diane Lota of Damien Memorial School; Margaret Yamamoto of St. Michael School; Elaine Watanabe of Star of the Sea Early Learning Center; Thaela Catala of St. Louis School; Margaret Castro of St. John Catholic Pre-School; and Bernadine Zimbra of St. John Vianney School.

Acknowledged for 30 years of service were Sacred Hearts Sister Katherine Francis Miller and Doris Zuern of Sacred Hearts Academy; Michael Weaver of Damien; James Wong of Maryknoll High School; Franciscan Sisters Mary Edward Sugioka and Jovita Agustin of St. Francis School; Dennis Almadova of St. Louis; Patricia Rickard of St. Anthony Jr./Sr. High; and Bettynda Young of Star of the Sea School.

Celebrating 50 years as educators were Sacred Hearts Sisters Angela Gregorio and Anne Marie Tamanaha, both of Sacred Hearts Academy.

The educators then listened to lectures by visiting education experts Dr. Kevin P. Colleary and Dr. Bena Kallick.

Dr. Colleary, a professor at Fordham University, spoke on teaching, learning and assessing through writing. Dr. Bena Kallick, a private consultant, addressed curriculum mapping.