

1996

The Jesuits and William Hughes Mulligan

Joseph O'Hare S.J.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr>



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Joseph O'Hare S.J., *The Jesuits and William Hughes Mulligan*, 65 Fordham L. Rev. 9 (1996).
Available at: <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol65/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by FLASH: The Fordham Law Archive of Scholarship and History. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fordham Law Review by an authorized editor of FLASH: The Fordham Law Archive of Scholarship and History. For more information, please contact tmelnick@law.fordham.edu.

The Jesuits and William Hughes Mulligan

Cover Page Footnote

President, Fordham University, 1985-Present

THE JESUITS AND WILLIAM HUGHES MULLIGAN*

*Father Joseph O'Hare, S.J.***

The relationship of William Hughes Mulligan to Fordham University and its Jesuit community spanned seven decades, and among those who enjoyed his special gift of friendship were a number of my predecessors as President of Fordham University. Father Robert Ignatius Gannon was President of Fordham during Bill's undergraduate years, when he was a sports writer for the Ram, as well as during his years as a law student and his first years on the Fordham Law School faculty. Father Gannon's successor, Father Laurence McGinley, had the wisdom to make Bill Mulligan Dean of the Law School in 1956. Father Vincent O'Keefe, the only living ex-President of Fordham, was Father McGinley's successor and a good friend of Bill. Father O'Keefe was present at his funeral last May. Leo McLaughlin and Father Michael Walsh were presidents of the University during Bill's tenure as Dean, and my predecessor, Father Jim Finlay, enjoyed the support of Bill's counsel as a trustee of the University.

Along with his great gift for friendship, Bill Mulligan had, of course, the gift of laughter as well. His humor was not that of the conventional storyteller, who recycles oft-told tales in an effort, as Jonathan Miller once said, to see if any sparks are left in the cigarette butts in the ash tray. Bill Mulligan's humor was far more original and creative. It was rooted in his deep sense of the comic dimension of life, an appreciation of the variety of incongruities that we encounter. Bill's comic imagination, I would submit, was very close to his profound religious faith, which gave him a confidence about his place in God's universe and a sharp Christian realization that things are never quite the way they seem to be. If we become inflated by a sense of our own self-sufficiency, we do so at great risk of disillusionment.

I can recall, for example, the first time that Bill Mulligan introduced me as President of Fordham. He noted that I was the 31st President of Fordham University and then added, for some reason that escaped me at the time, that the 31st President of the United States had been Herbert Hoover.

Because Bill Mulligan was a man with such extraordinary gifts of friendship and laughter, wisdom and faith, the pain of his passing was difficult for his beloved Roseanna, his family, and his friends to bear. But even if there were tears on this side at his passing, what a great crowd of friends waited for Bill on the other side. Among them were many sons of Ignatius, like Bob Gannon, Larry McGinley, Mike

* Adapted from remarks made at Dean Mulligan's funeral liturgy, May 17, 1996.

** President, Fordham University, 1985 to Present.

Walsh and Jim Finlay. And so many other men and women of Fordham, like his great friend Joe Crowley, whose lives were entwined with his and enriched by his extraordinary gifts. The trumpet surely sounded, and a great shout of welcome must have gone up on the other side when Bill passed from us last May.