

# Father Flanagan

[www.fatherflanagan.org](http://www.fatherflanagan.org)

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 1

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## Father Flanagan Says

Youth needs the force of good and attractive examples. Children are not philosophers, but they are apt imitators. They may be easily led to follow where they cannot be driven.

It has always been a source of great satisfaction to me to watch a child acquire strength and dignity of character. Children acquire character through their desire to emulate and practice the principles of right living laid before them by those they love and respect.

When you help a child today, you write the history of tomorrow. —Fr. Flanagan



## About Father Flanagan, by Tom Burnes

“What I learned at Boys Town, I shared with my family—the importance of prayer and God’s relationship to us.

Father Flanagan led me mind, heart, and soul to God. I am indebted to him for all he has done for me.

I loved him very much.” —Tom Burnes  
(Story on page 7)



Tom Burnes Class of 1950, on the Boys Town farm in 1949.

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### FATHER FLANAGAN



**Born** July 13, 1886, Leabeg Farm, Co. Roscommon near Ballymoe, County Galway, Ireland.

\*

**Ordained**, July 26, 1912, Innsbruck, Austria.

\*

**Founded** Father Flanagan’s Boys’ Home, 25th & Dodge, Omaha, December 12, 1917.

\*

**Moved** Home to German-American Home, South 13th St., Omaha, June 1, 1918.

\*

**Moved to** Overlook Farm (present site) October 17, 1921.

\*

**Invested as** a monsignor, November 21, 1937.

\*

**World premiere** of movie, “Boys Town,” September 7, 1938.

\*

**Assessed** the child care system in native Ireland on visit there, June, 1946.

\*

**Met** General MacArthur in Japan to develop care program for war orphans.

\*

**Sent to** Europe by President Truman to aide war orphans. February 26, 1948.

\*

**Died** May 15, 1948, Berlin, Germany

## From Ed Flanagan, Chairman

The Advisory Council recently met with Msgr. Peter Dunne at his residence for a beautiful mass and a wonderful lunch. When you walk into Msgr. Dunne's apartment, you are struck by the magnificent religious artifacts throughout his home. But it is not the items that dazzle you when you leave, it is the inspiring stories Msgr. Dunne tells of his time with Fr. Flanagan.



*Advisory Board members Maureen Brady and Madeleine Leininger at lunch with Monsignor Dunne, caretaker Vicki Herout and Chairman Ed*

Msgr. Dunne has been the Advisory Council's spiritual advisor for the past five years. After each monthly prayer meeting, he blesses our group then proceeds to tell us more about Fr. Flanagan and why he truly believes that Fr. Flanagan is a saint. Although Msgr. Dunne's presence at our Prayer Group is less frequent these days, due to his health, his words are forever in our hearts. When Msgr. Dunne begins a story about Fr. Flanagan, you can hear in his voice and see in his Irish eyes that illuminate the room, how he wants you to feel the unconditional love spread by Father Flanagan to all.

We can be reassured that Msgr. Dunne will continue to unfold stories that illustrate Fr. Flanagan's love of youth. Thank you, Msgr. Dunne.

*Ed*

## Fr. Clifford Stevens



*At the luncheon following his 50th Anniversary Mass, Father Stevens accepts an award of lifetime membership in the BTNAA from Ed Novotny, Boys Town Class, 1943.*



*Father Clifford Stevens, Boys Town Class of 1944, celebrates his 50th anniversary of ordination Mass at Immaculate Conception Chapel, Boys Town, on April 23, 2006, with his brother priests. (Read the story of Fr. Stevens on the following page, 3).*

Boys Town National Alumni Association  
P. O. Box 2 Boys Town, NE 68010

**Movement for the Canonization of  
Father Edward J. Flanagan**  
[www.fatherflanagan.org](http://www.fatherflanagan.org)

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Boys Town Hall of History

**Father Steven E. Boes**

Executive Director, Girls and Boys Town  
**Father Val J. Peter**, Executive Director Emeritus

### Advisory Council

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Honorary Chaplain



One hundred Founders' Edition 18" miniatures have been cast of the Fred Hoppe statue of Fr. Flanagan. A few are still available for sale at \$1,850.00.

To reserve yours or request more information, call **800.345.0458**. Credit cards are accepted.

## To Father Flanagan- May 15, 1948

*Editor's Note: At his 50th Anniversary of Ordination Mass at Boys Town on April 23, 2006, Father Clifford Stevens, Boys Town Class of 1944, told us that upon bearing of the death of Father Flanagan, on May 16, 1948, he sat down and this poem "flowed out of him."*

-I-

You saw the empty hulks pour through your doors.  
You gave them food and tried to give them more.  
They sat and stared at you, dead to their cores,  
And went away as empty as before.

Misshapen ore that could not be re-formed,  
These empty lives, they never could be filled.  
For though the man was fed, the body warmed,  
The heart and mind and soul of him were killed.

A street, a dirty face, an impish grin,  
A ray of Godness shining through a lad;  
You saw him and you took him, took him in,  
And gave him all you were and all you had.

"Give him a field to run in, God knows, he was made to run;  
And give him the wind and the prairies and a spot beneath the sun.  
Give him stuff for his hands to shape and things for his heart to love,  
Then leave him alone to God alone and the dreams he is dreaming of."

-II-

You took this tired life, this light yet dim,  
And poured on it the light and love of truth.  
You planted, watered, weeded, prayed o'er him,  
And shot a shot of glory through the youth.

This bent and clouded life reached out anew  
To stars and roads and horizonic things;  
He found new worlds to conquer and to hew,  
And learnt in smithies how the anvil rings.

A thousand streets, a thousand streets and more,  
A thousand alleyways and country lanes,  
A thousand lads from Nome to Singapore  
Have learned to know your face and speak your name.

Somewhere in a German town the stars rolled back their doors,  
And hands that molded seas and suns reached down and folded yours.  
Deep in the wings of God you slept, tired and weary so.  
You were one of earth's greatest and someday the world will know.

Father Clifford Stevens, a native of Brattleboro, Vermont, met Father Flanagan in February of 1942. Two months later he was on his way to Boys Town.

After graduating from Boys Town in 1944, Father Stevens went to work in the Mare Island Shipyards in California as part of the support for World War II. A chance meeting with Father Flanagan at a football game in California started Father Stevens down the path towards priesthood. He entered New Melleray Abbey in Dubuque, Iowa, to begin and completed his studies at Conception Seminary at Conception, Missouri.

Father Stevens was ordained on May 26, 1956, by Archbishop Gerald T. Bergan at St. Cecilia's Cathedral in Omaha. He celebrated his first mass at Boys Town on May 27, 1956.

Father Stevens began his service as an assistant pastor of Saint Rose Parish and Saint Bernard Parish in Omaha. After a tour of duty as an Air Force Chaplain, he served as pastor at the following Nebraska parishes: St. Stanislaus, in Duncan, St. Francis in Neligh, and St. Theresa in Clearwater. In 1984, he began working to establish Tintern Monastery in Oakdale, Nebraska.

Father Stevens has served as executive editor of "The Priest" magazine from 1968-69 and editor and publisher of his own magazine, "Schema 13: The Priest in the Modern World," from 1969-71. He has authored 12 books, including three books for youth. He taught at Pope John Paul XXIII High School in Elgin, Nebraska, and developed several religious/education programs for children.

Presently, Father Stevens lives in Wyoming and is in the process of reestablishing his Tintern Monastery in Kemmerer, Wyoming. He has written extensively about Father Flanagan and has agreed to be a contributor in our forthcoming newsletters.

*(Material taken from Anniversary Mass program)*

## Pilgrimages and Prayers



*Steve Wolf with Pro Sanctity Apostolic Oblates Pilgrimage  
February 25, 2006*



*Ed Flanagan and Steve Wolf with group from  
St. Brigid's Parish, Omaha, April 1, 2006*

### *A Healing for Frank Hart*

*Editor's Note: Deacon Paul Eubanks, Boys Town Class of 1960, told us this story on May 8, 2006.*

Frank Hart was head counselor at Boys Town's Eagle Hall in the 1950's. He then worked with new teaching parents for forty years, working until his recent illness.

In February of this year, Frank became sick suddenly with a viral infection that attacked his heart and vital organs. He was in ICU, on a ventilator, feeding tube and multiple medications at Bergen-Mercy Hospital for five and half weeks.

Deacon Paul and his wife, Jackie Eubanks visited Frank and his wife Ruth in intensive care at Bergen Mercy every day. Frank was never able to speak with them and it seemed as if he "wasn't there." After nearly six weeks, Frank was sent to select health at Emmanuel.

Paul Eubanks said: "One night I was visiting Frank there and I said this prayer over him: 'Father Flanagan, I don't know if you are a saint or not, but if you are with the Lord, please intercede for Frank, get him back in good health and home with his family. This is not for me, if you can do anything, have a little miracle for the non-believers.' Then I thought for a minute and added: 'Well, maybe for me, too. Dear Lord, show the world that Father Flanagan is a saint.'

The very next morning, I went to visit Frank and he was talking! I told Frank that I had asked Father Flanagan to intercede to heal him up and he said, "I don't know, but something happened!"

Frank is still recovering, now at Nebraska skilled rehab near Bergen Mercy Hospital. He is talking, taking steps, exercising and on the road to full health. His doctor is amazed at his progress.

Frank's wife Ruth added her thanksgiving to everyone who had been visiting and praying for Frank.

## *Pilgrims tread the Same Ground Father Flanagan Made Holy*



*School Sisters of St. Francis, April 22, 2006*



*Students from Omaha Biblical Studies, April 18, 2006*

***Spirit 88.9 FM KVSS or KVSS.com Mondays AT 1:00***  
***A new series: FATHER FLANAGAN***  
***AND THE SPREADING OF DEVOTION***



*Sacred Heart School, Omaha, third and sixth graders on pilgrimage May 12, 2006*

### ***Roger Hinesh*** ***"You're not a bad child."***

*Editor's note: from a phone interview on May 11, 2006, with Roger Hinesh, Boys Town, 1952-56*

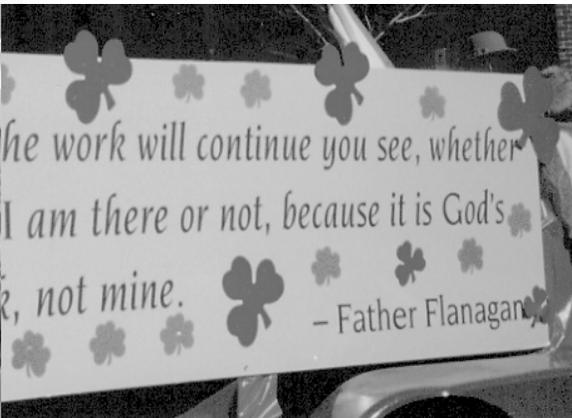
When I was in solitary confinement in a Texas prison, I heard a voice say to me, "You're not a bad child... bad training, bad associations...who are you running with?" Later, my buddy in prison told me, "Write it down and start thinking about it." And that's what I did. Today Roger speaks in prisons and school systems about making good choices. He is writing a book about his life, It's an Inside Job, Baby, in collaboration with Dr. Emily LaBeff, PhD, Chair of Sociology at Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, Texas.

# St. Patrick's Day Parade 2006 Omaha



←Andy Dopheide, BT Class 1988, as Father Flanagan, led our entry.

Ed Flanagan and Alumni Director Sarah Cambridge join other alumni in celebrating Boys Town USA sites.→ The float entry was designed and organized by alumni family member, Mary Kuhn.



*Barney Hill, BT Class 1973*

*Sam and Cole, sons of John Fox, BT Class 1982*



*Approximately 75 alumni family and friends participated in this year's event.*

*Olivia & Emma Dopheide & Erin Wolf*

## Interview—Tom Burnes, Class of 1950

By Maureen Brady and Sharon Nelsen



*Tom Burnes, 1970's, when he was appointed Alumni Director by BT Director Fr. Hupp.*

Tom Burnes was twelve years old when he came to Boys Town in July, 1944. He knew about the Home and about Father Flanagan because he had seen the movie, "Boys Town." His Mother had made all of the arrangements with the Home prior to putting her son on the westbound bus in

Philadelphia with his ticket and a \$20 bill in his pocket. When he arrived at Boys Town, he saw some kids playing and asked one, "Where do I check in?"

When asked to describe his years at Boys Town and some of his special memories, Tom began talking about the times he spent working on the farm, his favorite place at the Home. In those days, the hundreds of acres of farmland produced nearly all the food consumed daily at the Home. The boys were encouraged to learn all they could about agriculture.

Tom shared with us many more memories from his years at the Home:

"I was just a little kid when I was with Father Flanagan. There was a very supportive atmosphere, so the adjustment was very easy. I worked on the farm and was in the shops when the students were working on one of the three special, inlaid wood desks for Father Flanagan. We lived in the old dormitories and ate our meals in the big dining hall—now the Hall of History.

Discipline was very important. You knew and understood the rules. They showed a movie once a week to all the students. If a kid was in trouble, he had to sit in front with his back to the picture screen.

We went to Mass twice a week. We went to confession. Father Flanagan spoke to us at Mass and at assemblies in the auditorium. He held weekly

conversations with boys who got into trouble."

When the news came that Father Flanagan had died in Germany, Tom remembered how people got busy trying to verify the story. Radio and newspapers were the sources of breaking news in 1945. "As the days passed, our sense of disbelief gave way to feelings of hurt and personal loss. We wondered who would take his place. I believe Monsignor Wegner was the right man to follow Father Flanagan. He truly fulfilled his philosophy."

When Tom Burnes graduated in 1950, he did farm work for a few months, worked at a feed lot and then joined the Air Force. He enrolled in college and earned a degree in agronomy and animal husbandry from South Dakota State at Brookings. During the Korean War, Tom spent four years in the Air Force and was a Specialist in jet aircraft.

Years later, Tom returned to Boys Town as the first paid Alumni Director. His main jobs were to contact alumni, create a current alumni list, and establish new alumni chapters all over the country. There were seven chapters when he started and thirty-two when he left.

Tom Burnes has known and worked with all of the former directors at Boys Town. He was instrumental in establishing the Alumni Newsletter, worked on the design and layout for the Hall of History and the restoration of Father Flanagan's home. He also re-established Boy Scout Troop 49 at Boys Town.

He knows he was fortunate to have been accepted at Boys Town all those years ago. "Everything was there to help and support me and I knew it and I was very, very, grateful."

In 1961, Tom married Jeanne Card, a graduate in nursing (SCN, 1961 BSN). They have five children and eight grandchildren.

"What I learned at Boys Town, I shared with my family—the importance of prayer and God's relationship to us.

Father Flanagan led me mind, heart, and soul to God.

I am indebted to him for all he has done for me. I loved him very much."



# Father Flanagan League

## Order Free Materials

- ◇ Informational Brochure
- ◇ Prayer cards
- ◇ Prayer leaflets and guide lines for forming a prayer group for the cause
- ◇ Prayer for Parents Bookmark
- ◇ Pilgrimage brochure
- ◇ Posters
- ◇ Poster/prayer in Spanish
- ◇ Quarterly Newsletter
- ◇ Story of Father Flanagan
- ◇ Teaching unit, Grades 4-12

## Come to Prayer Group

- ♥ Second Tuesday of each month, after the 11:40 a.m. Mass, Dowd Chapel, Boys Town

## Request a Presentation

- ◇ Monday—Friday
- ◇ Daytime or evening
- ◇ Omaha Archdiocese area

## Schedule a Pilgrimage

- ◇ A half day of prayer at Father Flanagan sites at Boys Town that includes mid-day Mass, lunch: Monday — Friday

## Contact us at:

[www.fatherflanagan.org](http://www.fatherflanagan.org)

Father Flanagan League  
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*Pray with us  
Every Day*



*Make a  
Pilgrimage*

**G**od of mercy, love and compassion, we are grateful that You gave Your servant, Father Edward Joseph Flanagan special graces to love, protect and guide neglected, vulnerable and oppressed youth. Thank you that the work he began with the foundation of Boys Town has continued to spread throughout the world. We pray that you inspire many to adopt his caring, loving ways as mentor and protector of youth.

Loving Father, we bring our own needs to you now, asking that through the intercession of Father Flanagan, in accordance with your Holy Will, you grant these special favors: \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank You for Your Faithfulness and Providence, and for hearing these petitions which we ask in the Name of Your Son, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

To schedule, contact us at our website:  
[www.fatherflanagan.org](http://www.fatherflanagan.org)

**Thank you Spirit 88.9FM Catholic Radio KVSS for continuing to publicize our pilgrimages!**

*Testimonies of **graces received** build up the community of faith.  
To share your **grace received**,*

*There is wisdom in the habit of looking at the bright side of life.*

*Fr. Flanagan*