

Cardinal Newman High School

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Cardinal Newman High School opened in September 1951. The building was taken over from the PSBGM who ran it as William Dawson High School. William Dawson had been a junior high school. After grade 9 its students went on to Montreal High School. It closed as the spanking new Rosemount High School was opened.

The year that CNHS opened, grade 7 classes were also housed in the building. I believe that this occurred because St. Dominic's School was quite crowded, and this was a means to give it a few extra classrooms. I don't think that Holy Names High School was operating for the girls at this time. I wanted to join some friends at Newman, but my parents insisted that I complete grade 7 at St. Brendan's as there would be no need to pay for streetcar tickets. At that time those with a school pass could buy "blue tickets" which gave you seven rides for a quarter.

In the fall of 1952 I began my stay at CNHS. At that time we did not say that we were in grade eight but in first high. Only the Protestants said they were in grade eight. Coming from a small school, I was amazed at the number of students, the fact that we'd have more than one teacher, that most were members of an order of brothers called the Christian Brothers, (Weren't all Catholics, Christian?) and that there was a school cafeteria. The cafeteria, what a delight! Mr. and Mrs. Trudelle had the concession. This is where I learned about pizza (10 cents a piece), giant donuts (5 cents a piece), giant mille feuilles (10 cents a piece) and twenty cent complete lunches. I was assigned to 1B. (Classes went all the way to 1H).

The Principal was Brother Robert and the Vice Principal was the elder Brother Raphael. (There was a younger Brother Raphael teaching first high.) My home room teacher was Brother Philip, a real nice guy. Brother Philip taught most of our subjects, but Brendan Fahey taught us History. If I remember correctly, Mr. Stan Machnik taught us literature, and Joe Turner taught us French. 1B was a "Latin" class and although I did quite well, I did not like Latin, could not see the purpose of it and vowed to drop it in second high. Brother Philip later went on to teach in Dorval but was by then Lennie McCool and at one point was principal of McDonald-Cartier High School on the south shore.

Second high was quite an adventure. I was assigned to 2B, another "Latin" class. The homeroom teacher was Mr. Luciani, who later was vice-principal at St. Thomas a Becket. As I had vowed, I went to see Brother Robert and asked to be taken out of the Latin class because I didn't want Latin but more so because I feared Mr. Luciani. Brother Robert called me a foolish boy but said that if I insisted, he would change my class. Of course I insisted and went from 2B to 2G. My homeroom teacher was Mr. Jack Boyle. At this time I had the privilege to be exposed to Thomas Francoeur, who came in for the last period every day. We truly appreciated him even though the level of academia in a G class was far from ideal.

At about this time construction began on the brother's residence on St. Joseph Blvd. Until this time the brothers lived at St. Dominic's and would walk to Newman.

Third high saw me getting back in the good graces of Brother Robert, and I was allowed to change streams again. I was placed in a "science" class. My home room teacher was

Brother Charles. Our class was next door to the Chemistry lab so Brother Charles was in and out of the class. He was an excellent teacher. The only complaint I had was that if he had to cancel a lab for a class, somehow it was always our class that got cancelled. Brother Charles was also the leader of the CNHS Glee Club so there was quite a bit of pressure to join the glee club but my stubborn nature prevailed, and I never joined.

About this time, construction began in the school basement. While we sat at lunch, men dug holes around the supporting posts and along the walls, as the building was sinking and had to be propped up. When the jacking of the building started we often heard creaks and saw cracks appear in the walls of the classroom. Suddenly the work was declared unsafe, and classes were limited to the mornings only so that the work could proceed in the afternoon. Also, in those years, if you were in senior high it was the custom for classes to end the first week of December so that you could work at a store, etc. for the Christmas rush.

In 4th high my homeroom teacher was Mr. Patrick Doyle, a literature teacher. Brother Charles taught chemistry, and Brother Owen, math. About this time, Mr. Jack Phalen and Mr. Daley were added to the school administration. He eventually headed the CNHS annex at St. Dominic's when Holy Names was opened and space was available. At the end of the school year all of us who worked part-time at Steinberg's were invited to a "graduation" dinner where they offered us jobs now that we were high school graduates. These were referred to as junior management training positions because we had finished high school! I took one of these jobs but I didn't count on Brother Daniel's influence.

At that time CNHS has two fifth highs. One was a senior matriculation class while that other was called fifth high commercial. It existed because many went to work right after high school but because they had followed the arts or science programs had no office skills training. The idea of this class was to teach bookkeeping, shorthand, (not compulsory) typing, etc. to prepare students for an office career. I had expressed interest in this course.

Along came September and I was happily working at Steinberg's when I was called to meet with the personnel manager, a Mr. Rabinovich, who had been contacted by Brother Daniel. Brother Daniel convinced Mr. Rabinovich that I would be much better prepared to work at Steinberg's if I followed the fifth high program. At that time there were personnel departments and not human resource department, and as they offered guidance and advice, I ended up in fifth high commercial. Only later did I find out that the reason Brother Daniel was actively recruiting was that there was a danger that the class would be closed if more candidates were not found. But there was a silver lining! After graduating from fifth high commercial I went on to work for CIL, and because I had this extra year, my starting salary was \$185 per month rather than the usual \$180. This shows the value of an education!

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March 6, 2007