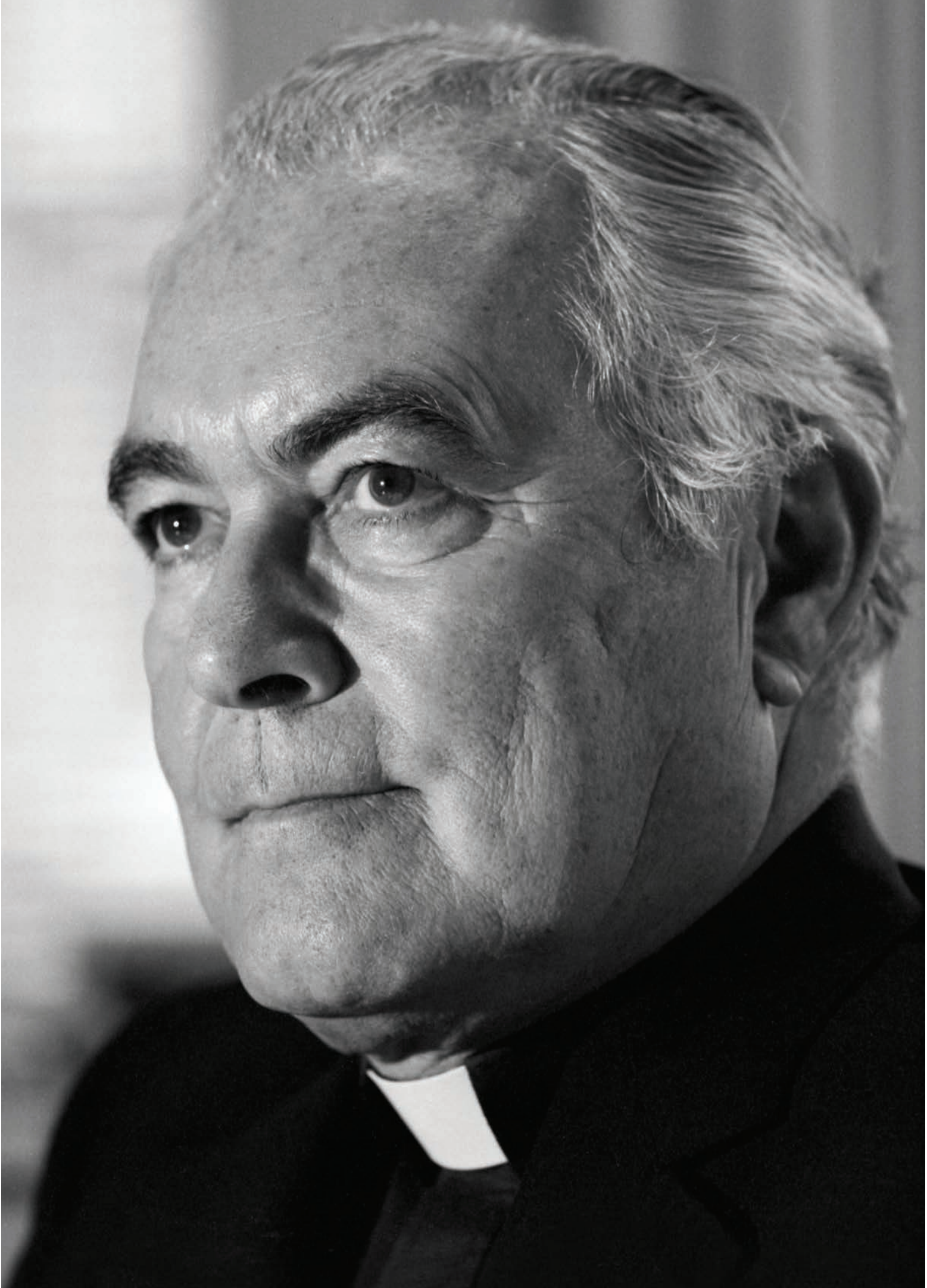


# THE OBSERVER

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REV. THEODORE M. HESBURGH, C.S.C.

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PRIEST

# GOD, COUNTRY, NOTRE DAME

*In memoriam of the impact Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh had on the Notre Dame Family, the Nation and the Catholic Church.*

**F**r. Theodore Hesburgh, whose unprecedented 35-year tenure as president of Notre Dame revolutionized the University, making him one of the most influential figures in higher education, and whose dedication to social issues brought him worldwide recognition, died Feb. 26. He was 97.

When Hesburgh became the 15th president of Notre Dame in 1952, the University was comprised of all males. It was owned and operated by the Holy Cross Order with an endowment of \$9 million and yearly student aid to tuition at \$20,000.

When Hesburgh retired in 1987, Notre Dame had grown its student body to include both men and women. He transitioned the school's governance to a mixed board of lay and religious trustees that still operates the University today. The endowment had grown to \$350 million over 35 years and student aid hit \$40 million.

His presidency transformed the school into the top-tier educational institution it is today. But Hesburgh was, first and foremost, a simple priest.

"I would say if there is one thing that my whole life has been dedicated to, I've been a priest now for about 70 years, and I would hope they remember me as a priest," Hesburgh told *The Observer* in May 2013.

"'Fr. Ted' is the best title I have. Not 'former president of the University of Notre Dame.'"

He had other titles, and many of them. He held 16 presidential commission appointments, served on various academic commissions and in 2000 became the first person from higher education to be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

From the start of Hesburgh's reign in 1952 to the end of his term in 1987, the total enrollment at the University nearly doubled, increasing from 4,979 students at the start to 9,600 at his finish, according to Hesburgh biographer Michael O'Brien.

At the time of his death, Hesburgh had been a priest for 71 years.

And it was that humble priest who maintained an open-door policy throughout his life, always welcoming students, faculty and friends who sought his guidance, his company or simply his blessing. It was the humble priest who led Notre Dame with an eye toward the University's namesake.

"I happen to think [Notre Dame] has the blessing of the Mother of God," Hesburgh told *The Observer*. "If you wanted to get something done in life, you couldn't do it better than I do right here looking out the window. I just look out the window, and I see the Lady [on top of the Dome]. I'm about the same height [in my office] as she is, and my prayer is always very simple: 'Lady, it's your place. And if we have a few problems at the moment, I know you'll help us out. And stay with us and help us, period.'"

"And it works."

## Path to the Presidency

Hesburgh was born on May 25, 1917, in Syracuse, New York, and was the second of five children to Anne Marie and Theodore Bernard Hesburgh. His parents and three sisters preceded him in death, and he is survived by his

Theodore Bernard Hesburgh

“ I happen to think [Notre Dame] has the blessing of the Mother of God.”

## CONTEXT



Photo courtesy of University of Illinois

«1917: U.S. enters World War I.  
»1920: The nineteenth Amendment passes, granting women the right to vote.

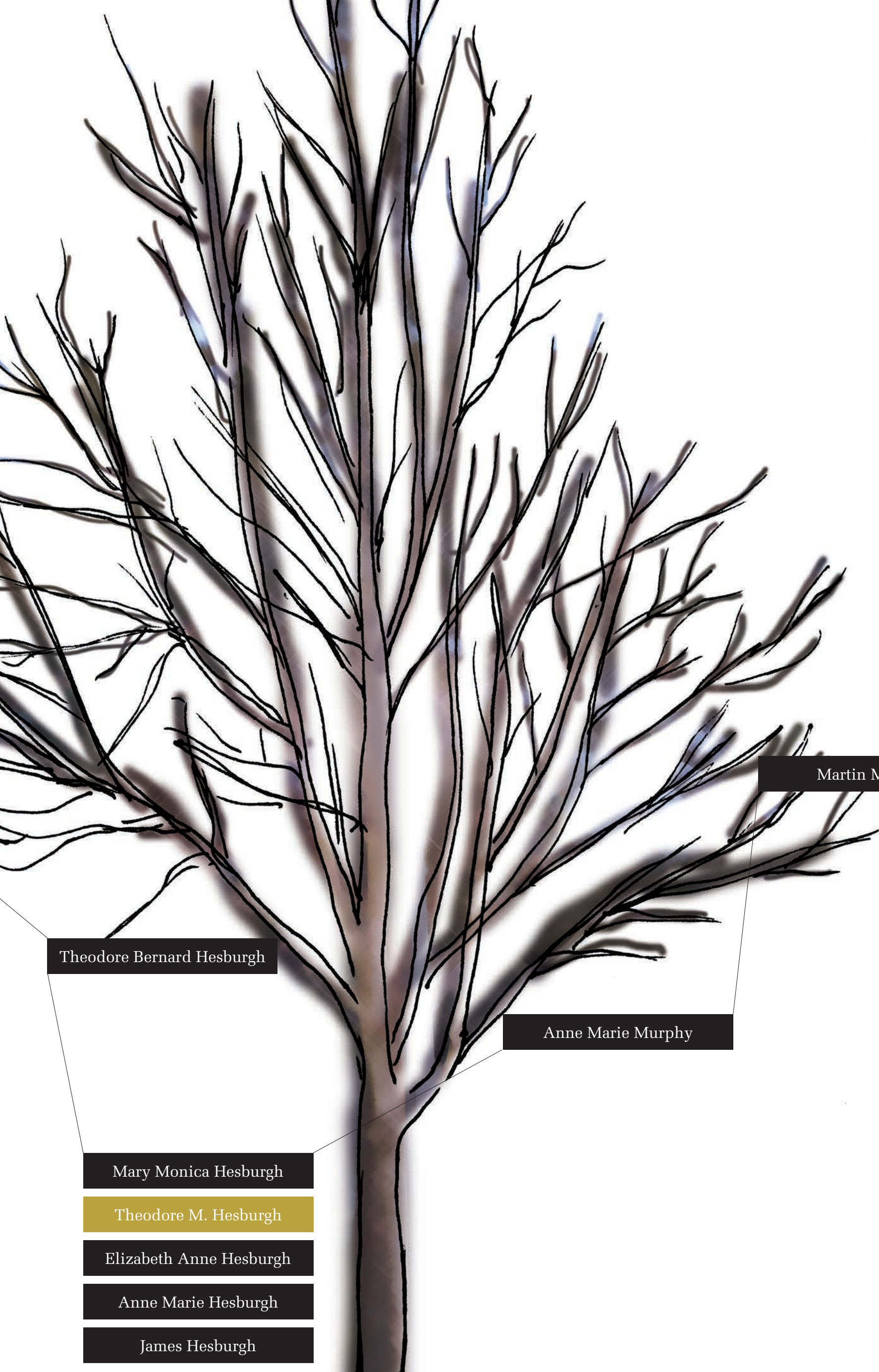


Photo courtesy of the United States Navy

»1929: The Dow Jones Industrial Average plummets triggering the Great Depression.



Photo courtesy of Trinity College



Martin Murphy

Theodore Bernard Hesburgh

Anne Marie Murphy

Mary Monica Hesburgh

Theodore M. Hesburgh

Elizabeth Anne Hesburgh

Anne Marie Hesburgh

James Hesburgh

»1941: Attack on Pearl Harbor; U.S. enters World War II by declaring war on Japan the next day on December 8; and three days later against Germany and Italy.



Photo courtesy of History Place



Photo courtesy of Univ. of Houston

«1945: Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Days later, Japan surrenders, ending World War II.  
»1950: Korean War begins



Photo courtesy of East Villagers

brother, James, who graduated from Notre Dame in 1955 and now lives in the Chicago area.

Hesburgh, who grew up in a Catholic family, knew he wanted to be a priest by the age of six.

“Even though I dated and partied as much as anyone in high school, I never wavered in my desire to be a priest,” Hesburgh wrote in his autobiography. “There were many nights when I’d roll in at 2 a.m. after having a good time and I’d just sit on my bed and say to myself, ‘This isn’t for me. There’s something more that I need out of life.’”

In the fall of 1934, a 17-year-old Hesburgh left home for the seminary and set foot on Notre Dame’s campus for the first time.

“The campus of Notre Dame was shaded by giant oaks, quiet, lovely and awe-inspiring in a medieval sort of way,” he wrote.

Hesburgh attended Notre Dame for two years before studying at the Gregorian University in Rome, from which he received a bachelor of philosophy degree in 1939. He was ordained a Holy Cross priest in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on June 24, 1943.

Hesburgh went on to receive his doctorate in theology in 1945 from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He joined the Notre Dame faculty the same year to teach theology classes and serve as the chaplain to World War II veterans on campus.

According to Hesburgh, he just wanted to teach and be the rector of Farley Hall and write theology textbooks. Then-University President Fr. John Cavanaugh had other plans for the young priest. Cavanaugh appointed Hesburgh as head of the theology department and later named him an executive vice president.

And then in 1952, at only 35 years old, Hesburgh was chosen as the 15th president of Notre Dame.

“[Being president was] the last thing in the world I wanted to do, and I was not aching to get these big jobs,” Hesburgh said to *The Observer* in fall 2012. “I just wanted to teach and be in the hall and work for the students. That’s literally what I had in mind of what I was going to spend my life doing. And I come back here, and within six or seven years, I wind up being president.

“That to me was not exactly a gift from heaven.”

Sitting in his office, he talked about his days as a young priest with a dry voice, not bitter but still a little bewildered, even after all these years, about how on earth he found himself with an office under the Dome.

“I got made executive vice president and then a few years later, president,” he said. “So that was the end of writing textbooks.”

#### A new Notre Dame

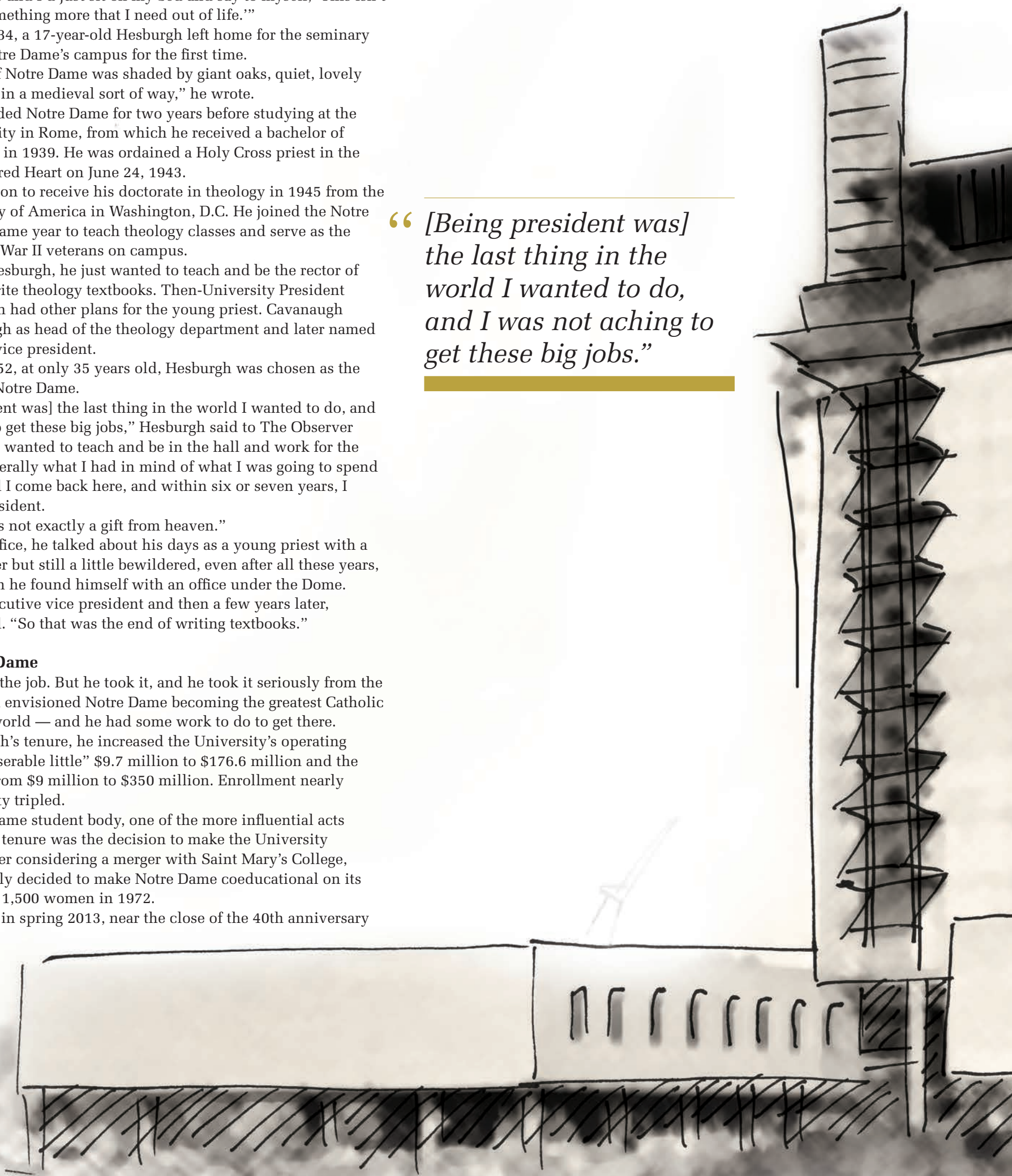
He didn’t want the job. But he took it, and he took it seriously from the first day. Hesburgh envisioned Notre Dame becoming the greatest Catholic university in the world — and he had some work to do to get there.

During Hesburgh’s tenure, he increased the University’s operating budget from a “miserable little” \$9.7 million to \$176.6 million and the endowment rose from \$9 million to \$350 million. Enrollment nearly doubled and faculty tripled.

For the Notre Dame student body, one of the more influential acts during Hesburgh’s tenure was the decision to make the University coeducational. After considering a merger with Saint Mary’s College, Hesburgh ultimately decided to make Notre Dame coeducational on its own and admitted 1,500 women in 1972.

In an interview in spring 2013, near the close of the 40th anniversary

“ [Being president was] the last thing in the world I wanted to do, and I was not aching to get these big jobs.”



## CONTEXT



Photo courtesy of Our Story

«1953: Dwight D. Eisenhower inaugurated as President



Photo courtesy of PBS

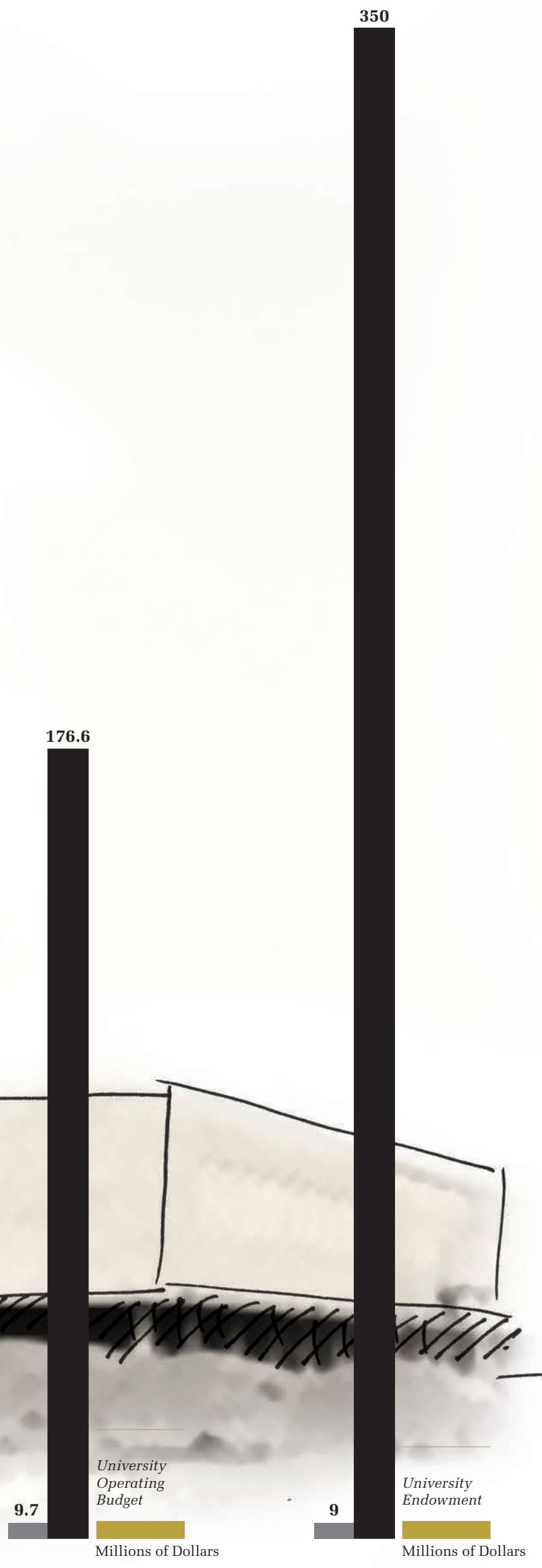
«1954: Brown v. Board of Education declares denying black children equal educational opportunities unconstitutional.  
»1955: Rosa Parks incites the Montgomery Bus Boycott



Photo courtesy of KPBS



Photo courtesy of the Monroe Gallery



**GROWTH DURING HESBURGH'S PRESIDENCY**

«1957: Little Rock, Arkansas school desegregated.  
 »1961: Vietnam War officially begins with 900 military advisors landing in Saigon.



Photo courtesy of Hawaii Army Museum Society



Photo courtesy of The Red Mountain Post

«1963: President Kennedy assassinated. The assassination marks the first 24-hour coverage of a major news event by the major networks.



Photo courtesy of PRWatch

«1964: Civil Rights Act of 1964, outlawing major forms of discrimination against blacks and women, and ended racial segregation in the United States.

year of coeducation at Notre Dame, Hesburgh said the decision to open admissions to women was essentially a simple one.

“When God made the human race, he didn’t just make men. He made men and women,” he said. “So since this is considered the best Catholic university in the world ever, well, why should half the people here be women as well as men since women ... are just as important in the scheme of things as men?”

Notre Dame’s population of men and women are now almost equal.

“We don’t want to be in another world,” Hesburgh said. “We want to be in the world that exists right now, we want to compete in that world and we want to be leaders in that world.

“And that’s true of both men and women.”

Of all of Hesburgh’s accomplishments at Notre Dame, though, he considered turning the University over to lay control the most important. When he began his presidency, the Congregation of Holy Cross governed the school and was tied to many of its day-to-day operations.

Hesburgh led the transition away from that system based on both religious and practical reasons — Vatican II said lay people should have more responsibility, and as Notre Dame expanded, running the University became an increasingly complex and difficult task.

“We had reached the point where Notre Dame could no longer be run by a handful of Holy Cross priests,” he wrote in his autobiography. “For me, it was the most natural thing in the world.”

In 1967, Notre Dame transferred governance from the Congregation of Holy Cross to a predominantly lay Board of Trustees, and it was the first university to do so with Vatican approval.

“Of all the accomplishments during the 35 years of my presidency of Notre Dame — improving the academics, the quality of the students, the endowment, the building program — the greatest change made during my administration was turning the university over to lay control,” he wrote in his autobiography.

Hesburgh knew what he did for Notre Dame, but he always spoke about the accomplishments of his 35 years as president with a matter-of-fact tone, brushing off his long resume as simply the job he had to do.

And he always gave credit to Fr. Ned Joyce, who served as the executive vice president and chief financial officer at Notre Dame until he retired with Hesburgh in 1987. He also managed much of the adjustments made in the athletic department during those 35 years, a job Hesburgh gave him.

“He was a superb companion because, first, he was very smart, and on top of that he had knowledge that I didn’t have,” Hesburgh said. “He was a CPA, and he was also a big sporting fan so he knew about athletics.”

Joyce died in 2004. In Joyce’s obituary, Hesburgh said the two friends prayed the rosary together before his right-hand man of so many years died.

“The best friend I had was Edmund P. Joyce, Fr. Ned Joyce,” Hesburgh said in May 2013.

Hesburgh led sweeping changes like these, but he prided himself on always making time for students and maintaining an open-door policy.

For example, reporters for The Observer were able to directly call his office with questions about a story, and it was widely known that if a student had a problem, he or she was welcome to drop in at Hesburgh’s office.

“The students were up half the night, so my light was on until 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. every night, and the door was always open so the kids felt free to come in,” Hesburgh said. “And so most universities ... the big problem was that nobody was listening to them, and they couldn’t meet the people in charge. They couldn’t say that to me.”

The 1960s were a turbulent period on college campuses across the nation as many young students protested the Vietnam War and rebelled against administrators at the University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University.

Anger boiled at Notre Dame too. But Hesburgh engaged students rather than run from them, even as bricks flew through the windows of presidents’ offices at other schools, he said.

At the height of student revolution across the country, Hesburgh penned a letter the student body in February 1969 outlining Notre Dame’s policy on dissent and protest. The letter, known as his “Tough 15-Minute Rule,” also ran in “The New York Times.”

“I believe that I now have a clear mandate from this University community to see that: (1) our lines of communication between all segments of the community are kept as open as possible, with all legitimate means of communicated dissent assured, expanded and protected; (2) civility and rationality are maintained; and (3) violation of another’s rights or obstruction of the life of the University are outlawed as illegitimate means of dissent in this kind of open society,” the letter stated.

The letter continued to explain that any student who did protest, violently or nonviolently, in a way that infringed the rights of others would be given 15 minutes to reconsider and stop his actions. If that student chose not to do so, he could turn in his ID card at the end of 15 minutes and consider himself suspended. Students without ID cards would be charged with trespassing and disturbing the peace on private property.

“May I now say in all sincerity that I never want to see any student expelled from this community because, in so many ways, this is always an educative failure,” the letter stated. “Even so, I must likewise be committed to the survival of the University community as one of man’s best hopes in these troubles times.”

More than 40 years after he penned that letter, Hesburgh sat in his office in the library, looking out on the dome where his office was in those days.

“I found that students are wonderful people if you understand them,” Hesburgh said. “And what you have to understand is they’re not full-fledged adults. They are people moving toward that goal. ... You have to be kind of patient with them because they make some mistakes, but you also have to be friends with them so you can help them in their career of growth.”

Hesburgh also took a few students directly under his wing during his time as president. He served as a father figure to the O’Grady family, students who attended Notre Dame, but whose blood family lived far away in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

“When I would introduce one of them to someone on campus, I’d always introduce him or her as one of my kids,” Hesburgh wrote in his autobiography. “I got some strange looks from time to time, but that was part of the fun.”

“Of all the accomplishments during the 35 years of my presidency of Notre Dame — improving the academics, the quality of the students, the endowment, the building program — the greatest change made during my administration was turning the university over to lay control.”

## Hesburgh’s Honorary Degrees

### CONTEXT



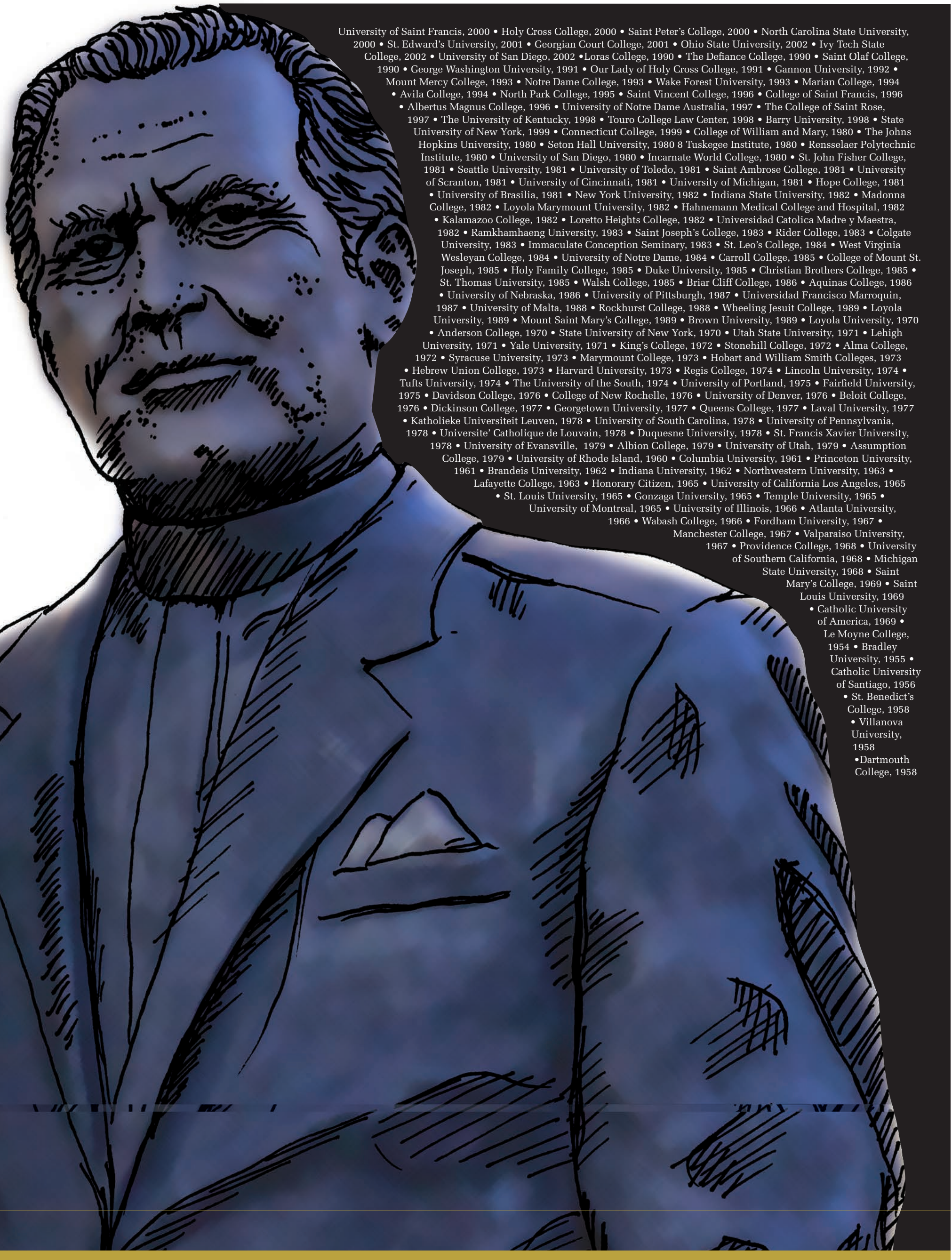
Photo courtesy of The Milwaukee Community Journal

«1968: Martin Luther King Jr. and presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy assassinated two months apart.  
»1969: U.S. bombs North Vietnamese positions in Cambodia and Laos.



Photo courtesy of Dept. of Defense

»1972: President Richard Nixon visits China, an important step in formally normalizing relations between the United States and China.



University of Saint Francis, 2000 • Holy Cross College, 2000 • Saint Peter's College, 2000 • North Carolina State University, 2000 • St. Edward's University, 2001 • Georgian Court College, 2001 • Ohio State University, 2002 • Ivy Tech State College, 2002 • University of San Diego, 2002 • Loras College, 1990 • The Defiance College, 1990 • Saint Olaf College, 1990 • George Washington University, 1991 • Our Lady of Holy Cross College, 1991 • Gannon University, 1992 • Mount Mercy College, 1993 • Notre Dame College, 1993 • Wake Forest University, 1993 • Marian College, 1994 • Avila College, 1994 • North Park College, 1995 • Saint Vincent College, 1996 • College of Saint Francis, 1996 • Albertus Magnus College, 1996 • University of Notre Dame Australia, 1997 • The College of Saint Rose, 1997 • The University of Kentucky, 1998 • Touro College Law Center, 1998 • Barry University, 1998 • State University of New York, 1999 • Connecticut College, 1999 • College of William and Mary, 1980 • The Johns Hopkins University, 1980 • Seton Hall University, 1980 • Tuskegee Institute, 1980 • Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1980 • University of San Diego, 1980 • Incarnate World College, 1980 • St. John Fisher College, 1981 • Seattle University, 1981 • University of Toledo, 1981 • Saint Ambrose College, 1981 • University of Scranton, 1981 • University of Cincinnati, 1981 • University of Michigan, 1981 • Hope College, 1981 • University of Brasilia, 1981 • New York University, 1982 • Indiana State University, 1982 • Madonna College, 1982 • Loyola Marymount University, 1982 • Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital, 1982 • Kalamazoo College, 1982 • Loretto Heights College, 1982 • Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra, 1982 • Ramkhamhaeng University, 1983 • Saint Joseph's College, 1983 • Rider College, 1983 • Colgate University, 1983 • Immaculate Conception Seminary, 1983 • St. Leo's College, 1984 • West Virginia Wesleyan College, 1984 • University of Notre Dame, 1984 • Carroll College, 1985 • College of Mount St. Joseph, 1985 • Holy Family College, 1985 • Duke University, 1985 • Christian Brothers College, 1985 • St. Thomas University, 1985 • Walsh College, 1985 • Briar Cliff College, 1986 • Aquinas College, 1986 • University of Nebraska, 1986 • University of Pittsburgh, 1987 • Universidad Francisco Marroquin, 1987 • University of Malta, 1988 • Rockhurst College, 1988 • Wheeling Jesuit College, 1989 • Loyola University, 1989 • Mount Saint Mary's College, 1989 • Brown University, 1989 • Loyola University, 1970 • Anderson College, 1970 • State University of New York, 1970 • Utah State University, 1971 • Lehigh University, 1971 • Yale University, 1971 • King's College, 1972 • Stonehill College, 1972 • Alma College, 1972 • Syracuse University, 1973 • Marymount College, 1973 • Hobart and William Smith Colleges, 1973 • Hebrew Union College, 1973 • Harvard University, 1973 • Regis College, 1974 • Lincoln University, 1974 • Tufts University, 1974 • The University of the South, 1974 • University of Portland, 1975 • Fairfield University, 1975 • Davidson College, 1976 • College of New Rochelle, 1976 • University of Denver, 1976 • Beloit College, 1976 • Dickinson College, 1977 • Georgetown University, 1977 • Queens College, 1977 • Laval University, 1977 • Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1978 • University of South Carolina, 1978 • University of Pennsylvania, 1978 • Universite' Catholique de Louvain, 1978 • Duquesne University, 1978 • St. Francis Xavier University, 1978 • University of Evansville, 1979 • Albion College, 1979 • University of Utah, 1979 • Assumption College, 1979 • University of Rhode Island, 1960 • Columbia University, 1961 • Princeton University, 1961 • Brandeis University, 1962 • Indiana University, 1962 • Northwestern University, 1963 • Lafayette College, 1963 • Honorary Citizen, 1965 • University of California Los Angeles, 1965 • St. Louis University, 1965 • Gonzaga University, 1965 • Temple University, 1965 • University of Montreal, 1965 • University of Illinois, 1966 • Atlanta University, 1966 • Wabash College, 1966 • Fordham University, 1967 • Manchester College, 1967 • Valparaiso University, 1967 • Providence College, 1968 • University of Southern California, 1968 • Michigan State University, 1968 • Saint Mary's College, 1969 • Saint Louis University, 1969 • Catholic University of America, 1969 • Le Moyne College, 1954 • Bradley University, 1955 • Catholic University of Santiago, 1956 • St. Benedict's College, 1958 • Villanova University, 1958 • Dartmouth College, 1958



Photo courtesy of the Times



Photo courtesy of Encyclopaedia Britannica

«1974: Watergate scandal: The House Judiciary Committee votes to impeach the President. President Nixon resigns, becoming the first President to step down.



Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

«1979: Iran hostage crisis begins. In the aftermath the price of oil triples, sending gasoline prices over \$1 per gallon for the first time.

## A Worldwide Vision

The joke has always gone something like this: “What’s the difference between God and Hesburgh? God is everywhere; Hesburgh is everywhere, except Notre Dame.”

Hesburgh played an active role in national and international affairs during and after his time as president, which often drew him away from his desk at Notre Dame and left him completing presidential duties on planes from here to there. But because of these commitments, Hesburgh leaves a legacy that reaches far beyond Notre Dame.

He held 16 presidential appointments over the years, which involved him in many social issues, including civil rights, the peaceful use of atomic energy, treatment of Vietnam draft evaders, immigration reform, ecumenism and Third World development.

Hesburgh was a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights for 15 years and served as its chairman for three. Congress created the Commission in 1957 and Hesburgh contributed to its many reports and recommendations on issues of civil and voting rights for blacks. However, when the Committee wrote a report critical of President Nixon’s civil rights record, Nixon fired Hesburgh as chairman.

Hesburgh also served as a member of President Ford’s Presidential Clemency Board, which was charged with making amnesty decisions for Vietnam War offenders and draft evaders. His work on these two commissions led to the creation of the Center of Civil and Human Rights at the Notre Dame Law School.

In addition to working closely with a number of presidents, Hesburgh served four Popes in his work for the Vatican.

For 15 years, Hesburgh represented the Vatican on the International Atomic Energy Agency, a group that helped Third World countries make use of new technology to improve standards of living. Through this work, he also helped smooth relations between U.S. and Russian representatives during the Cold War.

Hesburgh also worked for the Vatican on ecumenical issues. At the request of Pope Paul VI, he built the Ecumenical Institute at Tantur, Jerusalem, which Notre Dame continues to operate. Paul VI also named him head of the Vatican representatives attending the 20th anniversary of the United Nation’s human rights declaration in Iran and he was later also named a member of the Holy See’s United Nations delegation.

Over the years, Hesburgh formed a close friendship with Paul VI, who once presented Hesburgh with a cake and a bottle of bourbon on his birthday.

Hesburgh continued to serve the Vatican after Paul VI’s death, and in 1983, was appointed to the Pontifical Council for Culture, which had the mission of finding the most effective ways to preach the Gospel to the world’s varied cultures.

Hesburgh also worked with the Vatican to define the nature and mission of contemporary Catholic universities. As chairman of the International Federation of Catholic Universities, he contributed to a papal letter on universities and higher education in 1972.

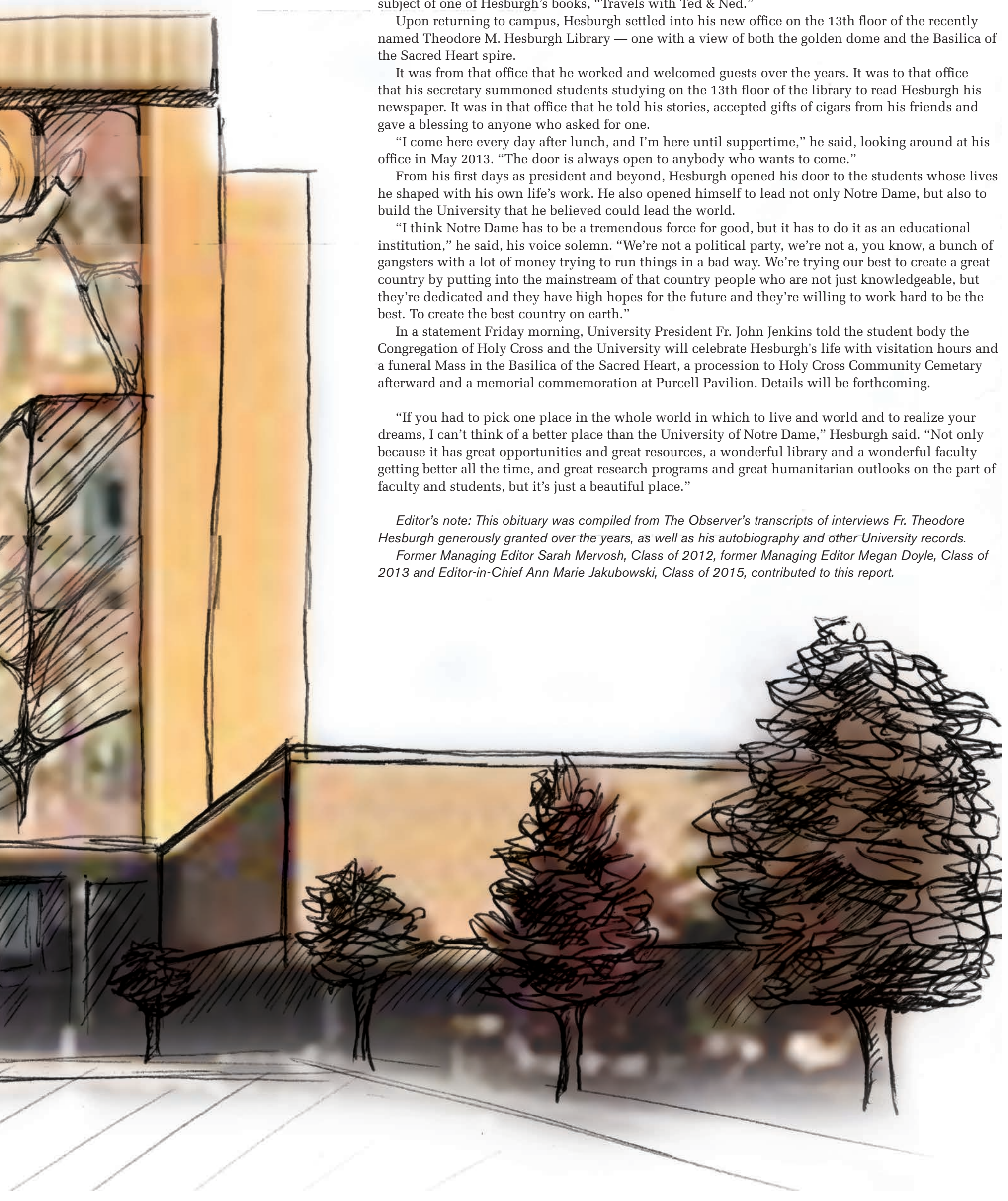
Hesburgh’s contribution to higher education is reflected his 150 honorary degrees (as of May 2004), the most ever awarded to one person.

One of Hesburgh’s lesser-known accomplishments was his role in the formation of the Peace Corps.

Working with connections in President John F. Kennedy’s administration, Hesburgh traveled to Chile and organized communication between the two countries to gain approval for







the first Peace Corps project.

Because of Hesburgh's efforts, Notre Dame was involved in the Peace Corps selection, training and supervision process for its first five years, and after that, turned control over to the government.

Hesburgh was awarded for his decades of public service in July 2000, when President Bill Clinton presented him the Congressional Gold Medal. Hesburgh was the first person from higher education to receive this prestigious civilian honor.

In addition, Hesburgh received the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, from President Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

'A tremendous force for good'

After 35 years as president, he turned control over to University President Emeritus Fr. Edward "Monk" Malloy.

It was then time for some well-deserved vacation. Hesburgh and Joyce set out on a year-long journey around the world in an RV.

Neither of the priests knew how to cook at the time of departure, and their journey became the subject of one of Hesburgh's books, "Travels with Ted & Ned."

Upon returning to campus, Hesburgh settled into his new office on the 13th floor of the recently named Theodore M. Hesburgh Library — one with a view of both the golden dome and the Basilica of the Sacred Heart spire.

It was from that office that he worked and welcomed guests over the years. It was to that office that his secretary summoned students studying on the 13th floor of the library to read Hesburgh his newspaper. It was in that office that he told his stories, accepted gifts of cigars from his friends and gave a blessing to anyone who asked for one.

"I come here every day after lunch, and I'm here until suppertime," he said, looking around at his office in May 2013. "The door is always open to anybody who wants to come."

From his first days as president and beyond, Hesburgh opened his door to the students whose lives he shaped with his own life's work. He also opened himself to lead not only Notre Dame, but also to build the University that he believed could lead the world.

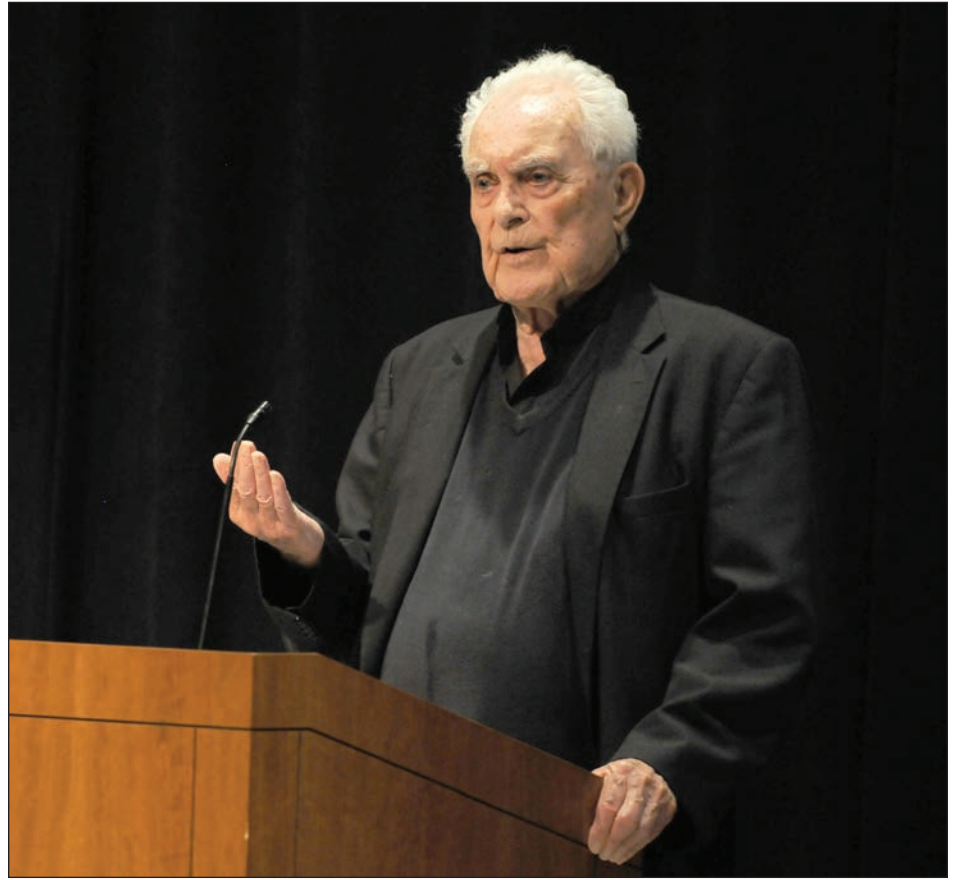
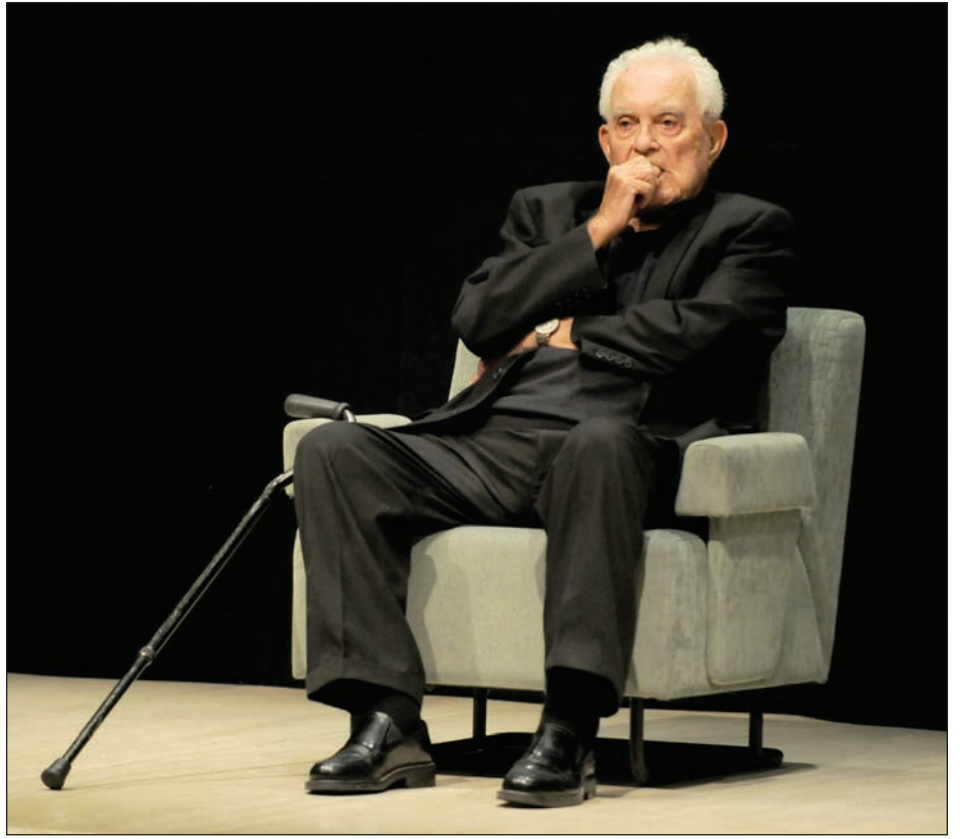
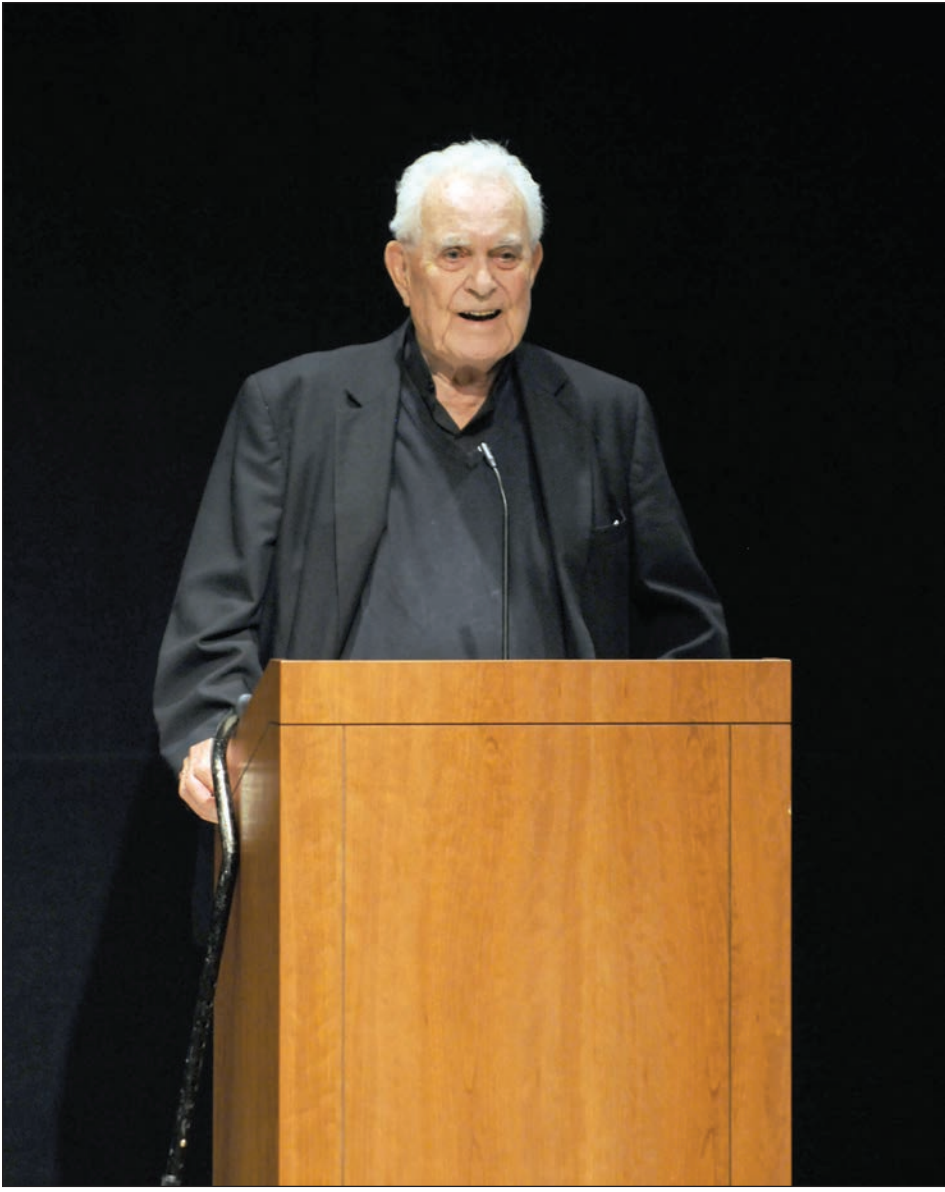
"I think Notre Dame has to be a tremendous force for good, but it has to do it as an educational institution," he said, his voice solemn. "We're not a political party, we're not a, you know, a bunch of gangsters with a lot of money trying to run things in a bad way. We're trying our best to create a great country by putting into the mainstream of that country people who are not just knowledgeable, but they're dedicated and they have high hopes for the future and they're willing to work hard to be the best. To create the best country on earth."

In a statement Friday morning, University President Fr. John Jenkins told the student body the Congregation of Holy Cross and the University will celebrate Hesburgh's life with visitation hours and a funeral Mass in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, a procession to Holy Cross Community Cemetery afterward and a memorial commemoration at Purcell Pavilion. Details will be forthcoming.

"If you had to pick one place in the whole world in which to live and world and to realize your dreams, I can't think of a better place than the University of Notre Dame," Hesburgh said. "Not only because it has great opportunities and great resources, a wonderful library and a wonderful faculty getting better all the time, and great research programs and great humanitarian outlooks on the part of faculty and students, but it's just a beautiful place."

*Editor's note: This obituary was compiled from The Observer's transcripts of interviews Fr. Theodore Hesburgh generously granted over the years, as well as his autobiography and other University records.*

*Former Managing Editor Sarah Mervosh, Class of 2012, former Managing Editor Megan Doyle, Class of 2013 and Editor-in-Chief Ann Marie Jakubowski, Class of 2015, contributed to this report.*





GOD | COUNTRY | NOTRE DAME

