

University of Notre Dame
RELIGIOUS BULLETIN
March 12, 1937

MAY HE HAVE HEAVEN!

Johnny O'Brien spent his last earthly moment about 2:45 this morning behind the wheel of his car.

Last night he had shown the film, "Highlights of the Season of 1937," to a group of K. of C.'s in Harvard, Illinois. Anxious after the meeting to get home to his wife and three children, Johnny started out late for South Bend.

Near 99th Street, on Route 6, out of Chicago, his car crashed into a viaduct. When they got to Johnny he was dead.

Johnny was most prominent in Notre Dame athletics as "One-Play" O'Brien. His fame started in 1928—the worst season that Notre Dame ever experienced under Knute Rockne. Army of that year was headed for a national championship until Johnny O'Brien, tall and speedy, went into the game for his famous one play, to take the pass that beat Army.

In track also he starred. He was captain of the 1931 team, one of the most successful in Notre Dame history, and, for a time, held the world's record in the 60-yard high hurdles.

After graduation, Johnny spent three years as assistant coach at Navy; in 1934 he became head coach and athletic director at St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas; then, last spring, he returned to Notre Dame as end coach and assistant to Coach Nicholson.

Thus he was known to the world at large.

Those who knew him intimately admired far more his many lovable qualities of character. He never seemed to get into a position where he couldn't tell the truth. And that, by the way, is immensely to any man's credit. He never sought the limelight, but once in it, he invariably came through—in life as in football.

He possessed a quiet, delicious sense of humor that functioned usually at his own expense. "Oh," he replied recently to a questioner, "my family made me a hurdler. I was the youngest in a family of boys. I learned to clear fences running away from my older brothers."

Johnny lived always as a true Notre Dame man. How comforting to say that, because, since he really lived that way, Our Lady wouldn't abandon him at the hour of his death.

Tomorrow at 6:25 in the main church there will be a solemn requiem high mass for Johnny. Father O'Hara, President of the University will be celebrant; Father O'Donnell, vice-president, will be deacon; Father Carrico, director of studies, sub-deacon.

Students in all the halls are asked to attend and to offer Holy Communion in a body. Confessions will be heard at night prayer tonight and (for a limited number) during the Mass tomorrow morning.

To Johnny's bereaved wife and family the tenderest sympathy of all at Notre Dame. May Our Lady take care of them.



Johnny O'Brien