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# Update!

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University of St. Jerome's College

## St. Jerome's mourns passing of Father Siegfried

The College was saddened at the news of the death of its former President, **Very Rev. Cornelius L. Siegfried, CR** on July 26, 1989 after a lengthy illness at Pine Haven Nursing Home in Kitchener.

Fr. Siegfried was President of St. Jerome's for three terms from 1948 to 1953, 1955 to 1965 and 1971 to 1979. He was a priest of the Congregation of the Resurrection for 47 years.

Known to be the driving force behind the federation of St. Jerome's College with the University of Waterloo in 1960, Fr. Siegfried devoted most of his adult life to Catholic education.

"Today the University of St. Jerome's College is thriving and prestigious, says current President Dr. Douglas Letson. "This is due to Fr. Siegfried's wisdom in helping to found the University of Waterloo, and his foresight and courage in bringing St. Jerome's into federation with the then young institution."

Born in Formosa, Ontario on September 7, 1916, Fr. Siegfried attended Sacred Heart High School in Walkerton. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Western Ontario in London in 1938, and was ordained a priest in 1941.

He received his teacher certification at the Ontario College of Education in Toronto in 1942-43, and taught science and mathematics at St. Jerome's High School in Kitchener until 1946.

He then attended the University of Michigan where he earned a Master of Science degree in 1947. He was named President of St. Jerome's College in 1948 and held that position until 1953. This was to be the first of his three terms as President which spanned 23 years. At the time of his first appointment as President, the College was affiliated with the University of Ottawa and most students were candidates for the priesthood, though there was a small contingent of lay students.

The College was then located in downtown Kitchener on the present-day site of St. Jerome's High School. In 1953, the College moved to new premises in the east end of Kitchener, known then as the "Kingsdale" campus. In the same year, Fr. Siegfried was named President of North Bay College, which was the forerunner of Scollard Hall, a boys' high school conducted by the Resurrectionists. He served there for two years.

In 1955 he returned to Kitchener to begin a second term as President of St. Jerome's and served in this capacity until 1965. It was to be a critical decade in the life of St. Jerome's College. It was a time during which Fr. Siegfried ended the College's affiliation with the University of Ottawa and worked tirelessly to bring St. Jerome's into federation with the then fledgling University of Waterloo which was founded in 1957.

Under Fr. Siegfried's leadership, the College was granted independent University status with its own degree granting privileges by the Ontario Legislature in 1959. Federation with the University of Waterloo became a reality in 1960, and Fr. Siegfried always considered this to be the major achievement of his Presidency.

In 1961-62, Fr. Siegfried oversaw construction of the College's residence and classroom buildings on the campus of the University of Waterloo. At the same time, the School Sisters of Notre Dame built Notre Dame College Women's Residence. It was a tumultuous period as construction was not yet completed when



photo by N. Wickens

Father Cornelius Louis Siegfried 1916-1989

the students arrived on the St. Jerome's campus in Fall, 1962. Fr. Siegfried suffered a heart attack and did not return until after Christmas.

From 1965 until 1971, Fr. Siegfried served as Provincial Superior of the Congregation of the Resurrection. He was reappointed President of the University of St. Jerome's College in 1971 and held that position until ill health forced him to resign in 1979.

He was succeeded in 1979 by Rev. Norman L. Choate, C.R., and was named *President Emeritus* by the College in 1980. Fr. Siegfried is the first and only President in the College's 125 year history to receive this honour. A 300-seat auditorium constructed at St. Jerome's in 1982 was also named in his honour.

"Father Siegfried was always a man of integrity and principle not only in the great educational work he did, but especially in his faith life, priesthood and religious community life," acknowledged Father Sutherland MacDonald, C.R., current Provincial Superior of the Resurrectionists.

Among the many honours Fr. Siegfried received throughout his lifetime, he was awarded an Honourary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Waterloo in 1966. In



At a 1980 testimonial dinner honouring Fr. Siegfried, then UW President Burt Matthews presents Fr. Siegfried with a certificate recognizing his contributions to the development of the University of Waterloo. Fr. Norm Choate, successor to Fr. Siegfried, looks on.