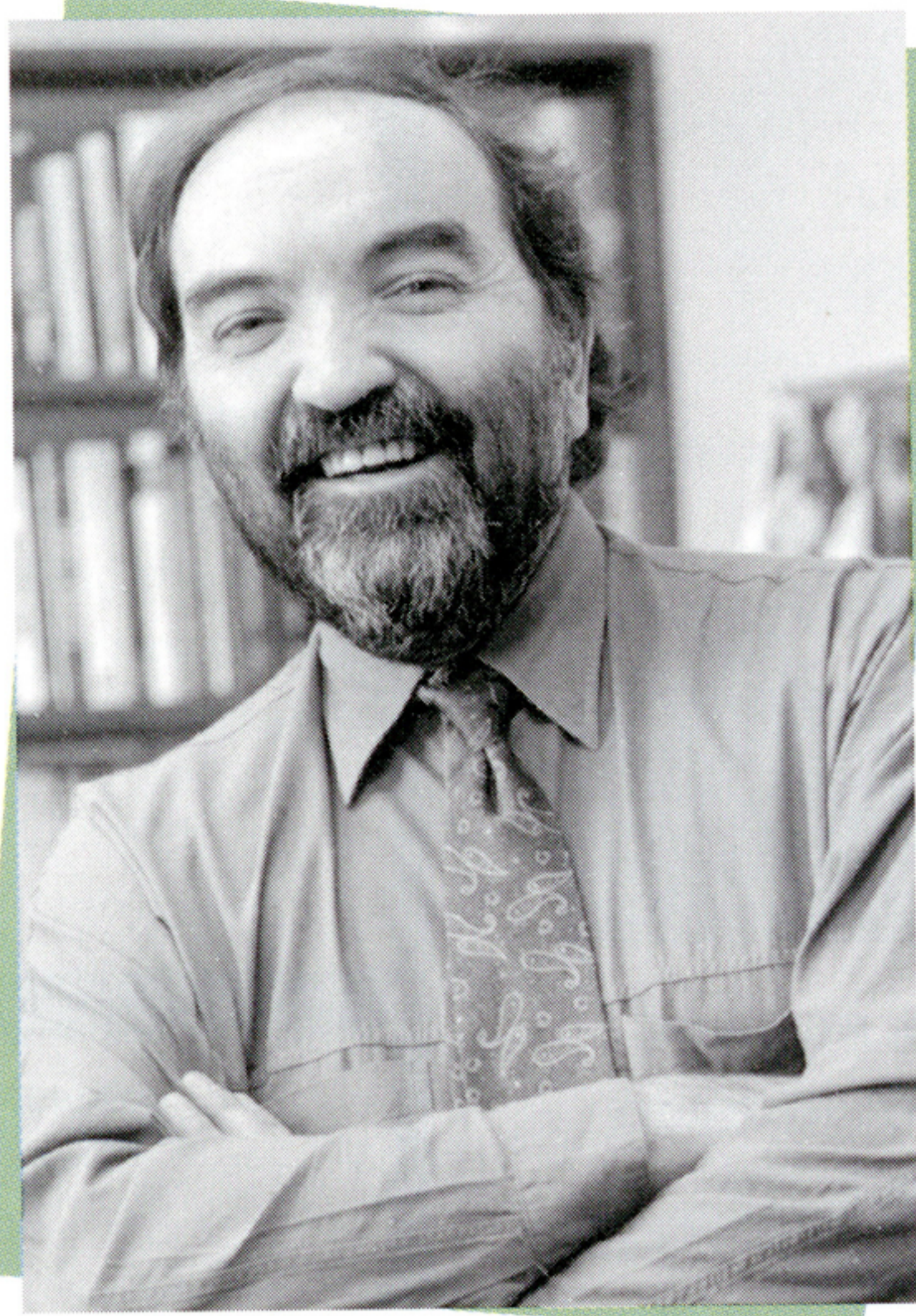


Something new about something old

by Michael W. Higgins



Michael W. Higgins is President of St. Jerome's University.

Photo: Ron Hewson

We are winding up this current academic year and anticipating many new things on the immediate horizon. As you will see as you browse through your *SJU Update* there are many changes afoot at St. Jerome's University: there are resignations and retirements among the faculty, staff and Board of Governors, and anniversaries galore. We have hired new personnel in several departments including a new Vice-President and Academic Dean. And we have plenty of new initiatives, most especially the inauguration of our Master of Catholic Thought program. This latter item is of special interest given that we have been working

for years to establish the proper groundwork for this exciting new academic undertaking at St. Jerome's University.

Few in our culture would deny the need for a critically informed laity, a laity committed to nurturing the fundamental values that inform Catholic leadership in our time. This leadership requires imagination, courage, generosity of spirit, an educated sensibility, and a broad awareness of the ecumenical and interfaith challenges that face all of us in Canadian society.

By establishing this program in Catholic Thought our intention from the outset was to insure that an appropriate pool of candidates be created for leadership positions in our Diocese, in other jurisdictions in the province of Ontario, and elsewhere in Canada. This pool of candidates would ideally consist of individuals from various disciplines, professions, walks of life, etc. who see the importance of developing the critical skills to appropriate the tradition, to articulate clearly the mission of the institution that they serve, and to contribute to the creation of a culture of reciprocity, enlightened dialogue, and open understanding.

St. Jerome's University is committed to this particular project because we recognize that it is an appropriate extension of our mandate as an institution of higher learning, that the needs of our diocese for such a body of informed leaders is increasingly urgent, and because we think that the role of the intellect and of the spirit have a mutually creative role to play in the shaping of a genuine society marked by civility and common respect. I think we can all agree that such qualities appear in short supply, in the political arena if nowhere else.

We have many other wonderful academic developments that will begin to unfold this fall, we will welcome many new faces onto our campus (both employees and new students), and we are exploring some new ventures and partnerships with other institutions and think-tanks that will go a long way to expand the continuing-education endeavours that have been an important part of St. Jerome's larger academic and pastoral mission.

Our new admissions appear to be a most promising crop, our residences are over-subscribed, many of our new undergraduate interdisciplinary projects are enjoying accelerated success, and we continue to work in as many ways as we possibly can to deepen the bonds that tie us with our alumni, our donors, our numerous

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friends, and our many partners in our shared educational project with the other University Colleges and our constituent university, the University of Waterloo.

There is a lot of meat to chew on in this issue, so let's get to it. 🍷