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## ⇒ The Legends of Prep ⇐

# Robert F. Mulvihill



It long has been known that the mention of the name “Mr. Mulvihill” automatically brings a smile to the face of both the speaker and the listener. Tonight we make that official protocol.

Bob Mulvihill had begun work on his legend long before he arrived at Grand & Warren. He had established himself as a scholar-athlete at Gonzaga Jesuit High School in Washington, D.C., where he was a true “star” basketball and football player. His career there was highlighted by his leading the Eagles to the City Championship and his being named MVP, All City, and All District. His talents and honors grew at Fordham University, where he was named second team All-American, with only a severe ankle injury cutting short a promising professional basketball career.

Bob served in the Marine Corps Reserve and engaged in private business in the Midwest before wending his way back east and earning a master's degree in English at Seton Hall University. In 1952, Fr. Paul Swick, S.J., hired Bob as a teacher at Prep, and that place—and thousands of its finest young men—have never been the same since.

The Prep experience demands and expects much of the Prep student, and Bob's own experience as a student of the Jesuits prepared him well to teach the math, history, and English classes assigned to him at Prep. However, he also added that magic Mulvihill touch, and especially for many freshmen, his classes were the first time that learning literally was a pleasurable experience. Yet, the wit and whimsy of his tongue were matched by the wisdom and wealth of his intellect; thus, it was easy to like him, and even easier to respect him.

Prep students must be well-rounded, of course, and some of their more pleasant memories are of the famous trips overseen by Mr. Mulvihill. For many young men, these were the very first times "on their own," experiencing new places and learning much from the diverse experiences of the unique teacher who would lead these treks to West Point and Washington, D.C., and even to Florida over the Easter break. Those trips were part of Bob's "curriculum" for almost the entire thirty-seven years that he devoted to Prep.

Bob also taught physical education, and it was in the gym that many students observed the other facet of his excellence; often, he would put an upstart young Prep athlete in proper perspective as he sank yet another two-handed set shot from virtually any spot within the half-court boundary. Rather than humbling the students with his prowess, however, Bob inspired and motivated his young charges to levels of excellence of mind and body to which they might otherwise never aspire.

Bob now spends his time with his wife, Lee, and their eight children and twenty grandchildren, and his "retirement curriculum" still includes providing chartered bus excursions to points north, south and west. Meanwhile, literally thousands of Prep men fondly remember the experience of having been taught so much by Mr. Mulvihill, and they smile in appreciation as they recall his easy manner, his wit, his sharp intellect, and that incredible two-handed set shot. It is truly the stuff legends are made of.