

ALUMNINEWS

Feature

Sacrificing his career for the poor, Bachmeier has never been happier

Knocking on Heaven's Door



Something was missing in Bachmeier's life, so he changed it. Now he's in Jamaica working with the poor as a volunteer with the Passionists.

BY GLENN TORNELL

"Every man gotta right to decide his own destiny."
—Bob Marley, "Zimbabwe"

EARNING A STIPEND OF \$100 A MONTH WORKING WITH SOME OF THE POOREST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD, HE ADMITS: "I'VE NEVER BEEN HAPPIER."

Jamaica, mon. No problem. Sun-kissed beaches in the protective lee of Cuba, the misty Blue Mountains soaring 7,000 feet above the shimmering Caribbean Sea, umbrella drinks served at posh Montego Bay resorts—all set to a tropical reggae beat.

This tourist mecca—birthplace of Bob Marley, Marcus Garvey, jerk pork, sniper Lee Boyd Malvo and Rastafarianism—is where Bruce Bachmeier, a self-effacing kid from Anamoose, N.D. (pop. 300), now lives and works.

It would be a paradise for most 30-year-olds. Especially for Bachmeier, who came to MSUM with, as he puts it, "pretty low expectations for myself."

"I've always wanted to follow a dream, but, like most people, I worried too much about money, security and my career," he said. "Starting out on this journey was the hardest decision of my life."

It's not what it seems. No problems in Jamaica, mon, no Bruce in Jamaica, mon.

The dilemma began when Bachmeier arrived at MSUM. The second of four Bachmeier siblings who would enroll in the university (including Brad, Bernie and Barbra), he opted to major in print journalism because friends and teachers in high school and junior college told him he could write.

"I considered Fargo-Moorhead 'the big time,' and at Moorhead State I was intimidated by everything right away," he said.

That wasn't surprising for this painfully reserved North Dakotan. Standing 5'3" when not schlumping, he always wore, and still does, his baseball hat backwards.

"My bubble burst immediately when I discovered that most students in my classes were a lot better writers than me."

Switching his major to graphic communications and photojournalism, his strengths—perseverance and adaptability—paid off.

"Slowly I discovered that even though I wasn't as talented as a lot of people in college, that was okay as long as I worked hard and got some real experi-

ence. I wasn't the best at anything, but I enjoyed putting all three—writing, photography and graphic arts—together on screen to communicate."

With some prodding by faculty and staff, he became a writer and then sports editor for *The Advocate*, the campus student newspaper, which led to an internship and then, after graduation in 1997, a full-time job as a copy writer on *The Forum's* sports desk.

Before the ink dried on his first few assignments at the local daily newspaper, Northern State University in Aberdeen, S.D., lured the young writer away by offering him the head sports information director position at the NCAA Division II school.

"It was a dream job," he said. "Me being kind of crazy about sports, I was in heaven. I wasn't the best sports information director, but I poured myself into it and wanted to do well."

It's a career start that literally thousands of sports-minded mass communications majors would kill for.

Time sped by, Bachmeier said. "The first five years were over in what seemed a blink of an eye. And when I gave myself time to think at night, something was missing."

Now, almost three years later, Bachmeier is basking

in Jamaica's unrelenting sunshine. He hasn't seen the 70-mile stretch of sugar sand beaches in the north and western tourist sections of the island yet. That's because he's stationed in Jamaica's underbelly, the slums and rural suburbs of Kingston, a city often referred to as the murder capital of the world.

Bachmeier left the secular world to become a volunteer with *The Passionists*, a Catholic order dedicated to bringing the compassion of Christ to unfortunates who bear the cross today: the disabled, the sick, the dying, the grieving, the isolated and alone.

Earning a stipend of \$100 a month working with some of the poorest people in the world, he admits: "I've never been happier."

"I've learned that for every story where life seems to be meaningless and filled with killing or violence," he said, "there's always another story where a mother works inspiringly hard for her children, where a family sticks together through the thick of poverty, never losing hope. I want to be a part of that hope."

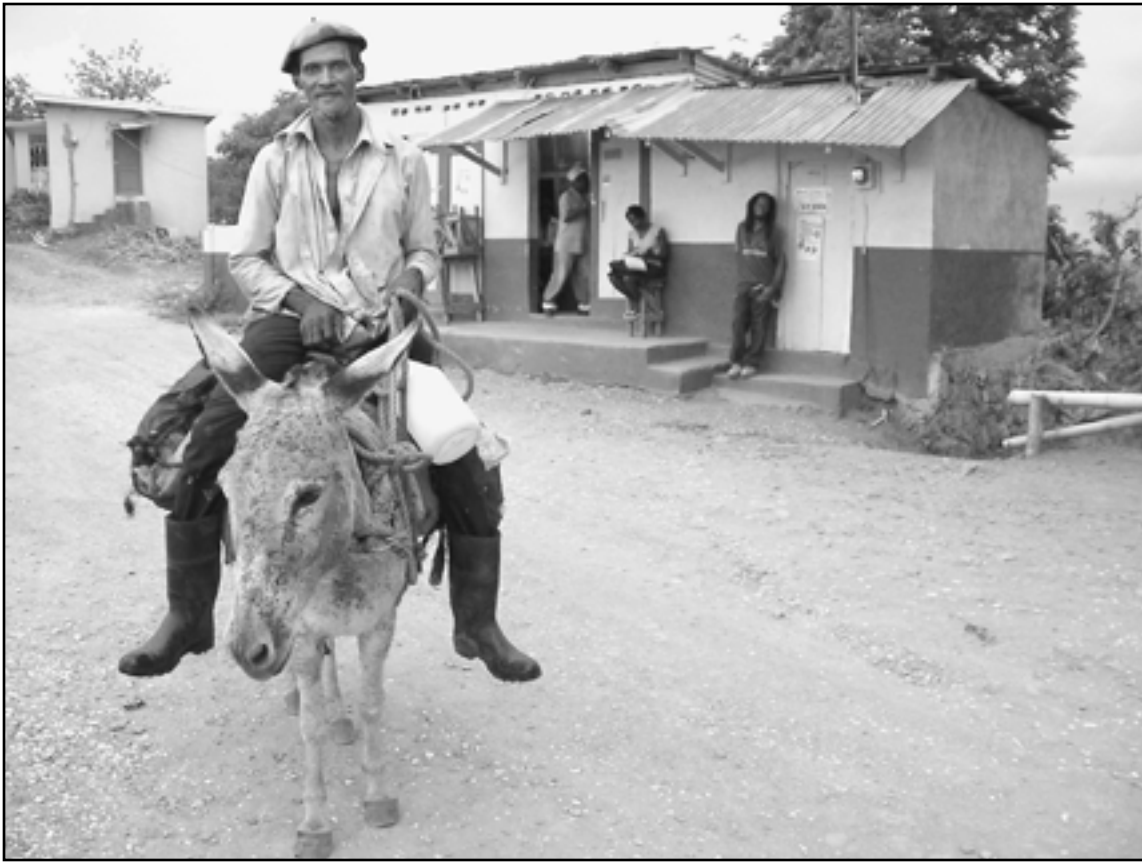
Joining *The Passionist* volunteers wasn't a hasty decision.

"When my brother Brian joined the seminary while I was in high school, he



Nickie Dietz, a 2001 MSUM English graduate, worked as a waitress and in a ski shop in Lutsen before joining the Passionists.

Continued next page



Life is a bit slower and much poorer in rural areas surrounding the gritty ghettos of Kingston.

**BUT THERE'S
NOTHING THAT
QUITE COMPARES
TO KINGSTON,
WHERE MORE
THAN 1,200
MURDERS ARE
RECORDED EVERY
YEAR.**

served as the first tangible example to me that faith is something to be lived, not just visited for an hour on Sundays," he said. "Not that I'm doing a great job of living it now, but being here has shown me where the restlessness came from when I was spending all my time working and tied up in what for me was the big rat race. I still have to work on so many things, but at night there's a sense of peace because I'm here and I'm trying."

In 1999, his second year in the Northern State sports information department, Bachmeier, listening to his restless conscience, took a three-week summer vacation working with The Passionist volunteers in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia. Nearly 150 of them, from a hog farmer in Kansas to a World Bank executive, lived and prayed communally, repairing homes, organizing sports and educational programs, staffing food and clothing banks, visiting nursing homes, and working with centers for abused women and children.

He went back in the summers of 2000 and 2001, then faced his future.

"At least once a week, before making the decision, I'd go to Eucharistic Adoration from midnight to 1 a.m., when I'd pray in silence in front of Jesus in the Eucharist and try to listen instead of filling my head with 'what-ifs.' That helped me let go of the material concerns that were keeping me back."

He ended up spending two years as a Passionist volunteer in some of the poorest and most remote sections of the Appalachians, and summers working with children in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a Brooklyn neighborhood with one of the largest African-American and Afro-Caribbean populations in the nation.

"There are more similarities than I expected between

West Virginia and Jamaica," he said. "The mountain terrain, the curvy roads, the forgotten poverty within a fantastic visual paradise, the low expectations, the failure of males in families, the multitude of churches."

"The city can be very dangerous, with senseless killings going on all the time," Bachmeier said. "Even in the country missions we hear about a lot of shootings and stabbings. The actual place we live is very safe."

Bachmeier and the other three Passionist volunteers (oddly enough, that includes Nickie Dietz, a 2001 MSUM English graduate from Bismarck, N.D.) are based at the Stony Hill



This chicken might be in danger. Bruce has acquired a taste for chicken, rice and beans.

Church, eight miles north of Kingston at the foothills of the Blue Mountains. They work with four missions, three with schools.

"Most of our work is geared around providing a presence to the rural poor, but I hope we can also develop a relationship with the Missionaries of the Poor in Kingston. They take people who can't care for themselves off the streets, just like Mother Theresa's

Missionaries of Charity (which also has a presence in Kingston). Every morning here we read a passage of Fr. Richard Ho-Lung's 'Diary of a Ghetto Priest'. He founded Missionaries of the Poor."

In fact, take Kingston out of the picture, he said, and most of Jamaica is safe. But 1.5 million of the island's 2.7 million people—90 percent of them black and the majority of them descendants of slaves—live in the city. Much of the violence, however, is restricted to the gritty ghettos on the west side of Kingston, and most is related to drugs and gangs.

Take the anger generated by poverty, degradation and hopelessness, and add in the enormous money involved in the cocaine trade (Jamaica is the main transshipment point for cocaine from South America to North America and Europe): that's a murderous cocktail.

"Being a volunteer and seeing what so many children have to grow up with...whether it's husbands beating wives or not being there at all, the physical, sexual and emotional abuse children deal with every day, knowing about the violence in communities like Bedford-Stuyvesant or here in Jamaica—I'm so thankful for what I took for granted most of my life. I had two parents who loved all seven children and my childhood was eventless, trauma-wise. Most children in the world just don't have that security."

He'll never forget meeting Miss Doris, a blind woman, about 80 years old, living

front of her dead, but somehow alive eyes. When we left later on, Miss Doris led us in a few songs. The one that stuck in my head, the one that this blind old lady in the sweltering heat and humidity sang and even danced to, with a smile, went like this:

*"He neva fail me yet.
He neva fail me yet...
Jesus Christ neva fail me yet!"*

"I think it was the best sermon I've ever heard," Bachmeier said.

It's hard to believe this same island, about the size of Connecticut, is where Noel Coward and Errol Flynn lived, where Ian Fleming wrote 10 of his James Bond novels, where the exquisite Blue Mountain coffee is grown, and where the films "Treasure Island," "Where Stella Got Her Groove Back" and "Lord of the Flies" were filmed.

Jamaica—burdened by an enormous national debt, soaring inflation and a huge trade deficit—was rated as one of the worst economic performers in the Americas during the 1990s. More than 20 percent of Jamaicans live under the poverty line.

Record tourism revenues were just beginning to lift the economy when Hurricane Ivan hit. While Ivan spared Jamaica a direct hit this summer, 16 died during the storm, and the hurricane caused an estimated \$330 million in damages.

"I met a man whose brother and both of his brother's children were

in one of the roughest areas of Kingston called Han-nahtown, not far from Bob Marley's Trenchtown. The area she lives in has been a political war zone, with the government having to impose curfews and martial law during a past election. Up to 80 percent of the people in her neighborhood are squatters.

"When we first met her she shook each of our hands, bringing us right in

killed by a landslide that smothered their home during the hurricane," Bachmeier said. "At the time we were clearing a road with machetes to get to a storm victim's home. I was amazed how these people could approach their reality with such a positive attitude and humble heart."

Bachmeier and the other volunteers are still cleaning up the storm damage

SOCIAL AND NATURAL SCIENCES

Magnetometers two in an international chain at MSUM Regional Science Center



Researcher Dr. Kawano builds a concrete structure for the Japanese developed magnetometer.



The UCLA magnetometer is buried in the ground.

MSUM's Regional Science Center is home to two of North America's newest magnetometers—two in a chain extending from Minnesota through Mexico along 330 degrees magnetic longitude.

It's part of a National Science Foundation (NSF) project called the Mid-continent Magnetoseismic Chain (McMaC), which conducts research in magnetospheric sounding using ground magnetic field observation. Another eight new magnetic stations are expected to be installed in the United States and Mexico in the next few years.

MSUM physics professor Linda Winkler installed two magnetometers at the Science Center's Buffalo River Site last September. Magnetometers are instruments used to detect and measure the intensity and direction of magnetic fields. Compasses are basically limited magnetometers that measure only direction of a magnetic field but not how strong it is.

One of the Science Center's magnetometers was developed by a team of engineers at UCLA and looks like a tube of PVC pipe. The other, developed by the Japanese company MEISEI and installed by professor Hideaki Kawano, looks like a snuff can that's placed in a small, concrete hut.

"The goal is to build a chain of magnetometers around the world to study the interaction between the sun and the Earth," Winkler said. For

Winkler, the interest in the magnetic field began with her research for the U.S. Navy, who uses magnetometers over land and sea to detect hidden pieces of iron associated with warfare, such as submarines and mines. She has received more than \$30,000 in grants from the Navy for the next three years to help identify natural sources of magnetic noise.

UCLA scientist Dr. Peter Chi and Kyushu University researcher Dr. Kawano are primarily interested in 'space weather' and the interaction between the Earth and the sun (solar wind). Winkler says the Earth's magnetic field is like the vibrating strings of a violin stretching from the North Pole to the South Pole and reaching 36,000 miles into space.

The sun flings about one million tons of matter into space every second. This material, called solar wind, travels at supersonic speeds all the way past Pluto. The magnetic field of the Earth creates our magnetosphere, which keeps most of the particles from the sun, carried in the solar wind, from hitting the Earth. This solar wind is responsible for such unusual occurrences as the Northern/Southern lights and geomagnetic storms.

The Science Center is just one of the sites in the McMaC chain. The magnetometers are monitoring phenomena constantly, and Winkler checks the data regularly and sends it to her counterparts at UCLA and in Japan.

The interest in space weather is becoming increasingly important. As we become more dependent on networks spanning the globe, it is necessary to predict how space weather affects these networks. Some of the specific effects of space weather on Earth systems include interference with navigation systems, short wave radio noise, problems with electrical grids, the decay of satellite orbits, increased corrosion in pipelines, and radiation hazard for satellites and/or astronauts during space missions.

The data obtained using magnetometers such as those in the McMaC chain may eventually help us predict and lessen the interference from space weather.

This research will have a long-term impact on understanding the sun-Earth magnetic interaction. Winkler says that within the past 50 years, the sun's magnetically active periods have been getting stronger, which may be correlated with rising global temperatures.

"However, there are so many systems involved in global warming that it's really difficult to say how much is due to increased solar activity at this early juncture," Winkler said.

Bachmeier from page 2

in their four assigned missions. At one of the mission schools, Bachmeier starts the day sweeping water out of the room. The hurricane blew the roof off.



Bachmeier said it's hard to describe what Passionist volunteers do. "It might not be big-time stuff on paper, but what we do is a lot of little things to help people help themselves. Tutoring in the schools takes up much of the time, but we also distribute food in rural communities, visit families and shut ins, help them get cash crop seeds and try to get the rural poor hooked up with medical care. There's never a shortage of work."

When he enters a school or a community and the kids come running out yelling 'Mr. Bruuuce. Hi Mr. Bruuuce,' Bachmeier can hardly contain himself.

"I know it's just because I'm a novelty, but not having any kids of my own, it just feels so good."

One of the most poignant lessons Bachmeier has learned as a Passionist volunteer is that "just being there and listening to their stories, giving the gift of your attention, seems just as important as fixing a roof or repairing a toilet."

He'll always remember a 21-year-old father in a remote hollow of West Virginia who wanted nothing more than to provide for his family. He just didn't know where to start.

"We simply encouraged him to earn his GED, and helped him a little with transportation and tutoring. Within a year he earned his high school certificate, got his driver's license, and took classes to become what he is today: an emergency medical technician and firefighter.

"This man is one of the hardest workers I've ever seen. He just needed a start. And it was simply by getting to know him and his family and caring about them that we were able to help him over a hump of sorts."

He says the work Passionist volunteers do may not be as tangible, as measurable or as dramatic as some of the more visible charities.

"But how do you quantify showing love, giving time, hearing with your heart? How do you program a spreadsheet to measure the value of a young girl's smile that you suddenly see one day when you drive up the rutty dirt hollow to her family's house, knowing her life of seclusion included being molested as a child, trying to kill herself before dropping out of school, and dealing with a social anxiety disorder? There is no statistic, thank goodness, to measure her smile that lets us in."

It's not all work in Jamaica. The food, for instance: Cow tail over rice, curried goat, chicken feet, cow skin, ackee (a fruit that releases poisonous gasses if it's forced open).

"Mostly I love the food here. We have chicken and rice and kidney beans all the time. People always give us coconuts, and we drink the cool refreshing water inside. They've got the best bananas I've ever tasted. I haven't had a pizza since I've been here and I don't even miss it."

Bachmeier admits that he has a difficult time trying to explain why he's so passionate about his volunteer work. To help him translate those emotions, he often points to the Prayer of Archbishop Oscar Romero, which Bachmeier links to his website (<http://www.geocities.com/brubach> 2003) Here's an excerpt from that prayer:

"We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing

Vizenor from page 5

hours a day, I do my best to be accessible."

Her warmth, concern and commitment radiates throughout the room at a meeting at the Shooting Star Casino. Her approachability and friendliness is evident on the walk to the casino's restaurant, where she says hello to everyone and stops to chat. It's clear Vizenor cares about accountability and the development of the tribe.

"I want to carry through the best agenda for the tribe and build a future for our people," she said. "I bring insight, knowledge and a deep understanding of the history, needs and dreams of our people. I understand the non-Indian world and feel I'm an individual who can walk in both worlds—the oppressive world and the liberating world."

She has her work cut out for her.

Of immediate concern is the battle heating up in the Minnesota legislature regarding a change in the state's casino structure. Gov. Tim Pawlenty has warned that he may support a Las Vegas-style casino if tribes don't share profits with the state, contending that tribal casinos should pay \$350 million a year to the state, a figure he estimated to be one-fourth of their profits.

Tribes deny their casinos turn a \$1.4 billion profit. Many of the state's 11 tribes say that can't afford to donate that much and that most of the casino profits are spent on reservation needs.

A Pawlenty spokesman says that the governor is willing to guarantee tribes no more casino competition if they agree to donate 25 percent of profits, which appears to be the size of contributions other states are negotiating.

"We must acknowledge that gaming will change in the state of Minnesota and we need to be at the table," Vizenor said. "One of first contacts I made after the election was to see if the chairman of Leech Lake would be interested in joining our efforts—White Earth and Red Lake—to build a casino in the metropolitan area. We may not have the financial resources but we have the people."

"Erma is a smart, educated woman capable of making tough decisions," Dille said. "She's a person of total integrity and she's the right person to lead the fight to keep state government out of the casino business and to ensure that casino profits will be used to improve life on the reservation."

Another immediate concern is the issue of constitutional change, which she is tackling immediately.

"We have to put safeguards and accountability in place to protect people of the reservation," she said. "We can't always count on the good conscious of elected tribal officials." She also wants to make the tribal court system independent.

Vizenor sees many challenges ahead. "We, as Indian people, want to be viewed with dignity and strength. We need to develop our economic base, improve our health care, develop our education, and provide adequate housing. Everyone who wants to work should have a job that pays a decent wage and provides for basic fundamental needs. I want to make sure the infrastructure is there so the reservation will be attractive to industry and business. I think a lot of tribal members would like to live here if the economy and housing were here.

"I'm a firm believer in entrepreneurship and the foundation to that is education. One of my first initiatives when I started on the tribal council was to establish the White Earth Tribal and Community College."

Youth are a priority to Vizenor. "We have to believe in our youth, to love them and to meet their needs. It's critical for our future."

"These are big picture issues that need continuous work and I'm sure they'll continue to be issues long after I'm gone," Vizenor said. "But if I can

□Pickett from page 12



Pickett

announced a multi-million dollar donation and matching grant for her proposed children's home by the Schulze Family Foundation of Best Buy.

"For me," Pickett said, "it's fantastic to have one of the wealthiest

people in America backing Mary Jo's vision of creating this option for kids in need and maintaining large sibling family groups rather than splitting them up in the foster care system."

Pickett and Nelson have been producing stories together for more than 14 years. For the past two years, Pickett has been using digital photography due to the demands of modern photojournalism. However, all but one of the photographs in the Copeland book were shot on traditional film.

"There is no way that digital can replicate the look of some of my older cameras," she said. "So I'm sure I'll continue to work with film as long as they keep making it."

Pickett says she's learned a lot about life and good fortune through her own brush with death. Nearly 15 years ago she was diagnosed with an aggressive form of lymphoma and given less than a 20 percent chance of surviving.

"My doctors now say I'm in complete remission and that the odds are very good that I will die of something else entirely," she said. "I think that has given me a perspective that others might not have."

Besides freelancing, Pickett recently joined two

photo agencies, Worldpicturenews and Aperture Images. Her first book, "Love in the 90s: BB and Jo, The Story of a Lifelong Love, A Granddaughter's Portrait" earned her the American Photography 12 Book Award in 1996, including an appearance on "Good Morning America."

Pickett now works out of a studio in the historic St. Anthony area of downtown Minneapolis that she shares with her uncle, Roy Blakey, also a photographer.

"What I've learned from working four years on this book," Pickett said, "is that generosity begets generosity. Faith can move mountains. And that one aware person can change the world by being compassionate, loving and hard working."

"Saving Body & Soul" sells for \$19.99 and was released Sept. 21. It is available at local bookstores and on-line through www.savingbodyandsoul.com.

□Writer's Journal from page 4

we're trying to focus more of our time now on sales and marketing."

That includes the addition of a new book division. In 2000 the Ogoske's published "The WRITERS' Journal Guide to the Writing Life," an anthology of the best 33 articles selected from the magazine, and they're now about to publish a new book, "WIN! Poetry Contests" by Esther M. Leiper, the poetry editor of the magazine who was recently nominated for Poet Laureate of New Hampshire.

"We've been working on it for two years," Leon said. "Our hope is that we can get it into classrooms across the country. It's actually two books combined into one."

The two brothers agree that they're getting to the point now where they know what writers like to read.

Even Stephen King subscribed to WRITERS' Journal, John said.

"The best advice I can give to any writer trying to get published is to quote my old journalism instructor at Moorhead State, the late Howard Binford," John added. "Edit, edit, edit, then edit again. Although we edit six times, we once ended up with a misspelling on the front page. Very embarrassing."

(Contact Writers' Journal at writersjournal@lakesplus.com, or view their web site at www.writersjournal.com.)

□President from page 12

"Camtown" and it promises to improve greatly our community's reputation as a destination for college students.

We've strengthened the partnership with our system partner, Minnesota State Community and Technical College. This summer our two institutions leased a former Moorhead elementary school for programs that need room to grow. Together we provide seamless higher education opportunities for students who want to start with an associate degree program, then, advance to a baccalaureate degree.

These improvements required teamwork. We are indebted to vice president David Crockett and his administrative affairs staff for their stewardship of our physical plant.

And we've added a crucial member to our campus team. Patrick Hundley, the new executive vice president for the MSUM Alumni Foundation, brings skills honed by 20 years of experience to build support from people like you and other friends of our university. By the way, during the last ten years, we've added 12,000 new alumni!

You've heard about cutbacks in state funding for public universities in Minnesota and across the nation. Students have had to make up the difference and we are concerned that the price tag will discourage some people from pursuing higher education. With ingenuity and your help, we'll meet that challenge and maintain the excellence that backs your diploma.

Roland Barden
President, MSUM

□Dorothy Dodds from page 14

one of those committee members who "mails it in," expecting others to do the work. Dorothy was an active member of organizations and committees—usually the most active.

Her willingness to advocate for the causes in which she believed—whether they were popular or not—was one of the most remarkable things about Dorothy. She was an energetic and persistent advocate for early childhood education at a time when in was popularly viewed as a communist plot at worst and babysitting at best.

Not only was she an advocate, but she was one of those rare people who has the courage to tell the truth to those who don't want to hear it—whether they were on the welfare board, the county commission, or in the legislature or governor's office. Just consider these painfully true Dorothyisms: "Our culture doesn't see working with children as valuable. It's glorified babysitting." Or, "We're not a nation who cares for their children; we are a nation who cares for our own child."

"Dorothy got away with saying such unpopular things because her auditors knew she genuinely cared, and because she had grace, gentle-

ness and a respect for others that even her opponents respected. She also has a sense of humor—an ability to laugh at anything, including herself. Dorothy's office was a fire marshal's worst nightmare—chronically cluttered with anything and everything because she couldn't throw anything away. As Dorothy would say in her self-deprecatingly humorous way, with a twinkle in her eye, her desk was stacked with "valuable information."

I am proud to say that Dorothy Dodds is one of my most influential mentors. She has taught me that our field is so crucial to society and its future that it must be improved and advanced. She taught me that early childhood education cannot be taken for granted, but must be advanced through the efforts of those who believe in it. And she taught me to advocate with assertiveness and grace. I got the assertiveness down; I'm still working on the grace.

Because Dorothy Dodds is so important to me, to Minnesota State University Moorhead, and to children and those who educate them, I am proud to recognize Dorothy and the scholarship that will be awarded annually in her name.

□Fire from page 3

physical education classes, and provide meeting places for college activities.

Despite the fire, enrollment at MSTC hit 601 college students in the fall semester following the fire, a 10 percent increase over the previous year. By 1932 when MacLean Hall opened, enrollment reached a record 663, including more than 200 men, double the number enrolled in 1930.

Maybe poet W.B. Yeats was right when he wrote: "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

□Bachmeier from page 7

that. This enables us to do something, and to do it well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter in and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker."

"I might sound like Yogi Berra, but it's true," Bachmeier said. "You can only do what you can do."

□Vizenor from page 7

they'll continue to be issues long after I'm gone," Vizenor said. "But if I can help accomplish some of that, I will have done a great job."

At 60, Vizenor's spirit is young, her health is good and her resilience is outstanding. She's at a great place in her life and she's ready for the challenges ahead.

"I came from the life of an underdog, just like many in our tribe," Vizenor said. "But I've always been a dreamer awaiting new challenges. I'll go where I'm needed and be the best possible role model."

Vizenor has been an outstanding role model for her daughters—Jody, coordinator of the White Earth-MSUM Program, and Kristi, a pharmacist at Fond du Lac—and her four grandchildren. She's also proud to be the first woman elected tribal chair—an election of historic significance for women and her tribe. She values the education she's received over the years, and is proud of the volunteer work she continues to do through her church and community. Vizenor received MSUM's outstanding alumni award in 1996, was outstanding lay leader in the Minnesota Episcopal Dioceses, and received an award from Minnesota Alliance for Progressive Action.

But the greatest challenges and joys lie ahead—"to unite the tribe and bring our people together."

Lorna LaGue, Vizenor's executive assistant of special projects, says a lot of people were afraid Vizenor would come in and make lots of changes. "She's proved those fears wrong," LaGue said. "She's cooperated with everyone, she listens to people, and she's meticulous about everything. She has a good vision for our tribe and she's enthusiastic about moving forward. I think we'll have a lot to brag about in the next year."

So the tribe—and the world—will watch and wait. Vizenor has a lot of work to do.