

# From parish to community, 25-year deacons continue service

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |

The first diaconate class for the Diocese of Little Rock was ordained Nov. 7, 1981, at the Cathedral of St. Andrew by Bishop Andrew J. McDonald. This year these men are celebrating their 25th anniversaries.

While the ordination Mass included 21 deacons and their wives, today 10 of them are still living in the state. Seven are still active deacons.

## “Bud” Daven

A chemical engineer for many years, Bud Daven is the owner of Safety Services. The Little Rock native has lived in Malvern with his wife Peggy for 30 years and they attend St. John the Baptist Church in Malvern. They have one son and one grandson. Their daughter, Darla King, is deceased.

In addition to serving Malvern, he is a deacon at St. Mary Church in Arkadelphia.

Daven, 64, said he enjoys serving the Church. His greatest joy is “being able to serve as a ordained deacon, which enables me to not only serve at Mass, hold priest-less services when our priest is not available and having the humble honor of being asked to conduct weddings, funerals and baptisms, along with visiting the sick and being there at times of need for our parishioners,” he said.

## George Edwards

George Edwards is still active as a pharmacist and deacon at St. Paul Church in Pocahontas. The 73-year-old said he had no intentions of becoming a deacon but was introduced to the idea while waiting for a friend after a diaconate information meeting nearly 30 years ago.

“It set a fire in me,” he admits.

Today Edwards is one of the organists at the parish as well as an advocate for the Marriage Tribunal Office. He also enjoys teaching the faith. “Teaching through preaching has been very gratifying,” he said.

His wife, Henrietta, is deceased. He has two children and two grandchildren.

## Don Francis

Don Francis thought he was supposed to be a priest. “I thought I had a priestly vocation; I didn’t, but still wanted to serve God and others in a special way. The diaconate seemed to be the answer,” he said.

Francis has volunteered as a hospital chaplain and currently is a chaplain for the North Little Rock Police Department. He also recruits volunteers to tutor students at St. Theresa Church in Little Rock where he is assigned.

His workdays are busy as the public relations manager for Amigos “Friends Learning Together program through the Arkansas Department of Volunteerism.

The 66-year-old is married to Bettye and they have three children and five grandchildren.

## Bill Hartmann

Bill Hartmann has found many opportunities to serve the Church. As a deacon for Christ the King Church in Little Rock, he has taken Communion to the sick and taught Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults sessions. With an accounting background, he added, “I also came to realize

many opportunities to serve as the diocesan finance director.”

Hartmann retired from the diocese in 2001, but he remains active in parish ministries. He is married to Claire and they have five children and 17 grandchildren.

As a deacon, he has been able to have a special part in his family’s important milestones.

“A ‘dessert’ is baptizing, giving first Communion and witnessing marriages to our grandchildren and nephews and nieces,” he said.

Larry Jegley

Larry Jegley has had a unique role in the history of the diaconate in the Diocese of Little Rock. In addition to being one of the earliest deacons in the state, he served as the diaconate director from 1989 to 1993, helping other men toward ordination.

A member of Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church in Little Rock, he continues to minister to the parish at age 78. He said his biggest supporter has been his wife.

“Pauline pushed me and felt it would be a good ministry for me,” he said about his interest in applying for the program.

They have six children, 29 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Tim Massanelli

Tim Massanelli might be best known as the parliamentarian for the Arkansas House of Representatives, but he was also well known in his native Pine Bluff as a longtime parishioner and deacon at St. Joseph Church. Today he serves at Our Lady of the Holy Souls Church in Little Rock.

He is married to Dottie and they have three children and seven grandchildren.

At Holy Souls, he assists with various sacramental ministries and advocates for social justice issues through the legislative process.

Massanelli, 73, said he sees his ministry as “to be helpful.” “(I am) trying to do the Lord’s work,” he said.

“Matt” Mattingly

For 11 years Matt Mattingly was able to actively serve the Church. At Christ the King Church in Little Rock, he trained lay people in hospital ministry. From 1988 to 1992 he was the director of Little Rock Scripture Study.

In spite of his dislike of hospitals, he was assigned to hospital ministry. “It became a pleasure and a privilege to call on the sick. I invariably came away feeling blessed,” he said.

In 1992 Mattingly had to retire from his diocesan job and diaconate ministry because of his deteriorating eyesight.

Mattingly and his wife Mary have three children, eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He is 87.

Mathew Post

If you have never met Mathew Post, you have probably at least heard about his family. As the president of Post Familie Winery, his family’s name is widely known around the state. Post considers himself a farmer. When asked what he does, Post replies, “I raise grapes.”

Even at age 81, he continues to work each day and serve St. Mary Church in Altus. His primary parish ministry is taking Communion to the sick and shut-ins every Friday morning.

“I really enjoy calling on the people who are unable to come to Mass. It makes them feel connected to the parish,” he said.

He and his wife Betty have 12 children, 34 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Oscar Rohlman

Born and raised in Morrilton, Oscar Rohlman has been serving the Church since he was an altar server. Later he was a youth leader and choir member.

"God gave him a good voice," his wife, Rodie Rohlman, said.

Rohlman, a former master plumber, had to retire as a deacon from Sacred Heart Church in Morrilton five years ago after being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Preaching was one of his favorite ministries.

"The people of the parish liked his down-to-earth homilies," Rodie said. "He talked about events that the people could relate to."

Oscar and Rodie have nine children and 15 grandchildren.

Frank Sluppick

Frank Sluppick of St. John Church in Hot Springs owned a hardware store until his retirement in 1988. He continued to serve his parish until 1990.

"Due to my health I am unable to serve. I am bedridden and I can't walk," he said.

While he was serving in his parish, "I saw a better way that I could fulfill my ministry in serving the Lord (as a deacon)," he said.

He and his wife Helen have nine children, 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He is 81.