

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2003

Charles Millard Sr. dies; Holy Cross 'ambassador'

By Emilie Astell
TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

WORCESTER — A former board of trustees chairman and alumnus of the College of the Holy Cross who raised objections earlier this year to M S N B C's Chris Matthews serving as commencement speaker died yesterday morning at his home in Old Saybrook, Conn.



Mr. Millard

Charles E.F. Millard Sr., 71, former president and chief executive officer of the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in New York, succumbed to pulmonary fibrosis, according to his son, Charles E.F. Millard Jr. Mr. Millard's wife of 49 years, Marylou, and other family members were at his side.

Mr. Millard, class of 1954, objected to the "Hardball" host's pro-choice abortion stance. He did not try to stop Mr. Matthews, class of 1967, from speaking at the 157th commencement ceremony in May, but asked college officials to add a disclaimer to the honorary degree the TV commentator received. The college did not comply with his request.

At the time, Mr. Millard said a substantial number of alumni shared his dismay concerning the college's willingness to bestow an honor on Mr. Matthews.

"It's inconsistent with everything they stand for," Mr. Millard said, while staying at a second home in Hobe Sound, Fla.

Mr. Millard remained actively involved with Holy Cross throughout his life. He established the Will Jenks Chair in honor of a classmate who contracted polio, and he served on the college's board of trustees for 27 years, from 1973 to 2000. He was chairman for five years, from 1977 to 1982.

He also contributed to the naming of the Millard Arts Center on campus in honor of his brother, the Rev. Daniel F.M. Millard, class of 1948. Another brother, James C.B. Millard, graduated in 1940.

The Millards' eight children also graduated from the college.

The are: Marylou Ferrara, class of 1977; Charles Jr., class of 1979; Christopher, class of 1982; Maureen, class of 1983; Marga-

ret McGrath, class of 1985; Suzanne Stanners, class of 1987; Kathleen Rehm, class of 1989; and Gregory, class of 1993.

Mr. and Mrs. Millard also had 24 grandchildren.

President emeritus the Rev. John E. Brooks worked hand-in-hand with Mr. Millard when he was chairman of the board of trustees.

"Holy Cross loomed large in Charlie Millard's life," Rev. Brooks said. "His love, devotion and commitment to Holy Cross is rarely found in today's society."

Holy Cross President Michael C. McFarland, S.J., said Mr. Millard was a tireless ambassador for Holy Cross, serving with honors for decades.

Rev. McFarland noted that Mr. Millard received an honorary degree from the college in 1999 for 25 years of service on the board of trustees and as a charter member, regent and past chairman of the President's Council.

Mr. Millard also received the In Hoc Signo Award this year in recognition of his commitment to his alma mater, although he said in an interview before he received it that he had asked alumni association members if they had changed their minds considering his objections to Mr. Matthews.

"Charlie's savvy and leadership brought vision to Mount Saint James," Rev. McFarland said. "He was always challenging the college to be faithful to its principles and its heritage. Even if we didn't always agree, we were better off for his presence and his wisdom."

Mr. Millard spent a decade in advertising before moving on to Coca-Cola in 1967. Sales for the company rose from \$60 million to \$500 million under his leadership.

The younger Mr. Millard said his father loved ice cream and playing practical jokes, whether the instigator or the victim.

More than once, the senior Mr. Millard hired a professional makeup artist to help him pose as a waiter at parties for his best friends and at his son Charles' bachelor party held at "21" in New York.

"He'd act the obnoxious waiter and provoke an incident," Charles Millard said.

"If you took his measure by his commitment to his family, his faith and his friends, you would see the magnitude of the man," the son said.

Charles Millard, 71, executive served on board at Holy Cross

By Tom Long, *Boston Globe Staff*,
10/21/2003

Charles E.F. Millard was the former CEO of Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of New York, but he was probably better known for his devotion to Holy Cross College, the Jesuit school in Worcester from which not only he, but all of his children graduated. Less well known was his devotion to ice cream and practical jokes.

"Three things were important to Charlie: his family, the Catholic faith, and Holy Cross," the Rev. John Brooks, the college's former president, said yesterday. "But he also had quite a sense of humor."

Mr. Millard, 71, who died yesterday in his home in Fenwick, Conn., was a member of the board of trustees of Holy Cross for 25 years. He led fund-raising campaigns that raised \$17 million for the school and donated the Millard Art Center in honor of his brother, the late Rev. Dan Millard.

After taking over Coca-Cola in 1967, Mr. Millard helped boost the company's New York sales from \$60 million to more than \$500 million over the next two decades.

He was president of the New York Urban League, which aimed at improving conditions for African-Americans and others.

"He was such a leader and so successful that people who didn't know him saw only that," his son, Charles Jr. of Rye Brook, N.Y., said yesterday. "But he had another side, he could be funny and generous and warm. When people saw this second side they were thrilled."

Brooks recalled a series of jokes Mr. Millard played on a lawyer he knew. "Every time the attorney went out of town, Charlie would arrange to have statues of animals placed on his lawn. The attorney would go out of town and when he came back there would be a flock of sheep."

Mr. Millard, born in Paterson, N.J., could be imposing, at 6 feet, 2 inches tall and more than 200 pounds. He was the youngest of six children, and his father was a coal company executive and trustee of the Jay Gould estate.

"Mine was a happy and exciting childhood that was probably parochial in the sense that I never strayed far from New Jersey," he said in a story published in the *New York Post* in the early 1970s.

He said even though he grew up during World War II, he was "too young to really feel it" because his family was "comfortably middle class." He graduated from Regis High School, a Jesuit school in New York City, where he later endowed a scholarship to Holy Cross.

Earlier this year, Mr. Millard got national publicity for a letter he wrote to Holy Cross alumni protesting the invitation of television

host Chris Matthews to graduation. Graduate speakers are traditionally offered honorary degrees, and Mr. Millard didn't think Matthews deserved one because of his support of abortion rights.

"I would have no problem if he was being invited simply to speak and express his point of view, but honoring him puts us in the pro-choice column," said Mr. Millard in a story published in the *Globe*.

Matthews got his honorary degree, as had Mr. Millard in 1999.

"He was always challenging the college to be faithful to its principles and its heritage," the Rev. Michael C. McFarland, Holy Cross president, said in a statement. "Even if we didn't always agree, we were better off for his presence and his wisdom."

Mr. Millard also had another passion, one not as public as his others. "He loved ice cream," said his daughter Maureen of New York City. "He didn't care what kind it was as long as it was high quality. I think it was his love of ice cream that defined him."

Besides his son and daughter, he leaves his wife, Marylou (Slattery), four daughters, Marylou Ferrara of Hopewell Township, N.J., Margaret McGrath of Fairfield, Conn., Suzanne Stanners of Old Saybrook, Conn., and Kathleen Rehm of Darien, Conn.; two sons, Christopher of Atlanta and Gregory of Southport, Conn.; and 24 grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete.

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