

Fr. James McConica Obituary in Globe and Mail December 23, 2023



FR. JAMES KELSEY McCONICA, CSB Died at Michael Garron Hospital on December 20, 2023, after failing health over the past weeks. He was 93 years of age; he had been a member of the Congregation of St. Basil (Basilian Fathers) for 58 years, having served as an ordained priest for 55 years. He was born on April 24, 1930, in Luseland, Saskatchewan, and was predeceased by his parents, Thomas McConica and Edith (Crates) McConica; by his brothers, William and Thomas; and his sister, Martha. He is survived by his nephews, Bruce Bryan and Casey Hayes. Fr. James showed academic excellence from an early age when he was selected for a Rhodes Scholarship in 1952. He received a BA degree and an MA in modern History from Oxford University and spent a year at Princeton as a university fellow, and then taught at the University of Saskatchewan. James was granted a leave of absence from 1958-60 for doctoral research at Oxford, where he obtained a PhD from the University in 1960 and a D.Phil in 1963. He then enrolled in the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto and received a MA in Mediaeval Philosophy in 1964. He joined the Basilian Fathers in 1964 and was ordained on December 14, 1968, in the chapel of St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon. He obtained a STB from the University of St. Michael's College in 1968 and a LLD from the University of Saskatchewan in 1986. Additional degrees and honours included Fellow from the Royal Historical Society in 1964, Fellows, Academy II from the Royal Society of Canada in 1987, Foreign Member from the Royal Belgian Academy in 1988, a D.LIT from the University of Windsor in 1989 and the Order of Canada from the Governor General of Canada in 2001. Among his significant leadership positions, Fr. McConica served as Praeses of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, and President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of St Michael's College, Toronto. He was also an Emeritus Fellow, All Souls College, the first Roman Catholic priest to be a fellow of this prestigious institution since the English Reformation. A man of extraordinary scholarship, erudition and culture, Fr. McConica served the Academy and the Church with dedication, devotion and a genuine love for people. He mentored countless students and colleagues, not only imparting to them his vast academic experience, but offered them a sterling example of a faithful Catholic priest who embodied and modeled the Basilian motto of 'Teach me Goodness, Discipline and Knowledge.' A concelebrated Funeral Mass will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, December 29, 2023, in the chapel of Presentation Manor for Seniors, 61 Fairfax Crescent, Scarborough, ON. Burial will be at the Basilian plot at Holy Cross Cemetery, Thornhill, ON. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the Basilian Fathers Retirement Fund, 360 Davenport Road, Toronto, ON M5R 1K6. To place online condolences, please visit: www.pauloconnorfunerals.ca

Published by The Globe and Mail from Dec. 23 to Dec. 27, 2023.

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