



City of Cambridge

R-47.

IN CITY COUNCIL

June 18, 2001

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR BORN
COUNCILLOR BRAUDE
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR DECKER
MAYOR GALLUCCIO
VICE MAYOR MAHER
COUNCILLOR REEVES
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

WHEREAS: The Reverend J. Bryan Hehir is the first Roman Catholic Priest to head the Harvard Divinity School; and

WHEREAS: Reverend Hehir will be leaving the position he has held for three years to assume the position of head of the Catholic Charities USA in Washington, D.C.; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That this City Council go on record extending its congratulations to Reverend J. Bryan Hehir as he assumes his new position of head of Catholic Charities, USA; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Reverend J. Bryan Hehir on behalf of the entire City Council.

In City Council June 18, 2001.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

6/14 @ 7:30 P

Councillor Sullivan

Whereas: The Reverend J. Bryan Hehir, the first Roman Catholic Priest to head the Harvard Divinity School; and

Whereas: Reverend Hehir will be leaving ~~his~~ the position he has held for 3 yrs to assume the position of head of the Catholic Charities USA in Washington, DC; Now therefore be it

Resolved: That this City Council go on record ~~as~~ extending its congratulations to Reverend J. Bryan Hehir ~~as~~ he assumes his new position of head of Catholic Charities, USA; & be it further

Resolved SECT Rev. Hehir

Divinity School transition

1st Catholic chief takes his leave

By Michael Paulson

GLOBE STAFF

The first Roman Catholic priest to head the historically Protestant Harvard Divinity School announced yesterday that he is resigning to take a job as head of Catholic Charities USA, the church's American social service operations.

The Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, a 60-year-old Chelmsford native who is one of the nation's most prominent Catholic theologians, will leave Harvard in December, after three years at the school's helm.

In his new job in Washington, he will play a central role in the debate over faith-based charities, as head of one of the largest associations of religiously inspired social-service organizations.

Hehir's appointment in 1998 marked a turning point for Harvard, which was founded in 1636 to train Calvinist ministers, and which in the 18th century offered lectures aimed at "detecting, convicting, and exposing the idolatry, error, and superstitions of the Romish Church."

Hehir also assumed the job at a difficult time for the Harvard Divinity School, after his predecessor, Ronald Thiemann, had been removed for viewing pornography on his office computer.

"The first year he was the dean, what we needed was a period of confidence building and healing, because we'd been through some tough straits," said Harvey Cox, an American Baptist theologian who has served on the Divinity School faculty since 1965. "Today, the school is in good shape, morale is good, we have higher enrollment, and we have more qualified students applying than in all my years here."

Hehir has made it clear that he would be a caretaker in the job because his primary loyalty was to the church, not to Harvard.

He had to be cajoled into accepting the post by Harvard's president, Neil L. Rudenstine, and he refused to accept the title of dean, to live in the dean's mansion, or to give up his part-time job at Catholic Relief Services.

Through his tenure, Hehir has continued to live in the rectory at St. Paul Church in Cambridge, where he was once the pastor, and to commute one day a week to Baltimore to work for Catholic Relief.

"As long as I've been at Harvard it was always understood that I have other obligations to the wider community," Hehir said yesterday. "No matter where I am, I have wider responsibilities back to the church."

Rudenstine issued a statement saying that Hehir's new job "will enable him to use all his many gifts to their full extent."

Hehir, who has served on the Divinity School faculty since 1993, plans to leave the university in December. His replacement will be chosen by Lawrence Summers, who is scheduled to be inaugurated as president of Harvard on July 1.

The Divinity School, founded in 1816, had long been associated with Unitarianism, but is now one of the most prestigious and diverse theological schools in the country, with about 500 students representing more than 35 religious traditions, and with new faculty positions in Buddhism and Islam.

About 20 percent of the student body and 17 percent of the faculty are Roman Catholic, compared with about 25 percent of the nation.

Hehir, who in 1984 won a so-called genius grant from the MacArthur Foundation, and who has won more than 25 honorary de-

grees from various universities, is perhaps best known as the architect of the American bishops' policy on the nuclear arms race during the Cold War. But in recent years his research has increasingly focused on the relationship between Catholic ethics and social policy. He said his decision to take a job as head of Catholic Charities USA was a natural outgrowth of that interest.

"I've become very interested in the intersection between religious institutions, government, and other private actors, and this job grows out of that," Hehir said.

Catholic social service officials voiced delight at the appointment.

"Bryan is going to be a great success in lifting up the voice of the poor at the national level," said Joseph Doolin, president of Catholic Charities of Boston, who credited Hehir with coining a frequently used phrase that describes Catholic Charities as "the bridge between the heart of the church and the fringes of society."

Catholic Charities USA, headquartered in Alexandria, Va., is an umbrella organization representing 1,400 Catholic social service programs around the United States, which provide services to 10 million people, many of whom are not Catholic.

The organization does not deliver direct services, but provides advice and support, particularly to smaller organizations, and advocates for the poor and for Catholic Charities in Washington.

Patrick Healy of the Globe staff contributed to this report.

Michael Paulson can be reached by e-mail at mpaulson@globe.com.

The Rev. J. Bryan Hehir's appointment in 1998 marked a turning point for Harvard, which was founded in 1636 to train Calvinist ministers.

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LOTTERY

The Boston Globe



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9/5R

Resolution #47

Congratulations to Reverend J.
Bryan Hehir as he assumes his new
position as head of Catholic
Charities, USA.

Councillor Sullivan

In City Council June 18, 2001

ORDER ADOPTED