



Seal of Wheeling Jesuit University. Motto devised by Fr. Clifford Lewis, S.J.

Source: Wheeling Jesuit University



Rev. Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. (ca. 1980s)

Source: Archives of Wheeling Jesuit University



Plaque honoring Fr. Lewis and other initial Jesuit faculty at Wheeling College

Source: Wheeling Jesuit University



Chapel of Jesuit Novitiate of St. Isaac Jogues, Wernersville, PA

Source: Society of Jesus, Maryland Province



Initial Jesuit faculty of Wheeling College with Fr. Lewis in center (ca. 1955)

Source: Wheeling Jesuit University



Aerial view of Wheeling Jesuit University

Source: Wheeling Jesuit University



Campus of Wheeling Jesuit University

Source: Wheeling Jesuit University

REV. CLIFFORD M. LEWIS, S.J. – JOURNALIST, HUSBAND, PRIEST, COLLEGE CO-FOUNDER, AND HISTORIAN

John C. Bates, Esq.

Luceat Lux Vestra (Let Your Light Shine)
– Motto of Wheeling Jesuit University

Jorge Mario Bergoglio followed a tradition that has been key to members of the Society of Jesus (popularly, the Jesuits) since the establishment of that order – he served as a teacher while studying for the priesthood in Argentina in the mid-1960s. Fifty years later, Bergoglio is Pope Francis, the first Jesuit pope. The tradition of Jesuit education continues, especially in the United States. Twenty-eight Jesuit colleges and universities stretch from Boston to Los Angeles and from Seattle to Mobile, Alabama.

Teaching is in the blood of Jesuits. They’ve been educators for virtually all of their 477 years of existence. In 1540, founder Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) received papal approval of the order. At that time, monastic schools educated young men to be priests. But what European families wanted for their children was an education that would enable them to be literate and able to engage in the secular public world.

The Jesuits offered instruction to those entering their order. The original Jesuits had studied at the University of Paris and had learned pedagogical methods not typically found elsewhere in Europe. This “Parisian method” divided students into classes, with progress from one class to a higher one in a graduated system. And in teaching writing and speaking, the Jesuits didn’t just have students read works by great authors but promoted “active learning” by having students write speeches and then deliver them in class.

This would become a new form of missionary work. The Jesuits opened their first school for “outside” students in Sicily in 1548. It was not designed to educate students to become priests, but rather to become thoughtful, active, engaged laity in their communities. Jesuits schools spread throughout Europe and the order’s members became known as “the schoolmasters of Europe.”

The Jesuits immigrated to Maryland, opening their first school in what would later become the United States of America, in 1640. Almost 150 years later, in 1789, America’s first bishop, John Carroll (a former Jesuit), broke ground on land bordering the Potomac River to build Georgetown College.

Like many “colleges” of the era that offered a preparatory-school education, Georgetown later evolved into a true college. Like most other Jesuit colleges in the United States, it became a university with professionally specialized schools. While it did not specifically train men for the priesthood, Georgetown did prepare some for seminary.

The opening of Jesuit high schools¹ and colleges reflected the movement of Catholics in America, as immigrants spread out in all directions in the country. The sequence of development of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States is listed in Table 1.

Table 1: The sequence of development of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States.

| College or University | Location | Year of Establishment |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Georgetown University | Washington, D.C. | 1789 |
| St. Louis University | St. Louis, Missouri | 1818 |
| Spring Hill College | Mobile, Alabama | 1830 |
| Xavier University | Cincinnati, Ohio | 1831 |
| Fordham University | New York, New York | 1841 |
| College of the Holy Cross | Worcester, Massachusetts | 1843 |
| St. Joseph’s University | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania | 1851 |
| Santa Clara University | Santa Clara, California | 1851 |
| Loyola University Maryland | Baltimore, Maryland | 1852 |
| University of San Francisco | San Francisco, California | 1855 |
| Boston College | Boston, Massachusetts | 1863 |
| Loyola University Chicago | Chicago, Illinois | 1870 |
| Canisius College | Buffalo, New York | 1870 |
| St. Peter’s University | Jersey City, New Jersey | 1872 |

| College or University | Location | Year of Establishment |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| University of Detroit Mercy | Detroit, Michigan | 1877 |
| Regis University | Denver, Colorado | 1877 |
| Creighton University | Omaha, Nebraska | 1878 |
| Marquette University | Milwaukee, Wisconsin | 1881 |
| John Carroll University | Cleveland, Ohio | 1886 |
| Gonzaga University | Spokane, Washington | 1887 |
| University of Scranton | Scranton, Pennsylvania | 1888 |
| Seattle University | Seattle, Washington | 1891 |
| Rockhurst University | Kansas City, Missouri | 1910 |
| Loyola Marymount University | Los Angeles, California | 1911 |
| Loyola University New Orleans | New Orleans, Louisiana | 1912 |
| Fairfield University | Fairfield, Connecticut | 1942 |
| LeMoyne College | Syracuse, New York | 1946 |
| Wheeling Jesuit University | Wheeling, West Virginia | 1954 |

Surprisingly, Pittsburgh is the one major American city that lacks a Jesuit institution of higher learning. That story is left to a future article. Rather, our focus is on the very last of the Jesuit schools to be established in the United States – Wheeling Jesuit University in Wheeling, West Virginia, just 40 miles west of Pittsburgh – and the Jesuit priest responsible for its establishment, Father Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Lewis was a native of Western Pennsylvania, and Wheeling is in many ways a cultural suburb of Pittsburgh due to its proximity to the Steel City. Therein lies an intriguing historical connection between Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia *via* a man who was a journalist, husband, priest, college co-founder, fundraiser, public relations official, professor, coach, archaeologist, archivist, and historian.

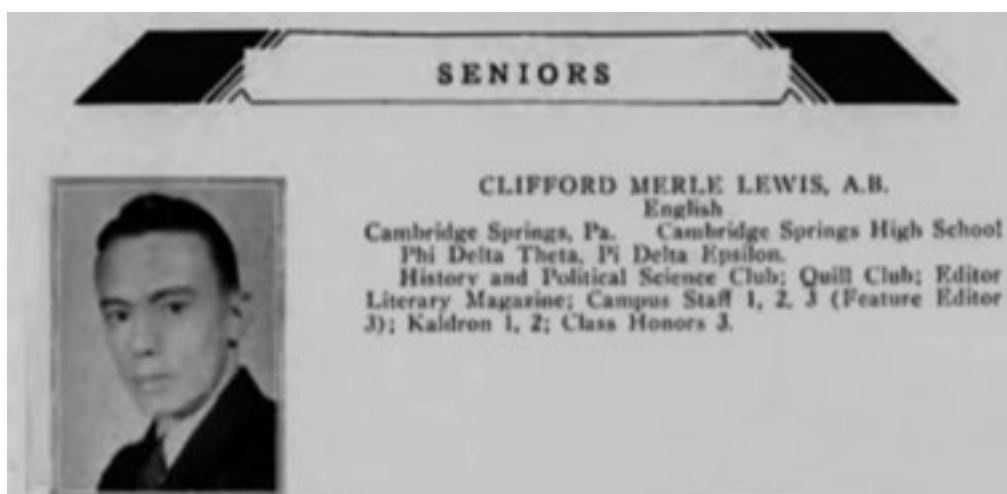
Pennsylvania Beginnings

The surname “Lewis” is of English and Welsh background – derived from *Lew* (one who gives light). Clifford Merle Lewis was born on March 3, 1911 in hospital in Meadville (Crawford County), Pennsylvania, the son of Walter D. Lewis (age 33)

and Florence W. Lewis (age 25). His parents were residents of Cambridge Springs, a resort town of approximately 1,500 people. Known for its mineral springs and variety of hotels, the town was just 11 miles from Meadville. The parents were well educated for that time – his father had completed college, and his mother had completed high school. His father was the proprietor of a hardware store, working 72 hours per week.² Clifford began his education, during World War I, in a one-room schoolhouse, typical of rural Pennsylvania. He graduated from Cambridge Springs High School in 1928.

Allegheny College

“Cliff” then enrolled in Methodist-affiliated Allegheny College in nearby Meadville, the county seat and a natural draw for residents of Cambridge Springs. A trolley line had connected the two communities until 1920, when automobiles became the mode of transportation. In this new setting, Cliff would promptly demonstrate his superior intellectual abilities, voracious appetite for work, and pronounced interest in writing.



Clifford Merle Lewis as a Senior in Allegheny College Yearbook 1932

Source: *The Kaldron*, Allegheny College 1932

The first mention of the young freshman at the college appeared in the December 19, 1928 issue of the college newspaper, *The Campus*, which reported that he had pledged Phi Delta Theta fraternity.³ He was to live in the fraternity house at 662 Highland Avenue for the final three years of his college studies. Cliff's college days were thereafter tracked in a series of articles that appeared in issues of *The Campus*:

- February 27, 1929: Freshman Clifford Lewis had become a reporter for the college newspaper.⁴
- October 16, 1929: Sophomore "Cliff Lewis" had joined the school's literary organization, the Quill Club.⁵
- Fall of 1930: The returning Junior became Feature Editor of the college newspaper.
- November 12, 1930: The college's literary magazine would make its debut that school year "newly dressed." The *Allegheny Literary Magazine* "presents a new cover design, and also a larger size page, but the chief innovations concern the actual contents." The transformation was the work of its associate editor, Clifford Lewis. The advance publicity noted: "Of outstanding importance, too, is Clifford Lewis' review of the early history of Crawford County, the first article of a series of five picturing life and development in this vicinity, particularly Indian lore."⁶
- December 10, 1930: Lewis was honored when the Publications Board presented its annual awards at a ceremony in the chapel. He was presented with a Silver Key as associate editor of the *Literary Magazine*. The silver key went to department editors and managers who had completed two years of work and had started on their third year.⁷
- December 17, 1930: Lewis was elected to membership in the History and Political Science Club.⁸
- February 18, 1931: A front-page article on the upcoming issue of the school's *Allegheny Literary Magazine* noted that it would carry two primary features, one of which was a continuation of Clifford M. Lewis's story of local Indian history, "Early Man in Crawford County." That publication "promises to be a little above par."⁹
- February 25, 1931: Lewis was initiated into the History and Political Science Club. The club met regularly where the students presented papers on historical topics that they had written, which were then discussed by the general membership.¹⁰
- April 22, 1931: Allegheny's chapter of Pi Delta Epsilon honorary journalism fraternity sent Cliff Lewis as its delegate to the national convention of the fraternity held in Cincinnati on April 17-18. The conference included a banquet, address by the Assistant Editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*, theater party at the Shubert, a play, and dancing.¹¹
- May 27, 1931: The Publications Board of the College met and elected Clifford Lewis as editor of *The Literary Magazine*. Among the reasons justifying his selection was the fact that "Lewis [had] acted in the capacity of Associate Editor of the *Literary Magazine*."¹²
- September 30, 1931: Cliff Lewis's name was front page news with the announcement that he had been elected to membership in Phi Beta Kappa for scholastic work done in 1930-1931. He was one of only eight Juniors so honored. The announcement had been made at Allegheny's annual Scholarship Assembly at chapel services.¹³ Admission to the nation's most prestigious honor society was demanding. At Allegheny, an average grade of 85% was required. Although one-fourth of the class was eligible, not more than one-half of those were chosen. One-third of the total number chosen might be initiated at the beginning of their Senior year, provided that they had maintained an average grade of 90% for their first three years' work. The award was not given as a mere reward for aptitude. Rather the golden key was a symbol of the highest honor given to deserving students who had ranked the highest in scholarship. Allegheny's chapter (established in 1902) was the 54th of only 93 chapters in existence at the time of Cliff's election.¹⁴
- November 4, 1931: The college president announced that Cliff Lewis would continue as one of four students on the reorganized Publications Board.¹⁵
- December 9, 1931: Cliff Lewis, president of the local chapter of Phi Delta Theta welcomed attendees at the Tri-Province Convention held December 4-6. Cliff presided. "Rushing Methods" and "Hell Week" were among the scheduled sessions. A dinner with over 100 guests was held at the local fraternity house; a formal dance followed in the college gymnasium.¹⁶
- December 16, 1931: Allegheny College did not exist in an academic vacuum, isolated from world events. The Carnegie Institute for International Peace regularly sent books to the school's History Club. Cliff Lewis was one of the three Club members who reported on the books. It was no surprise that he was selected to attend as a delegate to the model disarmament conference that the Carnegie Institute would hold in Pittsburgh in January 1932.¹⁷
- January 13, 1932: Lewis, of the History and Political Science Club, attended the 3-day Model Disarmament Conference at the University of Pittsburgh.¹⁸
- February 10, 1932: Cliff Lewis received considerable attention in a front-page article, "Arms Gathering Ruled by Local Politicians." He had represented Allegheny College at the January 8-10 Model Disarmament Conference in Pittsburgh. Representing Great Britain in the "Committee on Military Aircraft" negotiations, he kept "British interests in the forefront throughout ... effected a 'satisfactory' settlement on disarmament in aircraft, and for the last session executed a *coup d'etat* which defeated the strong pacifist section of the conference." He was deemed to have demonstrated appropriate "aggressive statesmanship."¹⁹
- March 2, 1932: Cliff Lewis spoke on his participation at the Model Disarmament Conference that had been held in Pittsburgh. He was also involved in the discussion of disarmament at a joint meeting of the History and Political Science Club with Pi Tau Epsilon.²⁰

- March 16, 1932: The Quill Club initiated a “Reading Hour” that met in the library on Sunday afternoons when faculty and students would give readings on varied subjects of interest.

Last Sunday, March 13, a representative of the student body, Clifford M. Lewis, was the center of attention in a group composed only of undergraduates. Mr. Lewis, who is editor-in-chief of the *Allegheny Literary Magazine* and an outstanding member of the Quill Club, chose to read from Robert Louis Stevenson, and selected an excerpt from *Travels With a Donkey*.²¹

- May 5, 1932: With the silver loving cup – symbolizing victory in the Interfraternity Sing – at stake, an outdoor vocal contest was held on the steps of Bentley Hall. A chorus from Phi Delta Theta participated with the solo part sung by Clifford Lewis. His fraternity did not capture the prize but a large audience, clustered beneath the trees lining the campus drive, thoroughly enjoyed the show.²²
- May 11, 1932: Honors accumulated for the graduating Senior. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching administered two days of general cultural tests – covering the fields of English, science, foreign literature, fine arts, history and social studies – to college students across the state. Allegheny College participated. With results of the English test still pending, results of the other tests were announced and Clifford Lewis emerged as the fifth highest student overall of the 500+ tested; among seniors, he ranked third highest. His score was 620.²³
- May 18, 1932: Senior Clifford Lewis placed third in the English division of the Carnegie Foundation Tests for the Advancement of Teaching. Also, *The Campus* noted that the final issue of the *Allegheny Literary Magazine*, of which he was editor, would include his article on “the abuses of the educational system in general.”²⁴
- May 25, 1932: Graduating editor Clifford Lewis, along with the faculty advisor and Lewis’s successor, had selected the incoming editorial staff of the college’s *Allegheny Literary Magazine* – nicknamed the *Lit* – for the 1932-1933 school year. The front-page article went on to describe Lewis’s contribution:

Clifford Lewis, retiring editor of the *Lit*, announces that his final issue will be distributed June 1. There will be four more pages than the usual number and an extra-large amount of poetry.

Commenting on his year’s work on the *Allegheny Literary Magazine*, Mr. Lewis stated: “I have been pleased with the writing that the freshmen have been doing this year. We have had more good freshmen contributors than I have [had] since I have been in school.”²⁵

The 1932 college yearbook, *The Kaldron*, presented Lewis as editor of the *Allegheny Literary Magazine*,²⁶ a member of Phi Delta Theta fraternity,²⁷ inducted into Pi Delta Epsilon (the honorary Journalism fraternity),²⁸ and a member of both the Quill Club²⁹ and the History and Political Science Club.³⁰

The following information accompanied his senior picture:³¹

CLIFFORD MERLE LEWIS, A.B.

English

Cambridge Springs, Pa. Cambridge Springs High School
Phi Delta Theta Pi Delta Epsilon
History and Political Science Club; Quill Club; Editor,
Literary Magazine; Campus Staff 1, 2, 3 (Feature Editor,
3); *Kaldron* 1, 2; Class Honors 3

Clifford M. Lewis emerged from four years of college as socially active, possessed of strong verbal skills, a clear leader evidenced both by his selection by college officials and election by peers to positions of responsibility, with an interest in music, a passion for writing, and a particularly strong interest in history. His literary interest was the most evident: editor of the college literary magazine, Feature Editor and three years on the staff of the college newspaper, two years on the staff of the college Yearbook – along with membership in both the history and literary clubs and the honorary journalism fraternity. Lewis’s college career concluded with Commencement Exercises for his 112-member graduating class on June 7, 1932 in the Allegheny College Gymnasium.³²

Career Development

Following college, young Lewis began a teaching career as a social sciences instructor in Erie County, Pennsylvania. He went on to earn a Master’s degree in journalism at the University of Wisconsin in 1935. Lewis returned to Meadville where he worked as a newspaper reporter for *The Meadville Tribune*, a seven-day morning paper that covered Crawford County. He next took a job teaching journalism at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon (Upshur County), West Virginia, while simultaneously serving as director of publicity.³³ In 1938, he became associate director (editor) of publications at Penn State University in State College (Centre County), Pennsylvania.

Conversion to Catholicism

A year earlier in 1937, Clifford left his Baptist roots and converted to Catholicism. He became active in Catholic evangelization efforts. *The Pittsburgh Catholic* noted in its May 25, 1939 issue that:

ST. PETER’S (BROWNSVILLE) –

Clifford Lewis, of Penn State College, addressed the parish study club on Sunday afternoon and took part in an open forum which followed the address. Questions on Catholic doctrine and practice were also answered.³⁴

Marriage

Clifford’s conversion was due to Catharine O’Keefe, a devout Catholic woman whom he had met and would later marry. Catharine had taught in public school at Harborcreek and at Academy High School in Erie. For three years, she was an instructor at California State Teachers College in California, Pennsylvania. She and Cliff shared a love of religion and music. The wedding notice in *The Pittsburgh Press* of August 9, 1939, provides background on both newlyweds:

**TEACHER, COLLEGE EDITOR MARRIED IN
BROWNSVILLE**

**Newlyweds Will Reside in State College
After Honeymoon at Yellowstone Park**

The marriage of Miss Catharine M. O’Keefe of the faculty of California State Teachers’ College, California, Pa., and Clifford M. Lewis, associate editor of publications at Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pa., took place Monday [August 7, 1939].

The marriage ceremony followed by nuptial Mass was held in the historic St. Peter Church, Brownsville, Pa. Rev. James A. McKeever of St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Coal Center, read the service and Mass, with Rev. Martin J. Brennan, pastor of St. Peter’s and [Rev.] Dr. James A. Reeves, president of Seton Hill College, present in the sanctuary.

Attendants were Miss Elizabeth Smith of Pittsburgh, dietitian at California State College, maid-of-honor, and Frank E. Williams Jr., of Buckhannon, W. Va., senior in the Department of Mining Engineering at State College.

The bride wore a gown of white lace and net with short puffed sleeves and a sweetheart neckline. Her finger-tip veil was draped from a crown of orange blossoms and she carried a shower bouquet of white roses and valley lilies.

The maid-of-honor was dressed in a gown of aquamarine mouseline de sole with shirred bodice and sleeves. Her hat was an aqua net turban styled with shirred crown and a shoulder-length veil. Her flowers were talisman roses and babies’ breath.

After a breakfast in the Mt. Vernon room of the George Washington Hotel, Washington, Pa., the bridal couple left for Yellowstone National Park. Later they will be at home in State College.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Louis A. O’Keefe of California, formerly of Erie. She is a graduate of Edinboro State Teachers’ College and the University of Pittsburgh and is a member of Alpha Psi Omega, honorary dramatics fraternity. She is president of the Junior Friday Afternoon Club of California.

Mr. Lewis is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter D. Lewis of Cambridge Springs, Pa. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Delta Theta, being chapter adviser for the latter fraternity at State College.³⁵

The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* also carried a similar article, captioned “Three Pastors Officiate at O’Keefe-Lewis Service in Brownsville Church.”³⁶

Tragedy!

The marriage would come to an unexpectedly tragic end just six months later, almost to the day. On February 7, 1940, Catherine

was driving with her mother in a recently purchased automobile on the Cochran Road about three miles out of Meadville, when she passed out at the wheel, causing the car to leave the road and crash into a tree. A dispatch from Meadville described the seriousness of the accident:

Mrs. Clifford M. Lewis, 25, of State College, and her mother Mrs. Lillian O’Keefe, 58, of California, Pa., were in the hospital today suffering from serious brain concussions as the result of their automobile striking a tree.

State Motor Police said there was a possibility Mrs. Lewis, driving the car, may have fainted yesterday, causing the machine to leave the highway and hit the tree near here.

Mrs. O’Keefe was some improved this morning, hospital attendants reported. Both women are suffering from shock. Mrs. Lewis’ husband is a member of the publicity department staff at Penn State College.³⁷

Mrs. Lewis lingered for five days, finally succumbing on Sunday, February 11 in Spencer Hospital in Meadville, which was operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania (Erie). Given her educational prominence and youth, her husband’s educational position, and the rarity of death due to a car accident in that rural county, publicity was quick and far reaching. *The Daily Republican* in Monongahela carried a front-page story, “Injuries Fatal to Former C.S.T.C. Faculty Member.” *The Pittsburgh Press* carried stories in all editions, ranging from “Crash Injuries Fatal” to “College Agent’s Wife Dies.”³⁸ Funeral services were held the following Tuesday morning at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Cambridge Springs, Cliff’s hometown, amidst a record snowfall of 8 to 10 inches.

Priesthood

The solace that Clifford Lewis found in the Catholic faith would lead him, just two years later, to an irrevocable decision to study for the priesthood. It was no surprise that Lewis – a scholar with a Master’s Degree who had taught in both high school and college and was fully invested in the field of education – would select the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)³⁹ to continue that educational role while serving as an ordained priest. Accordingly, he entered the Jesuit novitiate near Wernersville, Pennsylvania, on September 7, 1942.

The Jesuit Novitiate of St. Isaac Jogues at Wernersville bears mention in its own right. The increasing number of applicants to the Society of Jesus had led to the decision to build a new novitiate in the late 1920s. The prevailing Jesuit training concept was to remove novices from the mainstream and educate them in an idyllic, secluded setting. Attracted by the rail lines and beautiful topography, the Jesuits selected a 240-acre site in Lower Heidelberg Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania – approximately 55 miles northwest of Philadelphia. The buildings and grounds of this Jesuit community were the gift of Nicholas and Genevieve Brady, famed benefactors of the Jesuits.⁴⁰ Nicholas was one of the great financial powers of his day and used his wealth for philanthropy. Both husband and wife were devout Catholics and spared no expense in the facility’s construction. The Boston architectural firm of McGinnis and Walsh – the premier Catholic

ecclesiastical designers of the day – designed the building in the English Renaissance style. The \$2 million novitiate featured carved oak, marble, coffered ceilings, and ornate details executed by European craftsmen. The Bradys suggested the novitiate’s name to honor the North American martyr slain in New York in 1646. The canonization of Isaac Jogues occurred on June 29, 1930, which coincided with the opening of the novitiate and “Blessed” was changed to “Saint.” The Bradys would be buried in the crypt under the novitiate’s high altar.⁴¹

While pursuing his philosophical and theological studies, Lewis taught at the Jesuit-run University of Scranton, where he served as Acting Head of the Department of Sociology. He was ordained to the priesthood in June 1951 by Archbishop Francis Keogh of Baltimore in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart at Woodstock College in Maryland. Woodstock was the oldest Jesuit seminary in the country.⁴² Lewis was 40 years old at the time of ordination. He then served as assistant to the president of the University of Scranton, Father J. Eugene Gallery, S.J.

West Virginia

The State of West Virginia came into existence following the Wheeling Convention of 1861 in which delegates from Unionist counties of northwestern Virginia decided to break away from the Commonwealth of Virginia in the early days of the American Civil War. West Virginia was admitted to the Union on June 20, 1863. Its two largest cities were Wheeling (located on the Ohio River, in the northern panhandle between eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania) and Charleston (located in the geographical center of the state). While Charleston would become the state capital, Wheeling was to exercise an outsize influence in the state – due to its proximity to large metropolitan areas, population, and direct connection to the Mississippi River and the heart of America. The state straddles the Appalachian Mountains. Its northern panhandle, which included Wheeling, was in close proximity to Pittsburgh. The state’s forests and coal mines would supply the burgeoning steel mills and factories of metropolitan Pittsburgh for over a century.

Catholic West Virginia

Catholic life in West Virginia preceded the organization of the state. The Diocese of Wheeling was canonically erected on July 19, 1850 with territory taken from the Diocese of Richmond. Bishop Richard V. Whelan – who was then serving as bishop of Richmond (1841-1850) and soon-to-be first bishop of Wheeling (1850-1874) – requested in September 1846 that Jesuits establish a college in Wheeling that would also serve those men aspiring to the priesthood. The Jesuits did not act on that proposal.⁴³

A period of expansion in the diocese occurred during the 40-year administration of Archbishop John J. Swint (1922-1962), the first native son to occupy the see.⁴⁴ During his tenure, the Catholic population doubled and the diocese built 100 churches, a new cathedral, five hospitals, and 52 schools. Such expansion was remarkable given that the number of Catholics in the Diocese of Wheeling (re-named the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in 1974)

was historically small. Then, as now, the percentage of Catholics approximated 5% of the state’s population.⁴⁵

One of Bishop Swint’s principal objectives was to realize the dream of Wheeling’s first bishop by organizing a college that would be operated by the Jesuits. The appeal of developing a college in Appalachia would prove persuasive to the Jesuits on this second try. Swint’s vision was influenced by the growing economic affluence in Wheeling as a thriving industrial city with a population of about 55,000 in the post-World War II era. The return of millions of soldiers seeking a better life and the availability of the G.I. Bill of Rights led many bishops to conclude that the time was ripe for an expansion of Catholic institutions of higher learning that would meet the educational needs of the rapidly growing numbers of faithful. Thus, in the area surrounding the West Virginia panhandle, new colleges were established by Bishop John Mark Gannon of Erie (Gannon College, now a university), Bishop John King Mussio of Steubenville (College of Steubenville, now a university), and Bishop Emmet M. Walsh of Youngstown (Walsh College, now a university) – not to mention others within a 200-mile radius of Wheeling.

The College

Swint revived the idea of a college when in October 1951 he asked the Society of Jesus’s Maryland Province (within whose jurisdiction his diocese was located) to begin a two-year feasibility study. The bishop offered to provide the site and physical plant for the college if the Jesuits would agree to staff and operate the school. Father Clifford M. Lewis, S.J., was authorized to undertake that study.

Father Lewis arrived in Wheeling in 1952.⁴⁶ As the Jesuits’ educational representative, he came to the city to gauge community needs and the level of support for a college. He began conferring with Bishop Swint and others interested in the start up of the school. As a plan developed, the price tag for constructing the bare essentials soared. Lewis quickly ascertained that several million dollars would be necessary for any plan to succeed. Swint declared the cost too expensive for the effort to continue, but the Jesuits in the person of Father Lewis persisted. Swint’s willingness to tap his financial reserves had its limits. Caught between his order’s desire to open this 28th Jesuit college in the United States and Bishop Swint’s limited financial commitment, Father Lewis became acutely aware that fundraising to cover the gap would fall on his shoulders – and since those monies would go to construction, additional funds for operation would also have to be raised. His survey and the beginning of the school’s history are memorialized in a classic photograph of Father Lewis viewing the college’s future location – pasture land that was part of the huge campus of Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy.⁴⁷ The photo does not show his face, so we can only guess at what that view might have revealed about his perception of the challenge ahead. Lewis was the first Jesuit to take up residence in Wheeling and he would spend the remaining 31 years of his life there.

Heiress Sara Tracy⁴⁸ had left her estate to the diocese and those

funds would enable the diocese to purchase land from Mount De Chantal Visitation Academy in Wheeling and finance construction of the first three buildings on campus. The site was largely self-contained and somewhat isolated from the larger community – bounded on the east to the northwest by Wheeling Creek, on the west by the then-Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy, and to the south by a high hill. Bishop Swint pledged \$2 million to help finance the construction of the campus on this site. As Father Lewis ascertained, the Jesuits would need to raise additional funds for a complete college campus.

On July 4, 1952, the Jesuits approved the bishop’s plan for a college which focused on 61 acres of empty pasture land that belonged to Mount de Chantal. Swint had already decided that this large and essentially flat site would be the best spot for a college in his see city, and proceeded to purchase the site later that month.

The Jesuits selected Pittsburgh architect Bertrand J. Marlier, Sr. (1912-1990), to design the college campus and all of its early buildings. At that point, Marlier had more than 20 years of experience in designing numerous buildings of many types. His work included residential and other buildings (such as the Golf Hall of Fame museum and library) in addition to a large number of Catholic churches and institutions in the Pittsburgh area – Our Lady of Grace Church and rectory in Scott Township, St. Winifred Church in Mt. Lebanon, St. Bartholomew Church and new school wing in Penn Hills, St. Bernadette Church in Monroeville with its nation-

ally famed corkscrew spire, and Vincentian Home in McCandless.⁴⁹ Marlier would earn the respect of the Jesuits in connection with his design of the master plan for and the initial buildings of Wheeling College.

On November 24, 1953, a groundbreaking ceremony for the college was held. Finalization of architectural plans, approvals, and winter weather combined to delay start of construction of the college’s first three buildings until spring 1954:

- Swint Hall (administration, library, dining),
- Donahue Hall (classrooms, labs, offices, chapel), and
- Whelan Hall (Jesuit residence).

In summer 1954, a Jesuit organizational committee set up a temporary college center in the former St. Michael’s rectory and church at 127 Edginton Lane in Wheeling. On September 25, 1954, the college incorporated as Wheeling College, Inc., with the Secretary of State of West Virginia in the state capital, Charleston. The college existed as of this formal incorporation date. On that same day, Father John Baptist Janssens, S.J., the Father General of the Society of Jesus in Rome appointed Father Lawrence R. McHugh, S.J., as the college’s first president.⁵⁰

The corporation would operate with an all-Jesuit Board of Trustees – Father Clifford Lewis, Father Edward Powers, Father Lawrence McHugh, Father Joseph Drane, and Brother John Mich-



Fr. Clifford Lewis at the future site of Wheeling College – 61 acres of pasture at Mount de Chantal (ca. 1953)

Source: Archives of Wheeling Jesuit University

alowicz. McHugh served as the college's president, Drane created the academic structure, Powers was the treasurer and selected equipment and furnishings for the buildings, while Lewis handled fundraising and public relations.

McHugh and Lewis worked with Bishop Swint on the challenging task of creating a college from 61 acres, three partially completed buildings, a handful of Jesuits, and a tight budget. Costs soon exceeded the initial budget. The bishop constantly disagreed about the project's priorities. The Jesuits saw the need for modern laboratories while the bishop envisioned a gymnasium as more beneficial.

Construction progressed and the cornerstone of Donahue Hall was laid on November 21, 1954. Completion of the buildings enabled the school to formally open on its own grounds on September 26, 1955 – delayed from the original opening date of September 11 due to the need to complete roads and sidewalks. Wheeling College had a staff of 12 Jesuits and four lay professors. The first class consisted of 90 students who were offered 25 courses in 12 majors. One month later, on October 23, more than 2,000 people attended the formal dedication ceremonies for the college. Festivities began with a Solemn High Mass at St. Joseph's Cathedral, followed by a colorful procession from Swint Hall to Donahue Hall, where the dedication took place. The now-Archbishop Swint and the Jesuit Provincial of the Maryland Province were the principal speakers. Four years later, the college's first commencement saw 31 men and 20 women graduate.

Father Lewis's work continued unabated. He was a special assistant to the college's president, immersing himself in any and all issues that affected the college. He was instrumental in obtaining an amendment to the federal G.I. Bill of Rights that would allow veterans to receive financial aid while attending a still-unaccredited college.⁵¹ Wheeling College promptly admitted its first military veterans after that 1956 amendment. On February 11, 1957, Archbishop Swint deeded the college property to the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus. This formal gift of the college would subsequently be commemorated as "Founder's Day."⁵² On November 4, 1957, a committee of the West Virginia Board of Education recommended that Wheeling College be approved as a degree-granting institution. Father Lewis's creativity was evident in the recruitment of entertainer Danny Thomas to give a benefit performance at Wheeling's Capitol Theatre in June 1958 to fund a dormitory project. Three months later, the college opened a \$4.5 million campaign for long-range development. Opening of the college's first residence halls in fall 1959 – McHugh for 158 male students and Sara Tracy for 100 female students – terminated the practice of housing students at Mount de Chantal, boarding houses, and residential homes. The Jesuits had even moved temporarily to a former orphanage to provide student residential quarters.

The year 1962 witnessed accreditation of the school by the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities, and a \$5 million expansion program to fund a library, campus center, theater, and two additional residence halls (1966). Throughout, Father Lewis

built bridges that served the college well during these years.

In the fall of 1964, the college was awarded an Area Redevelopment project – part of President Johnson's Great Society – to study how the State of West Virginia might improve its economy. Under the direction of Father Lewis, eight students each spent about 200 hours studying how tourism might impact employment, traffic and other matters.

The 1970s brought financial challenges, declining enrollment, and rumors that the college would close. Refocused, the Jesuits undertook initiatives that resulted in a 50% increase in enrollment, constructed \$50 million in new facilities, and added an evening program. The word "Jesuit" was added to the school's name in 1986. On August 22, 1996, the school name would change again to the current Wheeling Jesuit University.⁵³

Responsibilities

Father Lewis was to wear many hats – usually simultaneously – in his many years at the school: special assistant to successive college presidents, chief fundraiser, director of public relations and alumni relations and development, liaison to the business and professional community, coach of the golf team, history professor, and college archivist. Having arrived first, he became the first faculty member of the new college. In addition, he coached the Wheeling Jesuit golf teams to championships in the West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference 1964-1966. The teams practiced and played most of their games at nearby Oglebay Park. During the construction of the early buildings, he conducted archaeological digs with students on the college property, collecting spearheads and arrowheads that are now displayed near the main entrance of Donahue Hall.

Lewis would work closely with the several Jesuit confreres who would serve successively as presidents of the institution:

- The early years under the first president, Father Lawrence McHugh, S.J. (1954-1959), witnessed the college's chartering by the State of West Virginia, hiring of faculty, and the building of Whelan, Swint, and Donahue Halls. Other buildings would follow.
- The second president, Father William Troy, S.J. (1959-1966) oversaw completion of McHugh and Sara Tracy dorms, the gymnasium, and the construction of three student apartment buildings on the hill. A Summer School was inaugurated in 1960. A capital campaign for \$5.3 million was undertaken. Student enrollment rose, necessitating more faculty and staff. The college received full accreditation in 1962.
- Father Frank Haig, S.J., served as third president (1966-1972). This was a troubled period for the college: student unrest during the Vietnam War, faculty and student discontent with college policies. Declining student enrollment led to abandonment of part of the college's expansion program (no new library), temporary closure of the Sara Tracy dorm, and other cutbacks that led to some faculty departures and concern about viability of the college.
- Father Charles Currie, S.J., succeeded as the school's fourth pres-

ident (1971-1982). He successfully increased enrollment, gained donor support, and initiated 12 new academic programs. An Evening Division was also created.

- Father Thomas Acker, S.J., would serve as the fifth president (1982-2000) and the last during the remaining lifetime of Father Clifford Lewis. The college was about to transform into Wheeling Jesuit University.

During these administrations, Father Lewis operated publicly and effectively in his dual roles as fundraiser and public relations official. To build support in the local community for the college, the school held banquets for influential Wheeling businessmen, lawyers, and city officials. At any one time, more than 100 guests would be present. A Board of Advisors was devised under Father Lewis – comprised of 32 businessmen, lawyers, and professionals – as a further integration of the school into the local community. The Board met annually, but had subcommittees that met more often. The Charter Guild was formed in 1955 as the women’s auxiliary – and they were highly successful in educating the public as to the school’s purpose and needs, creating goodwill, and raising funds.

Passion for History

This collegiate work dovetailed nicely with Father Lewis’s interest in local history. As a passionate historian, Lewis concluded that the Wheeling area provided ample opportunity to contribute to researching and publishing its history. He became president of the Wheeling Area Historical Society. In 1968, he launched publication of the *Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review*. The first issue contained an article researched and written by him. He would publish again in that journal, while serving on the journal’s Editorial Board. He also served as an officer of the West Virginia Historical Society. He was a principal in organizing the annual Panhandle Historical Dinners. The county historical societies in the Panhandle district of West Virginia met, with Wheeling College playing host; at the October 1968 gathering, Father Lewis showed slides of the historic National Road. He was a popular and sought-after speaker, often supplementing his addresses with illustrative slides. He was often pictured in the photographs that marked such groups’ dinners and other activities.⁵⁴

Interest in Archaeology

Archaeology was another interest of Father Lewis. He regularly attended the annual meetings of the West Virginia Archaeological Society. He became president of the West Virginia Archaeological Society. At the 1968 state meeting, Father Lewis delivered a report on the Wheeling area chapter’s activities, including their work on the McCulloch Site.⁵⁵

Historic Preservation

Father Lewis believed that Wheeling contained numerous historic structures that warranted preservation. West Virginia Governor Hulett Smith appointed Father Lewis to the West Virginia Antiquities Commission in April 1968. Under a new state law, the Commission was charged with conducting a statewide survey of historic properties.⁵⁶ Father Lewis also played a key role in acquiring

federal funds for the restoration of West Virginia Independence Hall (the old Custom House) in Wheeling. At the dedication of the structure, he delivered an address on its history. The structure was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1988, just five years after the death of Father Lewis.

He likewise served as a moving force in the declaration of Wheeling’s Suspension Bridge as a Civil Engineering Landmark in ceremonies held in Wheeling in 1969 – and also as to the subsequent designation of the Suspension Bridge as a National Historical Landmark on the National Register of Historic Places on May 15, 1975. The bridge – the first to span the Ohio River – was built 1847-1849. Lewis’s published article on “The Wheeling Suspension Bridge” (1972) was cited in the Nomination Form for inclusion of the structure on the National Register.⁵⁷ As part of Wheeling’s celebration of the United States Bicentennial on July 4, 1976, Father Lewis delivered the keynote address on the history of the Suspension Bridge.

But the foregoing may create the misimpression that Father Lewis’s spiritual duties were secondary to his administrative responsibilities and academic interests. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Small newspaper notices from eastern Ohio, throughout West Virginia, and Western Pennsylvania indicate a true priest. He addressed a group in Beckley in southernmost West Virginia on “Problems of Planned Parenthood.”⁵⁸ He officiated at marriages, within and outside of West Virginia, of former students and others who came to know and respect him. He worked with such Catholic groups as the Catholic Daughters of America, the Holy Name Society, the Knights of Columbus, and Catholic Parent-Teacher organizations.

Activities Outside West Virginia

Father Lewis’s work was not confined to West Virginia. He was a not infrequent speaker at Catholic gatherings in eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. For example, he served as retreat master at a three-day retreat for the Sacred Heart Alumni Association held at St. Francis Retreat House on Beechwood Boulevard in Squirrel Hill in Pittsburgh in March 1957.⁵⁹ Spring of 1966 saw him address a conference of officers and alumni from all 28 Jesuit colleges and universities that was held at the Bishop’s Latin School in Pittsburgh. The event was sponsored by Wheeling College alumni. Lewis addressed the group in his capacity as director of development at the school.⁶⁰ He was involved in the national Newman Center ministry to Catholic college students at secular colleges and universities. Reflecting his personal conversion experience, he authored a manual of Catholic readings for college students designed to explain the Catholic faith to non-Catholics and educate Catholics whose catechesis was incomplete.

Death

Death came to Father Lewis on St. Patrick’s Day, March 17, 1983, at the school where he had devoted his adult life.⁶¹ Characteristically, he was working on a historical project – the history of Wheeling College. Lewis had just celebrated his 72nd birthday two weeks before his death. His funeral was held at the Jesuit chapel in Wernersville in Berks County, Pennsylvania, where he had entered

the novitiate. Burial followed in the Jesuit cemetery there. Wheeling College held a memorial service the day before Father Lewis's funeral Mass.



Tombstone of Fr. Clifford M. Lewis, Jesuit Cemetery, Woodstock, MD

Source: Find A Grave



Near the tombstone of Fr. Clifford Lewis, S.J., is that of Bishop Michael O'Connor, S.J., who entered the Society of Jesus in 1860 upon his resignation of the see of Pittsburgh.

Source: Find A Grave

Publications

The Wheeling Area Historical Society began publication of *The Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review* in October 1968, devoted to the local history of the northern panhandle of West Virginia.⁶² Appropriately, Father Lewis contributed an article to the first issue: "Bishop Van De Velde's Journey Down the Ohio, 1831." His article, "Jesuits in Virginia 1570-1850" appeared in the Spring 1977 issue of that journal. This was the beginning of a number of historical articles that he would submit for publication over the coming years.

Father Lewis's published works include:

- "French Priests in Western Pennsylvania 1739-1759," *Mid-America*, Vol. 29 (April 1947), 92-121.
- "French Jesuits in Western Pennsylvania," *The Woodstock Letters*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (June 1947), 130-158 [Part I], and Vol. 76, No. 3 (October 1947), 241-261 [Part II].⁶³
- Book Review of Mother Pauline Smith-Steinmetz, *Life of Mother Janet Stuart* (Dublin: Clonmore & Reynolds Ltd., 1948), appearing in *The Woodstock Letters*, Vol. 78, No. 4 (November, 1949), 383.
- Book Review of Kenneth E. Kidd, *Excavation of Ste Marie I* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1949), appearing in *The Woodstock Letters*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (May 1950), 191-192.
- Book Review of John Bernard McGloin, *Eloquent Indian: The Life of James Boucharde, California Jesuit* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), appearing in *The Woodstock Letters*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (July 1950), 287.
- Co-author with Albert J. Loomie of *The Spanish Jesuit Mission in Virginia, 1570-1572* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press for the Virginia Historical Society, 1953).
- "Sporadic but Dramatic Contacts Link Jesuits to State Through Four Centuries," *The West Virginia Register* (October 12, 1956), 28.
- Editor of *FOCUS: Catholic Background Reading for the Orientation of College and University Students* (Huntington, IN: National Newman Club Federation/Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1956).
- Book Review of Rev. Emmett A. Shanahan, *Minnesota's Forgotten Martyr* (Warroad, MN: St. Mary's Church, 1949), appearing in *The Woodstock Letters*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (February 1961), 94-96.
- "Bishop Van De Velde's Journey Down the Ohio, 1831," *Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (October 26, 1968), 8-12.
- "A Frontier Store in West Virginia," *West Virginia History*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (July 1971), 238-243.⁶⁴
- "The Wheeling Suspension Bridge," *West Virginia History*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (April 1972), 203-232.
- "Triumph from Tragedy: Charles Ellet Jr. and the Collapse of the Wheeling Suspension Bridge," *Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (Spring 1976), 2-15.
- "Francis H. Pierpont – A Man for Two States," *Allegheny College Bulletin* (June 1976).

- “Francis H. Pierpont – A Man for Two States,” *Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review*, Vol. V, No. 1 (Autumn 1976), 15-21.
- “Jesuits in Virginia, 1570-1850 – A Brief Account,” *Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Spring 1977), 3-10.
- “Nation’s Greatest Earthquakes, 1811-1812: Effect in Wheeling Reported by Ship-Builder Josiah Fox,” *Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review*, Vol. IX, No. 1 (Autumn/Winter 1979), 2-14.
- “Career of Josiah Fox as Ship-Builder for the U.S. Navy: His Own Story,” *Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review*, Vol. X, No. 1 (Autumn/Winter 1980), 22-31.
- “The Reconnaissance Expedition of Two French Navigators,” *West Virginia History*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Fall 1981), 21-35.
- “Roman Catholic Missions in the Southeast and the Northeast,” in William C. Sturtevant and Wilcomb E. Washburn (eds.) *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 4: History of Indian-White Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1988), 481-493. This is a 20-volume series, publication of which began in 1978; 15 volumes were published before the series was suspended in 2007.

Awards and Recognitions

Father Lewis’s true legacy lies in Wheeling Jesuit University – the name adopted by Wheeling College in 1996. While the school’s initial buildings reflected the names of the successive bishops of Wheeling and a principal donor to the diocese, the school – and community leaders – later memorialized the work of Father Clifford Lewis in several ways:

- The school installed a commemorative plaque at Whelan Hall recognizing Father Lewis and four other Jesuits as the first residents in Whelan Hall and the original trustees of the college.
- The WJU Alumni Association created the Clifford Lewis S.J. Award that is presented yearly to the alumnus/a who best exemplifies Father Lewis’s spirit, extraordinary service, and dedication to Wheeling Jesuit University – a “person for others.” The first recipient was Father Lewis in 1971.
- The school conferred an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.) upon Father Lewis at the Fall Academic Convocation (September 1974), in recognition of his contribution as a Jesuit founder of Wheeling College.⁶⁵
- Wheeling’s principal newspaper, the *Wheeling News-Register*, recognized Father Lewis’s contribution to the community in a 1974 editorial: “If the purpose of education is to prompt a human awakening in man, we believe that Father Lewis is a true example of education’s success.”⁶⁶
- The Upper Ohio Valley Historical Society confirmed in 1978 that Father Lewis was affectionately regarded as the “Dean of Wheeling historians” by those in the Wheeling area interested in local history.⁶⁷
- The school dedicated the “Lewis House” on the campus in Father Lewis’s honor in the year of his death, 1983.
- The Wheeling Hall of Fame Board in 1994 inducted Father

Clifford M. Lewis, S.J., into the Wheeling Hall of Fame that honored residents “who had attained considerable distinction in some specific field and thus brought honor to their home city.” He was honored in the field of “Education and Religion” with these words:

Educator, author, lecturer, and research analyst, he was among the founders of Wheeling Jesuit College (University) and was assistant to college president. He played an instrumental role in restoration of West Virginia Independence Hall and designation of Suspension Bridge as a national historic landmark. He was the first Jesuit priest to take up residence in Wheeling.⁶⁸

- The school created the Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Appalachian Institute in 2002 as a way of stressing the need for a service-learning component at Wheeling Jesuit University. The Institute’s mission is “to serve as a center of research and analysis, education and action attuned always to the struggles and dreams of the Appalachian people” – focusing on issues such as health, education, economic development, and coal impoundment.
- The school recognized Father Lewis’s role as a “founder” of the institution during the 50th Anniversary Lecture Series “Sharing Our History: 250 Years in the Life of the Jesuits and the Upper Ohio Valley.”⁶⁹
- University President Father Joseph R. Hacala, S.J., announced that he would honor this pioneer Jesuit founder during the school’s 46th Commencement exercise in 2004, citing “In the spirit of Wheeling College, Father Cliff Lewis was a pioneer who prophetically dreamed of an institution that would ‘provide independent enlightenment to tomorrow’s problems.’”⁷⁰
- The school, to mark its 50th anniversary, created the Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. Award for Mission and Service and conferred the new award posthumously on Father Clifford M. Lewis, S.J., at the 2004 Commencement of Wheeling Jesuit University.
- The compilers of *Legendary Locals of Wheeling* included Father Lewis in this 2013 volume of local “heroes” who shaped the history of Wheeling, appropriately in the “Public Service” chapter.⁷¹

President Hacala’s tribute to Father Lewis at the time of conferral of the Kolvenbach Award included these comments:

During thirty years of service to Wheeling College until his death in 1983, Fr. Lewis was a person on whom students, faculty, administrators, staff members, the public at large and other Jesuits could model their own commitment. It was he who suggested the motto of the college, *Luceat Lux Vestra* (Let Your Light Shine) – all the more significant because it was so typical of the man himself. Hardly a brick, hardly a tree, hardly a curriculum innovation on the campus those early years did not bear the imprint of Fr. Lewis’s vision and wisdom and concern.

Wheeling College was founded in 1954, as a partnership between the then Catholic Diocese of Wheeling and the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, bringing to life this Jesuit institution, the first and only Catholic college in West Virginia. Fr. Lewis, the first Jesuit to arrive on campus, steadily engaged in a dedicated priestly ministry. Constantly on call as an educator, author, lecturer, historian and archaeologist, he was also largely responsible for raising the money to supplement Archbishop John J. Swint's original benefaction to the college.

The first faculty member, Fr. Lewis also served as archivist, as special assistant to the first four presidents, and as the first director of public relations, alumni relations, and development. Fr. Lewis was first and foremost a "great simple man" who said "yes" to the call of God, and dreamed of a campus that would, in his own words, "provide independent enlightenment to tomorrow's problems."

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our founding and incorporation, the institution which he loved so warmly and creatively and which continues to cherish him and learn from him, is awarding, posthumously, the Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. Award for Mission and Service upon Fr. Clifford M. Lewis of the Society of Jesus.⁷²

Legacy

Father Clifford M. Lewis, S.J., was a dedicated priest, an avid historian, and a skilled administrator – with an effective way of dealing with people. He is recognized as one of the two founders of the university. He is remembered for his efforts as an educator, author, lecturer, and religious counselor – a person who was called on to accomplish many tasks over many years, and did all of them well.

Father Lewis dreamed of a Jesuit institution in West Virginia that would "provide independent enlightenment to tomorrow's problems."⁷³ For over 30 years, he worked daily to bring that dream to reality. Today, Wheeling Jesuit University numbers 1,400 students (two-thirds of whom are Catholic) from 37 states and 20+ countries, 47 programs (including seven Masters, one doctoral, and four certificate programs), 29 student clubs and organizations, 20 athletic teams, a 65-acre main campus with an auxiliary campus in downtown Wheeling, and dormitories that house 79% of students on campus.⁷⁴ Support from its 8,000+ alumni and the business community has increased far beyond the original expectations for this last of the Jesuit institutions located in one of the smallest state populations in the United States.

Father Lewis spent almost all of his priestly life just about a two-hour drive from his birthplace of Meadville. He carried with him always the educational foundation he received in the elementary, secondary and collegiate institutions in Western Pennsylvania as well as the Catholic faith that he embraced as a young man in this area. His roots in Western Pennsylvania were strong and deep, and enabled him to reach out to enrich the lives of countless people just a short distance from Western Pennsylvania. He made Wheeling his new "home" without abandoning his original home and all that had shaped him.

The motto of Wheeling Jesuit University is *Luceat Lux Vestra* – "Let Your Light Shine." Father Lewis devised that motto for the school. Indeed, that phrase truly captures the spirit and life story of Father Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. The flame lit by that Jesuit priest more than 60 years ago in Wheeling continues to shine brightly today.

Endnotes:

¹ Today, there are 64 Jesuit high schools in the United States, an increase from the 47 in existence just 25 years ago. The Jesuits never opened a high school in Western Pennsylvania, but they did administer the Bishop's Latin School in Pittsburgh for the 13 years that it operated (1961-1973) as the pre-seminary high school of the diocese of Pittsburgh, inaugurated by Bishop John J. Wright.

No additional Jesuit colleges or universities have been established in the years since Wheeling Jesuit University opened.

² 1940 U.S. Federal Census, Cambridge Springs Borough, Population Schedule, Sheet 1 A, Line Nos. 35-36 (April 4, 1940). The parents lived at 123 Main Street in Cambridge Springs.

A sense of the community in which Clifford Lewis grew up can be obtained by an examination of the histories of Cambridge Springs: (1) Terry and Kathleen Perich, *Cambridge Springs and Edinboro* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), (2) Sharon Smith Crisman, *Around Cambridge Springs* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), (3) Chuck Stone (ed.), *Cambridge Springs Centennial: "Spirit of the Springs"* (Cambridge Springs, PA: Cambridge Springs Chamber of Commerce, 1966), (4) Brigitte Beard, *Cambridge Springs Celebrates 100 Years of the Blue and the White* (1986), (5) Tom Hobson, *Progress in Athletics: Cambridge Springs High School 1910-1986* (1986), and (6) *Cutter's Guide to Cambridge Springs: The Great Health and Pleasure Resort of Pennsylvania* (Cambridge Springs, PA: Charles Cutter and Son, 1902).

³ "Fraternalities Announce Results of Pledging," *The Campus* (December 19, 1928), 1.

⁴ "Reporters," *The Campus* (March 20, 1939), 2.

⁵ "Quill Club," *The Campus* (October 16, 1929), 3.

⁶ "First Issue of 'Lit' to Contain Several Attractive Features," *The Campus* (November 12, 1930), 1.

⁷ "Publications Awards Given to Eighteen," *The Campus* (December 10, 1939), 1.

⁸ "History and Political Science Club Meets," *The Campus* (December 17, 1930), 1.

⁹ "Literary Magazine Will Be Given to Student Body Soon," *The Campus* (February 18, 1931), 1.

¹⁰ "History Club Elects Six Members Monday," *The Campus* (February 25, 1931), 1.

¹¹ "Annual Convention of Journalism Fraternity is Held in Cincinnati," *The Campus* (April 22, 1931), 4.

¹² "Publication Elections for 1931-1932 Held Monday," *The Campus* (May 27, 1931), 1.

¹³ "Phi Beta Kappa Elections Held – Honors Awarded," *The Campus* (September 30, 1931), 1.

¹⁴ As to the Society's history, see Richard Nelson Current, *Phi Beta Kappa in American Life: The First Two Hundred Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

¹⁵ "Changes Are Made in Publications Board," *The Campus* (November 4, 1931), 1.

- ¹⁶“Phi Delts Entertain District Convention,” *The Campus* (December 9, 1931), 1, 3.
- ¹⁷“History Club to Send Delegates,” *The Campus* (December 16, 1931), 1.
- ¹⁸“Delegates of Local Clubs Attend Meetings,” *The Campus* (January 13, 1932), 1.
- ¹⁹“Army Gathering Ruled by Local Politicians,” *The Campus* (February 10, 1932) 1, 4.
- ²⁰“Pi Tau Epsilon Plans Meeting with Political Science Club,” *The Campus* (March 2, 1932), 2.
- ²¹“Quill Club Presents Sunday Reading Hour,” *The Campus* (March 16, 1932), 2.
- ²²“Sigma Alpha Epsilon Winner in Third Sing,” *The Campus* (May 5, 1932), 1.
- ²³“Students Make Good Showing in Carnegies,” *The Campus* (May 11, 1932), 2.
- ²⁴“Further Information on Carnegie Results: The Campus Publishes Ten High Scorers in English for Each Class,” *The Campus* (May 18, 1932), 1; “Lit Magazine Will Discuss Curriculum,” *ibid.*
- ²⁵“Edith Fox to Edit 32-33 Lit Magazine,” *The Campus* (May 25, 1932), 1.
- ²⁶“Allegheny Literary Magazine,” *The Kaldron* (Meadville, PA: Allegheny College, 1932), 61.
- ²⁷“Phi Delta Theta,” *The Kaldron*, *op. cit.*, 88-89.
- ²⁸“Honorary Fraternities: Pi Delta Epsilon,” *The Kaldron*, *op. cit.*, 147.
- ²⁹“Quill Club,” *The Kaldron*, *op. cit.*, 159.
- ³⁰“History and Political Science Club,” *The Kaldron*, *op. cit.*, 160.
- ³¹“Seniors,” *The Kaldron*, *op. cit.*, 184.
- ³²“One Hundred Seventeenth Annual Commencement,” *The Kaldron*, *op. cit.*, 172.
- ³³The school catalog for 1937-1938 included in its faculty listing: Lewis, Clifford M., M.A. Instructor in Journalism and Director of Publicity A.B., Allegheny College; M.A., University of Wisconsin.
- West Virginia Wesleyan College Catalog 1937-1938* Vol. 31, No. 1 (Buckhannon, WV: West Virginia Wesleyan College, September 1937), 16. The college was founded in 1890 by the West Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. It was a private coeducational, liberal arts college, named in honor of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.
- ³⁴“St. Peter’s (Slippery Rock),” *The Pittsburgh Catholic* (May 25, 1939), 5.
- ³⁵“Teacher, College Editor Married in Brownsville,” *The Pittsburgh Press* (August 9, 1939), 15.
- ³⁶“Three Pastors Officiate at O’Keefe-Lewis Service in Brownsville Church,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (August 8, 1939), 8.
- ³⁷“Woman and Mother Are Hurt as Auto Crashes,” *The Evening News* [Harrisburg, PA] (February 8, 1940), 17. See also: “Two Women Hurt in Road Accident,” *The Record-Argus* [Greenville, PA] (February 8, 1940), 1 [reported “shock” and “severe lacerations”]; “State College Woman and Mother Injured,” *Altoona Tribune* (February 8, 1940), 1 [reported “fractured skulls” and “critical condition”]; “Two Women Hurt in Crash at Meadville,” *The News-Herald* [Franklin and Oil City, PA] (February 8, 1940), 1 [reported “serious brain concussions”].
- ³⁸See “Crash Injuries Fatal,” *The Pittsburgh Press* (February 12, 1940), 13, and “College Agent’s Wife Dies,” *The Pittsburgh Press* [Final Edition] (February 12, 1940), 6. See also “Woman Dies of Wreck Injuries,” *The Record-Argus* [Greenville, PA] (February 12, 1940), 9.
- ³⁹As to the order’s history in the United States, see Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., *The American Jesuits: A History* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).
- ⁴⁰Nicholas Brady (1878-1930) held several papal honors and was a papal duke. Genevieve Garvan Brady (1884-1938) was a papal duchess who became a *confidante* of Bishop (later Cardinal) Francis Spellman and hosted Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli (Pope Pius XII) at her 87-room 72,000-square foot Tudor mansion, *Inisfada*, on Long Island during the latter’s 1936 trip to the U.S.
- ⁴¹Despite declining numbers and talk of closing the novitiate and selling the building, the novitiate remained in Wernersville until 1993. In the late 1960s, a Jesuit spiritual center was opened in the building for laymen and women. Retired Jesuits now occupy a portion of the house. “History of the Jesuit Center,” *Jesuit Center for Spirituality at Wernersville, PA*, accessed October 3, 2017, <http://www.jesuitcenter.org/history>.
- ⁴²Woodstock College existed from 1869 to 1974. It was located just west of Baltimore. The campus is now a Job Corps Center.
- ⁴³Clifford M. Lewis, “Jesuits in Virginia, 1570-1850 – A Brief Account,” *Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Spring 1977), 7.
- ⁴⁴John Joseph Swint was born in Pickens WV in 1879, ordained a priest of Wheeling in 1904, appointed auxiliary bishop of Wheeling in 1922, ordained a bishop that same year, and appointed bishop of Wheeling in December of the same year (upon the death of his predecessor). He was appointed an archbishop *ad personam* in 1954. He died in 1962 at age 82, having ruled the diocese for 40 years.
- ⁴⁵Today, Catholics number only about 116,000 in a statewide population of a little under 2 million. There are 110 parishes.
- The history of the diocese is recounted in Tricia T. Pyne, *Faith in the Mountains: A History of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston* (Strasbourg, France: Editions du Signe, 2000), and Ryan Rutkowski, *Catholic West Virginia* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010).
- ⁴⁶Some accounts cite his arrival as late as February 1953.
- ⁴⁷Mount de Chantal had been founded in 1848 as the Wheeling Female Academy in downtown Wheeling and moved to its final location with a new name in 1865. Grades 5 through 12 of the private academy were all female. The school building (1864-1865) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The school closed in 2008. Wheeling Hospital purchased the site in 2010 and demolished the building in 2011. Wishing to see the Mount’s legacy continued, the sisters gifted money to Wheeling Jesuit University to establish the Mount de Chantal Conservatory of Music. A gallery displays art, antiques and archives from Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy. The order’s early history is recounted by Barbara J. Howe, “Pioneers on a Mission for God: The Order of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Wheeling, 1848-1860,” *West Virginia History*, New Series Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 2010), 59-92. See also Margaret Brenan, “Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy,” *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, accessed September 21, 2017, <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1430>.
- ⁴⁸Sara C. Tracy (1827-1904) was a New Yorker who befriended Bishop Patrick Donahue (Swint’s predecessor), to whom she left her entire estate. Those funds enabled development of a number of diocesan institutions, including Wheeling College.
- ⁴⁹“Bertrand J. Marlier,” *The Pittsburgh Press* (October 31, 1990), 19. Marlier also had the unique distinction of attending Sacred Heart High School in Pittsburgh during the period that the parish operated a co-ed high school in competition with the newly opened Central Catholic

High School for Boys. Marlier served on Sacred Heart's football team. See "Sacred Heart Hi Enrolls 200: Clubs Organized, Football Season Starts," *The Pittsburgh Press* (September 30, 1928), 66. Bertrand's older brother, Raymond (1894-1969) was also a famed architect.

- ⁵⁰ Father McHugh began his theology studies at Innsbruck, Austria, in 1936. He was expelled by the Nazis shortly after the *Anschluss* of Austria by Germany.
- ⁵¹ The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-346, codified in Title 38, U.S. Code, Chapter 12) and the Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 (P.L. 82-550, codified in Title 38, U.S. Code, Chapter 33) as amended. Collectively, they were referred to as the G.I. Bill of Rights.
- ⁵² Sixty years later (on May 23, 2017), Wheeling Jesuit University announced that the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston would purchase the university's property in exchange for redeeming the school's outstanding bonds that secured its long-term debt – in order to stabilize the school's finances and secure its future. The property was leased back to the school at a nominal rate. "Wheeling Jesuit University Sells Property to Secure Financial Future," *America*, last modified May 26, 2017, <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/05/26/wheeling-jesuit-university-sells-property-secure-financial-future>.
- ⁵³ The history of the university is told in (1) Steven M. Infanti, Paul V. Stark, Judith Geary, Joseph R. Hacala (eds.), *The First 50 Years of Wheeling Jesuit University: Ignatian Vision and Gospel Values in the Tradition of Jesuit Education, 1954-2004* (Wheeling: Wheeling Jesuit University, 2005), and (2) Joseph A. Laker, *Wheeling Jesuit University* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012). See also the history appearing at the university website: <http://www.wju.edu/about/history/default.html> (accessed September 21, 2017).
- ⁵⁴ See, e.g., "History Groups Plan Meetings," *The Weirton Daily Times* (October 3, 1968), 5; "History Group to Hear Priest," *The Weirton Daily News* (November 18, 1969), 2; "State Officers," *The Weirton Daily Times* (September 24, 1969), 17 [with photograph]; "Historical Societies Hold Dinner," *The Weirton Daily Times* (September 24, 1969), 17; "Historical Dinner Principals," *The Weirton Daily Times* (October 23, 1967), 1 [with photograph]; "Historical Groups of District Meet," *The Weirton Daily Times* (October 23, 1967), 1-2 [Father Lewis, identified as president of the Ohio County Historical Society, offered the Benediction.]
- ⁵⁵ "Potomac State Host to Society Meeting," *Cumberland Evening Times* [Cumberland, MD] (October 17, 1968), 11.
- ⁵⁶ "Three Appointed to Antiquities Panel by Smith," *The Charleston Daily Mail* (April 3, 1968), 15.
- ⁵⁷ See National Park Service, "Wheeling Suspension Bridge," *National Register Digital Asset Management System*, accessed September 21, 2017, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail?assetID=7fd8551-e435-412b-a437-4ded19ee67b7>.
- ⁵⁸ "To Meet May 2," *The Raleigh Register* [Beckley, WV] (April 26, 1965), 5.
- ⁵⁹ "Alumni on Retreat," *Pittsburgh Catholic* (March 14, 1957), 12.
- ⁶⁰ "Jesuit Alumni Plan Meeting," *Pittsburgh Catholic* (April 14, 1966), 12.
- ⁶¹ "Jesuit College Teacher to be Buried in Berks," *Reading Eagle* (March 19, 1983), 14; "Wheeling College Co-Founder Dies," *The Pittsburgh Press* (March 20, 1983), 43.
- ⁶² Today, the Wheeling National Heritage Area continues the initiative first started by the Wheeling Area Historical Society.
- ⁶³ *The Woodstock Letters* are officially titled *The Woodstock Letters: A Record of Current Events and Historical Notes Connected with the Colleges and Missions of the Society of Jesus*. The *Letters*, covering

the years 1872-1969, appear in print and are digitized. See, e.g., George Zorn, *Woodstock Letters Index*, Volumes 1-80 (1872-1951) (Woodstock, MD: Woodstock College Press, 1960), accessed September 21, 2017, <https://archive.org/details/woodstockletters1801unse>.

- ⁶⁴ *West Virginia History* was an annual journal published by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.
- ⁶⁵ Many, but not all of Father Lewis's awards, are listed at the WJU Factbook website, accessed September 21, 2017, factbook.wju.edu.
- ⁶⁶ Harry Hamm, Editor, *Wheeling News-Register* (September 29, 1974).
- ⁶⁷ Robert Ramsey and Kenneth R. Nodyne, "In Honor of Father Lewis, First Editor of the *Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review*," *Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review*, Vol. VII, No. 2 (Spring-Summer 1978), 23.
- ⁶⁸ Wheeling Hall of Fame, "2015 Wheeling Hall of Fame Program," *Ohio County Library*, accessed September 21, 2017, [http://www.ohiocountylibrary.org/uploads/5g_WHOF-MAG105500-Book_P4\(1\).pdf](http://www.ohiocountylibrary.org/uploads/5g_WHOF-MAG105500-Book_P4(1).pdf).
- ⁶⁹ "Lecture Series to Examine Early Years of Wheeling Jesuit University" [advertising the November 3, 2004 lecture], *Wheeling Jesuit University*, accessed October 3, 2017, http://www.wju.edu/about/adm_news_story.asp?iNewsID=1265&strBack=%2Fabout%2Fadm_news.asp.
- ⁷⁰ "Brother Rick Curry to Address Class of 2004," *Wheeling Jesuit University*, accessed October 3, 2017, http://www.wju.edu/about/adm_news_story.asp?iNewsID=1079&strBack=%2Fabout%2Fadm_news_archive.asp.
- ⁷¹ Seán Duffy and Brent Carney, *Legendary Locals of Wheeling, West Virginia* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013), 105, 125.
- ⁷² "Wheeling Jesuit University Honors Founding Jesuit With The Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. Award for Mission and Service," *Wheeling Jesuit University*, accessed October 3, 2017, http://www.wju.edu/about/adm_news_story.asp?iNewsID=1121&strBack=2Fabout%2Fadm_news_archive.asp. The award was named for Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, then-Superior General of the Society of Jesus. As 29th Superior General, Kolvenbach (1928-2016) served 1983-2008.
- ⁷³ Fr. Joseph Hacala, S.J., "Recommitting the Institution to Its Mission," *National Jesuit News*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (November 2004), 7.
- ⁷⁴ "Fast Facts About WJU," *Wheeling Jesuit University*, accessed October 3, 2017, <https://www.wju.edu/about/fast-facts.html>.