

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Br. Arthur A. Loftus

Faculty/Baseball Coach



Arthur Austin Loftus, the son of Irish immigrants, was born in the Bronx on August 8th, 1904 and entered the Congregation of Christian Brothers at 14 years of age on October 4th, 1918. A key to his sense of vocation can be found in his lifelong devotion to St. Therese of Lisieux, popularly known as the Little Flower. He received his bachelor's degree from St. Mary's College in Halifax, NS in 1923 and went on to help found Leo High School, in Chicago IL, in 1926. He taught at Leo from 1928-1933, while studying for, and receiving, a masters degree in classical languages from Notre Dame University in 1933.

At this point in time, Br. Loftus was transferred to Power Memorial Academy, where he taught for 7 years, in addition to coaching varsity baseball and basketball, with his teams winning the 1937 and 1939 CHSAA City Championships for baseball and the 1939 CHSAA City Championship for basketball. Somewhere in this same time period, he also managed to study for, and receive, his doctorate from Fordham University in 1940.

When Iona College first opened its' doors in 1940, Br. Loftus was one of the founding community of nine Christian Brothers, serving as chairman of the philosophy department and continuing to coach varsity baseball and basketball. Their idea was to start a small, affordable college for the sons of New York's working class. At the time, the Christian Brothers taught in seven high schools in the Archdiocese of New York, including [Iona Prep](#), All Hallows, Rice, and Power. They recognized that many of their graduates could not afford the cost of local universities, and so, Iona was born.

Guiding the college through its' tenuous start and sudden growth were her first two presidents, Br. William Cornelia and Br. Arthur Loftus. One a native of Dublin, the other a native New Yorker, they helped Iona expand and prosper throughout the middle of the 20th century. Br. Loftus succeeded Br. Cornelia as president of the college in 1946, serving in that role until 1953. In those years, according to Brother Harold Delaney, Provincial of the Eastern American Province, the new president was "totally involved in every facet of the early development of Iona College."

In 1953, Brother Loftus was named the Provincial Leader of the North American Province, a post he held until 1960. At that time, he returned to the academic life as the principal and religious superior of Essex Catholic High School in Newark, NJ. In 1966, he was elected the Superior General of the Congregation of Christian Brothers, the first native born American to hold that position. Based in Rome, he led the Congregation of some 3,000 brothers in 30 countries and visited more than 400 schools and religious homes in Europe, North and South America, India and Africa, an enterprise that helped draw attention to what his associates were to describe as his great religious zeal and energy.

In 1972, at his request, Brother Loftus returned to the United States to resume his career as a high school teacher at Bishop Hendricken High School in Warwick, RI. He remained there in that capacity until his death on October 1st, 1979, the feast day of St. Therese, the Little Flower and just 3 days before his 61st anniversary as a Christian Brother.