



Canon Robert Reed, precentor, conducting choir rehearsal at St Patrick's Cathedral. Photograph: Brenda Fitzsimons

TRIBUTE - Canon Robert C Reed

Canon Robert C (Bob) Reed, who has died aged 68, was a teacher in Wesley College, Dublin, for 42 years, during most of which time he was housemaster. He was also closely associated with St Patrick's Cathedral for almost 30 years.

The Very Revd Victor Stacey, Dean of St Patrick's, referred to his gifts in music and liturgy,

and said that “his joyful and at times calming presence” would be missed.

Christopher Woods, principal of Wesley College, described him as an institution in the school, “a big personality and always generous to others”, a great friend whose judgment and perspective he deeply valued, whatever the issue.

A Wesley colleague, Niall MacMonagle, said that Canon Reed was a “kind and extraordinarily dedicated teacher” and that “his humour served him well during his challenging role as housemaster” for 37 years.

Robert Chase Reed was born in Chatham, Massachusetts, the second child in a family of four. He received his schooling at Wakefield Memorial School and Chatham High School.

Geography major

From 1965 to 1967, he attended George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee, a renowned teacher training college, where he majored in geography. He then studied mass communications at Emerson College, Boston, graduating in 1970.

As a result of meeting the son of the then principal of Wesley College in 1971, he came to Ireland for a short holiday and made this country his home for the rest of his life.

Having spent much of his youth around Cape Cod, he loved to return there throughout his life.

Although he embraced all things Irish, he never left America behind either and had “that outward-looking, adventurous, tolerant, true American quality”, according to Niall MacMonagle.

A short period of temporary teaching at Wesley was followed by a permanent position teaching geography and he took his Higher Diploma in Education from Trinity College in 1972. He took on the job of resident housemaster, a pastoral role that, according to Dean Stacey, “possibly gave him the greatest satisfaction”.

He looked after thousands of boarders in the school for nearly four decades. Large numbers of past pupils showed their appreciation by attending the service of thanksgiving on his retirement in 2012 and he travelled all over the world to attend many past pupils’ weddings over the years.

He met fellow teacher Ida Bunberry in Wesley College and they married in 1982.

He studied for the priesthood in the Church of Ireland and was ordained a non-stipendiary minister in 1988, serving his title in Taney parish, Dundrum, in south Dublin.

Praying with song

His singing ability (his favourite quotation was *bis orat qui bene cantat* – he who sings well prays twice) introduced him to St Patrick's Cathedral, where he rose through the ranks of minor canon (1988), succentor (1992), treasurer (1996) and precentor (2001).

In all these roles, Dean Stacey said, he had “scope for all his gifts, musical, pastoral, educational”.

He worked with musicians, the choirs of the cathedral and of the cathedral schools, “contributing to each ... with his wisdom, counselling, peace-making and generosity”.

He was a gregarious man and would travel distances to a good party.

An avid and eclectic sports fan, he gave his support to Cricket Ireland, Leinster and Irish rugby, Boston Red Sox, New England Patriots, Boston Bruins, UNC Women's Lacrosse, Vanderbilt Commodores and Dublin GAA.

He is survived by his widow, Ida, brother Rick and sister Melissa.

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