



**In Memoriam – Fr Patrick Joseph Finneran, S.J.
(January 23, 1915-October 1, 1989)
Taught at Wah Yan College, Kowloon, 1952-1989**

A. Photographs, 1958-1989



FORM V B, 1960 - 1961

F5B, 1960-1961



*Mr. Chu, Fr. Finneran and Mr. Hung —
the pace setters.*



TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

1958-1959, with Mr Chu & Mr Hung 1961-1962, teachers of English



"Above reproach, guard thy Baptism"

1959-1960, baptizing students

AIKIDO CLUB



1974-1975, Aikido Club

Soccer



Planning the next move on the "football board"



員職及員球體全軍冠項三組甲界學港全獲榮

1958-1959, planning

1958-1959, championship



SENIOR GRADE LEAGUE AND KNOCK-OUT TROPHY WINNERS

1960-1961, trophy winners



Mrs. Ho presents the trophy to Ng Chun Bong.

1960-1961, trophy presentation

Swimming



Life Savers Club.

1960-1961

Tennis



1974-1975, championship



1975-1976, playing tennis



1975-1976, playing tennis



1984-1985, with tennis team



1985-1986, with tennis team

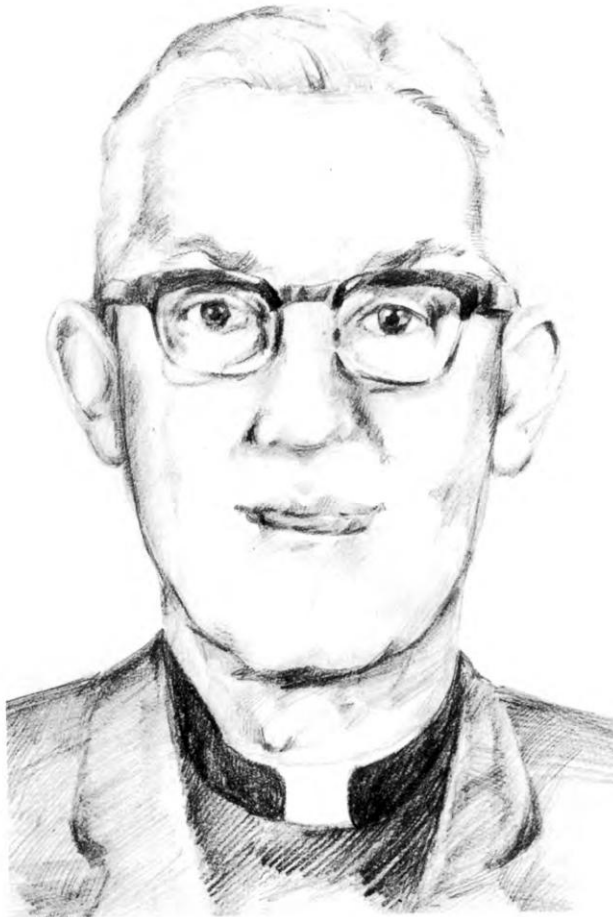


1988-1989, with tennis team

B. Tributes and Memories

Sandglass

Last Tribute to Father Patrick Joseph Finneran, S.J.



Fr. Patrick Joseph Finneran, S.J. (1915 – 1989)

Introduction

The late Father Patrick Joseph Finneran, S.J. was renowned as a keen sportsman. Besides his predilection for sport, he was also a devoted teacher. He had taught in Wah Yan College, Kowloon for 35 years, which amounted to nearly half of his life. The number of students who were taught by him exceeded a thousand, and with his dedication and enthusiasm, they remember him as an attentive form-master. In his later years, he concentrated on tennis, and under his leadership, the results proved to be glorious. All the students were disturbed when they heard of his sudden death, and many expressed their condolences. By laying out this special section, we pay a last tribute to the memory of our revered teacher.



A BIOGRAPHY

Fr. Patrick Joseph Finneran, S.J. (1915 — 1989)

BY Father A.J. Deignan, S.J.

All of us were shocked when Father Finneran died so quickly after falling in his room on October 1st, 1989. He died soon after being admitted into Kwong Wah Hospital.

He had been, as usual, Formmaster of Form 5A2 teaching the students English and Biblical Knowledge. On the previous Friday, September 29th, he had been to Cheung Chau on a class picnic, which he enjoyed very much. Of course he was still in charge of the School Tennis Team which he coached for many years so successfully.



*Enjoying the peace
of reading newspaper*

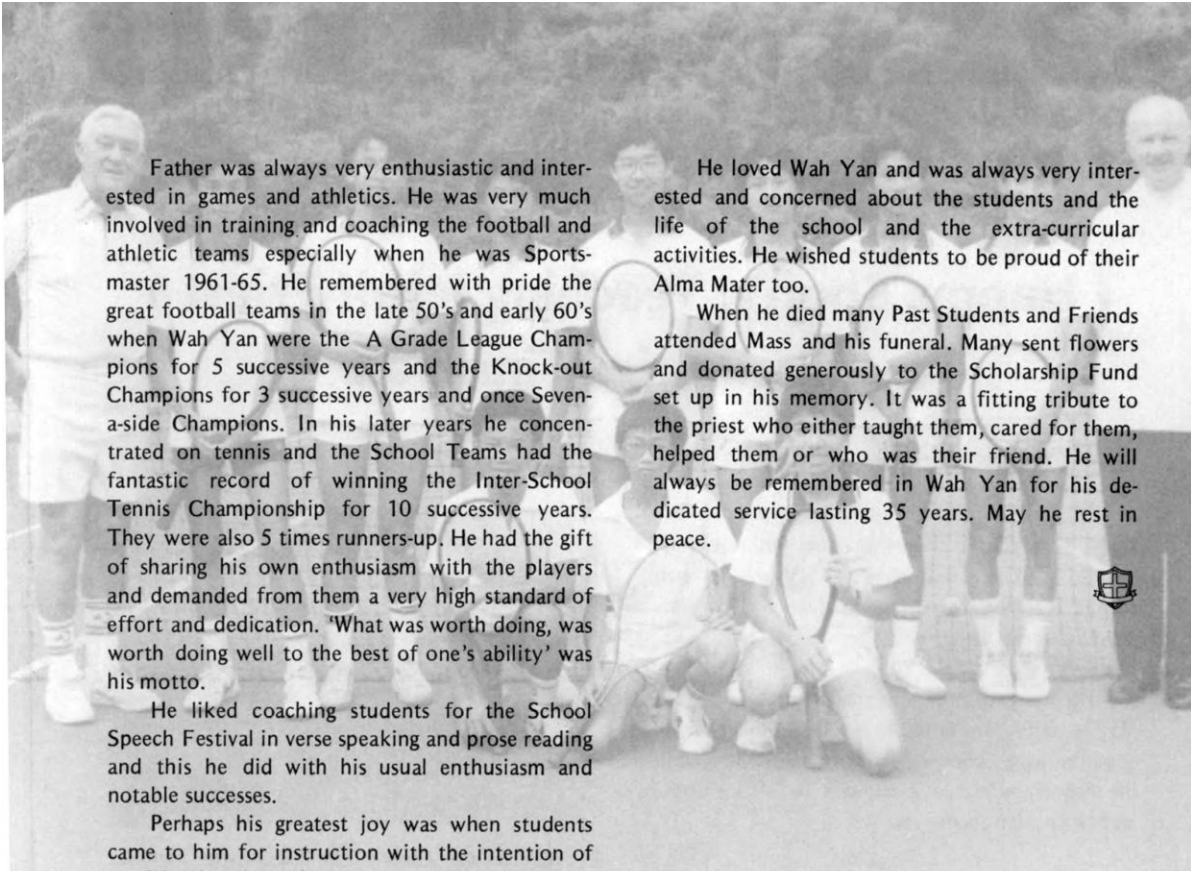
Father Finneran first started teaching in Wah Yan College, Kowloon in 1952 and apart from two years spent in Wah Yan College, Hong Kong (1956-58) he taught in this school up to September 1989 i.e. for 35 years. You can imagine the number of students that knew him over these 35 years of generous service. He was an excellent teacher, enthusiastic, dedicated and persevering. He always wanted his students to succeed and he tried his best to help them obtain success. He once wrote "I always try to help the boys to do well

in their exams, for I feel that is my first duty, but at the same time I try to educate them for life — to teach them what is right and what is wrong, what is important and what is not." Like a good teacher, he had a personal care and concern for each student. Again he wrote "Over these years I have taught and got to know more than a thousand boys and to me each of them is an individual with a personality of his own, and the more I got to know each one, the more I admired him and love him." It is no wonder that so many Past Students who experienced his love, care and respect remembered him and wrote to him or sent him Christmas cards.



*Happy, friendly
students and their
attentive form-master*





Father was always very enthusiastic and interested in games and athletics. He was very much involved in training and coaching the football and athletic teams especially when he was Sports-master 1961-65. He remembered with pride the great football teams in the late 50's and early 60's when Wah Yan were the A Grade League Champions for 5 successive years and the Knock-out Champions for 3 successive years and once Seven-a-side Champions. In his later years he concentrated on tennis and the School Teams had the fantastic record of winning the Inter-School Tennis Championship for 10 successive years. They were also 5 times runners-up. He had the gift of sharing his own enthusiasm with the players and demanded from them a very high standard of effort and dedication. 'What was worth doing, was worth doing well to the best of one's ability' was his motto.

He liked coaching students for the School Speech Festival in verse speaking and prose reading and this he did with his usual enthusiasm and notable successes.

Perhaps his greatest joy was when students came to him for instruction with the intention of receiving baptism. He once wrote "I would like to see them all Catholics — this would be my greatest gift to each boy. I give everyone the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of the teaching of Jesus.... many were attracted and have believed and were baptised. For me, it is a great joy, especially at Christmas to get letters and cards from all over the world from Past Students whom I baptised."

Father Finneran had many friends — people he knew through his work in the school; — people he had directed in retreats or helped spiritually; — or just people he met casually. He had a wonderful memory for people and the details about them. He was always willing to help them in every way possible and he appreciated their friendship.

He loved Wah Yan and was always very interested and concerned about the students and the life of the school and the extra-curricular activities. He wished students to be proud of their Alma Mater too.

When he died many Past Students and Friends attended Mass and his funeral. Many sent flowers and donated generously to the Scholarship Fund set up in his memory. It was a fitting tribute to the priest who either taught them, cared for them, helped them or who was their friend. He will always be remembered in Wah Yan for his dedicated service lasting 35 years. May he rest in peace.



Making wishes, and blessing his students

MEMORIES

R.I.P. Happy, Sporty, Teaching Jesuit Priest — Fr. Patrick Finneran

BY Harold Naylor

In the past months, quite a few people have asked me about Fr. Finneran. They did not know he had died. He was very well known. He had started teaching Form Five English and Religious Studies here in 1952.

He was exceptional in that he died as a Form Master, unlike most teachers. He did not have an apparent long sickness. Two days before he died in his shower, he had 5A2 on picnic to Cheung Chau, and swam with them.

His funeral in St. Ignatius Chapel on Thursday afternoon, October 5th, saw a turn out of also most half the school. He had also sold forty tennis rackets to Form One boys, and of course the Tennis Team was there, along with many other people in school sports. But there were past students and about fifty people who he had baptised into the Church.

Every year, he instructed a few in the Catholic Faith. These wrote to him at Christmas, and I know that he used to send out as many as 300-400 Christmas cards. He had long lists of addresses of those he had baptised. There were about sixty priests at the Requiem Mass, forty concelebrating.

Along with them were many Religious Sisters, whom had known him over so many decades. He was a deeply respected priest.

He had preached in that church a few weeks before and one lady there has received into the Church some months before. Some ladies present,



A speech by Father Finneran, with familiar teachers in the background



Addressing on the official opening ceremony of the tennis courts of Wah Yan

of the Catholic Women Guild, remembered the retreat he had preached to them before Easter that year.

He was born in Roscommon, Ireland, 23 Jan 1915, joined the Jesuits in 1934, ordained priest in Dublin Ireland in 1946. He came to Hongkong to learn Cantonese in 1950. His remains are at St. Michael's cemetery, Happy Valley, lying with many Irish Jesuits who have died here. I am not interested in sport — he was a keen sportsman! He was Sports Master in Wah Yan for more than a decade, and very popular. But it was on the tennis court that he was best known. The School Tennis Team won the inter-schools' championship for many successive years. Most people remembered him on the tennis courts, where he was for many hours EVERY DAY.

But I remember him best as the one who lived so peacefully next to me for twenty years! Though I disagreed with him on many topics and issues, I can say that I could think of no better person to live with. He was quiet, retiring early and rising early. He was clean and neat. When he died, his room was a model of orderly neatness. But it was his cheerfulness and gentleness that so many people admired, which was so congenial to live with. When he first met me in 1960, he smiled and told me, "You are one to be in Wah Yan!". Encouragement, gentleness, devotion are words that flash into my mind as I think of him.

There is a beautiful Chinese scroll painting of him, showing him like Confucius, with a smile and a crucifix. It was commissioned by Mr. Frank W.Y. Ho, a long time friend and golf partner. I feel that it is the best tribute I know to him. May he pray for Wah Yan, and may his prayers bring us more Jesuits like him.

Feb., 1990



A Chinese scroll painting of Father Finneran by one of his students

Fr. Patrick Joseph Finneran S.J. (1915 – 1989)

BY Paul Yeung

Fr. Finneran died at 7:04 p.m. on Sunday, 1st October, 1989, following a fall in his room. His death was really a great loss of every member in Wah Yan, Kowloon. Fr. Finneran had taught in Wah Yan, Kowloon for about 35 years and he was very loyal to the school.

At the beginning of the dinner-time on October 1, Fr. Finneran was found collapsed in his shower by Fr. Naylor. There were towels with blood on the floor and there was blood in the washbasin too. Fr. Finneran was bleeding heavily and he was only partly conscious. The case might be that Fr. Finneran fell and hit his forehead against his desk. And afterwards, he might try to go to his shower to clean off the blood with some towels and must have collapsed again. Fr. Deignan anointed Fr. Finneran before he was sent to the Kwong Wah Hospital. Unfortunately, Fr. Finneran died soon after admission to the hospital and he was then 74 years old.

Fr. Finneran was born in Ireland. He entered the Jesuit Society in 1934 and became a priest in 1948. In 1950, Fr. Finneran came to Hong Kong and then he studied two years of Chinese at the Battery Path Language School. Afterwards, he came to the newly opened Wah Yan at 56 Waterloo Road in 1952. In 1956, he moved across to Wah Yan Hong Kong as Minister for two years and then returned to Wah Yan Kowloon where he lived up to his death.

Fr. Finneran was the first born in his family. He had two brothers and his father was in the Royal Irish Constabulary. The education of Fr. Finneran began in a village national primary school. During his leaving certificate year, Fr. Michael Murphy invited him to be a Jesuit and under this invitation he entered the novitiate at Emo Park in Laois.

Fr. Finneran taught students English and Biblical Knowledge at Form Five level. He also published some books on the teaching of English. Every year he prepared some students in verse and prose reading for the annual School Speech Festival.

Fr. Finneran had a flair for sports and up to the year 1964 he was the driving force behind Wah Yan Sports. The school won the A, B and C Grade championships for three years and also First Division Athletics. He was also a devoted lover of tennis and he coached the school team to a record of 10 successive Inter-School championships.

The requiem mass for Fr. Finneran took place on 5th October, 1989 at St. Ignatius Chapel. The mass was celebrated by Cardinal Wu and many other priests. The chapel was crowded with friends of Fr. Finneran and many students and some of them could not help weeping as the Mass proceeded. The Mass ended at about 4 p.m. and the body of Fr. Finneran was buried at Happy Valley. May the soul of Fr. Patrick. J. Finneran S.J. through the mercy of God rest in peace.

'There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold His temple'

(Psalm 27:4)

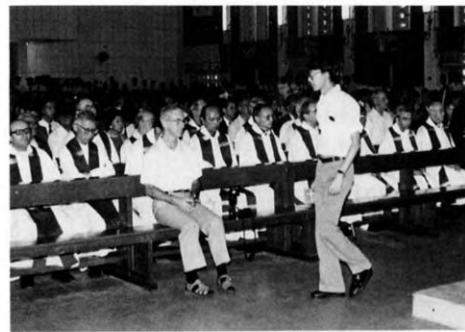


For Fr. Finneran, everything was Tennis. The Wah Yan (Kowloon) Tennis Team, under his leadership, was once the best of the best and had stayed at the summit for a record-breaking ten successive years. He really deserves the glory and credit. I am sorry that we are only the third best this year and failed to make his dream again come true, but I hope he will be satisfied with our great effort and high team spirit.

Father, thanks a million for what you taught and for your devotion to everyone of us in the team. We found that we were not only a team, but in fact a family. It is indeed hard to say goodbye, especially after having got together for so many winters such a nice person like you.

May God bless you.

Medes Ma
Tennis Team Captain 89 – 90



contributions from

TEACHERS

How The Late Fr. Patrick Finneran, S.J. Inspired Me

- (1) She sells seashells on the seashore.
But if the shells she sells are not seashore shells,
then she does not sell seashores shells on the seashore.
- (2) Round the rugged rock the ragged rascal ran.

By the Form Master of 5Y
- Mr. Percival Ho
(Teacher, former student of WYK, 1983-88)

When I was in Form 5A2 (now 5Y) in 1987-88, Fr. Finneran was my form-master, my English and Biblical teacher. He trained us to speak accurately by always asking us to read these tongue twisters aloud, after we had said prayers in English or Chinese on alternate days at the beginning of our lesson. He inspired me to learn to enjoy the wonder of spiritual enrichment for life.

I enjoyed his teaching. Our class copied the tongue twisters (the above two are only some of them) in a notebook which was at hand whenever we had his class, since he often presented us with interesting and exotic materials. With the textbook Practice in English, each student was asked to give him answers orally. His saying 'bad man' (wrong answers) and 'good man' (right answers) filled our lessons. Sometimes I was not

'a good man'; however, I was determined to be one and marvelled at the English Language; why can it reign over the world linguistically through the infinite permutations of the 26 letters? I started to spend much time studying the Language. I became so fascinated with the powerful combinations of letters that I could not resist digging into this language myself for hours everyday. Later, in my report card (unlike the computerized,

impersonal paper nowadays), Fr. Finneran wrote: Percival has the best vocabulary in class.

Class 5A2 enjoyed reading stories in class. Fr. Finneran would ask some of us to come to the platform to read aloud George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, the class reader, to check our pronunciation. Sometimes when I read the story aloud, Fr. Finneran interrupted me:

"Percival, you read too FAST!" He said, pounding the teacher's desk.

"Sorry, Father." I blushed, but continued to read fast. The class laughed.

"Percival, *BAD MAN*, go back to your seat!"

I shuffled back to the last seat of the second row on door's side. Reading aloud fast did not guarantee you compliments from your listeners.

Form 5 was short. With a flash, it was April 1988. Fr. Finneran talked to each of us off-class about our future. He asked us what we would like to study in Form 6. He asked us if we were interested in getting involved in Jesuit's work. Being non-religious, I hardly understood or knew the life of the Jesuits. They were respected in the

school, on the street; they stood out from the crowd, the mundane world; they did not teach for money, but for educating the future generations. I just assumed that they taught until they died.

A few months after finishing Form 5, I left for Canada to study. Earlier one day I asked Fr. Finneran for a reference. I was overwhelmingly excited since I could talk to him again, despite my broken English. However, that morning he missed our meeting at the last minute and left the reference at the information desk for me to pick up since he had guests. That became our last contact. Not being able to say goodbye to him direct, I left sadly and rushed for my life-changing overseas study.

His sudden and tragic death in late 1989 accentuated my grief. One cool night in Toronto, Canada, upon opening a letter air-sent by one of my classmates, I found a small black-and-white card with a portrait of smiling Fr. Finneran with lines of words below it: Born 23rd January, 1915 Ireland. Died 1st October, 1989 Hong Kong. May he rest in peace. I was stunned; I grabbed and hugged my pillow to contain my long-held tears. In the summer of 1990, my first year in university, I came back to Hong Kong on vacation, and went to Fr.

Finneran's gravestone to pay my last belated respect for him at the Catholic Cemetery in Happy Valley.



Ten Years Later

In September 1997, ten years later, I became the form-master of 5Y. Entering Room 128, the same classroom where 5A2 was, gives me a very special feeling. The images of my having classes with other classmates, particularly in Fr. Finneran's class, re-emerged. I always reminisce about the joy, grief (Fr. Finneran once gave me 40 in my composition!), stress, laughter which become my permanently indelible memories. I share the tongue twisters, Practice in English, and my life-changing experiences with my beloved students to perpetuate Fr. Finneran's inspiration.

Percival Ho
Former student of WYK, 1983-88



Donald, our star player.

1969-1970, with Don Chen

Extract from the article “Memories of Wah Yan” (in Chinese) in the WYKAAO website, Features section:

華仁的回憶

Don Chen 陳柏齡 (Class of ‘71) 2011 十二月，LA.

先獻上歪詩一首：

華仁師友尚難忘 憑網寄情傳各方 信是有緣今未盡 四十週年聚一堂

機緣

這次見面，勾起我對那段同學少年日子的回憶。

四十年了，驀然回首，輕舟已過萬重山。我跟各位有緣。想當年，如果不是 **FINNERAN** 神父熱愛網球，我怎樣能夠認識你們這班精英。**FINNERAN** 在南華早報看到我，叫一就讀中五的華仁仔到南華會找我來華仁讀書，同學姓蕭。也在南華學打球。我把消息告訴父親，父親笑說，你點有本事讀華仁？

中三插班，學校要求我考入學試，我數學和中文合格，英文肥佬。何副校長多年後告訴我，考試後，**Fin** 神父進入副校長辦公室，問一句 “What do you want to do with this boy?” 今天想來，就算我三科不合格都照入華仁。

蕭君日後成為我好友。冥冥之中，他指引我入讀華仁書院，令我受用終身。

...

我大學畢業之後，第一次從美國返香港。獨自到學校探望 FINNERAN 神父，我還是選擇那長長的石級上華仁，他老人家消瘦了，但還很精神。寒暄幾句之後，神父就問：你在美國賺多少錢一年？我告訴他，他用口頭慣語誇讚，"good man"，就像當年打贏波落場和他握手沒有兩樣，他總是那句："good man"。那是我最後一次看見他，FIN 神父現在已經投奔天國，和主在一起，錢多少已無什意義。他召我到華仁讀書，對我的一生都有影響，我對他有無限的追憶和懷念。我在學校讀了三年，幫他老人家贏了三年，年年打低拔萃，喇沙，還有 KG5 班鬼仔，也算報效得體，對得起他老人家了。

最近，我遊覽 FINNERAN 神父的網站，把他的一生了解得清楚，當我知道他帶領九龍華仁網球隊，在香港校際比賽中連勝十年，這記錄可比美世界上任何運動教練的成績。我的眼睛為他流下了開心的眼淚...

END

Document compiled by Wong Hin-Shing, with the assistance of Yu Fong-ying,
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