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Hipps gives insight on Alcuin renaming, Tasch's role at Saint Vincent



When Saint Vincent College released a list of a dozen Benedictines against whom “credible allegations” of sexual abuse had been made on Aug. 16, Rev. Alcuin Tasch, OSB, the Student Activity Center’s prior namesake, was included.

Br. Norman W. Hipps, OSB, President of Saint Vincent College, provided insight on the College’s decision to rename the building and on Alcuin Tasch himself.

“When the Grand Jury report was released, and it became apparent that there were a number of church buildings named after prominent clergymen, the Bishops made the appropriate decisions to delete the names of alleged abusers,” Hipps explained, answering the question of why the renaming occurred 23 years

after the initial set of abuse allegations came forth in 1995.

According to meetthemonks.com, Tasch lived from July 28, 1892 to March 17, 1982. The allegations themselves were made 13 years after the death of Alcuin Tasch.

Hipps stated that the campus staff was not even aware that the building was named after him.

“Even though I was a student here when the building was constructed, I was not aware of that naming,” he said.

The Grand Jury report then informed the decision to rename the building, according to Hipps.

“We reviewed our records and only then became aware that Alcuin Hall was named after Fr. Tasch,” Hipps said. “We acted accordingly.”

In terms of personal reaction to the Tasch allegations, Hipps was not personally connected to Tasch.

“But indeed,” Hipps said, “there was sadness that a community member who had worked in our College had been allegedly responsible for abuse that occurred when he was at a parish in Baltimore.”

Hipps said that the distance was significant.

“He was a dean in the College in the 1920s and as such, had a leadership role in an institution which was much smaller than it is now,” he said.

In regards to any personal familiarity with Tasch, Hipps said that he himself entered the monastery in 1963.

“[Tasch] would have been in his 70s at the time,” Hipps said. “I do, however, remember him. He was a tall man with white hair, but I do not recall any conversations that I had with him.”

In 2001, the book *A Place in the Sky: A History of the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport, 1919-2001* was published. In the book, Tasch is mentioned several times as he received a Silver Wings Fraternity certificate for his work in aviation instruction in 1978. Additionally, the book notes that he helped institute Saint Vincent's aviation program in 1929.

Hipps then supplied information of how individuals should react to situations of abuse in the community, confirming that whenever allegations of abuse are made, they need to be reported to the proper office for investigation.

“If we see any situations where there may be abuse, we should report these – whether as a citizen, as a student or as a member of our Catholic Church,” Hipps said.

Hipps emphasized that the act of reporting is important for both the victim and the alleged abuser.

“For the victim that proper counseling and justice might be awarded,” Hipps conferred, “and to the alleged abuser, that the case be investigated carefully and fairly.”

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