

For Brother Wong, music is his life

By ALDONA RYAN
Daily News Special Writer

Brother Terrence Wong, the University of Dayton's assistant to the dean, is a very unusual man. His studious appearance, serious vocation and administrative capabilities overshadow the mirth and music that is in his heart.

He was born in Hawaii, where his parents still reside. His only sister is a concert pianist and teaches at Julliard School of Music.

"I was raised and educated in Hawaii. My teachers were Marianist brothers," he said. "That was at St. Louis High School in Honolulu."

He decided to join the Society of Mary after he graduated from high school. He was sent to the novitiate in Santa Cruz, Calif., for training.

He started his higher education at St. Mary's College in Moraga, Calif., but went back to Hawaii for his last two years at Chaminade University.

"AFTER I FINISHED my college education, I was assigned to St. Louis High School, the same school from which I graduated. In those days, it was unique to be sent back to your own high school," he said.

He taught there for three years and then he was sent back to California. His studies there included master's degrees in religious studies, education administration and music. He studied in Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Jose and Santa Clara.

"While studying, I held positions such as department chairman, dean of students, dean of faculty,

dean of discipline and assistant principal," he said.

In 1978, Brother Wong applied for an administrative position at the University of Dayton. He was appointed the director of Founders Hall, a men's dormitory.

"When I took the job, I didn't realize what I was getting into. Founders Hall had been called 'the zoo' for many years. People were amazed that I changed the attitude completely around," he said. "Students who had lived there before I got there didn't recognize the same place."

HE WAS LATER appointed administrative assistant for the College of Arts and Sciences and finally he became the assistant to the dean.

Besides his regular duties at UD, he directs the chapel choir. He started with 17 members and has now doubled that number. The choir sings every Sunday at the Immaculate Conception Chapel on campus for 10 a.m. Mass.

Brother Wong, who is a baritone, stated, "Music has always been with me. I sang as a child in grammar school. My father played the ukulele and, when we were kids, we had amateur hour with the neighbors. I led my first choir when I was a junior in high school. That was in our parish church. I have always had a choir since then.

"I love classical music. It is a release, a therapy for me," he added. "I did a thesis on Palestrina. I had the privilege of using the facilities at the Vatican archives in Rome for my research."

In 1976, Brother Wong conducted the choir at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.