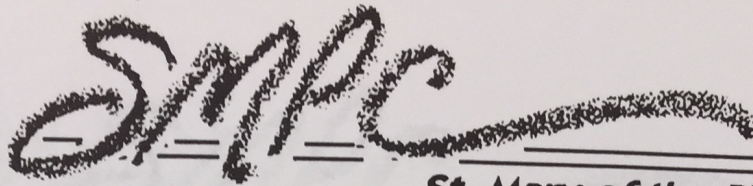


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(316) 225-4171



**St. Mary of the Plains College**

Bernard S. Parker  
President

February 17, 1992

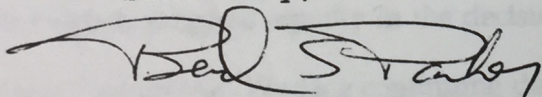
Dear Friend of Saint Mary of the Plains College,

It is with great sadness that I announce the closure of Saint Mary of the Plains College on June 30, 1992. The reasons for the closure are contained in the news release I have enclosed.

The Board of Regents recommended closure to the General Council of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita. They accepted that recommendation with regret today.

I want to thank you for all you have given Saint Mary of the Plains College in the past and I appreciate your continued understanding and support as we undertake this burdensome task of closing the institution with dignity. Peace.

Sincerely,



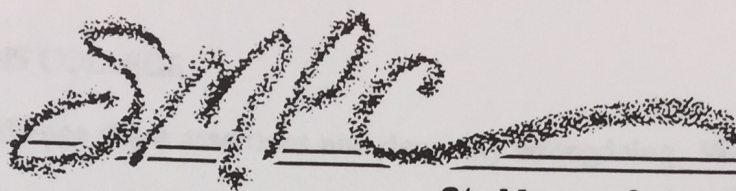
Bernard S. Parker, Ph.D.



An Education for the Third Millennium



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**St. Mary of the Plains College**

February 17, 1992

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Bernard Parker  
President  
St. Mary of the Plains College  
(316) 225-4171

### **ST. MARY OF THE PLAINS COLLEGE TO CLOSE**

DODGE CITY, KS -- St. Mary of the Plains College, a liberal arts college in Dodge City, Kansas, will close effective June 30, 1992, announced Dr. Bernard Parker, president of the College. A total of 837 full and part-time students and 160 faculty and employees will be affected.

"Sadly, the reasons for the closure are incontrovertible and non-negotiable," said Dr. Parker. "The Board of Regents voted to recommend closure to the sponsoring organization, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita. The Congregation accepted the recommendation today with regret, he said."

"The problems facing St. Mary of the Plains were threefold. These factors, all separate but interrelated, weighed equally in the decision. First, like so many private colleges, we have encountered financial struggles. We face continuing declines in student enrollments and can no longer sustain the deficits resulting from operations. The college sustained a loss of \$215,000 last year and is projecting a loss of \$970,000 for the balance of the 1992 fiscal year.

"The second factor in the decision stemmed from the disastrous consequences of the College's involvement with the American Truck Driving School, a vocational program for non-traditional students begun in 1985. The Department of Education asserted the program failed to meet eligibility requirements for access to student aid funds and contends the College is responsible for \$94 million dollars in student aid utilized during the five years the program was in existence. Negotiations seeking resolution of this dispute are continuing.

(more)



ADD ONE

## ST. MARY OF THE PLAINS COLLEGE

"We vigorously challenge these assertions and deny any wrongdoing. We acknowledge making mistakes monitoring the program, but our intentions were always honorable. The Department of Education's failure to make a timely decision while we were still able to rectify the situation was critical.

"The third factor is the College's student loan default rate which was last reported at 43.7%. If the rate exceeds 35% for three years, the institution loses its ability to access Title IV funds which students use to pay college costs. Without the American Truck Driving School students, our default rate is a very respectable 8.1%", Parker said.

Sister Antoinette Yelek, CSJ, president of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Wichita stated that the decision was one of great pain for everyone involved. "Our values of compassion and justice will direct us as we proceed with the closing of the College. Another chapter in our history is coming to a close. Let us make it an act of resignation and be prayerfully grateful for all the good that has been a part of the St. Mary of the Plains experience."

Students, employees and faculty on campus were informed Monday afternoon. Classes will continue without interruption through the end of the semester. Students, alumni and friends of the College who have questions can call 225-4171.

Manor of the Plains, a senior community adjacent to the College will not be affected by the closing. The long-term care facility opened in 1990 is a joint-venture between CSJ Health System and Presbyterian Manors, Inc. Manor of the Plains has 50 nursing beds and 60 assisted and independent living units.

St. Mary of the Plains College School of Nursing in Wichita, with 129 students, will also be affected by the closing. Because of schedule differences, the closing date at the School of Nursing will be August 30, 1992. Discussions are underway to reorganize the School of Nursing under the auspices of a different sponsoring organization. Meanwhile, classes at the School of Nursing will continue without interruption.

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