



**COLUMBIAN SQUIRES**  
**ONTARIO PROVINCIAL BOARD**  
*“For Those Who Must Lead”*

**ECUYERS COLOMBIENS**  
**DE L'ONTARIO**  
*“Pour Ceux Qui Doivent Diriger”*

## **BROTHER BARNABAS McDONALD'S SPECIAL TIES TO ONTARIO**

BY PAUL JOHN CRAWFORD, STATE SQUIRES CHAIRMAN, P.S.D., AND P.D.D. - ORIGINALLY WRITTEN 1988

At the request of Supreme Treasurer, William J. Van Tassell a monumental undertaking with regard to Brother Barnabas, the Founder of the Columbian Squires was arranged.

On Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> day of June 1988, under the direction of the Ontario State Deputy Phil Zakoor, Fred Bédard P.S.D. and Executive Secretary and I were requested to supervise this task. We both had the opportunity to see history in the making, a monument dedicated to Brother Barnabas F.S.C. (the founder of the Columbian Squires) had to be dismantled and removed from Holy Cross Cemetery in North Toronto, Ontario, Canada and reconstructed on the burial plot in Westchester County, New York, U.S.A.

This task was by no means a small undertaking, as the monument is a very imposing and beautiful granite cross 16 feet in height and weighs approximately 3 tons including the base. The removal took about 2 hours and involved nine persons including Mr. Larry Martin, Manager of the cemetery and Mr. Heinz Muller, a specialist in monument designs. The monument had to be lifted by a hoist and taken apart at the base in order that during the transportation the cross would not crack.



**Brother Barnabas McDonald F.S.C.**

Brother Barnabas was born in Ogdensburg, New York on 20 March, 1865. He was baptized Edward Patrick McDonald and became a Christian brother on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1885. Shortly thereafter he became involved in health care work - orphans, abandoned children and delinquents. He achieved great prominence in the field and was recognized internationally by catholic and non-catholic organizations alike. He was on the executive of about 40 social work or child-care organizations and called upon by two U.S. Presidents to carry out investigations and make recommendations.

In 1917 he was transferred to the Christian Brothers Training College in Aurora, Ontario where, for the next four years he worked as a tailor. However, in 1921 the Archbishop of Toronto, the Most Reverend Neil McNeil called him out of seclusion to help organize the various charitable works of his diocese. About this time the Holy See and the U.S. bishops condemned the Y.M.C.A. as an organization to which catholic boys in conscience could not belong.



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The Bishops turned to the Knights of Columbus to develop a similar agency under Catholic control to direct the free time and recreational activities of boys. And as you may expect the Knights turned to Brother Barnabas.

In March of 1923 he presented to the Supreme Council for its consideration a well-formulated and detailed four-part program for "Boyology." The fourth point of this proposal included rules, constitutions and activities for a Junior Order, the Columbian Squires. By 1925 the Boy Life program was in place and the first official Investiture took place in Duluth. There had been experimental circles in Montreal and South Bend and these were also officially recognized.

Brother Barnabas had many titles. He established in 1909 and agricultural school to provide vocational training of delinquent boys at Lincolndale, New York. He was Executive Secretary of the Knights of Columbus Boy Life Bureau; he was Director of Catholic Scouting for the Boy Scouts of America, he was the Organizer of the Columbian Squires and Advisor of playground and recreational associations.

Brother Barnabas was not a robust man in that he suffered from an asthmatic condition. He was moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico in the hope that dry air would be more conducive to the restoration of his health. However, the tremendous efforts and commitment to the various organizations and activities finally sapped his strength and he eventually succumbed in a sanatorium in Albuquerque, New Mexico on April 22, 1929.

On Saturday October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1931 at the insistence of the Supreme Secretary Brother W.J. McGinley, under the auspice of the Knights, in the Toronto area, the remains of Brother Barnabas were escorted from Santa Fe to De La Salle College at Aurora, Ontario, Canada. Here at the College he had spent several happy and peaceful years and had been delighted to come there from time to time for rest and prayer. It was the spot he loved best on earth.

In recognition of the great work of Brother Barnabas the Squires by means of a 25 cent subscription from their members erected a suitable monument over his grave. It was a fitting tribute to this great social worker.

However, in 1967 the Christian Brother's property in Aurora was sold and on Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1967 the remains of Brother Barnabas were moved again, this time to Lincolndale, New York to the school he established in 1909. A special "Day of Recognition" was held and was attended by many of the organizations with which he had been associated. However, this did not prove to be his final resting place as he was evicted yet again for reasons unknown and now he rests at the gate of Heaven Cemetery, Hawthorn, New York.

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Presumably, because of its size the monument did not follow the same direction as that of the remains of Brother Barnabas. The Cross was eventually moved to the front lawn of the Christian Brothers residence in Scarborough, Ontario and was also evicted when this property was slated for homes and a Catholic school. The Cross ended up in Holy Cross Cemetery, North of Toronto where it seemed to act as a marker for the Brothers plot.

In January 1987 at the request of the New York State Chief Squire, Michael Furst and with the help of Brother Isodore in Toronto arrangements were made through the Supreme Office to have the Cross finally reunited with the remains of Brother Barnabas.

I have been pleased to play a small part in the organization and the arrangements of the removal as it is only fitting for the remains of a man of this Stature should be together with the beautiful memorial gravehead cross bought by the boys he worked with and loved.



Brother Barnabas' grave at Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Hawthorn, New York