

Letter: BC comments reveals true goals

Friday, February 4, 2005

To the editor:

There are times in life when false appearances fade away and the unvarnished truth emerges. The comments by Jack Dunn, Boston College's chief spokesperson, praising the relocation of the Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Boston to Our Lady of the Presentation School, reveal contempt for our community and unmask years of lofty rhetoric concerning Boston College's commitment to Allston-Brighton.

In a display of arrogance and ignorance, Mr. Dunn believes that this community is well served by an archdiocese bureaucracy that focuses on marriage nullification and "penal matters." We, however, believe in the vision of the Oak Square Partnership for Youth and Families, a vision that would serve the needs of children, working parents, immigrants and the poor. Mr. Dunn is an apologist for the university he represents, a university focusing its attention on its real estate transactions with the Archdiocese of Boston.

Safe in his office on Chestnut Hill and secure in his suburban home, Mr. Dunn displays a profound lack of knowledge of the problems confronting Allston-Brighton. We live in a community with increasing poverty and declining owner-occupancy rates. If Mr. Dunn so loves the Tribunal, we suggest that he invite its administrative officials and their investigations of penal matters to his home community of Milton. We, then, would benefit from the programs and services that would be provided by the Oak Square Youth and Families Campus.

Ellen McCrave

Siobhan McHugh



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Letter: BC not culprit behind OLP closing

Friday, February 4, 2005

To the editor:




City Councilor Jerry McDermott is either sorely misguided or blatantly manipulating the debate over the Our Lady of the Presentation School for his own political gain. His allegation that Boston College is somehow responsible for the closing of the school is absurd. More importantly, it attempts to confuse what is a very clear case: the Boston Archdiocese is squarely to blame for the fate of OLP. McDermott is wrong to use this as an opportunity to air his own grievances with BC. The families of Brighton deserve better. We have been misled by an uncaring archdiocese. Let us not be misled again by an opportunistic politician.

Stephen O'Brien
Brighton

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Letter: BC defends self against attacks

Friday, February 4, 2005

To the editor:

As an institution with 90 years of history in Allston-Brighton and a longstanding record of support and outreach to our host community, it is with regret that we must respond to Councilor Jerry McDermott and his disturbing allegations regarding Boston College and Our Lady of the Presentation School.

In his remarks, reported in the TAB on Jan. 21, Councilor McDermott unfairly blames Boston College for the rejection of the Presentation School Foundation's proposal by the Archdiocese of Boston. Specifically, Councilor McDermott's assertion that BC "played a hand in letting a Catholic grammar school close for their own gain" is reprehensible. BC played no role in the archdiocese's decision to close Presentation or in its decision to move the Tribunal to the Presentation School. We were informed of the archdiocese's decision when it was announced publicly on Jan. 20. Simply stated, we stand to gain nothing from this decision, as we have already purchased the major buildings that comprise the archdiocese's Brighton campus.


Our position regarding the archdiocese, or any other entity, is that an institution reserves the right to make its own decisions regarding its own property. Knowing the archbishop and his staff at Chancery personally, I know that they have agonized over the closing of Catholic churches and schools as part of the reconfiguration process. It is a painful decision that elicits emotional responses from alumni, parents, students and neighbors. The fact is, however, that they have been forced to close schools and churches that are no longer self sufficient, and in their view, the Presentation School, whose enrollment has dwindled down to 100 pupils, is no longer viable, especially in a community with two nearby Catholic elementary schools. That is a decision, however, that the archdiocese has made independent of Boston College.


What Councilor McDermott seems to have forgotten is that Boston College has a long-standing history of assisting Catholic and public schools in Allston-Brighton, including St. Columbkille's, St. Anthony's, Our Lady of the Presentation, the Gardner, Garfield and Jackson Mann schools, and Brighton High.


The Lynch School of Education and the Graduate School of Social Work at Boston College offer nationally acclaimed programs to assist the needs of students, teachers and parents, and have won the praise and gratitude of the principals in each of these schools. Furthermore, BC students and staff each year provide more than 100,000 hours of volunteer service through literacy programs, ESL classes, tax preparation seminars, food and clothing drives, sports clinics and student-mentoring programs, among other services, mostly in the Allston-Brighton area. In addition, BC provides \$75,000 in annual community grants to various nonprofits, as well as 10 full-time and 10 part-time scholarships to Allston-Brighton residents. Because of its long association and partnership with St. Columbkille's, BC has also provided more than \$250,000 over the past few years in support of its parish school, and intends to continue working closely with St. Columbkille's for the sake of the Allston-Brighton community.


As much as we may want to help, however, we cannot save every school or finance every program that surfaces within this community. It is simply not feasible for any institution with finite resources. So when we were asked to help OLP to transition from a Catholic school to a nonprofit school and community center - particularly in light of the ongoing needs of St. Columbkille's and St. Anthony's schools - we stated honestly that we could not be of assistance in this case.

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For that decision to have elicited statements from Councilor McDermott that Boston College "is not a friend to this community," is both unfair and inaccurate.

We hope that the parents of Presentation School will consider sending their children to nearby St. Columbkille's or St. Anthony's schools so they can continue to receive a first-rate Catholic education. The principals of these schools have said they would welcome OLP students, and simple economics dictates that two strong schools are better than three weaker ones. In addition, we hope that community leaders will realize that by keeping the Tribunal in Brighton, they are preserving jobs for local residents who have been a mainstay of the Archdiocesan work force for decades.

We are proud to be a partner in the Allston-Brighton community. We look forward to our continued partnership and to the mutually beneficial relationship that comes from our long association with our neighbors and friends.

Jack Dunn

Director of Public Affairs

Boston College

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Letter: Statement of the Presentation School Foundation

Friday, February 4, 2005

To the editor:

We renew our call for a meeting with Archbishop Sean O'Malley to discuss the future use of Our Lady of the Presentation School.

The archdiocese's rejection of our proposal to establish a multi-service center at the school ignores the pressing needs of children, working parents, immigrants and the poor.

The archdiocese's decision to retain the building for the administrative purpose of granting marriage nullifications does not respond to the significant problems of Allston-Brighton.

The rejection of our proposal to purchase the building at full market value and to use it to provide vital services for children and the needy contradicts the archdiocese's repeated vow to work cooperatively with communities in planning future uses of church-owned properties.

Kevin M. Carragee




Chairman

Presentation School Foundation

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