

COLUMBUS CRISTO REY SCHOOL PRESIDENT SELECTED

BY TIM PUET

Reporter, Catholic Times

F. James Foley, an attorney for 29 years with the Columbus firm of Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP, has been selected to become the first president of Cristo Rey Columbus High School, effective Jan. 1, 2012. The school is to begin admitting students in the fall of 2013.

Foley said that once he takes the position, he will be hiring an administrative assistant, a development director, a principal, admissions office personnel, and a work-study coordinator, followed later by faculty and other staff members.

The school is to open with a freshman class of approximately 100 students in the former diocesan Child Guidance Center building at 840 W. State St. Foley said the building is intended to serve as a temporary home for the school for two years at the most while a search continues for a permanent location. The school will add one class for each of its first four years, with its first graduation anticipated in the spring of 2017.

"It would have taken something amazing to lure me away from my current position, but this truly is amazing," Foley said. "Being able to help students from needy families receive a quality education really hits home for me. It's an opportunity to pay forward and to share the benefits of the Catholic education I was able to receive because of what my eighth-grade teacher in Akron, Sister John Bosco of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, did for me."

"My family was poor and didn't know it," he said. "We couldn't afford to send me to Archbishop Hoban High School, but Sister John Bosco came to me one day with a bunch of papers and said 'You need to fill these out and take the scholarship test for Hoban.' I won a scholarship to the school, then went on to college and law school at Notre Dame," where he received a bachelor's degree in theology in 1974 and a law degree three years later.

"None of this would have been possible without my teacher's intervention," he said. "I'd like to do the same for students who are in the position I was. I often think back to how formative high school was for me. I know from personal experience the power of a strong college preparatory education.



Students (from left) Dominique Aaron, Savannah Hogan, and Tyler Hughley of the Cristo Rey High School in Cleveland with Columbus attorney F. James Foley, who will become president of the planned Cristo Rey High School in Columbus on Jan. 1, 2012

CT photo by Ken Snow

"Cristo Rey is a chance for all of us involved to be that person who helps to steer an underprivileged eighth-grader to a great high school, then on to become the first person in his or her family to graduate from college."

Cristo Rey Columbus will be an employer-sponsored school providing a coeducational Catholic college preparatory education for urban young people with limited educational options. Students from all religious denominations are welcome.

The school will employ a model of "working to learn and learning to work," which has proven successful at 24 Cristo Rey schools in 17 states and Washington, D.C. Those schools currently educate about 6,500 students. In 2010, 100 percent of their senior class members were accepted to colleges.

Approximately 70 percent of the funding for the schools is provided by the Cristo Rey Network Corporate Work Study Program. Every student in a Cristo Rey school works five full days a month to generate that funding, gain job experience, grow in self-confidence, and realize the relevance of his or her education. Students work at law firms, banks, hospitals, universities, and other professional corporate partners.

There has been a Cristo Rey school in Cleveland since 2004. Three graduates of that school, all of whom are attend-

ing Ohio University, were with Foley in Columbus on Monday, Oct. 17, when the appointment to his new position was announced.

"Cristo Rey was a phenomenal experience," said Tyler Hughley, a junior English major at OU, who interned while at Cristo Rey's St. Martin de Porres High School in Cleveland with Cristo Rey partners *The Plain Dealer* newspaper, the Heinen's grocery chain, Parker Hannifin Corp., and the local justice system. "It encouraged me to consider college as an option and opened doors to opportunities and people I never could have otherwise met."

"The school offered a very close-knit, family-type atmosphere and a real support system," said Dominique Aaron, an OU senior majoring in sociology and taking pre-law studies. "You also learned quickly in your internships that 'This is the real world, where you can't play with people's lives and you never know how you can affect someone else.'" While in high school, she was an intern with Lifeline Screening, the Social Security Administration, and the Baker Hostetler law firm.

"Cristo Rey opened the door to maturity and made me grow up a lot faster," said Savannah Hogan, a junior majoring in exercise physiology, with minors in Spanish and art. "When you work with adults, you realize you have to act as an adult, even at age 14." Most of her

internships were with various departments of the Cleveland Clinic.

Foley said the school has received about \$1 million in pledges, including \$500,000 from the HCS Foundation. It needs to raise \$2.5 million by June 2012 to reach the capitalization amount required by the national Cristo Rey organization.

Foley and Barbara Brown, the school's program director, are talking with local businesses about providing internships for Columbus Cristo Rey students. Those businesses include several locally based insurance companies whom Foley said anticipate offering a combined 14 positions. He said 25 internships are needed for a full class, since four students share one internship.

Foley, 59, and his wife, Vicki, are members of Columbus St. Timothy Church and are the parents of four children and grandparents of three. He has been chairman of the board of Catholic Social Services since 2009, is on the diocesan Catholic Charities Commission, and has served on the board of the Ohio Legal Rights Service Commission and chaired the Upper Arlington Charter Review Commission.

At his parish, he has been a school board member and Parish Council chairman, and has worked on diocesan retreats for high school students.

He has been an adjunct professor at the Ohio State and Capital law schools and has written for and taught at many legal seminars. Before coming to Columbus in 1982, he was an attorney for an Akron firm and for the Justice Department in Washington.

To learn more about Cristo Rey Columbus, contact Foley at (614) 395-1501 or jimf@cristoreycolumbus.org.

