

[Page 59 - With Fr. John Angus Rankin, Glendale](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 45](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1987/6/1

With Fr. John Angus Rankin, Glendale (Before you decided you were going to be? come a priest, what did you think you were going to do?) Doctor. Maybe a vet! More than a doctor! I don't know why. I like people. And, not boasting or bragging, I like to help people. I like to be with people. Likely that came out of the music. But then, , . one of my best friends, "When I was at college, taking physics for the pre-med course, I'd do an experiment. And a great priest--he's dead and gone today--he helped a lot of young fellows. It was an experiment to do with music. And it tested your tone ability and how accurate you were, and how true a tone were you. So I did the experiment, and I came up with figures of, well, 95, 97, 94--I ended up with an average of 94. For myself. And I took the experiment over to get it corrected. And I ran into this old--we called him Doc Pat at the time--Pat Nicholson. He was rector after; we became great friends. "Ho ho," he said, "there's only one man that ever had that at this university. Go back and do it again." So I went back. And this time I came back with my readings, and I was better. Say, I had gone up from 94-point-something to 95-point-something. He said, "That can't be right. You can't be doing the thing right." He said, "I'm the only man that ever went through this university that had perfect tone." And he said it was 98-point-something. And he took me. And I did the thing. I came up with just below himself, "Now, hang it all," he said, "you can go places with music," At that time I had a nice voice, I could hit B-flat dead on, piano, for pitch. So, I got so bloody fed up. I caught the scribbler, and I threw it away, and I was coming out, and I said, "To hell with college, to hell with Nicholson, to hell with medicine, to hell with everything!" I met a friend of mine from Sydney. He said, "What happened?" And I was only a freshman that year, "Oh," I said, "Nicholson and myself had it out." I said, "I'm getting the hell out of here. There's no place." "Oh," he said, "wait now, just hold it." He said, "That's a great man. He'll be your best friend yet." He said, "You'd better go back in and write that experiment out. And get him to correct it." He said, "He's got a gruff tone, but he's got a heart of gold. That year (my friend) left and joined the army. He was killed within 6 months. I never forgot what he said. So Nicholson and I became very good friends, and by God, I got shifted over--dropped Science and went into Arts, And went on and studied, and came back and did some parish work and taught at the college, and then came back out to parish work again. CONTINUED NEXT PAGE (59)