

# Lansdale native to keynote South Dakota graduation ceremony

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Lansdale native Bob Tereshinski talks to students in a classroom at Mount Marty College in South Dakota, where he will give the school's commencement address on Saturday at the close of his 26-year career working for the school. Photo courtesy of Mount Marty College.

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A Lansdale Catholic High School graduate will be the main attraction at a graduation ceremony on Saturday some 1,300 miles away from LC.

Robert Tereshinski, who headed west in early 1965, will deliver the keynote speech at the commencement ceremony for Mount Marty College in Yankton, S.D., as his 26-year career at the school closes. "I had a great life in Lansdale until I was 18, and Lansdale Catholic really gave me a great foundation to further my life in a great direction," Tereshinski said.

Originally a resident of Third Street in Lansdale, Tereshinski said he spent most of his youth playing ball at an aunt's house on Pierce Street, and the baseball skills he learned playing "with a group of outstanding baseball players in Lansdale, just kind of carried over for me" to Yankton.

As a teen at LC, he said, the school's then-Principal Sister M. John Joseph noticed that the young Tereshinski was interested in hunting and fishing, and opened his eyes to the world beyond Lansdale.

"She always caught me reading books about pheasant hunting, deer hunting, out in South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, and she said 'Well, you can have your dream and head out that way if you like,'" Tereshinski said.

He did exactly that after graduating from LC in 1964, and has stayed there ever since: Tereshinski will be retiring Saturday as MMC's vice president and dean of academic affairs, to cap off a career that started in January of 1965 as a student-athlete in both football and baseball.

"I went from being a quarterback at LC to an offensive center at Yankton, and did some field goal kicking for them too," he said, in addition to playing third base and catcher for the school's baseball team.

After graduating from Yankton, Tereshinski coached high school sports in New England for several years until returning to South Dakota in the early 1970s, where Paula Tacke, MMC's vice president for marketing and admissions, said he grew into a pillar of the community.

"Everyone in this community knows Bob, or at least has heard of his huge accomplishments in the coaching and teaching arenas, as well as his leadership the last few years" as MMC's vice president for academic affairs, Tacke said.

"When they hear his name they think of a man with integrity, humor and a love of family and his community," she said.

Located in the Missouri River Valley in the southeast corner of South Dakota, Mount Marty College is a Benedictine coeducational college founded in 1936 in Yankton, SD — about halfway between Sioux Falls and Sioux City — with more than 1,100 students in three campuses at Yankton, Sioux Falls and Watertown, SD.

"It was quite a culture shock for me, leaving the (Lansdale) area, with the rolling hills and the dairy farms, and ending up in, basically, small grain country with cornfields and soybean fields," Tereshinski said.

After returning to Yankton in the mid-1970s, Tereshinski coached as a defensive coordinator for the Yankton College Greyhounds school football team, and acted as an assistant baseball coach for three seasons from 1974-6; his baseball coaching skill caught statewide notice in the early 1980s when he led the Yankton Post 12 American Legion baseball team to back-to-back state playoff appearances.

He also grew involved in the community — Tereshinski has headed the Yankton Chamber of Commerce, its Sertoma Club which performs service projects throughout the area and been a member of the Yankton Library board, while managing local radio station KQHU. Tacke said

those experiences made him a strong asset to MMC when he was brought back on board in 1988 to coach and work as an admissions counselor.

“Bob was coming to us after having a successful career in the radio business, as well as lots of experience teaching and coaching locally,” she said.

Tereshinski began recruiting and coaching a new Mount Marty College baseball team in 1988, and in time that team went on to earn four NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) regional appearances and five SDIC (South Dakota Interstate Conference) regular season and tournament championships. The team also developed a total of 12 NAIA Academic All-Americans, three NAIA All Americans and brought three SDIC coach of the year awards for Tereshinski, who was named the South Dakota Sportswriters Association Coach of the Year in 1995.

Four years later, his Lancers baseball team was named the SDSWA’s College and University team of the year, and Tereshinski’s baseball coaching career totalled more than 400 wins throughout 11 years at both levels, including a school record 332 wins coaching Mount Marty College’s ballplayers.

The school and area have honored him before: in 2004 he was named a Yankton College athletic Hall of Fame, and in ‘07 inducted into the Mount Marty College athletic Hall of fame. He has also kept involved on the academic side of the school and its students as chair of Mount Marty College’s physical education department and as an assistant professor teaching phys ed and recreation courses — earning MMC’s Teacher of the Year award in 2007.

“I will miss him when he leaves. His office is right next to mine, and he often stops in to get a cup of coffee and we chat about everything from the college to family to community to world events,” Tacke said.

If you happen to be in the South Dakota area, the commencement ceremony will be held Saturday at 2 p.m. local time and Tereshinski will give the school’s commencement address. Some of the topics he’ll hit on include how to deal with tragedy, keeping a balance academics and athletics, and finding ways to enjoy whatever you choose to do.

“You know you’re going to have some confrontations in life, and have some expectations about life that sometimes don’t end up being what you think they’re going to end up being, but you should also enjoy the successes,” he said.

For more information on Mount Marty College and its activities visit [www.MTMC.edu](http://www.MTMC.edu).

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