

## 8. VIETNAM WAR & STUDENT UNREST

NOV 1964

Lyndon B. Johnson soundly defeated Barry Goldwater and was elected President, serving through 1968.



Midshipmen test signaling

MID-1960s

MU's mainly conservative administration and students generally supported America's Vietnam involvement at first.



Navy Band pass in review during 1966 drill.

UWM students rallied to hear anti-war broadcasts in spring 1965. In direct contrast, MU students at a Milwaukee Braves game, led by MU sophomore August P. Sandroni, raised a banner: "Marquette U. supports U.S. Vietnam policy." Hundreds of MU students at the game cheered.

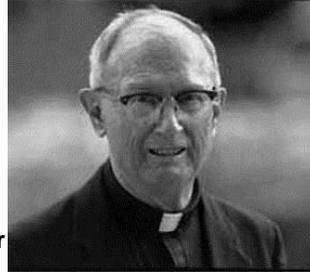
In fall of 1965, senior John C. Leavitt convinced 2,047 students to contribute to a telegram of support for U.S. troops in Vietnam. It received heartfelt praise from Gen. William Westmoreland, commander of U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam.

"Young Americans for Freedom" MU members collected five tons of soap to send to the people of South Vietnam.

But as the Civil Rights movement emerged, the nation became more liberal and opposed to the war. Changes began at MU as well.

1965

Fr. John P. Raynor, S.J., replaced Fr. F. Kelley as MU President. Fr. Raynor served in that role for 25 years: until 1990.



Father Raynor

U.S. troops were sent to Vietnam in large numbers, including MU NROTC graduates. Many Marine Option graduates in particular served at least one tour of duty in Vietnam. Others served in carrier strike forces in the South China Sea as line officers or pilots.



Marine Corps candidates at Quantico or Little Creek, VA before senior year

FALL 1966

*Marquette Journal* listed political-agenda organizations on campus, including “Students for a Democratic Society” (SDS), originally a Socialist group focused on labor issues. Troop commitments in Vietnam gave SDS a new focus, anti-war protests. When SDS was chartered at MU, Alfred J. Sokolnicki, speech therapy director, saw SDS as a Communist front based on atheism - with no place at MU. His two-year effort to disallow SDS failed.

31 JUL 1967

Milwaukee Mayor Henry Maier called in the National Guard and declared a dawn-to-dusk curfew to quiet civil rights riots. The curfew was lifted on 3 August.

SUMMER 1967

Capt. R.B. Harrell took command of MU NROTC until 1970.



Capt. R.B. Harrell

**30 NOV 1967**

**Dow Chemical, manufacturer of napalm, recruited graduates on MU's campus every semester. Interviews on 30 November at Copus Hall drew a demonstration vigil, with complaints that Dow interviews identified MU with the Vietnam War. MU Dean Edward Kurdziel, retired Marine colonel and former MU NROTC commander, allowed demonstrators to enter the Union if they behaved.**

**Small protests followed at later Dow interviews, the Union and O'Hara Hall. Protest groups accused MU security of spying on them, but the identities of protest leaders were obvious to all.**

**LATE 1960s**

**Draft card burnings and student protests on U.S. college campuses became commonplace.**

**4 APR 1968**

**Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, TN, allegedly by sniper James Earl Ray. This set off African American protests nationally and overshadowed the Vietnam issue.**

**SPRING 1968**

**"Students United for Racial Equality" (SURE) joined with SDS at MU. Radical student Art Heitzer '69 was elected president of MU student government.**



**Art Heitzer spoke at MU against ROTC.**

**Conservative groups conducted anti-protest, anti-leftist, anti-Communist rallies. Campus siege mentality became a national trend.**

**MU had relatively few African-American teachers and students, unlike the City of Milwaukee. This disparity became a protest focus.**

**Protest topics gradually included not just war or race, but the university itself. Large rallies, marches, picket lines and sit-ins became more obstructive.**



Anti-ROTC protesters gather at MU Gym

- 8 MAY 1968**      **A small sit-in disrupted the Union. Protesters refused to leave until police removed them, arresting two.**
- 9 MAY 1968**      **Fr. Raymond R. McAuley, S.J. issued a policy confirming student rights to freely communicate, but threatened suspension or expulsion if demonstrations interfered with university business. Dean Kurdziel worked out procedures for dealing with protests that summer.**
- 16 MAY 1968**      **A larger demonstration resulted in Dean Kurdziel suspending seven students. In protest, 14 Black students withdrew from MU. The end of the semester defused the issue.**
- JUN 1968**      **Attorney General Robert Kennedy was assassinated in L.A. by Palestinian Sirhan Sirhan because Kennedy supported Israel.**
- FALL 1968**      **Small protests focused on the Vietnam War. Army and Navy ROTC became new protest targets. Protesters knew the attrition rate of Army and Marine 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants in Vietnam was high.**
- 6 NOV 1968**      **About 250 SDS, SURE and other protesters (“Marquette Coalition for Peace”) massed at the gym to disrupt Army ROTC drill. Drill was cancelled. Two bomb threats were made on the gym.**
- NOV 1968**      **Richard M. Nixon defeated Hubert Humphrey on a “law and order” platform and was elected president, taking office in January 1969.**
- 30 JAN 1969**      **Yale ROTC programs became no-credit extra-curriculars. Harvard followed suit 4 February. Military personnel left Yale and Harvard.**



Despite protests, classes like navigational astronomy continued uninterrupted in 1969.

- 14 FEB 1969** Milwaukee draft board office was broken into; records were burned. The community was upset, but students cheered.
- 19 FEB 1969** Ash Wednesday Mass at the MU Union included burning draft cards, war clippings, etc. to mix with palm ashes.
- SPRING 1969** MU “Coalition for Peace” was renamed “Anti-ROTC Coalition.” The group questioned ROTC courses, hoping to echo Yale and Harvard.
- 15 APR 1969** Protesters conducted “bayonet charge” skits at the Union with mixed results, wrongly thinking an Army inspector was on campus. A crowd formed at the gym before Army drill, which was then cancelled. The crowd formed a picket line chanting “ROTC must go.”
- 16 APR 1969** Dissident campus groups attempted to call MU support of ROTC a “special interest”, whereas MU would not take a stand on “open housing” as a special interest. They condemned ROTC for teaching about war, and sending men to war, as “anti-Christian acts.”
- 17 APR 1969** NROTC drill was interrupted by 60 protesters who pushed past security to the NROTC annex. When Fr. Michael Sheridan, S.J. appeared, they tried to reach second floor classrooms. A guard pushed a demonstrator over a stair railing, halting the push. Police arrived without being requested by authorized staff, a procedural breach. Protesters Art Heitzer and J. Patrick Murphy agreed to meet with the administration. Police left. Protesters moved to the Union.



Drill on the tennis courts continued despite protests.

Prof. Warren Bovee, Committee of Faculty (COF) chairman, appointed seven students to attend the COF meeting that afternoon. They proposed a committee to review MU's "involvement in the military-industrial complex." They met with Fr. Raynor. He refused to agree with their request, which would undermine MU deans.

**22 APR 1969**

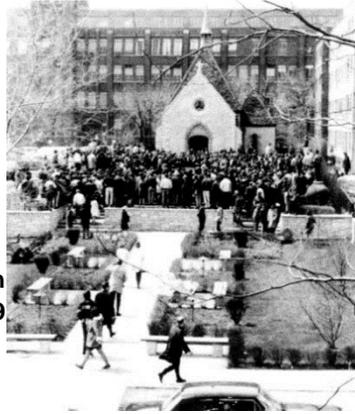
Disturbances on campus spun out of control at Army ROTC drill. Around 1200, 50 protestors marched to the Army ROTC gym annex. Student Jesse Rove secured the gym door with a metal bar. A scuffle ensued, and the group split to block the NROTC entrance. Dean Kurdziel went to the Navy doors and Fr. Sheridan went to the Army doors, to end the disruption.



Anti-ROTC coalition demonstrators confront Army ROTC officers, April 1969.

When another scuffle broke out at the Army entrance, MU security called the police. Fr. Sheridan immediately suspended six students. After demands and warnings, protesters cleared half the entrance. Protesters dispersed when Army ROTC left the gym at 1500.

The protest refocused on suspensions: there had been no official order to disperse. A sit-in followed, as 150 students barricaded themselves in the Joan of Arc chapel. Thick walls barred sound, so two-way radios were used. Before MU officials could order students to disperse, 50 Milwaukee policemen and a fire truck arrived at 2300, responding to a purported chapel bomb threat. The two-way radio failed. Police broke the door and 70 arrests followed. Six students were suspended.



Student protesters gather at Joan of Arc Chapel, April 22, 1969

No bomb search was conducted, and students called the threat an administration ruse. About 150 protestors gathered at O'Hara Hall chanting "Raynor must go." Another 50 staged a sit-down. Another 70 shouted "Raynor must stay." Police broke up fighting at O'Hara without arrests.

- 23 APR 1969** Fr. Raynor addressed 1,000 students at the Union the next day about police involvement. The next week he officially stated that protestors violated university policy and were at fault. Other false bomb threats followed, but demonstrations stopped. The university played a waiting game as exams approached.
- 29 APR 1969** A vigil group at the chapel was warned but not removed.
- 11 MAY 1969** Wisconsin Rep. Clement J. Zablocki spoke on WISN TV on the clash between realism and idealism, in support of ROTC. He also spoke at the ROTC commissioning ceremonies as 20 protestors stood silent.
- 19 MAY 1969** Dean Kurdziel refused the appeals of six students suspended in the 22 April demonstrations. They were banned from campus until January 1970. Due to procedural irregularities, Fr. Sheridan did not press charges against the 70 students arrested on 22 April.
- 20 JUL 1969** U.S. Apollo 11 Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed in the Sea of Tranquility on the Moon, while pilot Mike Collins watched from orbit in the Columbia space module. The world cheered, and a tone of optimism and national pride led into the fall semester at MU. Conditions remained peaceful until May 1970.
- FALL 1969** SDS ceased to exist at MU. Radical leader Heitzer had graduated. The anti-ROTC coalition disintegrated. Instead the

**Radical Student Union (RSU) emerged. Protesters did little during the school year until holding an anniversary vigil at the St. Joan chapel in April 1970.**

**4 MAY 1970** Nervous National Guardsmen fired on rioting Kent State (Ohio) war protestors, killing four and wounding eight. This drew global shock. In response, 800 MU students voted to go on strike May 6.

**6 MAY 1970** Four million students went on strike across the U.S.; hundreds of schools closed. At 1500 on May 6, a few MU students shouted at Wisconsin Ave. motorists from safety islands. Police arrived as 2,000 students watched calmly on sidewalks.

**7 MAY 1970** Campus firebombs failed to ignite. The turmoil slowed.

**8 MAY 1970** Firebombs did \$800 in damage to campus buildings on this last Friday before exams. Students blocked Grandmora entrance at 0800 at 13<sup>th</sup> and Wisconsin. At 1200 ASMU President John Dunn declared the strike over.



Student protestor faced riot police on Wisconsin Ave., 1970

Disregarding Dunn, at 1300 students blocked the library, breaking windows. At 1630 students tried to block the Marquette Interchange. Police came, and they moved to block Wisconsin Ave. Police made four arrests. Students broke all Army ROTC annex windows. That night every campus building received bomb threats.

**9 MAY 1970** At 0300 two students were arrested on Wisconsin Ave. More campus buildings suffered fires.

**10 MAY 1970** A fire bomb closed the Union. That morning, Fr. Raynor gave students three options: stay for finals, accept their present

grade as is, or take finals in fall. That night students broke Union windows.

**11 MAY 1970**

Ft. Sheridan, IL bomb squad arrived at 0200 to defuse a bomb, but the device had no explosives. At 0400 a firebomb damaged Schroeder Hall. Half of MU students elected to leave Milwaukee before exams.

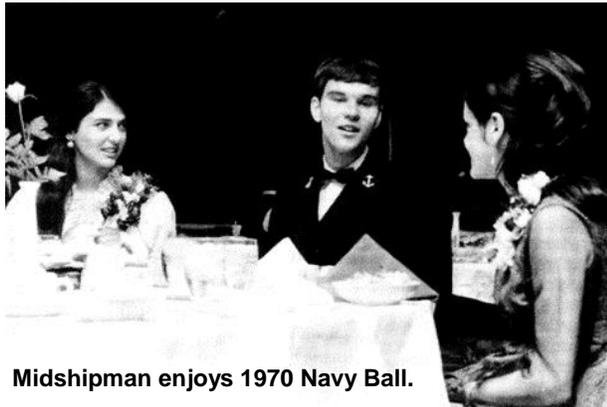
A few small protests in 1971-72 signaled the demise of student demonstrations. The campus unrest from 1966 through 1970 took a toll on ROTC spirit, cutting enrollment nearly in half. To boost morale, NROTC held a beard-growing contest over the 1970 Christmas break. The winner could keep his beard for a week.

**MAY 1970**

ROTC graduates sat in blocks at graduation and commissioning, rather than with their colleges. They received a standing ovation.

**SUMMER 1970**

Capt. Patrick F. Cunningham, USN took command of MU NROTC until 1972.



Midshipman enjoys 1970 Navy Ball.

**1971**

Fr. Bartholomew Quinn, S.J. resigned as MU military coordinator after 31 years of service. He was highly commended by the Navy, MU and the Association of NROTC Colleges. He was replaced by Fr. Richard A. McGarrity, S.J., who also served for decades.

**MAY 1971**

ROTC graduates were required to wear caps and gowns at graduation for the first time. NROTC conducted commissioning privately in uniform at 0800 on the St. Joan chapel steps.

**1972**

**MU NESEP peaked at 65 MU men enrolled. Older than regular college students, they formed their own social circle at Callahan's.**

**SUMMER 1972**

**Capt. Harold R. Lockwood, USN took command of MU NROTC.**



**Capt. Harold R. Lockwood**

**NOV 1972**

**President Richard M. Nixon trounced George McGovern in the election and was reelected.**

**28 JAN 1973**

**Vietnam Cease-Fire was signed in Paris and went in effect, ending the Vietnam War. North Vietnam absorbed South Vietnam.**