

# THE CANON GETS HOME RELEASE AFTER 36 YEARS

Victoria's longest serving and best known Child Care Worker, Canon Neale Molloy, retired at the end of May after 36 years as the Director of St. John's Homes for Boys and Girls.

More than 350 friends, family, colleagues and former kids of St. John's crowded into the Church Hall at St. John's, Camberwell to say farewell. Prior to the farewell, the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Most Rev. F. Woods, presided over a Holy Communion service offered as a Thanksgiving for the contribution that Canon Molloy had made to Child Care in Victoria over the past four decades.

His contribution as most of the speakers pointed out, has been monumental.

He has seen, sometimes presided over, often provoked major changes and developments in the way the community has cared for children who are unable to have the security of their own family.

The Canon has held many positions at State and National level in Child Care — currently he is the President of the Child and Family Welfare Council of Australia. He has been Chairman of the Child and Family Welfare Council in Victoria — National Chairman of the Church of England Boys' Society — Deputy Warden of the Diocesan Mission to Streets and Lanes and Vice President of the Children's Welfare Association. In 1963, he was Victoria's "Father of the Year".

An inventory of his current Committees would fill this page comfortably. This statement can be verified by the good natured receptionist at St. John's who cannot disguise that note of resignation in her voice as she turns away another frustrated caller with those well-known words "I'm sorry the Canon is at a meeting".

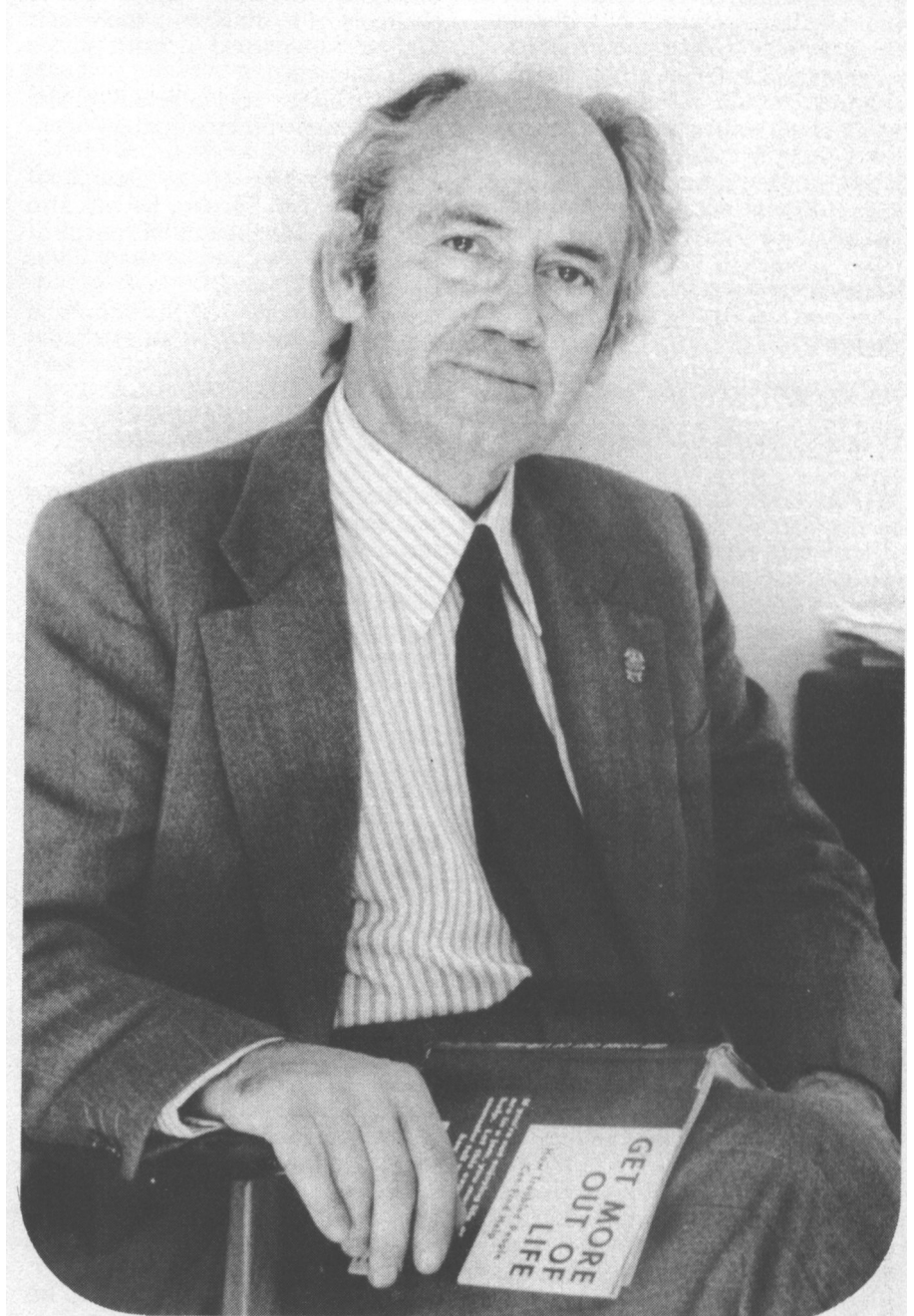
When the Canon graduated from Melbourne University in 1936 with

his Arts degree and Certificate of Theology, the Church placed him in the Brighton Church where he served three years as Curate.

Following that appointment he

was made Warden, later Director, of St. John's.

Back when I began, he recalled, the good institution usually consisted of one or two large buildings,



Canon Neale Molloy

# Children have rights:

the bigger the better, in extensive grounds with a high wall. A large dining room and kitchen, large dormitories with long rows of beds covered with lily white counterpanes with polished floors and an excessive smell of disinfectant.

The bathrooms would shower ten or twelve children at a time, there would be large playrooms, a library which was rarely used and probably a gymnasium. The better institutions would usually have a boys' band and perhaps a choir which kept the institution before the public for fund raising purposes.

Institutions were like this, explained the Canon, because the public believed that the underprivileged were different and should be kept away from "good" children.

The Canon was one of the first administrators in Child Welfare to introduce professional staff into his agency.

Under his leadership, St. John's pioneered "The Family Clinic" where Psychiatrists, Psychologists and other professionals were brought together and made available to children and their families who needed support, advice and treatment.

This service was offered to and used by many other voluntary agencies.

With the help of the Church of England Boys' Society, he was also responsible for the establishment of Hostels for boys who had come through the Courts.

The Committee of St. John's in recognition of the Canon's con-

vocal on the question of children's rights — Children have Rights, we have responsibilities — is a well known plank on the Canon's platform.

Nothing is so intensely personal, explained the Canon, as the private world of the child — no two children are alike and what is right for one child may be wrong for another.

It is important for all children to realize that what they do matters, that their ideas count and that we need their thoughts, their creativity, their contribution. The challenge in the changing scene of child care is to give a chance to every child and his family to learn and grow and live creatively.

# We have responsibilities!!

It was as late as the fifties, lamented the Canon, that the community began to realize that underprivileged children were basically no different from children in normal families, that they needed an opportunity to develop their skills and abilities and they needed an environment in which love and concern was primary as an alternative to the discipline and regimentation which characterized those early institutions.

The fifties was possibly the decade in which we recognized the critical role of parents in the development of children.

In Australia, even before the Commonwealth was formed, we were disposed to place children in institutions . . . to sweep them under the carpet as it were. We have done this rather than provide assistance to the families so that families are able to remain intact. Up to the fifties parents were often looked upon as a necessary evil, the introduction of Social Workers, Psychologists and other professional workers, has helped enormously in altering that focus.

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tribution in this field, have called the Hostel in Maling Road, Canterbury, MOLLOY HOUSE.

He also helped to form the Guild of St. John . . . a body of volunteers that provide assistance and support to the boys that reside in the Hostels.

It is almost impossible to draw the Canon into conversation about his accomplishments at St. John's or elsewhere.

It is not false humility — just unassuming — he honestly prefers that the credit lay with others and that's all there is to it.

He rarely likes to take the spotlight — no-one in the States has a more detailed knowledge of the internal networks within the voluntary and statutory fields as the Canon — that's undeniable.

He uses his contacts and his information to stimulate others to put into effect the ideas he feels strongly about, explained one employee, but then again to call him a "manipulator" would be to use language unbecoming the Canon, don't you think?

The Canon has also had his causes. For a long time he's been

When parents are unable to cope then resources should be available to the family so that disintegration is avoided. While the strain on some families can be intolerable and the prevention of family breakdown, no easy task, much can be achieved by the skilled intervention of Social Workers, Clergy and members of the other helping professions.

The family is the basic unity of society and the best place of every child is within the family unit.

It is the duty of all those within the youth and child care fields to use all the skills at their disposal to achieve this end.

When the Canon leaves St. John's at the end of this month, it is hard to visualize him with a spade and a fishing rod even the lawn mower he was given as a retirement gift. Chances are things will go very much as before, and when you ring, the reply you receive from his long suffering wife Evelyn, will be just the same.

"You wanted the Canon? I'm sorry — Yes, that's right, he's at a meeting."