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Deacon, Hall of Famer 'Easy Ed' Macauley dies

Joseph Kenny Catholic News Service | Nov. 14, 2011

ST. LOUIS -- Basketball Hall of Famer, former sportscaster and pro-life advocate Deacon Ed Macauley, known as "Easy Ed," died Nov. 8 in St. Louis at age 83. He had Alzheimer's disease.

Deacon Macauley was best known as an All-American with St. Louis University and a pro player with the St. Louis Bombers, Boston Celtics and St. Louis Hawks. The St. Louis University High School grad also coached the Hawks for two seasons. He was ordained a permanent deacon of the St. Louis Archdiocese in 1989.

He told the St. Louis Review, archdiocesan newspaper, in 1996 that he was grateful for the blessings he enjoyed and wanted to do something for others. He wanted especially to let people know how it makes sense and "how much fun it is" to follow the Christian life. An important element in the diaconate was the support of this wife, Jackie, he said.

The deacon kept a full schedule of ministry and speaking engagements until his retirement from active ministry in 2002. He helped start the St. Nicholas Food Pantry in north St. Louis and gave homilies. He also gave homily workshops around the country and co-wrote "Homilies Alive." He later expanded the book to a website with tips, techniques and ideas for preachers.

God "can be tough at times, but basically he's a nice guy," Deacon Macauley told Catholic News Service in 1990 after his book was published. "That's one of the reasons I was interested in writing a book. ... How do you take the teachings of Jesus Christ and apply them on Wednesday morning?"

Deacon Macauley and his family became active in pro-life programs in the early 1980s. He gave talks for speakers' bureau of what was then known as the Archdiocesan Pro-Life Committee (now part of the Respect Life Apostolate) and conducted seminars for the other speakers in the program, later becoming a board member and co-chair of the committee.

He told the Review that abortion was a moral issue that, like other moral issues, affects society as a whole.

Through the years he helped a number of agencies and programs, including Dismas House, a halfway stop for ex-offenders. When Deacon Macauley learned that all NBA fines go to charitable causes, he contacted sports announcer Bob Costas and together they did a video showing the need for Dismas House residents to have some activity, such as basketball. The NBA contributed $10,000 for a basketball court there.

He was a television sportscaster in St. Louis, co-hosted "Beat the Press," a media analysis radio program, and worked in the cable television industry before quitting to free up more time for his diaconal responsibilities. In 2008, Deacon Macauley was honored as Irishperson of the Year at the Ancient Order of Hibernians' Irish Emerald Ball.

In his later years he was open about the onset of Alzheimer's. The 6-foot-8 deacon pointed out that among his many accomplishments, he "married a girl 5 foot 4." However, he said, "things didn't work out. We only had

seven kids." He and wife Jackie, who died earlier this year, had been married nearly 60 years and had seven children and 17 grandchildren.

Deacon Macauley was the most valuable player when he led St. Louis University to a win at the National Invitational Tournament in 1949, which at the time was the most prestigious college basketball tournament.

He was in the top five NBA scorers for four years and played in seven All-Star games, being named MVP of the first All-Star game in 1951. He was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1960 at age 32 -- to this date still the youngest person ever inducted.

He told the Review that "we played because we really enjoyed it. We weren't the gods that (players) are today. We came back in the offseason in our neighborhoods and everybody said, 'Hi, how are you?' We got jobs and we worked. We weren't besieged and idolized the way they are now. I think we were better off."

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