



FATHER WILLIAM ATKINSON, a quadriplegic Augustinian priest and teacher at Monsignor Bonner High School, Drexel Hill, has been honored by the Pennsylvania State Jaycees as an "Outstanding Young Pennsylvanian", one of three young men chosen for the award throughout the state. Rev. Atkinson, who received his award at a special dinner Feb. 7 in York, Pa., was honored in November last year with an "Outstanding Young Man" by the Main Line Chapter of the Jaycees. Congratulating Rev. Atkinson in his classroom are two Bonner students, Terrence Connelly (left) and Ed Byrnes.

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Father Atkinson at his residence, Monsignor Bonner High monastery

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Outstanding

PHILADELPHIA --- Father William Atkinson, a 31-year-old almost totally paralyzed Catholic priest who teaches at Msgr. Bonner High School in Drexel Hill, Pa., is congratulated by Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia (left) and his brother, Al Atkinson, former star linebacker of New York Jets, after being named one of "America's Ten Outstanding Young Men for 1977" by the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce. The quadriplegic priest is paralyzed from the neck down as a result of a tobogganing accident 12 years ago. He was a first-year seminarian at the time and made a long, tortuous recovery to resume his studies. Eventually, he received special permission from Pope Paul to be ordained and now teaches theology at the suburban Philadelphia high school.

'Top 10': Blind doctor and paralyzed priest

By Edgar Williams
Inquirer Staff Writer

The Rev. William E. Atkinson and Dr. David W. Hartman are related — by courage.

Because of that courage, which has enabled Father Atkinson and Dr. Hartman to surmount physical handicaps and reach the heights of accomplishment, these two residents of the Philadelphia area are among "America's Ten Outstanding Young Men for 1977" named yesterday by the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Father Atkinson, 31, a Roman Catholic priest and a faculty member at Monsignor Bonner High School in Drexel Hill, is a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the neck down — except for some slight use of his shoulder muscles — since he was injured in a tobogganing accident 12 years ago.

Dr. Hartman, 28, now in his first year of residency at Temple Hospital after having been graduated from the Temple University School of Medicine last June, has been blind since he was 8. He is believed to have been the first blind student in this century to be accepted by an American medical school.

Others on the "Ten Outstanding Young Men" list announced at national Jaycee headquarters in Tulsa, Okla., are Steve Garvey, 28, first baseman of the Los Angeles Dodgers; singer Wayne Newton, 34; Harry Chapin, 34, entertainer and co-founder of World Hunger Year; U.S. Rep. Les AuCoin (D., Ore.), 34; Frank J. Banks, 32, a Memphis, Tenn., accountant; David Wayne Frederickson, 34, a staff assistant to President Ford; Dennis Lee Landesman, 33, director of Audiology Center, Newport Beach, Calif., and Dr. Grady Stumbo, 31, physician with the Eastern Kentucky Health Services Center.

Father Atkinson, Dr. Hartman and the others will receive their awards in ceremonies at Las Vegas Jan. 12.



Dr. David W. Hartman
 . . . 10th application succeeded

Father Atkinson, who was a first-year seminarian when he was injured, made a long, torturous comeback physically before being able to resume his studies for the priesthood. Eventually he received a special dispensation from Pope Paul VI to enable him to be ordained. Bonner students call him "Father Ack."

Father Atkinson, a brother of Al Atkinson, former New York Jets linebacker, teaches theology. He gets around in an electrically powered wheelchair, and his faculty colleagues say that he "pulls his own weight" in faculty duties.

"I'm honored by the award from the Jaycees," Father Atkinson said yesterday. "I hope some good comes of it. By that I mean the award will have true meaning only if it serves as a beacon that may show someone else with physical handicaps the way to self-sufficiency."

Dr. Hartman, a native of Haver-town, who lives with his wife, Cheri, in Germantown, applied to 10 medical schools after graduating from Gettysburg College. Nine rejected him. Temple, the last to reply, accepted his application.