Almost famous

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It seems like just yesterday I went to a small, exclusively undergraduate, Jesuit, liberal arts school which was virtually unknown off the northeast coast. Now, suddenly, we're almost famous.

Applying to college from my New Jersey high school, the decision to come to Holy Cross was not extra ordinary. My high school has sent at least one student a year to Mt. St. James since, what seemed like, the dawn of time. The name Holy Cross was often mentioned in the same category as its larger Catholic counterparts. I soon discovered, however, that Holy Cross' notoriety was geographically limited, if at all together geographically ignorant.

Until the last year or so, the following rubber held most of the title of the name Holy Cross in New England and expect a knowing reaction. Venture down to the tri-state area and the response simmers down a bit. Step one foot south of the Mason Dixon line and you might as well give up all hope.

I knocked heads with this geographic barrier during my senior year of High School. Venturing down to the University of Virginia to visit a transplanted friend, odd questions and comments on Holy Cross soon began to pile up. Common responses to a mention of Holy Cross included: "Is Holy Cross a girls' school?" ("Ah, no.") and "How long do you have to study to become a nun?" ("You know what, I really have no idea."").

Compounding the problem of general lack of name recognition was also an issue of name confusion. Confusion brought on, I quickly realized, by one of the biggest blows the College of the Holy Cross' name on a national level: the movie "Rudy.". "Rudy" was a mid-nineties football movie which brilliantly combined sports with a story of inspiration and determination aroused by sports. To sum up a decent movie in a sentence: there is a smallish guy with poorish grades who dreams of playing football for Notre Dame and who finally, after a lot of blood, begging, studying, sweat and tears, gets to. Before Rudy can gain admission to Notre Dame, not to mention play football there, he attends Holy Cross College, a junior college in Indiana. Hence, our own sweet College of the Holy Cross' "Rudy" factor.

On my trip to Virginia the "Rudy" factor reared its ugly head innumerable times. As soon as the words "Holy Cross" passed my lips they were received with a break eye contact and a distracted face synonymous with the turning of internal mental gears. "Didn't...ah...damn it, what's that movie...oh, got it, 'Rudy.' Didn't...no Rudy go there?" was a normal response.

But dear fellow Crusaders, the times they are a changin'. In a wave beginning last year in the acclaimed show "The Sopranos," Holy Cross has been getting an encouraging amount of national media attention. First, Meadow Soprano, the gifted academic daughter of the TV mob boss included HC on her list of potential alma maters and was accepted. Sure, she left us for Columbia, but Holy Cross still got its 15 seconds of fame.