

Eighty-One More Hughes Wills

By Georgia Dullen
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WELL, 81 last wills and testaments — all signed "Howard Hughes," all purporting to be the one true will — have now been filed here at St. Joseph School.

And more wills are expected, according to Michael De Vito, as soon as certain slow-pokes hand in their homework.

De Vito is the language arts teacher who challenged sixth-seventh-and eighth-graders at the parochial school to make their own Howard Hughes wills "using any writing method and style your gloriously clever minds will fathom."

They did not disappoint him. In fact, some students honored De Vito by bequeathing him the Spruce Goose, the billionaire's famous flying boat, and putting him right up there with such notables as:

• Clifford Irving, the bogus biographer, who was bequeathed \$100 million in a Swiss bank account;

• Mayor Beame, bequeathed 500 New York City municipal bonds;

• Governor Jimmy Carter of Georgia, bequeathed \$30 worth of Colgate toothpaste;

• Representative Wayne Hays of Ohio, bequeathed what were termed the Hughes "mistresses."

"I guess they did get a little carried away," De Vito was saying the other day en route to the classroom where the Reading of the Howard Hughes Wills, sixth-grade version, was to be held.

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INSIDE, THERE was a momentary rustling of yellowed scrolls and burnt looseleaf sheets. But soon the 11- and 12-year-old willmakers settled down in their seats and the readings began.

They began, for the most part, "I, Howard Hughes, being of sound mind and body . . ." After that, however, the wills took off in various dispositive directions, some of which indicated heavy study of the Hughes obituaries.

Kathleen Voute, for example, had read the

rumors about long fingernails. "Upon my death," she wrote, "the coroner is to be instructed to surgically remove my ten fingernails and to convey, transfer, or set over such fingernails to the Revlon Company for experimental research."

Christopher Barnett, another Hughes scholar, was kind enough to leave the Mormon Tabernacle Choir a new piano. Rebecca Sheridan left the Howard Hughes Research Institute \$1.5 billion "to probe for a way to eliminate household germs." And several students left a little something for the CIA.

Then there were those who, like Michael O'Connor, thought charity began a bit closer to home. Michael bequeathed \$1 million, plus 15 German shepherds, 100 guards, five maids and five butlers to "my secretly best friend, Kevin Martin."

But did Kevin Martin return his friend's generosity? No, for some reason he left everything to Carol Channing.

In any case, everybody seemed to agree that Howard Hughes became so rich that "it ruined his whole life," as someone put it, because wealth forced him to play the recluse.