

Male students infiltrate former women's college

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

When H. Charley Curtis, 18, enrolled in business classes at Madonna College in Livonia, he never considered becoming a statistic.

But Curtis, a graduate of Garfield City High School who now works for grandfather Don Massey of Massey Cadillac in Plymouth, is a statistic.

During this semester's registration, he was the one-thousandth male to enroll for classes, the first time that one thousand or more men have ever enrolled during a single semester since Madonna was founded by Felician Sisters in 1947.

Although the college began admitting men in 1972, female students have continued to outnumber males by four to one. Of 4,393 students now enrolled, 1,020 are men.

Unmindful of numbers, Curtis selected Madonna because of its size and location. He prefers a smaller, more intimate school and the college is conveniently located to job and home in Plymouth.

Tim Nadon of Farmington believes Madonna offers a superior education. A product of Catholic primary and secondary schools, Nadon is Catholic, as are 70 percent of all students attending Madonna.

Mike Stowell, 28, a full-time city employee for Northville participating in an employment educational program, selected Madonna for the same reasons. A Plymouth resident, he has been taking night classes since 1987.

"I HOPE to graduate sometime this century," he said with a laugh, figuring on another seven years of night school before earning a degree in public administration.

John Tallard, a 33-year-old father of two, also attends Madonna part

time in a program sponsored by his employer, Flint Ink. The firm pays part of Tallard's tuition fees of \$122 per credit hour (120 are normally needed for graduation).

"It's more intimate here," he said. Eric Klisz, 18, a graduate of Livonia's Churchill High who has not yet declared a major at Madonna, agrees.

"The student-teacher ratio here is much lower. My friend attends the University of Michigan and he's having (academic) trouble. There's 250

students in a lecture hall there. I don't think anyone can benefit from a situation like that."

Stowell cites a course he recently completed, a mandatory class offered on Saturday morning, the only time he could attend. "Including myself, there were three students. But the class wasn't canceled and the instructor, who was the greatest, adjusted to so few students." That, he said, would never be the case in a public institution.

Tim Nadon, 26, of Farmington, believes Madonna offers a superior education. A product of Catholic primary and secondary schools, Nadon is Catholic, as are 70 percent of all students attending Madonna.

"I'M AN EDUCATION major. The most interesting thing about Madonna is that teaching in the classroom is offered each semester. It completely prepares you for going into the classroom, that necessary one-on-one experience."

Nadon knows current employment opportunity is scarce. To increase his chances for a job after graduation next year, he has changed his minor from English to math. He is willing to relocate and "I'm a man. They like male teachers. That helps."

John Burdick, a 20-year-old from Redford Township who is majoring in criminal justice, is more concerned at the moment with maintaining passing grades. A sophomore, he nearly "played too much baseball" last school year. Still, he completed the year with a 2.6 grade point average.

A product of Catholic elementary and public high schools, Burdick chose Madonna because of its Catholic discipline. At the time of registration, he was unaware of student body composition.

"I had no idea it was mostly women," he said, adding the odds don't interest him because he already has a girlfriend.

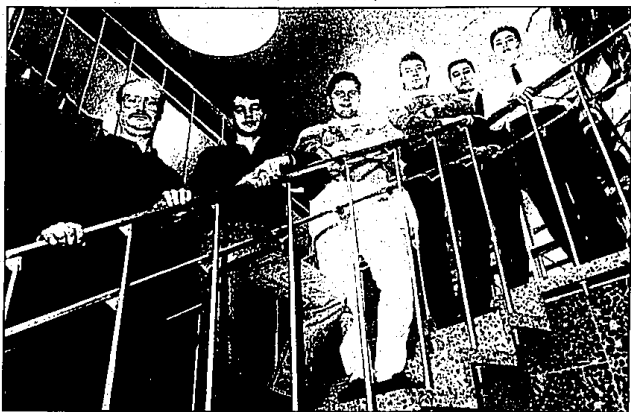
Nadon, who transferred to Madonna after completing two years at Oakland Community College, was "surprised" when I found out they take men here."

As to the clear majority of female students? "It's a terrible burden," he quips.

SISTER NANCY MARIE JAMROZ, vice president for student life at Madonna, said the college continually attempts to bolster male enrollment.

"Our on-going programs in business are attractive to the male population. Initiatives taken by various companies, like Michigan Bell, to assist in continuing education by acting as third-party payers, encourages men."

"We've gone slowly, increasing (male enrollment) by 3 to 4 percent a year. Now we've reached over 25 percent. And we will continue to strive to balance enrollment even more," she concluded.

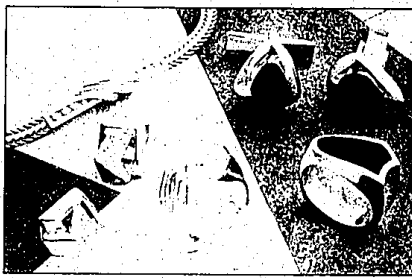


BILL BRESLER/staff photographer

The male population continues to increase about 3-4 percent each year at Madonna. Some of the men who selected the college based on size, location and curriculum include (from

left) John Tallard of Livonia, Eric Klisz of Livonia, Tim Nadon of Farmington, Mike Stowell of Plymouth, Charlie Curtis of Plymouth and John Burdick of Livonia.

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