Steve Hirdt did not think so at the time, but the best thing that happened to him while a student at Regis High School was not making the basketball team. Instead, Hirdt, who grew up in St. Brigid’s Parish, Ridgewood, became the squad’s scorekeeper and statistician. Which in turn eventually led to a career with the Elias Sports Bureau, official statistician for Major League Baseball, the National Football League, the National Basketball Association and the National Hockey League. Also, Major League Soccer and the Arena Football League.

In addition, Steve, now executive vice-president of the bureau, also served as Director of Information for the ABC’s/NFL Monday Night Football.

Now to return to the road traveled from school at St. Brigid’s to the present, which includes being a seasonal member of St. Rosalie’s Parish for 24 years.

“At St. Brigid’s,” began Hirdt, “the boys and girls, starting in the fifth grade, were in separate classes. “When I reached the eighth grade, my teacher, Bro. Casian, a Franciscan, told us about Regis. While I had good grades, I never heard of the school. Eight of us took the test however, and two of us were accepted.

“I really didn’t think that I was that smart.”

It should be explained, since some may not know, that the Jesuit Fathers’ school on the upper East Side is scholarship only. Funds are raised in various ways for the education of the young students.

“My parents were concerned about the traveling into Manhattan every day,” continued Steve. “I hooked up with Gerard Lynch who was from Maspeth and we rode the train together.

“Plus he was in my freshman World History

The Elias Sports Bureau is a family affair as Steve, center, works with his brother Tom, left, and Peter. The bureau handles statistics for all the major professional sports leagues.
class. The first day, our teacher, John Wright, gave us the curriculum that was to be covered---
The History of Europe from the Middle Ages to the French Revolution.

“Then the teacher asked if anyone knew the names of any kings of England from 1066 to the current day. Gerard rattled off every single one---yes, every single one.”

Hirdt took a deep breath and quickly added, “I said to myself, ‘What do we have here?’ Mind you, he was only 12 as a freshman. He is still the smartest person I have ever met in my entire life.”

Small wonder that Gerard Lynch went on to become a judge in the U.S. Federal Court Southern District.

At Regis, Hirdt figured he would play basketball, but it was not to be. He was cut during pre-season tryouts.

“I still wanted to be around the team, so I kept statistics.” he related. “My sophomore year I didn't bother going out for the team as some very good players had entered the school.”

Upon graduating from Regis, Steve enrolled at Fordham University as a journalism major.

“I obtained a part-time position with Information Concepts Inc.,” said Hirdt, “and was involved in doing research for the Original Baseball Encyclopedia.

“ICI was putting together a 2,500-page book starting before 1920 and everything was on microfilm. My assigned two years were 1894 and 1912. I learned a great deal about 1912---the sinking of the Titanic, the opening of Fenway Park, the nomination and election of Woodrow Wilson as president of the U.S.A.”

That took two years, and just when Steve was about to graduate he went to work part-time for the Elias Sports Bureau.

“Elias took over in 1972 as the official statistician for the NBA,” related Steve, “and a position opened up. I was hired. Once computers came in, everything was put on them. Nothing is done by hand any longer.

“I never thought I would make statistics a career, nor did I ever think that statistics would become as big as they are today...in every sport.”

Hirdt spoke of working with the late Howard Cossell, the controversial announcer on Monday Night Football; Frank Gifford, Dan Dierdorf and Al Michaels among others.

The subject of baseball and steroids has been in the headlines so much recently that Steve wanted to be as well informed as possible legally.

Who better to contact than his freshman classmate from Regis, the now Judge Lynch.

“I called him and received the advice I needed,” stated Hirdt, “and we renewed our friendship.”

Then the subject changed from sports to family. Steve and his wife, Karen, who was from Mary’s Nativity Parish, Flushing, have two sons, Ken and Dennis, both Regis graduates.

Karen, by the way, taught at St. Teresa’s School, Woodside, soon after getting married. The two boys graduated from Holy Cross College and have joined their father at Elias.

Perhaps Seymour Siwoff, the principal owner who has been with Elias for over 50 years and still is in the office daily, might consider a name change.

There are two more Hirdts in the organization, making it five in all. Peter and Thomas, brothers of Steve, complete the quintet.

And guess what---they, too, graduated from Regis!