

In

HARMONY

Sisters of Mercy, New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community

***Congratulations and God's blessings
to our Sister and Associate jubilarians!
May God bless you and keep you in Mercy.***

OUR JUBILARIANS

85

SR. MARY GEORGE KLOCKGETHER
Pittsburgh

From 1927-82, Sister Mary George Klockgether taught in Pittsburgh Catholic schools. And it is no surprise that teaching was her favorite ministry.

"I have always loved children," said Sister Mary George, who is celebrating her 85th jubilee. "I loved to see the eagerness and wide-eyed responses of the children each day."

She entered the Sisters of Mercy community in 1925 after what she described as "the persistent call from God" and seeing the example of the Sisters of Mercy. Her religious life also included ministry as a home visitor to the elderly in Sun City, Ariz., from 1998-2003. Today, she continues in prayer ministry at the Convent of Mercy.

"Community life is such a joy and source of strength for me. I love to be with



**Sr. Mary
George
Klockgether**

the other sisters as they pray the Divine Office as a community," she said.

Sisters of Mercy describe Sister Mary George as "always having a smile and a witty comeback."

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SR. M. REBECCA FROMME
Pittsburgh

The Sisters of Mercy taught her in grade school and left such an impression that she decided to join them in ministry. That's how Sister Rebecca Fromme looks at her calling to the religious life.

"Their lives were an inspiration to me, and to live my life for God through a life of service is what I wanted to do," said Sister Rebecca, who, this year, is celebrating her 80th jubilee.

Most of her life was spent teaching. Her



**Sr. M. Rebecca
Fromme**

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In Harmony

JUBILEE ISSUE

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SR. M. REBECCA (CONTINUED)

school assignments included: St. Pius, McKeesport, Pa.; St. Coleman, Turtle Creek, Pa.; and St. Agnes, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Francis Xavier, Epiphany and St. Mary 46th St., all in the Pittsburgh area. Also, she taught and was principal at these schools: St. Mary 46th St. and St. Maurice, Pittsburgh; Holy Family, Latrobe, Pa.; and Our Lady of Lourdes, Burgettstown, Pa.; and St. Thomas the Apostle, South Miami, Fla.

“Teaching has been my favorite ministry,” she said. “I have always wanted to work with children and young people. It gave me the opportunity to lead others in doing good, to help them to grow in love of God, and at the same time, it enriched and fulfilled my life of growing closer to God.”

Sister Rebecca also was involved with pastoral care at Holy Cross Hospital, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., before she returned to Pittsburgh for prayer ministry at the Convent of Mercy. Throughout her years, she has learned much from Catherine McAuley’s quote, “Our hearts can always be in the same place, centered in God, for whom alone we go forward or stay back,” and worked to center her life around it.

“Great things happen in life when God is at the core of my being. I have tried to live this, and hopefully, my example has passed a little of it on to others,” she said.

75

SR. DOROTHY SLOAN Pittsburgh

Sister Dorothy Sloan entered the Mercy Hospital School of

Nursing to learn about nursing. She ended up getting much more out of the experience as she had the opportunity to know the Sisters of Mercy there, especially the late Sister Alma Soisson. That led her to enter the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh in 1935.



Sr. Dorothy
Sloan

After a life of teaching and other ministries, she celebrates, this year, her 75th jubilee.

Sister Dorothy earned her registered nursing degree from the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, Pittsburgh. Later, she earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from St. Louis University and a master’s degree in education from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh.

Her ministries included being a teacher in the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing. She was a supervisor and volunteer at Mercy Hospital. She taught at these Pittsburgh-area schools: St. Elizabeth, St. Maurice and St. Clare. Also, she taught at Our Lady of Lourdes, Burgettstown, Pa., and was infirmarian at the former motherhouse at St. Xavier Academy, Latrobe, Pa. At the Convent of Mercy, Pittsburgh, she was wellness coordinator, sacristan and continues in prayer ministry.

“My favorite ministry was always the ministry I was engaged with at the time,” said Sister Dorothy, a native of St. Francis Xavier Parish, Cresson, Pa. “When you see the switching back and forth between teaching in elementary school and nursing in such a variety of settings from supervisor of

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SR. DOROTHY (CONTINUED)

very different departments to the sisters' infirmary to teaching nursing, that says a lot!"

70**SR. MARY BERNARD BUTTS
Rochester**

Education and administration were the hallmarks of Sister Mary Bernard Butts' life as a woman religious.

"I'm living my dream that one day I would be a Sister of Mercy. Over all these years, no matter where I've been as teacher, principal or administrator, I've always enjoyed the people I've served," she said.



**Sr. Mary
Bernard
Butts**

Sister Bernard entered the community from St. Andrew Parish, Rochester. Her motto is "To love God without measure."

She found great joy in educating children in elementary schools throughout the Diocese of Rochester at Holy Cross, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Andrew, St. Charles Borromeo, St. James and St. Thomas the Apostle, and Annunciation, where she served as principal – all in Rochester. She also taught at St. Patrick, Elmira, N.Y., and St. Mary, Corning, N.Y., where she also served as principal.

She was a parish visitor at St. Anthony Parish, Rochester.

She served as an office staff member at Our Lady of Mercy High School and was motherhouse administrator from 1998-2001.

Since 2007, Sister Bernard has lived at Mercy Center, Rochester.

**SR. MARY CELINE
FITZGERALD
Buffalo**

Nursing is the way Sister Mary Celine Fitzgerald has served God and others as a Sister of Mercy.

"Nursing has been my favorite ministry, because it was something you could do to care for and help others," said Sister Mary Celine, who is celebrating her 70th jubilee. "It is a hands-on ministry."



**Sr. Mary
Celine
Fitzgerald**

During a nursing career that spanned five decades, she worked on the surgical floor at Mercy Hospital, Buffalo, from 1951-53, and was surgical supervisor at St. Jerome Hospital, Batavia, N.Y., from 1953-63. She returned to Mercy Hospital from 1963-68 as medical and night supervisor, and then worked in the orthopedic and intensive care units at Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Kenmore, N.Y., from 1973-75. In later years, she was clinic supervisor and a teacher at Mt. Mercy Academy, and infirmary supervisor at Our Lady of Mercy Generalate, all in Buffalo. Since 1997, she has worked at Mercy Center, Buffalo, and assisted in the Archives Office.

Sister Mary Celine grew up at St. Brigid Parish, Buffalo, and attended Mt. Mercy Academy. She was greatly influenced by Sister Mary Ursula, a music teacher and choir director at the parish.

"It has been a wonderful opportunity to do for others," she said of her years as a woman religious.

"Do all for the honor and glory of God," from Catherine McAuley, gives her strength and inspira-

60**SR. KATHLEEN BAYER
(formerly Sr. Mary Benigna)
Rochester**

Decades ago, Sister Kathleen Bayer took as her motto, "To refuse God nothing." Now, as she celebrates her 60th jubilee she looks back on her years of ministry in education, pastoral care and social justice.

"My life as a Sister of Mercy has been a great blessing for me, and I hope for others as well. God's mercy and love have filled my life with peace and happiness."

A native of St. James Parish, Rochester, she entered the Sisters of Mercy in Rochester in 1950. She taught at these schools in the Diocese of Rochester: Annunciation, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, St. Joseph, St. Rita, St. Salome and St. Thomas the Apostle, all in Rochester; and St. Ann, Hornell, N.Y. She ministered at St. Mary House of Prayer in Corning, N.Y.



**Sr. Kathleen
Bayer**

Sister Kathleen studied pastoral care at St. Louis University, Mo., and St. Raphael Hospital, New Haven, Conn. She returned to the Rochester Diocese as a pastoral care minister at Rochester General Hospital and Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, both in Rochester; and the Eastside Catholic Parish, Elmira, N.Y. Today, she volunteers at the Elmira Community Kitchen, as Eucharistic minister to the sick, and is actively involved in social justice issues in Elmira. Sister Kathleen lives in Elmira.

SR. PHYLLIS BERNARDO
(formerly Sr. Mary Malachy)
Rochester

Sixty years ago, Sister Phyllis Bernardo entered the Sisters of Mercy from St. Mary Parish in downtown Rochester. Today, she is grateful to those who helped foster her vocation to religious life.



**Sr. Phyllis
Bernardo**

“My vocation has been inspired by my family; Mercy family; Sister Carolyn Lattinville, RSM; Rev. Francis Hester; Sister Concepta Walsh, RSM; and Rev. Jerome Robinson,” she said.

Over the years, she tried to weave into all of her ministries her motto of “Christ reigns.”

Sister Phyllis taught at these Rochester schools: Holy Cross, St. Cecilia, St. Salome, St. Thomas the Apostle and Our Lady of Mercy High School.

In 1959, she was college secretary at Catherine McAuley College, Brighton, N.Y.

Three years later, she began 10 years of pastoral work with the black community in Rochester at the Joseph Avenue Center Ministry. After her internship with the Diocesan Office of Black Catholic Ministry, she went to Alabama to work with the black community through the Edmunite Southern. Sister Phyllis remained in Mississippi for 24 years serving the pastoral needs of those who were imprisoned and poor.

Since 2002, she has been living at St. Cecilia Convent, Rochester.

SR. RUTH BIELMANN
Buffalo

One month after Sister Ruth Bielmann entered the Buffalo Sisters of Mercy in August 1950, the first German computer, Z4, was sold.

Little did this 60-year jubilarian know then that she would be a vital contributor to the timeline of computer technology as a teacher of computer science in 1995 at Our Lady of Mercy Grade School, Orchard Park, N.Y. Among her many accomplishments, she was noted for two major contributions at the school: she taught her third graders how to use the computer, and she also put on Passion plays with her primary students.



**Sr. Ruth
Bielmann**

To this day, her former students are proud to tell of the roles they played in the performance.

Sister Ruth said she was drawn to religious life by the example of her sister, Mary, who was a Maryknoll Sister working in the Philippines. “I did not want to go to the missions, but rather I wanted to teach as a Sister of Mercy.”

She “loved teaching, especially the primary grades” where she conducted her classes between 1951-81. An interruption to her ministry followed, but she returned to teach at Holy Family School, Buffalo. Before her present-day prayer ministry in the Mercy Center infirmary, she worked at Mount Mercy Academy Medical Center for almost 10 years.

As Sister Ruth celebrates her jubilee, she continues to use “baby

pictures to convey fun messages for people and of events.” All those years of growing with the computer industry has kept her in the forefront of activity. Friends say that her generosity and humor remain intact.

**SR. JACQUELINE
DeMARS**
(formerly Sr. Mary Campion)
Rochester

Sister Jacqueline DeMars is celebrating her 60th jubilee of religious life.

“As a member of the Sisters of Mercy I enjoy a life lived with women whose lives are centered in prayer and service. This has been, and continues to be, a great blessing,” she said.

Sister Jacqueline entered the Sisters of Mercy from St. Alphonse Parish, Auburn, N.Y.



**Sr. Jacqueline
DeMars**

In Rochester, she taught at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, where she was principal; St. Thomas the Apostle School; and Cardinal Mooney and Our Lady of Mercy high schools. During her years at Mercy High School, Sister Jacqueline also served terms as Director of Academics and as chief financial officer.

From 1970-74, she was treasurer for the Sisters of Mercy in Rochester.

She currently lives in Buffalo where she is NyPPaW archivist.

SR. GERTRUDE ERB
(formerly Sr. Mary Gerard)
Rochester

Education and pastoral care have been ministries in which Sister Gertrude Erb has worked to live her motto, "Serve the Lord with joy."

"At this special moment in my life as a Sister of Mercy, I remember the past with gratitude to God. I live the present with joy in serving God's people, and I look forward to the future with confidence in God's ever-present love," she said.

A native of Holy Family Parish, Rochester, Sister Gertrude taught at Holy Cross and St. Salome schools, Rochester, and Holy Family School, Auburn, N.Y. She taught at these high schools: Cardinal Mooney, Rochester, and Notre Dame, Elmira, N.Y.

Her pastoral experience included ministry at these parishes: Our Lady of Good Counsel, Peace of Christ, the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward, St. Ambrose and St. Ann's Community at Cherry Ridge, all in Rochester; and St. Agnes in Avon, N.Y.

Sister Gertrude's is presently pastoral care coordinator at St. Ann's Community at Cherry Ridge and lives at Queen of Peace Convent, Rochester.

SR. ROSEMARY FLAHERTY
Pittsburgh

"There was a mystique about them that left a lasting impression," said Sister Rosemary Flaherty of the Sisters of Mercy who taught



Sr. Gertrude Erb

her. "They showed caring, compassion and a generous sharing of their knowledge."

The example of the Sisters of Mercy, so much a part of her formative years, prompted her to follow in their footsteps.

Celebrating her 60th year of religious life, Sister Rosemary taught at elementary schools and high schools in the Pittsburgh and Greensburg dioceses and at Carlow College (now Carlow University) Pittsburgh.

"My favorite ministry was teaching English to high school students. It was enjoyable to share the education I had obtained with students who were cooperative, creative and sincere," she said.

She also worked in the finance and legal services offices at Mercy Hospital (now UPMC Mercy) the Pittsburgh Blind Association, and the Pittsburgh Health Studies Office. Today, she volunteers in the Archives Office and is active in prayer ministry at the Convent of Mercy.

Reflecting on her years in religious life, she said: "Being a Sister of Mercy gives me a great sense of purpose and well-being. I am given the opportunity to share community life with dedicated women who strive to be God-centered and who express and share the charism of Mercy exemplified by our foundress, Catherine McAuley."

SR. MARGARET HARING
PITTSBURGH

Sixty years after entering religious life, Sister Margaret Haring continues her giving spirit as



Sr. Rosemary Flaherty

a volunteer visitor at Pittsburgh's Southwestern Veterans Home and Most Holy Name Parish.

Some of those veterans she visits today may have been active in the Korean conflict, begun in 1950, the year Sister Margaret entered the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh.

The Mercy Sisters hadn't been her first choice since her early education was overseen by the Sisters of St. Joseph. While working as a secretary in a Pittsburgh firm, she visited a Mount Mercy College student who shared an interest in a religious life, and whose father had a shop next to the firm. "She prevailed on me to visit the Mercy Sisters," she said. A short time later, she entered the community.

Having received education degrees from Mount Mercy College (now Carlow University) and Duquesne University, she taught and was principal at Saint Vincent Elementary School, Latrobe, and at St. Colman, St. Peter and Our Lady of Fatima grade schools and the former Dominic High School, all in the Pittsburgh Diocese. She specialized in music, art and social studies.

Additional ministries included nursing home chaplain, parish ministry and volunteer clerical duties at UPMC Mercy.

For three years a caregiver for her mother, Sister Margaret spoke of "believing I am where God wants me to be so that God's will may be accomplished in my life, and being able to continue to min-



Sr. Margaret Haring

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SR. MARGARET (CONTINUED)

ister to the elderly.”

Her treasured quote from Catherine McAuley is “Prayer is a plant, the seed of which is sown in the heart of every Christian, but its growth depends on the care we take to nourish it. If neglected, it will die.” And Sister Margaret added, “... and so would my religious vocation, even at my age.”

SR. MARIE HUGHES
Buffalo

With each new teaching assignment, young Sister Mary Hughes was sent off with a blessing from her superior: “God will bless you for whatever you are asked to do in obedience, Sister.”



Sr. Marie Hughes

Those words, remembered over 60 years, served Sister Mary in the classrooms of numerous Buffalo grade schools and on into her favorite ministry, religious education at Our Lady of Sacred Heart Parish, Buffalo.

“It was a great joy to teach students about the Sacrifice of the Mass, Catholic Doctrine and devotions,” she said.

The Sisters of Mercy who taught her in high school impressed her with their prayerful example and their willingness to help guide and encourage their students. “I wanted to be like them – prayerful, kind and dedicated to their teaching profession,” she said.

Entering Mt. Mercy Convent in 1950 from Holy Family Parish, Buffalo, Sister Mary, eventually became principal at St. Joseph School, Batavia, and Holy Family

School, LeRoy, and taught religious education at St. Thomas Aquinas School and Mt. Mercy Academy, both in Buffalo.

Formerly a secretary at Mercy Health Care Unit, Buffalo, she now serves as receptionist there.

“Regardless of the circumstances of my life,” she shared, “in joys or in disappointments, in health or in sickness, in times of celebration or in sorrow, I pause to reflect on these comforting words ... from the Suscipe Prayer, ‘My God, I am yours for time and eternity.’”

Sister Mary encourages any young woman to visit the Mercy ministries practiced today and respond as Catherine McAuley did: “She saw the need of orphaned children and opened a school for them. She saw homeless young women and gave them domestic instruction ... Because of her vision and wisdom, the Sisters of Mercy serve all over the world.”

SR. SUZANNE KELLY
Buffalo

Wanting to be with the sisters all the time by staying after school at St. Martin’s Grade School, Buffalo, young Suzanne Kelly got her wish, became a Sister of Mercy and now looks back over 60 “happy” years.

“It was clear this was my call because my aunt, Sister Bernetta, was a Sister of Mercy. She, and the other sisters who taught me, encouraged me in my vocation,” Sister Suzanne said.

A graduate of Mt. Mercy Academy, Buffalo; Niagara University; and LaSalle University, Ozamis, Philippines, she began her teaching ministry at Madonna High School, Niagara Falls, N.Y., and returned to Mt. Mercy Academy to teach chemistry for seven years.

In 1982, she journeyed to Alicia,

Philippines, served on the formation team, performed parish ministry, provided spiritual direction and was named dean of studies at St. Mary’s Theologate. While in the Philippines, she earned a master’s degree in religious studies in 1998.



Sr. Suzanne Kelly

“Working with the Columban Fathers and the seminarians at St. Mary’s was a very affirming ministry for me,” she said. Sister Suzanne ministered in the Philippines for over 20 years, returning to the states in 2003.

She said she had been inspired by these words of Catherine McAuley, “Glory be to God whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we ask or imagine.”

Reflecting on her life as a woman religious, she said: “Being a Sister of Mercy has made me very happy. I have learned so much that has made me a better person and enabled me to do so much more than I imagined for other people.”

She advised those who are contemplating religious life to follow through on their desire.

SR. EDITH LANGIOTTI
Erie

Throughout grade school and high school at St. Michael’s, Greenville, she knew that she would become a sister.

Now celebrating 60 years as a Sister of Mercy, Sister Edith Langiotti recalled: “I remember hearing Father James Kearns speaking one morning at one of our high school assemblies about religious vocations. He said, ‘This call comes to

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SR. EDITH (CONTINUED)

everyone sometime; but if it's there long enough, keep it there.' And mine was there."

For more than 20 years, she taught in Erie Diocesan elementary schools and was a principal. She noted that each grade level had its own personality.

"The younger groups were excited to learn something new every day and eager to tell of their experiences, sometimes all of them. The older groups were somewhat hesitant to perform in front of their peers," she said.

Her other ministries included librarian at Mercyhurst Prep and Mercyhurst College, both in Erie. She managed Mercy Terrace Apartments, Erie, and was motherhouse coordinator. Today, she is archivist in Erie.

"I made the choice to enter the Sisters of Mercy, not knowing exactly what life in a religious community fully meant, but very much convinced that this was where I was to be. With the support of my family and that of the Sisters of Mercy who taught and knew me for 12 years in school, I can say that I chose the right path," Sister Edith said.

She added: "The years have been very satisfying for me, knowing that I was part of a larger effort in helping others to achieve some measure of success in learning their faith and academic skills that would hopefully sustain them throughout their lives."



**Sr. Edith
Langiotti**

**SR. M. MARY GRATIA
L'ESPERANCE
Rochester**

A native of St. Louise Parish, Pittsford, N.Y., Sister Mary Gratia L'Esperance entered religious life 60 years ago and lived most of her life as an educator and ministering to seniors.

"My experiences with wonderful people in community, during educational opportunities, and in a variety of ministries have been a blessing and an inspiration," she said.

Sister Mary Gratia taught at these schools: Holy Cross, Our Lady of Mercy High School and Catherine McAuley College, all in Rochester; Holy Family, Auburn, N.Y.; and Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Patrick, both in Elmira, N.Y.

After completing studies at St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester, she held positions as a staff member for adult education and theological consultant for the Diocese of Rochester; assistant to the director of field education at St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester; and justice coordinator for the Sisters of Mercy in Rochester.

In 1983, Sister Gratia began working with older adults and caregivers at Mercy Center of the Aging, Rochester. Today, she volunteers at the Resource Center of the Alzheimer's Association.

**SR. M. VIVIAN McELHINNY
Pittsburgh**

While the old 1902 wooden structure of Holy Angels Church in Hays, south Pittsburgh, was being

renovated in 1945, Sister Vivian McElhinny was a young teen attending Mass there with her family.

Because of that Christian family atmosphere encouraged by her parents and reinforced by the Mercy Sisters who taught her, she began contemplating religious life at a young age.

"I admired the Sisters of Mercy for their dedication to God and others, and this led me to want to serve God as one of them," she recalled.

Sister Vivian celebrates her 60th jubilee following years of teaching in several Pittsburgh-area schools. In 1964, she was among the Sisters of Mercy who helped open North American Martyrs School in Monroeville for 60 first-grade and 40 second-grade students.

"My favorite ministry is what I was able to do at Carlow Campus School," she said. "I taught religion and math, gave weekend college workshops to teachers in math and computer technology. And now I am tutoring children."

For most of her religious life, Sister Vivian has drawn strength from a passage in Isaiah that was introduced to her while on a retreat, "I have called you by name ... I am with you always." She reflected, "It keeps me aware of God's presence."

Being a Sister of Mercy has enabled her to show her love for God, she said, by having "many opportunities to love and serve others."



**Sr. M. Vivian
McElhinny**



**Sr. M. Gratia
L'Esperance**

SR. MARY CELESTE O'BRYAN Buffalo

For 30 years a teacher and another 27 years – and still counting – as director of an active South Buffalo soup kitchen, Sister M. Celeste O'Bryan is actively celebrating her jubilee as a Sister of Mercy.



Sr. Mary
Celeste
O'Bryan

“God drew me to religious life for His own reasons ...” she said. And the “freedom and support I receive in my efforts to fulfill my vocation and accomplish my ministry” is her reward.

Entering the Buffalo Community in 1950, Sister Celeste taught in various Catholic schools, grades one through seven, in the Buffalo Diocese until 1982.

“Teaching kept me in touch with the innocence of children and their spontaneity. With the exuberance of holidays and change of seasons, I liked the closure each June and the new beginning each September,” she said.

Taking over the South Buffalo Community Table, Inc., as director in 1983 put her in touch with the working class and provided a “hands-on understanding and respect for the poor,” she said. “It’s the attitude of many toward the poor as to why we see so few of the very poor at our church services or in our social gatherings.”

Sister Celeste said she related to when people are at their lowest ebb, as she once experienced, and “God made His presence felt” through Scripture: “Every valley shall be filled and every mountain

and hill shall be leveled. The windings shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth.” Luke 3:5

Unaware of the moment of her vocation decision, she advised those seeking direction to “pray and listen earnestly to the Holy Spirit for guidance and sincerely and honestly seek counsel.”

SR. MARY LOUIS OSCLICK Erie

Ask Sister Mary Louis Oslick about her favorite ministry, and without hesitation, she will say, “Teaching.” That is what she has done for most of her 60 years as a Sister of Mercy.

“Teaching enabled me to make a difference, to touch so many lives. I had students whose parents and grandparents were my students,” said Sister Mary Louis. “Being a teacher and having a positive influence is so important in the life of a child.”

She taught for 38 years at St. George School, Erie. She also taught at Diocese of Erie elementary schools in DuBois, Erie, Greenville, Pittsburgh and Titusville. Today, she is a residence hall monitor at Mercyhurst College, Erie.

It was the Sisters of Mercy who influenced her as she was a student at Holy Redeemer School, Ambridge, Pa. Those Sisters of Mercy who provided her with a good example of religious included her aunt, Sister M. Leonarda, and Sisters M. Rosalia, Francine and Mary Jane.

“In the fourth grade, I thought it would be fun to be a nun. I began to think seriously about a religious



Sr. Mary
Louis Oslick

vocation after my senior year in high school,” she said.

She noted that being a Sister of Mercy helped her to find a “great confidence in God and trust in God’s providence.” She is excited to see the expansion of Mercy throughout the world and in the lives of individual Sisters of Mercy.

Her advice to anyone seeking religious life is simple, “Pray and follow your heart.”

SR. ANN PRISCO Erie

Growing up in Hornell, N.Y., Sister Ann Prisco was influenced by the Sisters of Mercy who worked in her parish or the local hospital.

“Religious life always impressed me,” she said.

Today, after a career devoted mostly to teaching grade-school children, she is celebrating her 60th year as a Sister of Mercy.

“I had the desire to be a religious and to be a teacher. My mother and family were always very encouraging to me,” she said. “I really enjoyed teaching, especially teaching religious education to children.”

She taught in Pittsburgh and at Diocese of Erie schools in Brookville, DuBois, Erie, Franklin, Greenville, Punxsutawney and Titusville. She was a religious education coordinator at St. Thomas Parish, Corry.

In later years, Sister Ann put one of her passions to good use: knitting. A knitter since 1972, she coordinated the Sisters of Mercy



Sr. Ann
Prisco

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SR. ANN (CONTINUED)

ministry in which prayer shawls are knitted or crocheted, prayed over and given to people who have a physical, emotional or psychological illness or are grieving.

"I feel that the Sisters of Mercy have that compassion and concern for those who are hurting. It not only blesses them, but us, too," she said in a story published on the ministry by the Catholic News Service in 2006. The story received national attention.

Like teaching, the prayer shawl ministry and her other activities, Sister Ann said prayer was woven into all of it. In fact, it is what she likes best about being a Sister of Mercy.

"Prayer is extending ourselves to others and being an example to the old and young," she said.

Over the years, she has been inspired by this scriptural passage, "This then is what Yahweh asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

SR. ELAINE SANDY**Erie**

Sister Elaine Sandy spent her religious life in education and drew strength from the writings of Sisters of Mercy foundress, Catherine McAuley, who once wrote, "God never refuses His grace to those who seek it."

She is celebrating her 60th year of religious life this year.

For much of her career, Sister Elaine taught at Diocese of Erie elementary schools in Brookville, Corry, Erie, Franklin, Greenville and Titusville. She was principal at Our Lady of Fatima School, Farrell. In 1976, she was assigned to

teach English at Mercyhurst Prep, Erie.

"Each day presented new experiences as well as challenges for a first-year high school teacher," she recalled. "Consequently, it didn't take me long to find out that I had to be creative with all sorts of games and extra bonus points when grammar lessons had to be taught. I can honestly say that I thoroughly enjoyed teaching the ninth graders."

Health problems made it necessary to curtail the number of classes she was able to teach, and she credits Sister Maura Smith, then principal at Mercyhurst Prep, with moving her career in a new direction: audio-visual director.

"I was absolutely sure that I was not qualified for such a position. I guess I had imagined all sorts of problems with equipment and light bulbs and the list went on and on," she said.

She did, however, accept the challenge at the high school and spent 20 years in that position before moving on to prayer ministry in 2005.

As she celebrates her 60th year of religious life, Sister Elaine has found strength from this Catherine McAuley quote, "Let us never desire more than enough; God will give us that and His blessing."

SR. JEANNE SNYDER**Pittsburgh**

From teacher, to hospital accountant, school treasurer, principal, and onto administrator, comptroller of a small business and lastly parish assistant administra-

tor/financial director, Sister Jeanne Snyder has traveled many roads.

"In 2003, I was given approval to retire from 'having to earn a salary,'" the 60-year jubilarian said. But not yet done ... "I volunteer in my Sacred Heart Parish in Georgetown, Conn., and minister to the Catholics at the local assisted living/medical center. One day a week I enjoy playing golf through the generosity and kindness of friends."

A native of St. Pius Parish, McKeesport, Pa., she entered the Mercy community in Pittsburgh in 1950, following 12 years of schooling by the Sisters of Mercy. "I had four relatives in the order in Pittsburgh, so I was 'predestined' when I decided in my senior year to enter." Her heart-felt ministry was teaching first grade in the beginning years. "In those days," she said, "children did not go to kindergarten and came into school with very little knowledge. It was a joy to see them grow and learn. Later, I started the business department at St. Elizabeth High School. It was like teaching first-graders because these students did not know shorthand or typing ... it was fun to watch them grow, also!"

In 1979, she became administrator at Mercy Center, Madison, Conn., which took her to Connecticut, where she lives today.

Had she not become a Sister of Mercy both professionally and spiritually, she added, "I would not have had the vast experiences. The beautiful people whom I have met over these 60 years are gifts, each and every one!"

**Sr. Elaine Sandy****Sr. Jeanne Snyder**

SR. MARY SULLIVAN
(formerly Sr. Mary Petrus)
Rochester

“For me, being a Sister of Mercy has been a wonderful, inexhaustible vocation for which I am deeply grateful – to God and to the Sisters of Mercy. I pray as Catherine McAuley did, that God ‘will finish in me the work God has begun.’”

That is how Sister Mary Sullivan described her life as a Sister of Mercy.

Sister Mary entered the Sisters of Mercy from Blessed Sacrament Parish, Rochester, and spent most of her religious life in education.

She taught at these schools: St. Charles Borromeo and Our Lady of Mercy High School, Rochester; and St. Louis, Pittsford. She taught at Catherine McAuley College, Rochester, where she served as president from 1965-1967; Marymount College, Terrytown, N.Y., and Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).

After almost 40 years of full-time teaching and administration in higher education, she is now professor emerita of literature and dean emerita of the College of Liberal Arts at RIT, where she still occasionally teaches.

She is the author or editor of several books and articles on Catherine McAuley and the history of Sisters of Mercy. Also, she is a frequent lecturer and retreat director on those topics.

Sister Mary lives in Rochester.



Sr. Mary Sullivan

SR. JANET WAHL
(formerly Sr. Mary Basil)
Rochester

Sister Janet Wahl is marking 60 years of religious life and sees it as a time to reflect on her commitment to God and people.

She said: “At this time in my life as a Sister of Mercy, I am free to be more attentive to whomever or whatever crosses my path. My motto, ‘Pray, Love, Sacrifice,’ calls me to exercise a deeper relationship with the God of my heart and to have a profound thankfulness for all the persons who have supported me in this call to religious life and this search for the living God. This quest to follow Jesus is something from which we never retire!”

A native of Immaculate Conception Parish, Rochester, she ministered in education, mission work, health care and congregational administration. She taught at these elementary schools: St. Salome and St. Thomas the Apostle; and Cardinal Mooney and Our Lady of Mercy high schools, all in Rochester; St. Michael School, Newark, N.Y.; and Notre Dame High School, Elmira, N.Y.

From 1973-77, she served on the administration team for the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester. Starting in 1978, Sister Janet spent five years as a missionary in Santiago, Chile. After further study, she ministered as a physician’s assistant at Park Ridge Hospital (Unity Hospital), Rochester; Greenwood Health Center, Troupsburg, N.Y.; and Cameron



Sr. Janet Wahl

Valley Health Center, Cameron, N.Y. She has most recently ministered in Brockport, N.Y., in the New York State Migrant Outreach Education Project.

Sister Janet lives in Rochester and volunteers with the poor, sick and uneducated in the area.

SR. GRETCHEN WEIGL
Pittsburgh

Academically schooled in math and physics, which she taught for 40 years, Sister Gretchen Weigl found her preferred ministry as hospital chaplain high on her list.

“I have ministered in many different areas – teaching, religious education, to name a few – however, I believe my latest ministry as hospital chaplain at Divine Providence and Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh for 12 years to be the most satisfying,” said the 60-year jubilarian.

“My close association with patients, family and staff was most encouraging, and those whom I met during those years were so appreciative of my ministry,” she said.

Sister Gretchen grew up in St. Wendelin Parish, in Pittsburgh’s Carrick neighborhood, and came under the influence of the Sisters of St. Joseph. With early thoughts of entering their community, she encountered the Sisters of Mercy while attending Mount Mercy College (now Carlow University).

The spirit of those teaching Mercy Sisters and the continued



Sr. Gretchen Weigl

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SR. GRETCHEN (CONTINUED)

love and support of her parents and friends most influenced her. She added, "My choice was made."

Aside from five early years teaching in Germany, Sister Gretchen taught in Pittsburgh diocesan schools, served as director of religious education at St. Maurice Parish and Holy Spirit School, was adjunct professor of math at Mercy Hospital School of Nursing and began her chaplaincy at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in 1994.

Finding comfort in "The Good Shepherd" Psalm, she shared a familiar quote from Catherine McAuley's "A Woman Sings of Mercy," which is: "... try to be like (water). Those rivers which enter the sea, without losing the sweetness of the water ..."

Her parents and the sisters, she said, enabled her to be herself and grow. "I was able to handle any obstacles that may have occurred, aided by the grace of God and the prayers of the sisters."

**SR. MARIA GORETTI
ZAMBERLAN**
Pittsburgh

Recognizing that the "elderly possess beautiful virtues of simplicity and humility," 60-year jubilarian Sister Maria Goretti Zamberlan devoted 17 years to their care as administrator of St. Joseph Nursing and Health Care Center, Pittsburgh.

Why this favored ministry? "They were loveable and special to me. It was indeed a great joy to be of service to them," she said.

While in high school, she joined the Senior Sodality at Holy Cross Parish, Iselin, Pa., near Pittsburgh, and visited a Sodality friend

who had become a Sister of Mercy. She was impressed by convent life and made a commitment to enter the community after first working for a time in Chicago as a stenographer.

Sister Maria Goretti taught at St. Agnes School, Pittsburgh, earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing, and devoted 20 years in several administration positions to Mercy Hospital (now UPMC Mercy).

She turned the third floor of the Motherhouse into an infirmary when the sisters' infirmary at St. Xavier, Latrobe, burned.

As administrator of the former St. Joseph Home for the Aged, she began a \$3-million renovation and name-change.

Catherine McAuley's words: "God can bend and change and form and reform any of His creatures to fit them for the purpose He designs," are her inspiration. And from Scripture, "I am the Potter, you are the clay."

Today, she is pastoral associate at Church of the Good Shepherd, Kent, Pa.

To anyone considering religious life, she had this advice: "Pray earnestly to discern what God is asking you. You will be happy and at peace if you choose God's will."

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SR. MARY CAROL BENNETT
Pittsburgh

The example of the Sisters of Mercy who taught her at Mount Mercy College (now Carlow Uni-

versity) is what drew Sister Mary Carol Bennett to become one of them.

"It was the grace of God and the prayers of the college sisters that led me to enter the community," said Sister Mary Carol, who is marking her golden jubilee.

Her ministries included teaching sixth grade at St. Agnes Parochial School and math at St. Paul Cathedral High School, both in Pittsburgh, and St. Peter High School, McKeesport. Later, she taught math

and was dean of students at Bishop Canevin High School, Pittsburgh. She returned to St. Paul's as principal. She was president of the Interfaith Alliance of Southwestern Pennsylvania and a member of the Justice Committee for the former Sisters of Mercy regional community of Pittsburgh – now the New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community.

Currently in prayer ministry, Sister shares the meaningful words of Scripture, "God has shown you what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Sister Mary Carol adds her favorite phrase of Catherine McAuley, "Be sure to prepare for the Sisters a comfortable cup of tea."

In living the Scripture message, she said, "I have enjoyed each of my ministries in a special way, because of the people I met and the opportunities I experienced."



**Sr. Maria
Goretti
Zamberlan**



**Sr. Mary
Carol
Bennett**

(Continued on Page 12)

SR. MARY CAROL (CONTINUED)

She noted that service is always needed for the poor, sick and uneducated with a particular concern for women and children and invited women interested in the consecrated life to join her.

“The Sisters of Mercy is the place for you,” she said.

SR. JEANNE MARIE COLLINS

(formerly Sr. Mary Carolyn)
Rochester

When she became a Sister of Mercy, Sister Jeanne Marie Collins took the motto, “With joy I will serve.”

She brought that joy to her ministries when she taught, worked in a parish and ministered to the elderly.

“I am very grateful for these past 50 years as a Sister of Mercy. God has gifted me in many ways. I was inspired by the Sisters of Mercy who taught me,” she said.



Sr. Jeanne Marie Collins

Sister Jeanne Marie entered the Sisters of Mercy from St. Louis Parish, Pittsford, N.Y.

She taught in these elementary schools in the Diocese of Rochester: Annunciation, St. Andrew, St. Cecilia, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Rita and St. Thomas the Apostle. In the Diocese of Syracuse, she taught at St. Matthew School.

In 1993, she became a pastoral minister and coordinated liturgy and music in Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Rochester. More recently Sister Jeanne Marie has assisted with the elderly and the homebound at various sites locally

including: Sisters Care, Home-Hospital in the Rochester City School District and Home Instead Senior Care. She lives in the Rochester area and ministers as a caregiver at Home Instead Senior Care.

SR. DOMENICA DeLEO

Erie

Sister Domenica DeLeo’s first exposure to the Sisters of Mercy came when she enrolled at Mercyhurst College, Erie. Sister Eustace Taylor, then superior of the Sisters of Mercy community and Mercyhurst College president, started the Cadet Program in 1959, a program designed to help the Sisters of Mercy staff elementary schools in the Diocese of Erie. Sister Domenica was among the first of nine young women in the program.

“During my four years and five summers it took to receive my degree, the Sisters of Mercy played a major role in my life,” she said.

Sister Domenica likes to cite a portion of the Sisters of Mercy “Constitutions” to sum up her religious life. It reads, “Through direct service and through our influence we serve God’s people through education, healthcare and other ministries.” She said that sentence became God’s prophetic plan for her and helped her understand her ring motto, “Love serves.”

Her ministries have included teaching and serving as principal at Diocese of Erie elementary schools, diocesan director of teacher personnel, member of the Leadership Team for the Regional Community of Erie and development director at Mercyhurst Prep,



Sr. Domenica DeLeo

Erie. Today, she is local leader in Erie.

“In my 50 years of religious life, it has been my privilege to touch the lives of innumerable students who were entrusted to my care. I am grateful to my Mercy Community for all of their love and support which has affected my life deeply and wonderfully,” she said.

Sister Domenica added, “At the rising of each new day, I whisper a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s gifts in my life.”

SR. ELAINE FRANZ

Buffalo

Sister Elaine Franz described them as the “giving people” – her parents and sophomore homeroom teacher and mentor, Sister Mary Thaddeus, who directed her to Father Juniper, a Franciscan. Each influenced her to serve, said Sister Elaine, who is celebrating her golden jubilee.

“I find my life in community... the opportunity to be of service and to meet people and hear their ‘stories’ has enriched my life,” said Sister Elaine, today the local development coordinator for Buffalo.

Taught by the Mercy Sisters, she once joked, “I was entering the Mercys to reform them.” She had only to wait two years from her 1960 entrance date from St. Teresa Parish, Buffalo, for Vatican II to make those changes.

She began teaching in 1963 and was principal in two Buffalo diocesan grade schools before being named director of education for the



Sr. Elaine Franz

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SR. ELAINE (CONTINUED)

diocese in 1984. Councilor on the Leadership Team, project manager for the renovation of the Mercy Center in Buffalo, administrator and director of administrative services followed.

"I have enjoyed all aspects of my various ministries," she said, "but I truly felt that my experience working with children, parents, teachers and sisters was most rewarding."

Her treasured Scripture from Jeremiah 29 reads: "For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, plans for your welfare, not for woe, plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me."

One doesn't always know why one feels drawn to religious life, she said, "because it is a call from God ... Like any other vocation, it has its 'ups and downs.' I've found many blessings as well as challenges ... but it is worth it."

**SR. MARGARET
(MARGY) GORMAN**
Buffalo

"It must have been a combination of God's gentle drawing, together with the love and support of family and several Sisters of Mercy that brought me to Mercy in 1960," said Sister Margaret Mary (Margy) Gorman, a native of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Buffalo.

"In retrospect, what seems more important now is what caused me to stay," said Sister Margy, who is celebrating her golden jubilee.

Today, she is director of mission and service learning at Trocaire College, Buffalo.

Sister Margy, a former English teacher, delights in Catherine

McAuley's words: "We have one solid comfort amidst this little tripping about, our hearts can always be in the same place, centered in God, for whom we go forward or stay back."

"The 'going forward' has taken several shifts ... from teacher to religious educator, from pastoral associate to community leadership and ... working with non-traditional college students for the past 10 years. I have loved every part of this, even while acknowledging the bumps in the transitions," Sister Margy said.

"The gift of it all," she continued, "has been to be able to wrap my whole life around the things I treasure most: intimacy with God, wonderful ministry opportunities ... and enduring relationships with such quality people. What at first seemed like separate parts of life now have become various facets of one thing – relationships – the pearl of great price."

Sister Margy added, "Women today have many more opportunities than they had 50 years ago. Yet, this way of life remains a unique and fulfilling opportunity not only to serve the needs of our time as part of a community of grace, but also to be deeply and powerfully transformed as a woman of faith and compassion."

SR. PEGGY GORMAN
Buffalo

Enthusiasm for religious community abounds in the life and ministries of Sister Peggy Gorman as the Buffalo native celebrates her golden jubilee as a Sister of Mercy.



**Sr. Margaret
Mary
Gorman**

The rewards experienced and shared by NyPPaW's chief development officer are, in her words, "the great opportunity to share your life with other faith-filled, dedicated women in community ... a life of service to God and others, particularly the poor, sick and uneducated ... to live simply and share all that you have been given with others ... the gifts of growth, enrichment, opportunities to deepen your relationship with God ... and the occasions to know yourself – to learn, grow, change and be changed."

Influenced by the teaching sisters in grammar and high schools, Sister Peggy singles out Sister M. Caritas Quinn as a guiding light in desiring to make a difference in the world.

That "difference" is reflected in her 14 years as a teacher and principal followed by these Buffalo Community administrative posts: president; vice president, member of the renewal team; and director of novices. Also, she served as vice president for mission at Mercy Health System, Buffalo, and vice president for mission integration at Mercy Hospital.

"All," she said, "provided challenges, opportunities for growth and a deepening of my relationship with God."

The words of Catherine McAuley, "God can bend and change and form and reform any of his creatures to fit them to the purposes He designs," and Ephesians 3, "Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine," are Sister Peggy's favorite passages of enlightenment.



**Sr. Peggy
Gorman**

SR. MARY ANN POWELL *Buffalo*

“The Sisters of Mercy are not the same as when I entered 50 years ago,” said jubilant Sister Mary Ann Powell. “What hasn’t changed is the Mercy charism.”

According to Sister Mary Ann, that charism includes the Sisters of Mercy commitment to reading the signs of the times and addressing them with service to the poor, women and children.

“Individually, we belong to something bigger than ourselves and together we can minister better than alone. We are alive and well,” she said.

From Holy Family Parish, Buffalo, Sister Mary Ann attended Catholic schools, and at her senior retreat the awareness to enter surfaced. She asked for signs, and they appeared with being put on the waiting lists for two colleges, despite her honor-student status.

“I had my sign,” she said.

Following graduation from Buffalo’s Sancta Maria (now Trocaire College) and Medaille colleges and Niagara University, she taught at these Buffalo-area Catholic elementary schools: St. Thomas Aquinas, Our Lady of Rosary, St. Teresa, St. Bonaventure, St. Joseph, St. Bernadette, Our Lady of Mercy and St. John Vianney before settling in the Community’s Finance Office for 23 years.

Her favorite Scripture is 1 Cor. 13:13, “Three things will last forever – faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love.” She said the inscription in her ring: “I believe, I hope, I love,” ... are the



Sr. Mary Ann Powell

virtues that call out to her today for continued growth and practice as she ministers at Trocaire College.

Sister Mary Ann, whose family and education influenced her, believes lack of knowledge and exposure to religious life prevents young people today from seeing this lifestyle as a possible choice. “We need to let them see that this life is a real and viable option.”

SR. GLORIA RUOCCO (formerly Sr. Mary Peter Claver) *Rochester*

Sister Gloria Ruocco entered the Sisters of Mercy from St. Mary Parish, Corning, N.Y. As she looks back on her 50 years of religious life, she appreciates the role that her parents played in her vocation.

“I owe my vocation to my parents who were immigrants from Italy and to my family. My mother and father were great, inspiring examples of faith, courage, sacrifice and love. I also owe it to the sisters who have taught me through the years,” she said.

She taught French at these Rochester Catholic schools: St. James, St. Rita, and Cardinal Mooney High School. She ministered with her cousin, Father Neil Miller, in the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry for the Diocese of Rochester in Elmira, N.Y. For the last 19 years, she has served the needy and the poor at the House of Mercy, Rochester.

“I feel privileged having had these experiences. These ministries have made alive, for me, the spirit and charism of Catherine McAuley and her preferential love for the



Sr. Gloria Ruocco

poor. I am happy to be a daughter of Catherine McAuley,” she said.

She took the motto, “Love without limit.”

She lives at Mercy Center, Rochester.

SR. JOANNA SINKO *Pittsburgh*

Of the 50 years she has been a Sister of Mercy, Sister Joanna Sinko has devoted 27 of them to living and working with the poor in the Appalachian region, and she states, “... this has truly been the work of my heart.” She continues there today as director of House of Hope, an emergency outreach center, in Garrett County, Md.

Employed in the 1950s in the medical records department at Holy Cross Hospital in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., she first encountered the Sisters of Mercy when they arrived from Pittsburgh to minister at the hospital. “These seven women brought an energy and vitality that had not been known before they arrived,” she recalled. “They created an atmosphere of hospitality and commitment to the service of the sick, as well as concern for the welfare of the employees.”

That spirit of joyful commitment eventually led her to her entering in 1961.

Sister Joanna earned her bachelor’s degree at Mount Mercy College (now Carlow University) before embarking on teaching assignments in these Pittsburgh



Sr. Joanna Sinko

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SR. JOANNA (CONTINUED)

schools: Holy Family, St. Elizabeth, St. Clare, St. Winifred and St. Agatha. She was principal at St. Maurice School.

Her move to House of Hope in 1983 was ignited by Catherine McAuley's entreaty, "... the poor need help today, not next week."

A New Brunswick, N.J., native, Sister Joanna gives credit, for her vocation, to Catherine's vision of mercy and service to others, "to the Sisters ... and being inspired, still, by that same 'spirit' of mercy that I first encountered all those many years ago."

SR. MARY EILEEN STEEN
Buffalo

In her golden jubilee year, Sister Mary Eileen Steen reflects back to the words of Jeremiah, "I know the plans I have in mind for you; a future full of hope."



Sr. Mary Eileen Steen

Those words are as meaningful today as they were in 1960 when she entered the Sisters of Mercy Community in Buffalo to begin her schooling as a teacher and director of various ministries.

Her commitment was inspired by the many sisters she experienced during her education at St. Martin of Tours Grade School and Mt. Mercy Academy, Buffalo.

"All of our teachers were sisters at that time, and I was always in awe of their commitment and dedication," she said.

Those early examples of dedication went with her to the various elementary schools in the Buffalo area where she taught and also served as principal at St. Joseph

School, Batavia, N.Y.

She was director of religious activities at Baker Victory Services, Lackawanna, N.Y., a multi-faceted center for children and youth with special needs, an outgrowth of Father Nelson Baker's orphanage 150 years ago.

Sister Mary Eileen was coordinator of religious education at Ss. Peter and Paul Parish, Hamburg, N.Y., before becoming director of Mercy at Home ministry, which she heads today.

Expressing her joy for the opportunities to serve, Sister Mary Eileen advised those considering a vocation: "Listen to your heart ... to the ways God speaks to you through people, your experiences and prayer."

SR. M. JUDITH STOJHOVIC
Pittsburgh

Recently, Sister Judith Stojhovic saw a former student now in college.

"She told me she was majoring in math, because of the influence I had on her when I taught her algebra in the eighth grade. She was a student who struggled, so hearing this news made me very happy," Sister Judith said.

Sisters making a difference in the lives of their students is how Sister Judith decided to be a Sister of Mercy. Growing up in Manchester, Pa., she lived near convents in which were the sisters who taught her: The Croatian Franciscan Sisters and the Sisters of Mercy.

Much of her religious life has been in education, teaching math or serving in administration in the Pittsburgh area. Her assignments include these high schools: Bishop Canevin, St. Paul Cathedral, St.

Elizabeth and North Catholic. She was principal at Nativity Elementary School and currently is principal at St. Maurice Elementary School.

"It is possible to see the joy in a student's eyes when he or she 'get's it,'" she said.

Sister Judith also served on the leadership team for the former Sisters of Mercy Pittsburgh Regional Community.

Of her 50 years as a Sister of Mercy, she said: "What I find most satisfying is the freedom to minister to those in need. I really resonate with the vow of service and feel that my work in education has been one of service to those who are poor in so many ways, not just materially."

SR. AUDREY SYNNOTT
Rochester

As she celebrates her golden jubilee, Sister Audrey Synnott reflects on her religious life this way: "My life as a Sister of Mercy is enriching my following of Christ. My vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and service to the poor, sick and uneducated have greatly lessened my concern about what possessions I have or don't have and has opened my heart to the needs of others."

Sister Audrey entered the Sisters of Mercy in Buffalo from St. John Parish, Stamford, Conn., in 1960.



Sr. M. Judith Stojhovic



Sr. Audrey Synnott

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SR. AUDREY (CONTINUED)

She taught at these schools in the Diocese of Buffalo: St. Martin, St. Monica, Madonna High School, Mount Mercy Academy and Trocaire College.

She edited poetry for "Sisters Today" magazine in St. Joseph, Minn.

In 1980, she transferred from the Sisters of Mercy in Buffalo to the Sisters of Mercy in Rochester. There, she continued to write and edit poetry for "Sisters Today," assist in the NW Speech and Hearing Clinic (Rochester), minister as spiritual director and as director of the associate program for the Sisters of Mercy in the Rochester area.

Since 2000, Sister Audrey has been in prayer ministry at Mercy Center, Rochester.

Her motto is "Love, Serve, Bring Peace."

SR. MARY ELLENTWIST
Buffalo

As a former student and now president of Mt. Mercy Academy, Buffalo, Sister Mary Ellen Twist looks back on her 50 years of ministry as a woman religious and cited teaching and pastoral ministry as her favorite forms of service.

Sister Mary Ellen, a former music teacher, acknowledged, "The freedom and health to engage in purposeful ministry have been my greatest gifts."

Teaching assignments included Holy Family School and Our Lady of Mercy in Orchard Park, N.Y.; Mt. Mercy Academy, Buffalo; and Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, N.Y., where she served on the faculty for eight years while continuing post-graduate, theological studies.

Aside from the classroom, she

served the Buffalo Community as director of formation, director for Mercy Associates, liturgy and choir director as well as a member of the final Leadership Team for the Sisters of Mercy in Buffalo.

She was pastoral minister at St. Bernadette Parish, Orchard Park, N.Y., and St. George Parish, West Falls, N.Y.

A great aunt, Mother Mary Joan Maloney, former Reverend Mother, proved to be a strong influence on her life and decision to become a Sister of Mercy. Also, her grade school education at home parish St. Thomas Aquinas, Buffalo, with Sister Mary Roberta and later at Mt. Mercy with Sister Mary Jane Nolan, enabled her to see their "sense of joy, purpose and desire to welcome new members."

Sister Mary Ellen's cherished quote is engraved in her ring, "Love as I love you," adapted from John 15:12.

Of Catherine's sayings, "Dance every evening" shows, she said, "the ability to rise above the difficulties in life and enjoy the blessings ..."

To anyone interested in becoming a Sister of Mercy, she offered this advice: "Spend time with us. Get to know us, our history, our mission."

SR. SHEILA MARIE WALSH
Buffalo

Through extensive education in healthcare, Sister Sheila Marie Walsh was given the opportunity to directly serve people, especially the poor, for the past 50 years as a Sister of Mercy and registered nurse.



**Sr. Mary
Ellen Twist**

Following graduation from Mercy Hospital School of Nursing, Buffalo, and completing a year as staff nurse at the hospital, Sister Sheila entered the Buffalo's Sisters of Mercy Community in 1960. Her home parish of St. Martin of Tours was just down the way on Abbott Road.

"The persistence of my God in removing obstacles in my path that prevented me from entering religious life and the association with the Sisters of Mercy for 15 years" finally led her to her final vows in 1968, she said.

Between 1964-80, she earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in hospital administration. Also, Canisius College, Buffalo, presented her with a doctor of humane letters degree.

Sister Sheila served Mercy Hospital as a nursing supervisor, director of nursing service, associate administrator and, from 1972-92, as administrator/chief operating officer (CEO). From 1992 to 2000, she was on the Leadership Team of the then-Mercy Regional Community of Buffalo.

She was CEO at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Georgetown, Guyana, South America, for eight years. Presently, she is director of Sister Services at Mercy Center in Buffalo. She has served on numerous professional, civic and community boards and organizations in the U.S. and South America.

"Be still and know that I am God" is her favored Scripture,



**Sr. Sheila
Marie Walsh**

(Continued on Page 17)

SR. SHEILA MARIE (CONTINUED)

because “it reminds me that God is ultimately in control,” she said.

And for those seeking a religious vocation, she advised: “Pray, discern and listen to what God is saying to you.”

25**SR. CONNIE DERBY**
Rochester

Sister Connie Derby entered the Sisters of Mercy in Rochester in 1985 from St. Mary Parish, Geneseo, N.Y.

She was a school media specialist for the Diocese of Rochester and also for school districts in Elmira, N.Y., and Owego, N.Y. Also, she served the diocesan Propagation of Faith Office as a book-keeper.

Today, she is audio/visual resource librarian and director of archives for the Diocese of Rochester.

She lives in Rochester.

Sister Connie’s favorite quote from Catherine McAuley is, “God can bend and change and form and reform any of God’s creatures for the purposes God designs.”

PEGGY AMSDEN
Mercy Associate
Rochester

Peggy Amsden’s closeness with Mercy Sisters and fellow associates is expressed in her feeling, “I am part of a special family of God.”

Originally from a family of 11 children in the East Rochester parish of St. Jerome, young Peggy Ruckdeschel always felt a need to

help at home. Her youthful dreams of being a missionary were put on hold.

Years later, after marrying Art Amsden, raising four children and being secretary to the president of the Rochester Philharmonic, Peggy recalled, “I would still have a kind of yearning about serving.” She lunched one day with Mercy Sister Kathy Milliken and expressed her desire. A quick visit with Sister Janet Korn, then Rochester associate coordinator, and Peggy began the process. Encouraged by her husband, who died in 1998, she became an associate in 1984.

“It’s hard to say who influenced me. In my heart was a deep desire to do whatever I could to be closer to God and the opportunity to share my prayer life and feelings with those who gave up much to serve God,” she said.

In sharing Scripture from Luke 18:16 – “Let the little children come to me and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs” – she admits, “I love this verse. When I’m doing something nice for someone, I always get this childlike feeling in my heart, and it makes me feel close to Him.”

Peggy has taken this “childlike trust” with her to her ministries of the Assumption Prayer Group, as caregiver to family members, to jail ministry and Isaiah House.

To the seekers of those desiring to serve others, she echoes, “Join the Mercy Associates!”



Peggy Amsden



Sr. Connie Derby



Margaret Ezro

MARGARET EZRO
Mercy Associate
Rochester

Seven years after the Tioga County Rural Ministry was established in 1978 in Owego, N.Y., for those in need, Margaret Ezro became the first Mercy Associate recorded from Tioga County.

That day was Dec. 12, 1985, in St. Patrick Church, Owego. This year she celebrates her 25-year jubilee.

Margaret and her husband, Ollie, owned and operated the family carpentry business in the Southern-tier village of 4,000 people. Together they built, remodeled and repaired anything under a roof, all while raising four children

It was at the rural ministry that the couple did volunteer work for the Sisters of Mercy and came to know the Mercy spirit. As they worked together with the sisters, their desire to have a more formal connection with them grew.

Explaining her wish to become an associate, Margaret said, “Mercy means being loved and strengthened by the Mercy Community to meet each new day. I was seeking a way to draw closer to the Lord and help His people.”

On Tuesdays she joined the sisters for soup, conversation and prayer.

In 1989, Ollie joined Margaret in becoming an associate and, when Ollie became sick before he died, the sisters traveled to the Ezro home in Candor, N.Y., on Tuesdays for the simple fare.

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MARGARET (CONTINUED)

For years, Margaret and Ollie guided students from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Geneseo during spring break as they worked to reconstruct and repair the homes of the poor in the county.

At Thanksgiving and Christmas, the duo took time to drive the sisters around the county with food baskets and gifts or deliver them themselves.

From Sister Nancy O'Brien, formerly of the rural ministry, she said, "Margaret has certainly been an example to all of us in her deep faith and great love for the poor as she ministered to and with them in Jesus' name."

ITANA KANE
Mercy Associate
Pittsburgh-Florida

New York City took charge of young Itana Rita DeFort when, as a recent graduate of high school in Pittston, Pa., in 1935, she enrolled in nurses' training at Mount Sinai Hospital and earned her registered nurse degree.

Following working as a nurse at Mt. Sinai, she married Charles Kane and together they raised two sons. In 1964, the family moved to Pompano Beach, Fla., and Itana returned for the next 20 years to nursing at Holy Cross Hospital in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Charles died in 1975.

Nursing was her profession, and it carried over into her retirement years as a volunteer at the hospital where, she said, "I knew all the Mercy sisters from Pittsburgh." It was there in 1985 that Itana became a Mercy Associate. This year marks her 25th jubilee.

"Carmel (Provençal) and I were the first two associates. I loved everything Mercy stood for," she said. No wonder that one of her favorite spiritual maxims comes from the Suscipe of Catherine McAuley:



Itana Kane

"My God, I am yours for time and eternity, Lord, I am yours forever."

She credits Sister Mary Schmidt with initiating the association. "Sister was great at getting people together," Itana said. "She worked at getting other Mercy nurses to join."

Itana was one of six children who attended St. John's Church in Pittston, outside Philadelphia, with her parents. "My mom was very active in the church," she said.

Her advice to anyone interested in becoming an associate: "Come join us, by all means. You'll love it. There's a closeness, meaning, feeling ... just like family."

CARMEL PROVENÇAL
Mercy Associate
Pittsburgh-Florida

While pursuing graduate studies at Michigan State in East Lansing, the former Carmel Elliott met a classmate who would come to her aid 28 years later and many miles distant.

For Carmel Provençal, who is celebrating 25 years as a Mercy Associate, that person was Mercy Sister Mary Schmidt. Both had been working at Holy Cross Hospital in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., for a year in the sewing department before realizing they had been college classmates in 1955. It

was Sister Mary who introduced Carmel to the Mercy Associate program following the death of Carmel's husband in 1983.

Carmel, named by her mother's friend because it was "most Catholic," grew up in St. Clair Shores, near Detroit, and attended St. Gertrude Church. She received her bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, and her master's degree from Michigan State. She taught at MSU and Central Michigan State before marrying in 1959 and moving to her husband's hometown, Pompano Beach, Fla.



Carmel Provençal

For 20 years, she had been a home economics teacher and department head at Pompano High School.

Following retirement, and utilizing her education and experience in home economics, she worked in the Holy Cross Hospital's dietary department; information; admitting; sewing room as chairman, sewing habits for the sisters; cancer center; auxiliary office; and today, maternity ward office. She even found time to be a Eucharistic minister.

At her ready reach, Carmel reads daily from Catherine McAuley's *Suscipite*: "My God, Teach me to cast myself entirely into the arms of your loving Providence ..." Carmel suggests, "Anyone interested in joining a Mercy Association should become familiar with Catherine's life and get to know her writings."

BERNADINE SAVARINO
Mercy Associate
Buffalo

When Bernadine (Berna) Savarino entered the Buffalo Mercy Associate program in 1985, she admitted, “The associate program was pioneer territory. Each new member’s commitment was planned and celebrated individually.” Following re-organizing by Sisters Patricia Gilbert and Priscilla Faltisko, it blossomed.



Bernadine Savarino

As a silver jubilarian, Berna said, “Being an associate has certainly made me aware of and involved in the many needs that the Mercy Community has been addressing. As challenging as these ministries are, the sisters always seem to make it work. This motivated me to join in many forms of service ‘in the marketplace.’”

From St. Benedict Parish, Eggersville, N.Y., she took an academic journey for college degrees from Vermont to Florida to Ohio and finally to settle back in Williamsville, N.Y.

As vice president at Ciminelli Development Co., Inc., Berna cited service chairing the development committee for the Trocaire College board of trustees as part of her Mercy mission, as well as serving on the Juliana Apartments board’s ministry of housing.

She said the highpoint as an associate came during a trip to the Philippines with Mercy Sisters who saw how works of Mercy were flourishing there. “The faces of those beautiful children still tug at my heart.”

She added: “For 25 years now, it has been an honor to come to know the Community of Mercy in a deeper way. So many relationships have flourished. I am grateful for a true sense of the needs of the poor, sick and uneducated which my association with the sisters of Mercy has evoked in me. My faith is deeper, and I can truly sense a connectedness with the whole Mercy Community... My own commitment to the Mercy charism and to our sisters and associates continues to grow to this very day.”

MARY STACHOWSKI
Mercy Associate
Buffalo

At age eight in 1939, Mary Pacicca met the Sisters of Mercy at Buffalo’s St. Columba Parish Sunday School. It was the year her mother died, and the sisters showed her compassion, caring and love. The bond was forged.

“I enjoyed their smiles, their warmth. I knew that I wanted to be one of them,” she said.

But after the sisters left the parish, she said there was no one to talk to about the vocation she wanted. Later, she married Ed Stachowski and joined St. Teresa Church where she was reunited with the Sisters of Mercy.

Their four children and grandchildren were educated by the Sisters of Mercy, and Mary was an active parish volunteer. In 1978 Sister Carnia, principal of Mt. Mercy Academy, advised Mary to get her teaching degree, which she did, at Trocaire College where she’s worked for 15 years in administrative capacities.

Learning about the Mercy Associate program in 1983 and prompted by her husband, Mary signed on.

During orientation, Ed died, and Mary was again embraced by the sisters.

“God’s plans were in place for me,” said the silver jubilarian. She became an associate in 1985.

“Over the years, working on the pre-associate team gives me the joy Mother McAuley must have felt – one of humility, satisfaction in bringing love and hope into the lives we touch,” she said.



Mary Stachowski

She traveled to McAuley House on Baggot Street in Dublin and recalled touching Mother McAuley’s dish, seeing her grave and where she went to Mass.

“My life was complete,” she said.

Added to her accomplishments, this associate advocate is a published poet and member of the International Society of Distinguished Poets.





The Community Leadership Team
and all NyPPaW Sisters,
Associates and Staff
congratulate our jubilarians and thank
them for their ministry, prayers
and service to Mercy.



**“Our hearts can always be
in the same place,
centered in God,
for whom alone we go forward
or stay back.”**

-- Catherine McAuley