

Obituaries

Eleanor O'Hanlon Sprague, 60; accomplished musician, composer

Eleanor O'Hanlon Sprague, an accomplished musician and teacher, died Monday, Dec. 7, 1987, at the age of 60. She had undergone surgery for a brain tumor in 1986, and had been bedridden in her Elmira home for the past several months.

Throughout her career, she had touched the lives of many people in the Diocese of Rochester, including the students of a number of Elmira and Rochester schools; patients in hospitals and nursing homes in which she entertained at the piano and organ; members of church choirs and congregations; and audience members from the numerous musicals and shows she produced.

Born in Syracuse to the late Leo F. and Angela Devlin O'Hanlon, Mrs. Sprague grew up in Elmira amid a family of musicians, and her talent was nurtured from an early age. She was graduated from St. Patrick's School and Elmira Catholic High Schools, where she often entertained at school functions. She became known for her musical ability throughout the Elmira area.

In 1944, she entered the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester under the name Sister Mary Leo. She continued her study of music in college, receiving a bachelor's degree from Nazareth College and a master's degree from the Eastman School of Music. She taught in several Catholic schools, including St. Patrick's, St. Cecilia's and Notre Dame High

School in Elmira, and St. John the Evangelist, St. James, St. Louis and Our Lady of Mercy High School in Rochester.

After leaving the Sisters of Mercy in 1966, she taught music in Endwell, N.Y., and in the Elmira Heights Central School District. She married Ralph Sprague of Elmira in 1976 and moved to Port Charlotte, Florida, returning to Elmira each year during the summer months. In Port Charlotte, she played the piano for the Cultural Center's theatrical productions and for the Swing Kings band. Mrs. Sprague also served as organist or pianist at dinners and other functions.

During her summer visits to Elmira each year, she continued to entertain locally at nursing homes, hospitals and other institutions.

St. Patrick's Day was a special occasion for Mrs. Sprague, and Irish songs and music were always her favorites. Often when she would play the organ in church, she would weave in an Irish tune here and there, to the delight of congregations. She had planned her funeral several months prior to her death, and the music included Irish songs. She was also a composer of church music. Among the selections performed at her funeral Mass was her original composition "The Canticle of Our Lady." Written during her time as a Sister of Mercy, the canticle was

performed by Sisters of Mercy as the recessional of the Mass.

Mass of the Resurrection for Mrs. Sprague was celebrated December 9 by Father Richard Murphy at St. Patrick's Church, Elmira. Interment was at St. Peter and Paul Cemetery.

Mrs. Sprague is survived by her husband; cousins Margaret Sullivan McCluskey and William Sullivan of Wappingers Falls, N.Y. and Leonard Sullivan of Bedford, N.H.; and close friends Maureen and William Maloney and family of Elmira.

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Sister Domitilla Leicht, SSJ; Villa staff member

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sister Domitilla Leicht, SSJ, on Wednesday, Dec. 9, by Father Joseph Trovato, CSB. Father Frederick Bush and Deacon Albert Bergeron assisted with the liturgy.

Sister Leicht died December 7, 1987, in the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary after an extended illness. She was 74.

A native of Rochester, Sister Leicht entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1933 from Holy Redeemer Parish, Rochester. Initially, she was a housekeeper in parish convents staffed by Sisters of St. Joseph. From 1938-46 she served as supervisor of a women's hall at St. Ann's Home on Lake Avenue. Sister Leicht then moved to Selma,

Ala., where she served as hospital housekeeper at Good Samaritan Hospital.

After spending several years at Holy Rosary convent, she moved to St. John the Evangelist Convent, where she remained until 1974. She was cottage supervisor at St. Joseph's Villa at two different times — in 1946 and again in the mid-50s.

Sister Leicht became ill in 1974 and moved to St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary of the Sisters of St. Joseph, where she remained until her death.

She was known as a very caring person who was diligent in her service to the sick, and to the children of St. Joseph's Villa.

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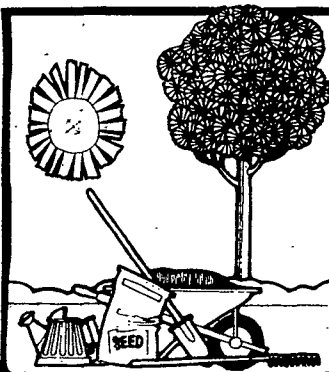
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