

Sister Magdalen LaRow, artist; taught at Nazareth for 39 years

Sister Magdalen LaRow, SSJ, a professor of art and former chairwoman of the art department at Nazareth College, died of cancer Thursday, Feb. 8, 1990, at the St. Joseph's Convent Infirmary. She was 61.

The guiding force of Nazareth College's art department for more than 25 years, she was an expert in early Christian, Byzantine, and Medieval art. Her particular specialty was the iconography of Mary Magdalen, on which she wrote her dissertation, due to be published in the near future.

A native of Utica, Sister LaRow studied art at Nazareth during the late 1940s, and decided to join the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1951. The art department that she was chosen to chair in 1955 claimed just 30 students and occupied four rooms. By 1981 — when she resigned her post due to declining health and a desire to complete her doctoral degree — the department had grown to offer 180 majors and merited a whole wing in the Nazareth College Arts Center.

Throughout her career, Sister LaRow was an impassioned teacher and caring mentor for art majors as well as other students. During the 1960s, she served as the campus' Peace Corps representative, corresponding with young women working thousands of miles from home.

In 1984, she introduced a visiting Antiguan man to Nazareth College President Robert A. Kidera. The college later

awarded the young man a four-year scholarship, and began a relationship with Antiguan students that continues at present.

Two years later, after listening to a news story about illiteracy, Sister LaRow established an informal tutoring program for campus employees in need, including many Cambodian refugees.

She never flagged in pursuing her own education, earning a master's in art history from Boston University in 1955; a master of fine arts in design from the University of Notre Dame in 1960; and a doctorate in medieval art history from New York University's Institute of Fine Arts in 1982.

Sister LaRow worked toward the latter for more than 10 years, continuing to study even after she was diagnosed with cancer. Her declining health, however, compelled her to give up chairing the art department in 1981.

Fellow faculty members recognized her dedication in 1983 by electing her Distinguished Colleague. Earlier, in 1978, she was honored with Nazareth's Distinguished Alumni Award, and in 1976, with the Distinguished Service Award.

Sister LaRow is survived by a sister, Sister DeChantal LaRow of Albany; a brother, Dr. Leo LaRow of Ormond Beach, Fla.; six nephews and a grandniece.

Her funeral Mass was celebrated Sunday, Feb. 11, at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse chapel.



Sister Magdalen LaRow, SSJ

Sisters of Mercy to host retreat weekend for women

GENEVA — The Sisters of Mercy of Rochester will sponsor a retreat weekend Feb. 23-25 for single women 18 years of age and older.

The retreat, which will take place at the High Acres retreat center in Geneva, is open to all women "searching to discover God's direction in their lives."

Sister Jean Marie Kearse, RSM, will lead sessions on the theme, "Be Still and Know that I Am God." The retreat begins at 7 p.m. Friday, and concludes Sunday at 1 p.m.

Call Sister Mary Fran Wegman, RSM, 716/342-9594, for information.

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