



Sister Evelyn Breslin, SSND, assistant principal at Bishop Kearney High School, regularly "cruises" the hallways on her scooter, joking with students and taking care of administrative duties. Her multiple sclerosis may have changed her active lifestyle, but it has not slowed her down. Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

## Friends, students praise BK educator

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Somewhere in the recesses of Sister Evelyn Breslin's past lies the broken heart of a Massachusetts boy with a boat.

The Bishop Kearney assistant principal may have forgotten how she treated the boy who once sought her love years ago, but Sister Breslin's brother hasn't.

Back when the 44-year-old school administrator was a carefree teenager growing up in Malden, Mass., outside of Boston, one of her many suitors befriended her younger brother, J. William Breslin. Richard, the young boat owner, invited his new friend, Bill, to bring his popular and attractive sister along for several water-skiing excursions.

With no intention of requiting Richard's affections, Evelyn Breslin took full advantage of his heartfelt generosity. "She just used that kid like you wouldn't believe," J. William Breslin

recalled. "She went water-skiing every day."

A few years later, after Evelyn Breslin had become a novice in the School Sisters of Notre Dame, her former suitor attempted to dissuade her from her vocation, her brother recalled. "Richard went back several times to talk her out of the convent, but she just wouldn't go," he remarked, adding: "Maybe he should've brought the boat."

Such a move probably wouldn't have worked, but considering how fondly her friends and colleagues speak about her, it's not surprising that the teenage boating enthusiast tried so hard to win Sister Breslin's hand.

Such words as "kind," "compassionate," "enthusiastic," "interesting," and "fun" crop up in every description Sister Breslin's associates make of her.

"She was always young at heart and was very active and excited about everything," observed Kathy Schiefen, a 1977 Kearney

graduate who had Sister Breslin for homeroom, English and religion. The former student and her onetime teacher have remained friends since parting ways academically, and now share similar professional experiences.

Shiefen credits Sister Breslin, in part, for inspiring her to become an engineering instructor at Monroe Community College. "I think Evelyn was one of the few people who I believe believed in me back then," Shiefen said of her high school days, noting that she and her former mentor regularly swap tales of their educational ups and downs.

Schiefen's comments hint at the kind of colleague one of Sister Breslin's former fellow teachers found in the bubbly, young religious. "She was great to have as an assistant principal because she wasn't afraid to go in and tell you ... 'You know, this is what has to be done,'" remarked Brother Brian Walsh, CFC, diocesan superintendent of schools.

Brother Walsh and Sister

Breslin both joined the Kearney faculty in September, 1972. The superintendent described her as "young, enthusiastic (and) willing to try anything."

Those are the qualities Sister Joanna Mannering, SSND, claimed she saw in Sister Breslin from the start when the future religious sat in Sister Mannering's classroom in Girls' Catholic High School.

"She was outstanding in the class as being very, very kind, very, very thoughtful," Sister Mannering said, noting that the adolescent Evelyn took parts in school plays and was well-liked by her teachers and peers.

But the youngster didn't merely bask in the glow of the popularity spotlight, Sister Mannering pointed out. "She looked out for the student who didn't have a friend, the student who was shy when (Evelyn) wouldn't have had to because she was popular ...," she said.

William Breslin also noted his sister's devotion to the welfare of

others. "She always just sort of looked out for me," he said. "She enjoys showing people how to do things. She's not overbearing. She's helpful."

And Sister Mannering might agree with the observation of Sister Breslin's brother, who said, "(Evelyn) was the last person in the world you would have ever expected to go into the convent."

Described as not being terribly pious, the lively teenager stunned her family when she announced her intentions to enter the religious life. Sister Breslin, though, today dismisses any dramatics surrounding her vocational choice.

"It's just something I always wanted," she said. "I went to Catholic school and looked at the sisters ... I kept putting (the idea of a religious vocation) in the back of my mind, but that didn't work."

She acknowledged that she was **Continued on page 10A**

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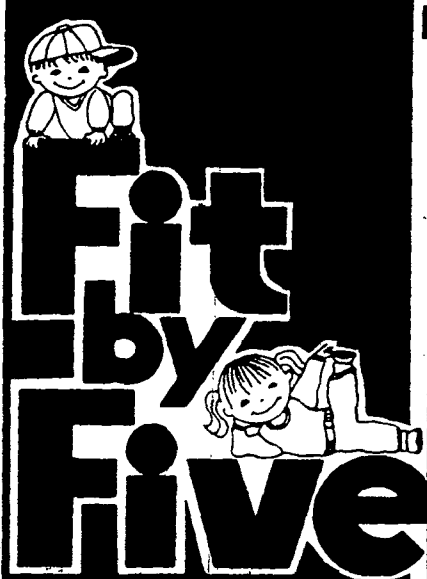
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