

Milestones

Sisters of Mercy mark 550 years of ministry

In 1996, five members of the Rochester Regional Community of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas are celebrating their 60th jubilees, and five are marking their 50th jubilees. The congregation will honor these jubilarians at the annual "Mercy Day" celebration Saturday, Sept. 21, at the motherhouse, 1437 Blossom Road. The day will include a Mass celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark, and a dinner.

60 Years

Sister Mary Leonard Gavin, RSM, a Rochester native, ministered in food preparation for 45 years. She was on the cafeteria staff at Our Lady of Mercy High School, Rochester, for 24 years; served as a convent cook for 21 years at St. Mary's Parish, Corning, Cardinal Mooney High School, Greece, and St. James Parish, Rochester; and was a camp cook for 18 summers at Camp Stella Maris, Conesus Lake, Livonia.

"To have a vocation is a great, great gift," Sister Leonard said of her years as a Sister of Mercy. "It's the happiest life if it's your vocation — it's a gift from God. It was a happy life for me. Things happen, but God gives you the grace to carry on. That's why I feel as if I lost 10-15 years someplace because I don't feel my age."



Sister Mary Kruckow, RSM, (formerly Sister Mary Matthew), is an Elmira native. Currently a tutor at St. Monica's School, Rochester, she was an educator for 34 years. She was principal at St. Cecilia's School, Elmira, and St. Vincent's School, Corning, and coordinating principal of the Corning Regional Schools. She taught at St. John the Evangelist and St. Charles Borromeo schools, Rochester; St. Cecilia's School, Elmira; St. Mary's and St. Vincent's schools, Corning; and St. Louis School, Pittsford.

She then worked in rural ministry in Southern Tier counties from 1973 to 1982, including six years with the diocesan Office of Human Development. Sister Mary worked three years as a home health aide in Rochester, then served as director of parish evangelization, primarily in rural areas, for Immaculate Conception Parish, Ithaca, until 1992.

"Though I enjoyed teaching," Sister Mary said, "the highlight of my ministry was the time I spent in rural ministry in the Southern Tier. My heart is still with them."

Sister Mary Veronica Kuhn, RSM, born in Olean, N.Y., spent her 44-year teaching career (1940-84) at Our Lady of



Mercy High School, Rochester, as a teacher of history, social studies, English and Latin. She was Mercy High Alumnae Association advisor for several years.

Sister Mary Maurice Pearson, RSM, a Rochester native, has been business manager since 1989 at Spirit House, a therapeutic community for sisters in Rochester.

She was in education ministry for 51 years. She was principal at St. John the Evangelist School, Clyde, and St. Rita's School, Webster. She taught math at Cardinal Mooney High School from 1972 till 1989. She also taught at St. John the Evangelist School, Rochester; Holy Cross School, Rochester; St. Andrew's School, Rochester; St. Thomas the Apostle School, Rochester; Holy Family School, Auburn; St. John the Evangelist School, Clyde; and Our Lady of Mercy School, Greece.

"Teaching had always held an attraction for me, even before my God's gentle but persistent nudgings drew me to the religious life," Sister Maurice said. "Students at every level present their unique challenges; meeting those challenges provides an excitement of its own. Over 50 years in the classroom didn't diminish that. If I had it to do over again, I would not change a thing."

Sister Mary Damian Sullivan, RSM, born in Gillett, Pa., was an educator for 40 years.

She taught English at Our Lady of Mercy High School, Rochester, from 1958 to 1978. She also taught at Holy Family School, Auburn; St. Patrick's School, Owego; St. Charles Borromeo School, Rochester; and St. Joseph's School, Penfield. She was the founding principal at St. Joseph's School in 1956.

Following teaching, she assisted at the motherhouse and in the community administration offices as a clerical assistant.

"Sixty years seems as nothing as I look back," Sister Damian reflected. "God has showered his graces in abundance, and it has been my privilege through these years to serve him in teaching



and prayer ministries. Please join me in giving thanks to him."

50 years

Sister Mary Faith Francione, RSM, has been a teacher in the Business Department at Our Lady of Mercy High School, Rochester, since 1973.

The Rochester native has been in education ministry since 1948. She was principal at St. Joseph's School, Penfield, and Holy Family School, Auburn. Also, she taught at St. John the Evangelist, Holy Cross, St. Charles Borromeo and St. Cecilia's schools, Rochester; and St. Joseph's School, Penfield. In addition, she worked in Mercy High's offices.

"I am deeply gratified for the gifts and blessings of these past 50 years," Sister Faith said, "as I have been touched by many experiences and wonderful people who enriched my life. I thank my late parents for their love and goodness, my family and the Sisters of Mercy for all their love and support throughout the years."

Sister Mary Conleth Kennedy, RSM, has been in rural ministry in Steuben County since 1982.

Prior to serving in rural ministry, the Rochester native was an educator for 24 years. She was principal at St. Cecilia's School, Rochester, and a teacher at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, Rochester, for 13 years. She also taught at St. Andrew's and St. Cecilia's schools, Rochester; and St. Ann's School, Hornell. After her teaching years, she did secretarial work in the Mercy community's administration offices in Rochester, and at St. James Mercy Hospital, Hornell.

Sister Lucille Lenhard, RSM, (formerly Sister Mary Aloyse), has been director of religious education at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Rochester, since 1993. The Rochester native was a religious education coordinator



at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Elmira, and St. Salome's Parish, Rochester.

From 1948 to 1975, she was principal at St. Salome's School and a teacher at the following Rochester schools: St. Charles Borromeo, St. Thomas the Apostle, St. James, Annunciation, St. Helen's, St. Salome's and St. John the Evangelist.

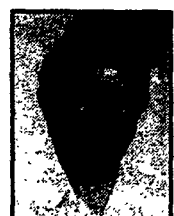
Sister Mary Brigid Quinn, RSM, pastoral associate at St. Pius Tenth Parish, Chili, since 1993, was also pastoral associate for 14 years at St. Mary's Parish, Waterloo; St. Helen's Parish, Gates; and the Cayuga Team Ministry cluster (1984-89), which pioneered parish clustering in the diocese.

In education ministry from 1948 to 1974, the Rochester native was principal at St. Charles Borromeo, Rochester, for 10 years, and was on the founding faculty at St. Louis School, Pittsford. She taught at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. John the Evangelist schools, Rochester; and St. Ann's School, Hornell. She was also coordinator of the retired Mercy sisters for two years.

"It is with joy and a grateful heart that I celebrate 50 years in God's service, always aware of his presence in the daily challenge of living life as a gift to be cherished," she said. "My life has been enriched by a variety of ministries, the loving concern of my Mercy community, my family and close friends."

Sister Mary Rose Schum, RSM, has been co-administrator of Mercy Care Center in Elmira since 1984.

With her co-administrator, Sister Mary Howard Cowan, she founded and operates the adult day care facility on Linden Place. Beginning in 1951, the Rochester native served as a nurse at Mercy High School, Rochester; at St. James Mercy Hospital, Hornell; and then for 30 years at the motherhouse infirmary on Blossom Road, Rochester, where she and Sister Howard served as co-administrators for many years.



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Franciscans note Sr. Lonergan's 50th

Sister Veronica Marie Lonergan, OSF, was born Margaret Ann Lonergan on July 5, 1924, in Utica, N.Y.

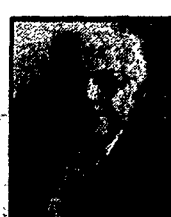
After working briefly for an insurance company, Sister Lonergan entered the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, N.Y., Aug. 15, 1946, pronouncing her final vows Aug. 16, 1953.

For the first 40 years of her religious life Sister Lonergan taught. Her first assignment was at St. Margaret Mary School in Rochester, where she taught second grade from 1947 to 1950.

Sister Lonergan also taught in schools in Connecticut, Florida, and various cities in New York,

and served as a principal at one school. In addition, she taught in St. Bonaventure University's education department.

In recent years, she served as receptionist at Villa Mary Immaculate nursing home in Albany and at St. Joseph Villa home for the aged in Catskill, and as a secretary at the congregation's motherhouse. She moved to Rochester in 1995, where she currently is an office assistant with OASIS (Older Adult Service and Information System).



Sister Lonergan said she could have retired, but was not ready to do so. Moreover, she wanted to be involved with people.

"I love children and people, and being with them," she said. "They bring me much joy and happiness."

Sister Lonergan holds a bachelor of science degree in education from St. Bonaventure University; a master's degree in education from Cortland State College; and a certificate of advanced studies in education from Syracuse University.

The congregation will honor Sister Lonergan and her fellow jubilarians May 25 at St. Elizabeth Motherhouse, Allegany.