

# Milestones

## SSJ's

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Peace School. Since 1988 Sister Jane Joseph has served as the director of the altar bread department of the motherhouse.

"Looking back on the past 60 years," Sister Mary Paul Geck, SSJ, said, "I have felt very strongly that religious life was right for me. It has been the way to serve God and be of service to the people of God."

The Rochester native began her teaching career at Corpus Christi School. She later taught at St. Mary's in Waterloo, and St. Monica's, Blessed Sacrament, St. Francis Xavier, and Immaculate Conception schools, also in Rochester.

From 1962 to 1968, Sister Mary Paul lived in Selma, Ala., working as the principal and superior of St. Elizabeth School.

Upon returning, Sister Mary Paul became principal/superior at Immaculate Conception School in Rochester, then two years later at St. Paul's School in Oswego.

Sister Mary Paul later went to work as the pastoral assistant at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Rochester, then as the assistant to the secretary general at the motherhouse. In 1975 she became the secretary general, and held that post for 16 years.

Most recently, Sister Mary Paul has been working in secretarial service and funeral service at the motherhouse.

Born in Rochester, Sister Wilma Grabb, SSJ, (formerly Sister Anna Gonzaga) graduated from Nazareth Academy in 1935.

After receiving certification from Nazareth Normal School, Sister Wilma served as an elementary and middle school art teacher at such Rochester schools

as Holy Apostles, Corpus Christi, St. Ambrose, St. Agnes Grammar School, and Our Lady of Lourdes. Simultaneously, Sister Wilma also taught Art I, Art II, and the History of Art to other sisters and lay people in the Teacher Training Division of Nazareth College.

She went on to serve as superior and principal at St. Thomas More Convent and School. And for 11 years, she served in the same position at Sacred Heart School in Auburn and St. Mary's School in Dansville.

Returning to Rochester in 1974, she continued to teach art to students at St. Ambrose.

"As I look back on my life, I have so many wonderful experiences," Sister Wilma said. "It was always a challenge to encourage children to reach their potential and even go beyond. It has been said that no matter how well one succeeds, one can always do more. This, I tried to instill in the children."

Sister Wilma has been named to the 1996 *Who's Who Among American Teachers*.

Sister Mary Denis Hurley, SSJ, knew from an early age that she wanted to be a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

"I have always loved the Sisters of St. Joseph," she said. "There have been many opportunities for learning, and serving with very few dull moments. I wouldn't trade it."

Sister Mary Denis' first teaching position was at Corpus Christi School in Rochester. While she was teaching, she earned her bachelor's degree in education, then went on to receive a bachelor of arts degree in English from Nazareth College.

After serving in schools in Seneca Falls, Penn Yan, Ithaca, and Geneva, Sister Mary Denis moved to Selma, Ala., where she worked with children and adults.

Upon returning to Rochester, Sister Mary Denis was resource center coordinator at Nazareth Academy for six years, after which she served as receptionist at St. Ann's Home.

Since 1989 the resident of St. Ann's has been a driver for the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary. She also serves as a driver, financial officer, and part-time staff member of the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary and motherhouse.

Sister Ruth Agnes Kesselring, SSJ, admitted she was glad the Second Vatican Council came within her lifetime.

"For me, it was like opening a flower," she said. "I welcomed the changes in the church and in religious life. It encouraged me to be more human and yet more divine; to live my vows in new and deeper ways; to pray in ways that fit my personality and gifts; to a faith commitment, Gospel-based, that continues to grow and deepen; to a community living that mirrors the Trinity; and to see all in the whole world as my brothers and sisters."

The Nazareth Academy graduate entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1935. She devoted 31 years to education, both in the classroom and in administration. She taught at St. Anthony of Padua, St. Aloysius, St. Theodore, and St. Agnes schools. She also served as superior/principal at St. Theodore and Sacred Heart Cathedral schools.

In 1966, Sister Ruth Agnes became the supervisor of schools for the diocesan Education Office. After four years there she joined St. Ann's Home as an administrative assistant and later became its director of general services.

Sister Ruth Agnes also worked in central administration. Since 1993, she has focused on financial duties as well as making crafts for Cornerstone Crafts and area churches.

In her youth, Sister Frances Maneri, SSJ, (formerly Sister Francis Camilla) dreamed of converting people to the Catholic faith.

"Obviously, the focus has changed," Sister Frances said. "Instead of conversion, we focus on the needs of here and now regardless of faith. The burden of peace and a better world is not somewhere out in the world. Rather it is here and now in each individual."

The Auburn native devoted her skills to teaching elementary school and middle school. She taught at Nazareth Model School, and St. Theodore's, Mother of Sorrows and Blessed Sacrament schools. She also taught at Immaculate Conception School in Ithaca, St. Mary's School in

Auburn, and St. Mary Our Mother School in Horseheads.

Sister Frances earned a bachelor's degree in education from Nazareth College. Three years later, she received a bachelor's degree in English and history, then went on to earn a master's degree in elementary education. In 1969, Sister Frances received certification in reading from Temple University.

As a reading consultant, she served on the congregational staff for nine years and at St. Ambrose for four years. From 1982 to 1991, she tutored students at St. Thomas More School.

Sister Frances also studied to become a Braille transcriber through the Library of Congress, and since 1991 has been doing Braille transcription at the motherhouse.

Sister John Margaret Reger, SSJ, was born in Rochester in 1917 and attended Holy Family Church as a youth.

The Nazareth Academy graduate earned her certification in teaching from Nazareth Normal School in 1937. However, her first ministry was as a baker in the motherhouse for 15 years.

Sister John Margaret's first teaching job was at St. Francis Xavier where she instructed fourth- and fifth-graders. She also has taught at Holy Rosary, Mother of Sorrows, and St. Augustine's schools.

While teaching, Sister John Margaret received a bachelor's degree in education from Nazareth College. She went on to serve as principal and teacher at St. Michael's School in Penn Yan for six years. Sister John Margaret also taught at St. Patrick's School in Mt. Morris and Holy Rosary School in Rochester.

Since 1994 Sister John Margaret has worked on the auxiliary staff of the Holy Rosary School, where she resides.

Sister Albertus Schauseil, SSJ, retired from teaching for 36 years, said it's still important to stay in contact with her former students.

"There is always someone I run into that was my student or knows one of my students," she said. "I truly enjoy hearing about their lives, so I keep in touch with as many students as I can."

The Rochester native entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1935 after graduating from Nazareth Academy. She received her certification from Nazareth Normal School, then began teaching at St. Patrick's School in Dansville.

Her 22-year teaching career took her to St. Alphonsus, St. Monica's, St. Mary's and St. Ambrose schools.

With a knowledge of mechanics, the Nazareth College graduate eventually assumed the job of maintenance director at the motherhouse for 22 years.

Since 1985 Sister Albertus has served in administrative positions at the motherhouse including assistant administrator, co-administrator and consultant to the motherhouse coordinator.

Sister M. Jamesetta Slattery, SSJ, when asked to share an experience that has been especially meaningful or rewarding, admitted the task would be difficult.

"The range from pre-school to graduate education which marks my ministry makes it difficult, if not impossible, to choose among my varied assignments," she said. "However, the most unique experience was the invitation to the co-directorship of the federally-funded poverty program known as 'The Lighted Schoolhouse,' in which some 1,400 inner-city children were offered compensatory education in after school and summer programs."

The Nazareth Academy graduate served this program for two years. Prior to that, she had earned a master's degree and a doctorate in elementary and religious education from Catholic University of America. Her educational background includes post graduate studies at Marquette University, St. Louis University, and Fordham University.

For 12 years Sister Jamesetta served as director for the elementary teacher education division at Nazareth College. And she briefly assumed the post as principal of Nazareth Academy.

The Rochester native assumed various administrative duties at Nazareth College before retiring in 1990. Sister Jamesetta still serves on the college's board of trustees and the board of directors for the Nazareth schools.

Sister Joseph Catherine Towns, SSJ, discovered her desire to teach at an early age. As a fifth-grader, she was inspired by her own instructor.

"She was so able to explain things to you so you could understand," Sister Joseph Catherine said. "She was excellent. And that year, I felt a desire to teach to help children."

"There is a satisfaction in helping children learn," she continued. "I did not force them. Instead, I tried to feed their interest in learning."


Sister Joseph Catherine entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1935. Her first teaching position was at St. Ambrose School. Over the next 31 years she taught at Nazareth Hall, St. Mary's, Sacred Heart, Immaculate Conception, St. Bridget's, St. Paul's and St. John the Evangelist schools in Rochester, and St. Jerome's School in East Rochester.

Sister Joseph Catherine earned a bachelor's degree in education and history from Nazareth Col-



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