

# FEATURE

## Retirement can't slow down longtime teacher

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

Learning assistant at one school. Aide at another school. Hospital receptionist. Community volunteer.



**Seniors**  
MONTHLY FEATURE

Does this sound like a retired person's agenda?

Officially, Sister Mary Brigid McCarthy, SSJ, retired from teaching nearly seven years ago. Yet since then, she has kept up

a pace that would exhaust many others. "I don't know how she does all that she does. She's a very busy lady," remarked Liz Berliner, principal at Elmira's Holy Family Junior High School.

Sister McCarthy, on the other hand, takes her many activities in stride.

"I'm certainly not going to sit and do nothing," stated Sister McCarthy, 71.

Sister McCarthy has been a visible fig-

ure in Chemung County for several years. She spent the final half of her 44-year teaching career at Catholic schools in Elmira, and has maintained several school and civic duties during her retirement.

Currently, Sister McCarthy spends all of Monday and Wednesday mornings as a study-hall monitor at the junior high, where she taught for 20 years.

"She knows every student by name," Berliner said. "She attends school functions — she's just always there."

Sister McCarthy also spends a brief portion of every school day at Holy Family Primary School. There, she assists in a "before-school program" for students who are dropped off early.

In addition, Sister McCarthy is a weekend and substitute receptionist at St. Joseph's Hospital. She also performs office duties with the American Red Cross in Elmira, and was cited by that organization in 1996 for her volunteerism.

"I do enjoy the variety with little children, older children, senior citizens — there's nothing boring," Sister McCarthy commented. "I just enjoy people in general."



Sister Brigid McCarthy, SSJ

Sister McCarthy entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1943. Her teaching stints outside of Elmira included Rochester's Holy Rosary School (1946-47), Nazareth Hall (1947-52), St. Anne School (1952-59) and St. Theodore School (1959-61); and Geneva's St. Stephen's School (1961-70).

In 1970, Sister McCarthy returned to Elmira to teach at her alma mater, St. Mary's School. The school was renamed Holy Family Primary School in 1985.

Despite the fact that Sister McCarthy still assists in the same classrooms she occupied as a child, she said she prefers not to get lost in nostalgia.

"I'm too busy living in the present," she remarked.

Sister McCarthy moved to St. Patrick's Junior High in 1971, and continued teaching there until she retired in 1990. The school was renamed Holy Family Junior High in 1985.

Although she is currently caring for her two older sisters, Sister McCarthy said she intends to keep up a full slate of school and community activities.

"I've been blessed with good health," she said.



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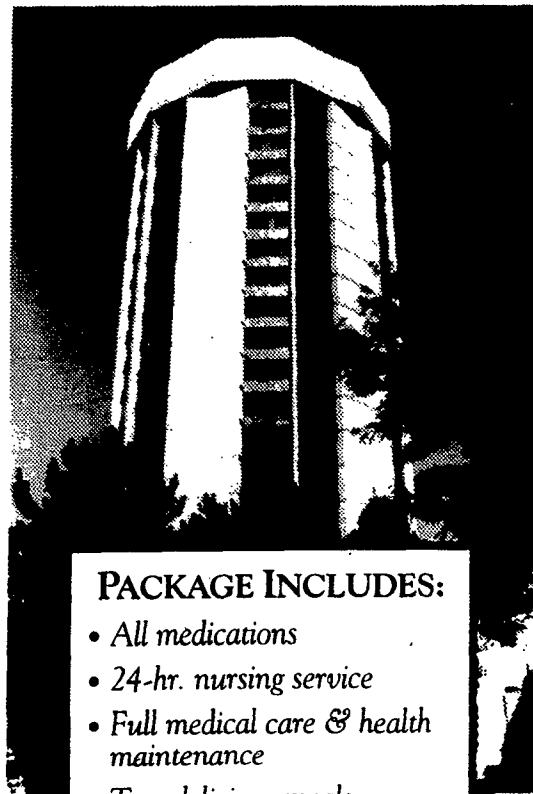
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