

## ***Ursulines mark 12<sup>th</sup> year of peaceful protest at Fort Benning***



### **Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland**

#### ***Witnessing for Peace at the Gates of the SOA/WHINSEC***

**1968** – Cleveland Ursulines respond to the Pope’s call for missionaries in El Salvador; Ursuline presence continues, enduring for 40 years.

**December 2, 1980** – Cleveland Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, Maryknoll Sisters Ita Ford and Maura Clarke, and lay missionary Jean Donovan are raped and killed by members of the National Guard in El Salvador. Three of the five soldiers convicted of these crimes were trained at the School of the Americas (SOA), now known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC).

**1983** – The Dorothy Kazel *Alleluia Award* is established by the Cleveland Ursulines and is given every five years to a person who exemplifies Dorothy’s spirit. Past recipients include:

- 1983 – Ambassador Robert E. White, former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador;
- 1995 – Sister Cecelia Feliciano, OSU, Santa Rosa, California;
- 1990 - The Reverend Paul J. Hritz, Cleveland, Ohio;
- 1995 - Rosemary Smith, Huron, Ohio;
- 2000 – Claire O’Mara, OSU, New Rochelle, New York; and
- 2005 – Margaret Swedish, Director of The Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico.

**1990** - First SOA Watch Vigil takes place at Fort Benning, Georgia. Cleveland Ursulines begin participating in 1996 and continue each year since.

**1993** – United Nations Truth Commission report confirms three of the five men convicted of killing the four churchwomen were trained at the SOA. Every year since 1993, legislation is introduced to the House of Representatives to close the SOA/WHINSEC.

**1994** - North American Ursuline Leadership Conference adopts Corporate Stance to Close the SOA/WHINSEC.

**1995** – Claire O’Mara, OSU, Ursuline Sister of New York, Eastern Province, is arrested at the SOA Watch Vigil and sentenced to two months in prison.

**1996** – The Pentagon releases Spanish language training manuals (used at the SOA until 1991) identifying “religious workers, labor organizers, student groups and others in sympathy with the cause of the poor” as those the military might target as potential threats to the government.

**1996** - Cleveland Ursuline Diane Pinchot and a Cleveland Ursuline Associate attend the SOA Watch Vigil and meet Claire O’Mara, OSU. One hundred seventy-six people attend the non-violent SOA Watch demonstration/vigil.

**1996** – Kentucky Ursuline Dianna Ortiz, holds vigil in front of the White House for declassification of documents concerning her rape and torture in Guatemala in 1989 while Defense Minister Hector Gramajo, a graduate of the SOA/WHINSEC, was in office. Her Ursuline Community calls for other Ursulines to join vigil with her to end the fast. Cleveland Ursulines Beverly Anne LoGrasso, Paulette Snyder and Diane Pinchot are among those arrested during the last week of Ortiz’s vigil. As the Cleveland Ursulines were arrested and placed in the paddy wagon, the crowd yelled, “Dorothy Kazel Presente!”

**1999** - After a year of study the Cleveland Ursulines adopt a Corporate Stance to advocate for the closing of SOA/WHINSEC.

**1999/2000** - Bill Ford, brother of Maryknoll Sister Ita Ford, files a civil suit alleging Generals Jose Guillermo Garcia and Eugenio Vides Casanova played roles in ordering members of the Salvadoran National Guard to murder the women.

**2000** – While participating in the SOA Watch non-violent protest/vigil, Cleveland Ursulines Diane Pinchot and Mary Eileen Boyle cross onto Fort Benning property, undergo arrest and receive a “Ban and Bar” notice prohibiting them to enter the property for five years.

**2007** – SOA/WHINSEC non-violent vigil attendance reaches 25,000. Over the years, more than 20 Cleveland Ursuline Sisters have attended the non-violent vigils at Fort Benning, Georgia, marching in silent procession with other Ursulines from across the United States and Canada.