



URSULINE SISTERS News

CONTEMPLATION ✦ JUSTICE ✦ COMPASSION





The *Ursuline Sisters News* is published three times a year for friends and supporters of the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland.

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MESSAGE from the PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As I write these words, our Easter rejoicing continues in full force! Signs of spring beyond my window are reminders of new life and of a God who is ever present, ever faithful.

A recent article in the *LCWR Occasional Papers*, challenged us to consider this question: “Given who we are ... our realities at this time ... our willingness to invest in a future we may never see, where do we want to spend ... our time, our energy, and our lives in the coming years?” Over the past several months we have been working toward answering this question and many others in order to make decisions for a sustainable future that balance our realities and animate our Mission.

In January we engaged in Chapter – a direction-setting gathering held every four years – that had as its focus the personal and congregational transitions we are now facing. The fruits of these conversations and the extensive work already underway regarding our property and legacy planning have set a course for the coming years. In February, we gathered again to elect leaders to shepherd the congregation in this important work.

In this issue we offer stories of sisters who have creatively transitioned into new ministries to address the needs of today. This includes Sister Donna Capuano who companions the home-bound and their caregivers, Sister Mary Jean Raymond who continues to serve in multiple ways at St. Aloysius-St. Agatha School, and Sister Sheila Marie Tobbe who serves in “retirement” as companion, teacher and compassionate listening presence.

Our *ArtSpace* program is also undergoing a transition. Under the direction of founder Sister Kathleen Burke, the popular ministry is finding and giving new life through its new emphasis on outreach and collaboration.

As a reminder that our sisters’ influence continues beyond their active years, we share news of a scholarship fund honoring Sister Catherine Waldron’s service at Lake Catholic High School. Finally, we highlight volunteers Dennis and Karen Murray who give of their time to assist our sisters at Regina Health Center.

There is excitement in anticipating what lies ahead, but there is also the letting go required for the new to emerge. We count on your continued partnership as we move forward.

On behalf of all the sisters, thank you for your interest in us, and for your financial and prayerful support. You continue to be one of our greatest gifts and blessings. Know of our prayers for you and those you love.

Gratefully, in Saint Angela,

Sister Susan Durkin

Ursulines welcome Carmelites to share new residence

When the Ursulines begin planning their new residence, they will do so with the Carmelite Sisters in mind. The sisters from the Carmel of the Holy Family Monastery in Cleveland Heights will be joining us in the new venture as housemates and sisters.

The sisters, headed by Prioress Sister Barbara Losh, recently made the decision to leave their beloved home of more than 50 years. At present eight sisters reside in the monastery designed to house 21 cloistered sisters. Another member is in permanent residence at Regina Health Center.

“Our smaller number and the ‘elder status’ of all our members,” Sister Barbara explains, “has made us aware that the building is too large for us.” And like the community, the building is aging, resulting in escalating maintenance and repair costs.

The sisters plan to remain in the monastery until the new Ursuline residence is completed. Should unforeseen conditions arise, however, necessitating an earlier departure, the sisters would join us in our current motherhouse.



Sister Susan and Sister Barbara



The Carmelite monastery

The coming together of the two communities is not a merger. For the Carmelites it is simply a change of residence. The community will remain autonomous, self-governing and self-supporting, faithful to its own Rule, Mission and lifestyle. The services that will be part of the residential agreement will free the sisters for their life of prayer and care for one another.

The decision was not a sudden one, but one that has evolved from a long-standing friendship and from a closer association of the communities over the past five years, during which the Ursulines have extended personnel to advise and assist with concerns about Carmel’s facilities and in the care of the community’s infirm and elderly sisters.

Sister Barbara admits taking leave of the monastery will be difficult for the sisters, but she heartily believes that God is walking with them and that there is great blessing in store for all. “God’s great gift,” she says confidently, “has been the invitation of our Ursuline Sisters to become part of their new residence. In this we see God’s loving care beckoning us forward, and we wish to respond in hope and trust.”

Like the Carmelites, the Ursulines believe this is a unique opportunity that will yield great blessings. “Having the Carmelite Sisters among us, with their rich spiritual heritage, will indeed be a gift,” Ursuline President Sister Susan Durkin says. “We have come to know the sisters through regular interactions of the past few years. We are happy to welcome them into a shared home.”

At the time of this writing, the Ursulines were still considering the best option for siting the new residence and are preparing to select an architect to work with the sisters in its design. The sisters hope to open the residence in late 2017 or early 2018.

Sister Donna offers the gift of compassionate presence

Sister Donna Capuano described her 62 year-ministry career as “checkered,” reflecting an array of places, positions, titles and roles. But all of the ministries have one thing in common — all are people-oriented. She has served individuals of all ages and backgrounds, from grade schools students, to adult college students, to the shut-ins of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Parma.



Sister Donna

Sister Donna began her career in education in the late fifties. From 1957 to 1979 she taught mostly junior high students in many different parish schools of the diocese. She has also served on the staff of the Diocesan Education Office, as Director of Continuing Studies at Ursuline College and as an Education Consultant for Ameritech, and worked with women struggling with alcohol and drug addictions at the Hitchcock Center for Women at Cuyahoga Community College.

In the past 20 years she has ministered at the Ursuline Educational Center/Motherhouse as Director of the Sophia Center, Director of the Career Transition Office and as coordinator of the motherhouse community.

Now, at age 80, Sister Donna is enjoying yet another kind of ministry. For the past two years she has been engaged in sharing the gift of her presence. When a representative of Saint Augustine Health Ministries contacted the Ursuline Sisters in search of someone to minister to the shut-ins of Parma St. Anthony of Padua Parish, President Sister Susan Durkin recommended Sister Donna.

Her current ministry visiting the homebound of St. Anthony’s offers no fancy title, no spacious office, and no support staff. But the work is no less important. In fact, the gifts of prayer, concern, compassion and companionship she brings to her work embody what it means to live the gospel. She sits down with her people and offers them Eucharist, a prayer, a smile or a hug. She’ll lend an ear, a hand or shoulder to cry on. Most importantly, she offers her presence. She makes a concerted effort to visit each of her 30 clients at least every other week.

In this new experience Sister Donna has witnessed amazing faith and optimism amid very difficult situations. Her visits may expose the frustration and fear born of disease or sickness, the struggle of pain and the emptiness of isolation, but she is able to share

smiles and laughter with these special friends. And with each visit she helps uncover more reasons for hope and gratitude.

Sister Donna is moved by the strength and patience exhibited by the family members of her shut-ins. “I see not only the challenges of the homebound patient, but the burden of their caregivers as well. I recognize their physical and emotional exhaustion and am inspired by the incredible devotion to their loved one.”

Sister Donna doesn’t get down or uneasy when entering the home; in fact, she feels blessed to be there. She finds “joy in bringing a bit of relief or comfort to the person just by being there.” And she doesn’t mind hearing a story she’s heard many times before. “It’s OK,” she says with a smile. “I listen as if it’s the first.”



Sister Donna with Emmet Masterson

Congregation elects leaders for next four years

At congregational meetings in February, the Ursuline Sisters elected a leadership team to serve through 2020. Sister Susan Durkin was re-elected as President. Sisters Susan Bremer and Kathleen Flanagan were also elected to a second consecutive term as councilors. New to the team are Sisters Joanne Gross and Laura Bregar.

Prior to her election in 2012, Sister Susan Durkin had served six years as the Ursulines' Development Director. Under her leadership the congregation decided to close the Saint Angela Center and move the sisters residing there to Regina Health Center, as a first step toward financial sustainability for the future. Sister Susan coordinated formation of a new lay advisory board to assist with a number of projects, most notably the planned construction of a new residence for sisters and the sale of a portion of the community's Pepper Pike property.

Sister Susan faces the next four years with the same spirit of enthusiasm and optimism that marked her first term. "We will continue the work we have begun, buoyed by the example of our sisters at Regina Health Center, guided by our trusted advisors, and confident in the faith and cooperation of all our members."

This will be Sister Susan Bremer's fourth term in leadership, having also served 2000-2008. During that tenure she also ministered as pastoral care coordinator in the Saint Angela Center and in the congregation's Development Office. "We have seen an incredible amount of change in the congregation," she notes. "I am confident that these next few years, though challenging, will usher in a new and graced time for the sisters and for our Ursuline family. We are working now to ensure a vibrant spiritual and ministerial presence into the future."

Sister Kathleen Flanagan, former faculty member in the nursing program at Ursuline College, brings administrative skills and leadership experience to her second term. She is grateful for the opportunity to continue in service to the sisters. "As we move forward ... to face the challenges, inevitable sadness, and positive energy transitions can bring," she says, "I pray that I can be a source of encouragement, bringing a



The Ursulines' new leadership team: (from left) Sisters Joanne Gross, Laura Bregar, Susan Bremer, Susan Durkin and Kathleen Flanagan.

caring and compassionate approach to my sisters and to the work to be completed."

A lawyer by training and experience, Sister Joanne Gross comes to congregational leadership with a breadth of ministry experience in corporate, educational, government, and non-profit settings. She has served as a teacher, in practice with Kelly McCann & Livingstone, as legal counsel for the congregation, Beaumont School, Ursuline

College and John Carroll University, and in several Cuyahoga County positions. Most recently she served as President of Catholic Community Connection, a collaborative effort promoting better stewardship of resources and coordination of health and human services. Sister Joanne looks forward to her new work, noting, "... I bring gratitude for and hopefulness about this graced time in Cleveland Ursuline history. I expect this ministry of leadership will teach me a great deal – and I trust that God will put that learning to good use!"

Sister Laura Bregar comes to elected leadership from her work in the Development Office. She has taught at St. Mary Magdalene School (Willowick) and served at Beaumont School. She also served as principal at Cleveland's Ascension School and Our Lady of the Lake School in Euclid. About the challenge ahead, she says, "This is an exhilarating time to serve the congregation as we work with our sisters and lay advisors to plan a future full of hope ... I pray to exhibit a creative and responsive spirit so that my time of service may be a part of moving our congregation continuously in the direction of God's Spirit and the heart of St. Angela."

Completing their four-year terms are Sisters Maureen Doyle, who returns to full-time ministry as Director of Urban Community School, and Ann Letitia Kostiha, who will minister among the Ursulines residing at Regina Health Center.



Sister Kathleen and a few of her budding artists

Ursuline ArtSpace is on the move!

Many extraordinary dreams are born of ordinary beginnings. In a casual conversation with Ursuline friends in 1998 Sister Kathleen Burk shared her dream of offering art for children and adults at the Ursuline Sisters' motherhouse.

Before long one of those sisters sat down at the computer to help Sister Kathleen craft a ministry proposal to present to the leadership team. The proposal for *Ursuline ArtSpace* was approved, and in 2003, after much planning and renovation, programs began. Since then, hundreds of "artists" of all ages have come to the motherhouse to learn and create.

Sister Kathleen Burke has been mining her passion for art since her mother took her to a free art class at the Cleveland Art Museum when she was just five years old. An only child growing up in East Cleveland, Sister Kathleen took advantage of every available art class. An Ursuline since 1956, she has been blessed with the opportunity to serve God through art. She has taught art at nearly all grade levels, most recently at Ursuline College where she continues part time while directing *Ursuline ArtSpace*.

Since realizing her *ArtSpace* dream, Sister Kathleen has been filled with gratitude. "These unique art

programs have made it possible to touch the lives of hundreds of children and adults through art, and for that I feel very blessed."

Today, she is focused on a new and exciting vision for *ArtSpace*. As the congregation faces the move to a smaller living space, *ArtSpace* anticipates an exciting future and a wonderful opportunity to reach more people. Sister Kathleen's new vision includes many new students who have not yet discovered the joy and healing art can provide. *Ursuline ArtSpace Outreach*, a new version of the program, is moving outward to meet the needs of new populations.

Ursuline ArtSpace collaborates with centers, schools and organizations in the community as an outreach effort to bring art to youth and adults in need. The program currently provides art therapy to three Cleveland area organizations — The Rene Jones Empowerment Center, Front Steps Housing Services and L'Arche Cleveland.

Gretchen Miller is a board-certified art therapist who enjoys the *ArtSpace* experience and working with Sister Kathleen. "Her compassion and commitment ... through the arts and in the art therapy field have been a life changing inspiration to so many," Gretchen says of Sister Kathleen. "Future and practicing art therapists,

Ursuline ArtSpace collaborates with centers, schools and organizations in the community as an outreach effort to bring art to youth and adults in need.



as well as youth and adults in the community have benefitted from the offerings of *Ursuline ArtSpace* and the leadership of Sister Kathleen.”

Sister Kathleen’s original dream of *Ursuline ArtSpace* in the motherhouse is evolving into something new. Her enthusiasm is just as unbridled as it was in the beginning. “I am thrilled to have colleagues working with me who are just as passionate as I am. I feel confident in handing the program over to them one day. It’s exciting to me that *Ursuline ArtSpace* will continue to touch lives for years to come.”

“These unique art programs have made it possible to touch the lives of hundreds of children and adults through art, and for that I feel very blessed.”

– Sister Kathleen



Sister Kathleen and Gretchen Miller



Sister Susan with guests Wayne and Susan Hamilton

Ursuline friends enjoy annual Florida event

The Royal Poinciana Club in Naples was again the gathering spot for almost 150 Ursuline friends and supporters. Following Mass with Father Gary Chmura, guests enjoyed a delicious brunch and some Ursuline updates.

Sister Susan Durkin reported on the congregation’s plan to build a new residence for the sisters and about the invaluable assistance of our lay advisory board. Beaumont President Sister Gretchen talked about happenings at the high school, and new Ursuline College President Sister Christine De Vinne offered her inaugural state of the college updates, highlighting the excitement surrounding the college’s new athletic facility and healing arts center.

While in Naples Sisters Susan and Ritamary Welsh also enjoyed a number of individual and group visits with friends and donors.



DERBY DAY 2016 ANOTHER RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The newly remodeled Lakeview Lounge at First Energy Stadium provided its unique views of Cleveland landmarks and skyline for sisters and guests of the Seventh Annual Ursuline Derby Day. It was a fun-filled evening highlighting the storied “run for the roses” and generating financial support for the Ursuline Sisters.

The evening featured the presentation of the Merici Award to Ursuline friend and supporter Bill Connelly by Sister Susan Durkin, congregational president. Bill, a product of Ursuline education at St. Ann School, credits the sisters with making him the man and leader he is today. “Bill is an outstanding friend and supporter,” Sister Susan noted in conferring the award. “We are proud to have had a hand in his success, and humbled and blessed by his generosity. The sisters who taught him St. Ann School are surely smiling down upon him today.”

Derby guests again enjoyed the excitement of the horse race raffle, 50/50 drawing, basket raffle, and wine pull. This year’s *Moving the Mission* effort generated additional monies for the 21st Century Club appeal earmarked for the replacement of 143 mattress and box spring sets and decades-old bedroom chairs to help keep the sisters well rested and healthy for their wide-ranging outreach.

Thanks to our sponsors, underwriters, horse owners, in-kind service providers, basket and wine donors, volunteers and guests. Special thanks to Andrew Grover, our faithful friend and Derby emcee and auctioneer. We couldn’t have done it without him.

**Mark your calendar for next year’s Ursuline Derby Day,
Saturday, May 6, 2017. We hope to see you there.**

This Ursuline's 'retirement' is a labor of love, learning

Sister Sheila Marie Tobbe is happily retired, but not in the typical sense. There's been no kicking back to enjoy leisure activities or travel, no new hobbies or babysitting. She is part of a new wave of early retirees, baby boomers 65-80 years of age, who are choosing to stay active and vital as agents of change through new modes of volunteer activity. And that is much more to her liking than BINGO or pinochle.



Sister Sheila Marie tutors Bryson Simpson at the Ursuline Institute of Learning.



Sister Sheila Marie

After leaving a position in 2012, Sister Sheila Marie found herself at retirement age (at least the age most people retire) without another ministry on the horizon. The former classroom educator, Central American missionary and parish minister didn't have long to wait. Invitations started coming from friends and acquaintances familiar with her many gifts.

Among the first at her door were a number of her Ursuline sisters. Sister Susan Mary Rathbun, director of the Ursuline Institute of Learning, enlisted her help in tutoring junior high and high school students in math, science, and beginning Spanish. Sister Susan Zion sought Sister Sheila Marie's help for her Ursuline Piazza HIV/AIDS clients interested in pursuing GED studies, as did Sister Mary Eileen Boyle for her seamstresses in training at Esperanza Threads.

A value-added feature of Sister Sheila Marie's service is her fluency in Spanish and her multicultural experience in El Salvador and in city parishes. She moves easily from group to group, from project to project, adjusting and accommodating as she goes.

When she is not tutoring, Sister Sheila Marie can be found with groups of young adults seeking a deeper faith dimension in their lives. She was recruited to assist with the *Busy Student Retreat* program at Case Western Reserve University, a spiritual companioning project funded by the Newman Foundation. She is matched as a director with one or more students for four or five one-on-one sessions centered on spiritual growth and theology. Some students opt to continue with monthly sessions beyond the formal retreat. Many go on to membership in the Coalition with Young

Adults (CYA) to deepen their spiritual core and give it expression through service. Sister Sheila Marie, who attends CYA-sponsored events from time to time, is always happy to meet up with former "Busy Student" participants and to see the fruits of the program.

An additional volunteer effort claiming a piece of Sister Sheila Marie's time and heart is the Metanoia Project housed at St. Malachi Parish on the near West Side. It is a multi-faith church outreach to homeless men and women, providing shelter, meals, and access to social services. Sister Sheila Marie serves as a spiritual companion to the 60-80 individuals who gather each weekend.

She helps with the Friday evening program, spending time walking around and talking with people. "It's not much," she readily admits, "and yet staff tell us that our presence makes a difference, that we create a discernible spirit of calm within and among the group." And that is a good thing for anyone, particularly for those whose lives are often chaotic and challenging.

Sister Sheila Marie's approach to ministry harkens back to Ursuline foundress Angela Merici who encouraged her followers to live lives of holiness as an example to others and to respond to changing needs. "We have a spirituality to share," she asserts, "and others are eager to learn about it in order to develop a similar core within themselves." She is pleased to be engaged in such a worthwhile endeavor.

Retirement has been redefined for Sister Sheila Marie and other 'boomers' who continue to give and serve in myriad ways. "The Spirit works the way the Spirit works," Sister Sheila Marie notes. "We just keep responding."

Meet Sister Mary Jean, teacher and track coach

It's a Wednesday afternoon in April and the familiar ring of the school bell sounds throughout the halls of St. Aloysius-St. Agatha on St. Clair Ave. in Cleveland. While most students and teachers pack up to head home, about 30 junior high youngsters head to the gym where they are greeted by Sister Mary Jean Raymond, "Coach" Sister Mary Jean. Soon the squeak of rubber soles and youthful laughter echo in the gymnasium. The track and field team is preparing for its first meet of the season.

The role of track coach was never part of Sister Mary Jean's vocation plan when she entered the community in 1961. Neither was it part of her job description when she came to St. Aloysius-St. Agatha School in 1981. But 13 years ago, when St. Al's volunteer track coach needed help, Sister Mary Jean stepped in. Two years later, when the coach left, Sister Mary Jean found herself coaching the team.

She recalls the words of wisdom – or warning – Principal Sister Sandra Sabo, SSJ-TOSF, offered when she arrived at the school, "If you have a talent we can use it," the principal said. "And you will develop other talents you never knew you had." "Perhaps coaching track was the talent I never knew I had," Sister Mary Jean says with a laugh.

The team is made up of students not only from St. Al's but from a host of city schools including St. Jerome, St. Francis, St. Thomas Aquinas and, new this year, St



Sister Mary Jean with Aniyah Milton (left) and An'neisa Millson (right)

Adalbert. Sister Mary Jean and her co-coaches, Aubrey Ward and Mari O'Neil, have led the team to an impressive 11 trophies in divisional and city championship meets.

"We talk to the kids about going all out, going for the brass ring, and we give them the tools to do it. They just have to put in the work, and they do," Sister Mary Jean says. The results speak for themselves.

Coaching a team of inner-city junior high students isn't without its challenges. Chief among them is imparting a sense of responsibility to the student athletes. "They need to learn to be here on time for practice and be ready for meets if they want to be a part of the team," Sister Mary Jean says. But she also knows that distractions facing kids today make it difficult to focus. Some can be managed, i.e., keeping cell phones in back packs. Other distractions, like family problems, are more difficult to leave outside. But they keep trying.

The school doesn't have a track of its own, and the team's uniforms are pretty basic. The athletes practice in the gym, run around the parking lot, or run a half mile to use the track at Patrick Henry School. Sister Mary Jean has heard her kids talking about the nice facilities or awesome uniforms of their competitors. At those times she reminds them, "It's not the shoe on the foot; it's the foot in the shoe."

The smiles on the faces of the coach and the athletes bespeak their pride in being part of the team, despite the hard work it entails. Sister Sandra is also proud of the team and not just because of its success. "Sister Mary Jean and her team are known by other coaches in the track circle not only for their many trophies, but for their positive attitude. We are so proud of her and our students!"



St. Aloysius-St. Agatha track team flanked by Coaches Mari O'Neil (far left) and Aubrey Ward (far right), with Sister Mary Jean in the middle

Couple's service is vehicle for sharing blessings

Volunteers Dennis and Karen Murray enjoy being on the go ... and being of assistance. It generally takes but a matter of moments for them to respond to our requests for help, which is especially remarkable given that we are not the only ones who call upon their generous service.

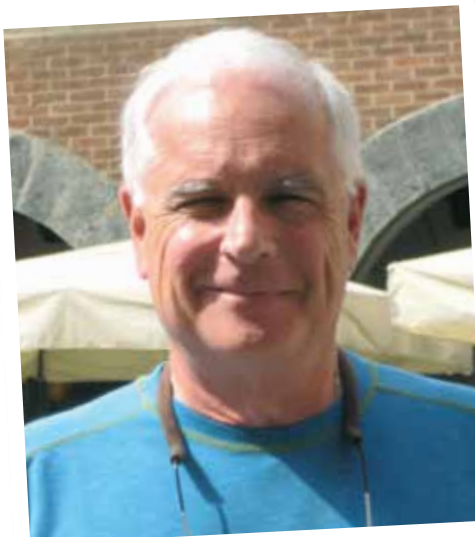
This retired husband and wife team, members of Assumption Parish in Broadview Heights, read about the Ursuline Sisters' volunteer needs in their church bulletin and signed up in January 2015 to drive the sisters living at Regina Health Center to their doctor appointments. Their efforts don't stop there, however. They also signed up for additional volunteer opportunities that interest them individually. Karen visits with sisters at Regina each week. And both Karen and Dennis assist Sister Mary Eileen Boyle at fair trade shows at which she markets her *Esperanza Threads* clothing items. Such is their commitment to the sisters.

"We chose to center our volunteer efforts mainly at Regina," Karen says, "because we were both taught by nuns in elementary school (at St. Pius X in Bedford and St. Rose in Cleveland) and continue to value the lessons we learned from them, such as compassion, respect, and fellowship." They continue to hold these other sisters in great regard and esteem even as they develop relationships with the Ursulines.

The couple acknowledges they thoroughly enjoy time spent with the sisters during car trips. They find there is always something fascinating to learn about the sisters' lives and interests. And it's been nice getting to know the sisters as real people.

In their spare time, Dennis and Karen enjoy traveling to and learning about places like the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Europe. They spend a lot of time in the Cleveland Metroparks and in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park where they walk their dog Frankie, named for Karen's father and Frank Sinatra, both "characters." Frankie also accompanies Karen on her weekly visits to Regina.

Sometimes Karen and Dennis travel to visit their children. Karen's daughter Sarah, a district manager for an international furniture manufacturer, lives with



Dennis Murray



Karen Murray

her family in Massachusetts. Dennis has two sons. The older one, Brian, lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He is married and has furry children — three dogs and two cats! Dennis' younger son, Greg, lives much closer to home, in Lakewood. He and his photography business were recently featured in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. (The article is available on Cleveland.com, by searching "Pet Photographer Greg Murray.")

Dennis and Karen, enthusiastic, compassionate and dedicated to our sisters, are valuable members of our volunteer team. They are grateful for the blessings of health, each other, and appreciation for life, and have pledged to share the fruits of those blessings with others. They have been doing just that since joining us. And we are blessed to have them!

"We chose to center our volunteer efforts mainly at Regina because we were both taught by nuns in elementary school and continue to value the lessons we learned from them, such as compassion, respect, and fellowship."

— Karen Murray

Ursuline Academy of Cleveland

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Scholarship honors former principal

Sister Catherine Waldron (formerly Sister St. Ann) is no longer engaged in active ministry, but her influence, still very much alive at Mentor's Lake Catholic High School, is about to get a boost.



Sister Catherine Waldron

Now in residence at Regina Health Center, the veteran educator served at Lake Catholic from 1982 until 2013, as a teacher and assistant principal, and finally as principal for 17 years. She was recently honored by one of the families she impacted with the establishment of the Sister Catherine Waldron Scholarship Endowment Fund. Monies will be awarded annually to students with financial need.

Sister Catherine's 2007 induction into the school's Hall of Excellence was a tribute to her "loyalty, integrity, long-term dedication, and unwavering understanding and passion" for Lake Catholic's Mission. Now, with the support of scholarship monies in her name, students for years to come will have the opportunity to develop and embody those same values.



Sister Catherine in her Lake Catholic days