

2018 Jubilarians



*The human heart
is drawn by love.*

—St. Catherine of Siena



Dominican Sisters
Grand Rapids, Michigan

What is a Jubilarian?

Our Hebrew roots provide a tradition for Jubilee to be celebrated every fifty years. In our Dominican tradition we have developed our own customs. Our celebration of Jubilee brings our Jubilarians back to their origin in the Congregation. We honor each woman and find ways to identify her unique contributions to our lives. We tell stories about our lives, our learnings and our joys and sorrows. We celebrate!

Each Jubilarian has a story to tell, and the common threads of our stories are enhanced by one another. The unfolding of the mystery of God's presence in our lives is awesome. We recognize this unfolding mystery of dying and being reborn as we walk together throughout life. Each Sister's YES, each day, enhances the whole community.

As we continue to be inflamed with contemplative love daily, we are so grateful for these holy women who celebrate their Jubilee this year, and we continue to be enriched by their lives.

Verona Wangler, OP



75th Jubilee! Really!!
Yes, 75 years as a Dominican Sister.
First and foremost, I "Thank You,
good and gracious God, for calling
me to consecrated life."

This Jubilee is a sacred time in my life to recall but more importantly to renew my commitment to religious life. My "1943 Yes" is reenergized to live religious life more deeply and to respond to God's call each day.



*Sr. Verona is often out
and about adding,
changing, and rearranging
the artwork around
Marywood Campus*

The Congregation has supported me in ministering to God's people throughout Michigan. I have served in the Dioceses of Grand Rapids, Gaylord, Saginaw, and Detroit. Each ministry has been both challenging and rewarding. My last teaching ministry was Faith Formation at St. Pius X Parish, Grandville. I walked with parishioners for eighteen years and concluded my service with great joy.

Presently, I renew my "1943 Yes" and embrace whatever God asks of me here at Marywood. With a grateful heart, I ask God's blessing on my family, friends, and my beloved community for the love and support given to me over all these years. I am deeply thankful for the gift of my vocation and for God's faithfulness leading me along the way.

I greet each day with: "Yes, Lord, here I am!"

75 years



Emma Kulhanek, OP



“In stillness and in quiet confidence is my strength.”

I was born in Chesaning, Michigan, December 15, 1929 to Wenz and Emma Nietling Kulhanek. There were six children in our family, three girls and three boys. I am the second oldest.

Through grade nine I attended Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Chesaning taught by our Dominican Sisters. The next three years I spent at Marywood Academy as an Aspirant. In September of 1947 I entered the Postulancy and took my mother’s name, Emma.

For a number of years my ministry was Teacher and Principal of a number of large and small schools in Michigan. In some of these schools I taught the upper grades and helped coordinate the staff and curriculum. Work in inner-city was of special interest and rewarding to me. Some students came back to tell me that they were glad they were taught for the ‘future’ - not just for the moment.

My other ministries included pastoral care for the elderly in Northview Manor and volunteering on the Marywood Campus as a visitor: reading, listening, and assisting with letter writing. How rewarding this was for me.

I enjoy reading, walking, crocheting, card games, doing word search puzzles, and going places with my family. I have traveled to all parts of the United States and overseas to Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and I spent one week in Rome. How blessed I am.



John Therese Kusba, OP



“I, the Lord, teach you what is good, and lead you on the way you should go.”

- Isaiah 48:17

Dolores Therese Mary was born June 11, 1928, the second child of John and Theresa Kusba. She had two brothers, one older and one younger. She learned self-defense by joining the boys’ sports.

Dolores attended grade school at St. Rita, Saginaw and St. Joseph High School. Recognizing that God was calling her to religious life, Dolores entered the congregation in September of 1947. She received the name Sister John Therese of the Blessed Sacrament.

Her 26 years in New Mexico began at St. Francis in Ranchos de Taos and continued at Alameda, Santa Cruz and Our Lady of Fatima in Albuquerque. She loved the mountains and the people and life in New Mexico.

Sr. John Therese earned a B.S. and M.A. in Religious Education from Aquinas College and continued her summer studies at Duluth and Notre Dame.

Her hobbies include reading, crossword puzzles, sports and traveling. Upper Peninsula and Washington, D.C. were favorite vacation sites.

In 2001 Sr. John Therese became a resident at Aquinata Hall where she had energy for several volunteer ministries. Today her home is Marywood Health Center where she receives love and care.

70 years 70 years



Louisa Mogdis, OP



“I have called you by name, you are mine. You are precious in my sight, honored and I have loved you.”

- Isaiah 43

I was born in Muskegon Heights, Michigan on March 20, 1928 to Louis and Gazelle (Regel) Mogdis. There were seven children in our family, four boys and three girls, I am the second youngest.

My school years were at Edgewood Elementary School in Muskegon through grade 5, Sacred Heart School grades 6-9 and St. Mary’s High School grades 10-12. From 5th grade on I was taught by our Dominican Sisters. Spending time helping the Sisters, I began to realize that I would like to become a Sister. God was working on my heart.

On September 7, 1947 I began my 70 years as a Grand Rapids Dominican Sister. These years have taken me to many places in Michigan with various kinds of ministries. Most of my years I spent as a teacher in the primary grades. Other ministries have been in food service, sacristan, coordinator of the gift shop at Aquinata Hall and Marywood Health Center, and mail deliverer.

For hobbies I enjoy jigsaw puzzles, reading, and word search puzzles.

For the people who have loved and supported me throughout these 70 years, I ask God’s special blessing on each of you.



Thaddeus Kowalinski, OP



“No eye has seen, no ear heard, no human heart imagined what has been prepared for those who love God.”

- 1 Corinthians 2:9

God has a long time plan for the eye, for the ear, and for me. Part of the plan was set in motion by moving the eye, ear, and heart to the East side of the state to Fulton Street in Grand Rapids, Michigan where the itinerant Dominican women’s Motherhouse, Marywood was located.



In the summer, you can often find Sr. Thaddeus helping outside in the garden at Aquinata Hall.

There the plan continued – moving me into the ministry of educating youth in Saginaw (Sts. Peter and Paul), Grand Rapids (St. Thomas), Chesaning (Our Lady), Gaylord (Our Lady), Bay City (St. Joseph), and Mt. Pleasant (Sacred Heart Academy).

So, in this my 70th year of serving God’s people, my eye, ear, and heart join with other eyes, ears, and hearts in thankful praise to our Good and Gracious God.

Deo Gratias!
Amen, Alleluia

70 years 70 years



Mary Courtade, OP



Reflecting on these seventy years as a Grand Rapids Dominican, I am filled with gratitude and happiness for my vocation. God has so enriched me with His love and abundant blessings over these years. I'm also grateful for my loving family, faithful friends, and our Dominican Sisters who have supported and encouraged me throughout this time.

Born on December 21, 1928, I was the sixth of seven children, having two brothers and four sisters. My parents, Peter and Claribel Courtade, were faith filled Catholics and life-long members of St. Francis Parish.

I attended St. Francis School for my elementary and secondary education. I was taught by our Sisters whom I loved and admired. They had a great influence on me. On September 8th I entered the community, then enrolled at Aquinas and began my studies for a teaching career.

Teaching students in grades 3-8 was my primary mission for forty-eight years. I found teaching to be a source of energy and joy that challenged and enriched me.

Shortly after leaving the classroom, I moved to Marywood and volunteered to work at the MI Blood Center, Tandem 365, the WORD ESL program, gardening, and driving the Sisters to appointments.

I enjoy reading, puzzles, walking, listening to music, traveling, and now crocheting hats for the Santa Claus girls. I enjoyed many adventures, like tubing in Wisconsin, white water rafting in Colorado, canoeing and a clam bake in Maine, and climbing the world-famous Dunn's River Falls in Ohio Rios while on a cruise. I have also toured some European countries. Visiting Vatican City was a very memorable experience.



Srs. Marie Kathleen McCrackin and Mary Courtade at Sr. Mary's family reunion in Colorado

Joyce Ann Hertzog, OP



"God is good and sustains us
with endless love."

A young girl from Omaha, responded to an invitation "Come and See", to pursue Dominican life as a religious sister, and sixty years later we celebrate! I am grateful to God for the many gifts, ministries, and people that have been part of my journey. My early teaching ministry in Saginaw, St. Joseph-Sacred Heart allowed me to experience cooperative efforts of African American, Hispanic, and Anglo students and families. Through study, action, and conscience raising discussions, seeds of justice were planted. Issues of poverty, racism, and the cost of war have propelled me to search for ways to be in solidarity with the ONE human family.



Sr. Joyce Ann helps Julio with math assignments as part of her current ministry.

Working with teachers and curriculum in Catholic Schools – Mobile Archdiocese; supporting Parish Social Ministry – Atlanta Archdiocese; promoting the Bishop's Justice for Immigrants and Catholic Campaign for Human Development were opportunities for me to preach justice. Engaging others created a strong voice for those with none.

After serving on our Dominican Sisters Leadership team, I now am a professional tutor with adult immigrants. Abundant graces have been given me and these fuel my desire to be an instrument of God's love to others.

70 years

60 years



Margaret Mary Birchmeier, OP



“Be still and know that I am God”
- Psalm 46:10

Sixty years and counting – ‘til the end of my days O Lord.
I will bless your name, Sing your praise,
Give you thanks.

You have surrounded my table with a loving and supportive family,

With faithful and committed friends,

With a Dominican Family that has helped me grow spiritually and has
been there in good days and has encouraged me in difficult days,

With a ministry that has helped me
live out the Gospel message,

working together with many other
committed companions serving the
poor, taking in the orphans,

making the marginalized feel welcome
and providing an oasis of love and
hope for those in need.

For all this – I bless You, praise You
and give you thanks.



Sr. Margaret Mary helps Diego
with his homework while
ministering in Peru

60 years 60 years



Nancy Malburg, OP



“Eye has not seen, and ear has not
heard...what God has prepared for
those who love him.”
- 1 Corinthians 2:9

Oldest of seven children, I grew up on
a small farm east of Hart, MI. In preparation
for First Communion, Sisters came from
St. Joseph, Weare over to St. Gregory, Hart to teach on Saturday
mornings. I liked the Sisters and soon began to think I’d like to become
a Sister. As I grew and explored vocational choices, the attraction of my
First Communion experience never really left me.

Still, it wasn’t easy to leave all the other
options open at age 18, to enter the
convent. Did I say, ‘leave options?’
Dominican life has been full of more
exciting options than I could have dreamed!

I truly enjoyed each new experience:
As Dominican Sister, teacher, principal,
Personnel Director, Diocesan schools staff
member, and Facility Manager at Marywood.
And God continued to surprise me. New
grace led me to parish management and
pastoral Associate roles and 5 years in
Bridger, Montana as Parish Coordinator.



Sr. Nancy is often sewing new
projects, ranging from hats
and gloves to bowls and
holiday decorations.



In 2012 it was time for an emotional
farewell to Montana and a trip home to
Michigan. After a long drive of 1,270 miles
eastward, I reached the Lake Express dock
in Milwaukee. I was going HOME!

God has blessed all of my years; I thank
my Dominican Community, my family, and
all who continue to show me the hand of
God in my present years.



Marie Joy Yuhasz, OP



“How good it is to make music to our God.” - Psalm 92

My heart is filled with joy and gratitude for God’s many gifts given me to use and share especially through instrumental and vocal music. Early ministry in schools at

St. Stephen - Grand Rapids and Holy Rosary - Bay City allowed me to nurture students to seek further musical involvement. Sacred Heart - Muskegon Heights, St. Stephen - Port Huron, St. Nicholas - Capac, provided opportunities to direct adult choirs for parish services. Dancing in state competitions, local square dancing, and movement to the rhythms of other cultures introduced me to diverse art forms, special relationships, and great fun.

Liturgy and Office prayer have offered many occasions for service. Musical compositions were created for Psalms and Scriptural passages. Original compositions such as “Justice and Peace” and “Abba Father”, were published. A hymn sent to a Eucharistic Conference was selected for their theme. St. Mary’s Hospital, Lacks Center - Grand Rapids, was a weekly venue to play popular and classical pieces for visitors/staff enjoyment as well as accompany the noon Mass. Until recently I enjoyed participating in our Dominican Chapel choir. I give thanks for the support and encouragement given me by family, friends, and community.

I continue my ministry of service in the daily living with the Sisters at Aquinata Hall. She will always hold a song in her heart.



Sr. Marie Joy provides musical accompaniment for the Sisters getting a Wednesday manicure at Aquinata Hall

Patrice Konwinski, OP



For all that has been, I say “Thanks” ~ for what is yet to be, I say “Yes”.

- Dag Hammarskjöld

I pause often to recognize the graces I have received in my life and ministries. Then with a smile and prayer I give thanks to God! Through my years as a Dominican, I have proclaimed “collaboration” as a virtue. Together with sensitivity to multiple viewpoints, I have been able to bring authentic compassion to my many administrative leadership roles: with hospital personnel in Albuquerque, with service as Finance Councilor for our Dominican Sisters’ Leadership Team, with resource expertise



Sr. Patrice facilitating at a Diocesan presentation

to bishops, pastors, and parishioners as Chancellor of the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

After leaving a full-time post, I continued to volunteer on Boards at St. Ann’s Home and St. Mary’s Hospital, where I also served as a receptionist for visitors. Whether working with the Vietnamese community in Grand Rapids or planning alumnae events at Marywood, organizational development

and growth happened and continues. This brings me great joy! Service and an ethical framework were traits instilled in me by my parents and I have been given many opportunities to share these gifts with others.

60 years 60 years



Ann Hehl, OP



“God’s faithfulness is without end.”

- Psalm 117

I was born August 31, 1939 at home in Coopersville, MI and was raised on a farm with three brothers. We attended a one room, nine grades (K-8), one teacher, country public school with our neighbors. Our Parish was Saint Michael’s in Dennison (now Coopersville). Religious formation began at home followed by one hour after Sunday Mass where two senior girls from Mt. Mercy came to help us memorize our Catechism. Every June two Mercy Sisters came for two weeks to prepare us to celebrate the sacraments. Later, we were all enrolled in a by-mail program called Religion Correspondence Course directed by Dominicans. After expressing my desire to be a Sister, I came to be an aspirant so I could learn what Sisters were all about.

September 8, 1957, I entered as a postulant. After profession, a few of us went to study nursing. September 1960, I became an LPN and completed RN studies in June of 1985. As a nurse, I ministered in many specialized fields, with my last 27 years being End Stage Renal Disease. Currently, I am a member of the Pastoral Care Team at Marywood Health Center and Spiritual Care Companionship in the home.

I am grateful for the many opportunities and blessings that I’ve had throughout these 60 years and for all of the support I have received along the way.



In recognition of their extraordinary care for seniors, the Pastoral Care Team received the award for Group Volunteer of the Year from LeadingAge Michigan at the 2017 Member Awards Gala.

Catherine Williams, OP



“You will show me the path of life...”

- Psalm 16



The path has twisted and turned during these 60 years, from a community of Williams on a small farm in Byron Center,...

...to a community of Dominican Sisters who share their lives of simplicity and prayer, laughter and song,....



...as we walk the road together toward, “the fullness of joy in God’s presence”.



60 years 60 years



Teresa Gallmeier, OP



“There is as much beauty visible to us in creation as we are prepared to appreciate – not a grain more.”

- Thoreau

My preaching has come through sharing stories of beauty seen, observed, and expressed in a variety of creative

mediums. I have created oil paintings of New Mexico, ink prints of nature, macramé lamp shades, crocheted afghans; these activities as well as coloring pictures or doing puzzles enabled me to pay attention to intricate details. The dated, small, and unnoticed things attract me both in art and life. Icon writing has put me in touch with prayer and the sacred strokes God has worked in my life. I realize that joy and sorrow, laughter and tears work together in time to reveal God’s mysteries.



Some of Sr. Teresa’s art can be found outside her room at Marywood Health Center

Ministry as a Dominican Sister has provided me opportunities to develop and utilize my nursing skills as a Visiting Nurse and co-founder of Hospice Programs in both Albuquerque and Ionia. Journeying with patients and families through life into death called me to share humor, honesty, empathy, and prayer. Later in my life, I delighted in holding infants at the DeVos Children’s Hospital as a volunteer.



Sr. Teresa helps make cookies during an activity at Marywood Health Center

Now I receive support services at the Marywood Health Center and interact with residents and staff as we appreciate beauty visible in and around us all.

60 years

Mary Jo Beckett, OP



“Rejoice in the Lord Always”

- Philippians 4:4

I truly can rejoice in the Lord for these 60 years of abundant blessings.

I was born March 4, 1939 in Mt. Pleasant. My parents were Floyd and Velma (McKnight). In 1946 when I was 7 and my brother Don was 2, my mother had a heart attack and died. It was a very difficult time for me and I could hardly sing “Jesus loves Me” during my Sunday School classes.

Everything changed when in 1949 my dad married Marie Esch and our family was baptized into the Catholic faith.

My first encounter with Sisters happened while I was sitting on our porch at home watching a parade of “funny looking ladies” go past our house. One day I asked them who they were and they replied that they were Catholic Sisters studying to become teachers.



Sr. Mary Jo shakes colorful pom poms with the Sisters during an activity at Aquinata Hall

I attended elementary grades (K-6) at the Central College lab school. I attended the Catholic school from 7th grade until graduation and had Dominican Sisters as teachers.

I entered the community following my graduation in the fall of 1957. I desired to share my faith and teach, which I did – mainly in the primary grades.

I enjoy doing activities with our Sisters at Aquinata Hall. Each day I thank God for being with me on my faith journey, for being my strength in hard times, and for a loving community.

60 years



Patricia Kennedy, OP



I am thankful to God for calling me here. Thank you to the community for welcoming me.

I was the ninth of eleven children born to Alfred and Alma Fortier Kennedy on March 18, 1939. My formal education began at Emerson Public School in kindergarten. The next year I transferred to St. Mary Cathedral School where I remained for the next twelve years, graduating from High School in 1957.

On September 8, 1957 I entered the Grand Rapids Dominican community. Through the years, my ministries have included Food Service, House Mother at an Indian Boarding School, Health Care, Tutoring, and Transportation.

I am grateful for all the blessings I have received during these 60 years as a Sister. God has truly blessed me with great friends, companions, mentors, educators, and Spiritual leaders. I am grateful for the support of my parents, family, community, and many friends.



One of Sr. Pat's current ministries includes tutoring students in the Word ESL program.

My ministries have taken me to many places; Aquin Hall, East Tawas, Traverse City, our Marywood Infirmary, St. Joseph Seminary, Gaylord, Essexville, The House of Studies, Marywood, Aquinata Hall, St. Catharine, Kentucky, Harbor Springs Boarding School, St. Augustine Retreat House, Conway, Cass City, Aquinas College, New Kent Homes, Fountain View, Oak Crest, and Marywood Health Center. For all of these opportunities to serve, I say Thank You to God and this Dominican community.



Yvonne Greiner, OP



What has gone before
And what is yet to come
Is beyond my control,
But the magic of today
Is within my influence.

She will be:

WISE; from having learned from her experiences of life.

JOYFUL; savoring the moment, sucking the juice out of it.

LOVING; love will rule her judgments and relationships.

FLEXIBLE; willing to change, adaptable to the changes demanded by the aging process.

ASSERTIVE; she will speak truth from her heart, and learn the necessary virtues of courage and self-confidence.

LIGHTHEARTED; learn to laugh at herself and the universe. Have fun so people will enjoy being around her.

HOPEFUL; learn to retain her brain to think more positively, to see options and choices

UNIQUE; bring her own best gifts forward: gentleness, a listening spirit, interest in and appreciation of others.

- From Sr. Yvonne Foster-Greiner's book, *Inner Journey*

60 years 60 years



Gail Ann Martin, OP



“I am yours, Lord,
do with me as you will”

On June 21, 1973, Sr. Cecile, novice mistress, presented us with the challenge of Jesus to his apostles to “launch out into the deep” in living religious life and I have happily treaded water in many different ministries and places.

My first launching was a greater act of faith on the part of my parents when they allowed me to become a high school aspirant at Marywood. Little did I know the journey had begun.

My family and my Dominican Sisters have supported me on this journey. I was a teacher in elementary schools in Carson City, Essexville, Bay City, Chesaning, Muskegon, and Marywood Academy. Then with increased social consciousness, I experienced a call to return to my home area – Detroit. In the city I directed the “Open Door” program at Holy Trinity Parish, served at St. Vincent De Paul Conference Center and at the Corktown Housing Initiative. These were years of interacting with people seeking basic needs for human dignity.

In Grand Rapids, the PACE - Program for All-Inclusive Care of the Elderly - allowed me to remain in ministry. At PACE I enjoyed reading to a blind participant and St. Thomas students came to read to us.

I continue to journey in trust and love at our assisted living facility, Aquinata Hall, and ask your prayers for the residents and those who support us.



During her sabbatical at Blessing Place in 2001, Sr. Gail Ann painted a variety of watercolor pieces.

60 years

Janet Brown, OP



“Be still and know that I am God.”
- Psalm 46

Sixty years! *Sounds* like a long time, but it doesn't *feel* that way. I was born in Ludington, the oldest of six girls. I knew Dominicans from the time I was small because we had relatives in the community. I entered Marywood after high school graduation.



Sr. Janet with Bishop Kenneth Unter during his visit to St. Patrick Parish in Ryan, MI

My early years in ministry were spent teaching primary grades in Michigan and in New Mexico. I taught in many settings – urban, inner city, farm, and pueblo communities. I treasure ministering in the Saginaw Diocese with Ken Untener as Bishop. I am now the Liturgical Life Director at Marywood. In this role we strive to serve and model inclusivity in the liturgical life of the community.

I've hiked mountain trails in New Mexico and in Alaska, enjoyed the waters of Lake Michigan, as well as skiing Caberfae Peaks in the winter. I enjoy reading a good book, playing the accordion for sing-a-longs, and watching the Tigers and the Notre Dame Women's Basketball Team. Yes, life is good!



Sr. Roberta Hefferan† and Sr. Janet get together for a sing-along at the Marywood Health Center

Being part of this Dominican congregation has been blessing. I'm grateful for the people I've met and the opportunities for travel, study, and ministry.

I thank all who have encouraged, challenged, and supported me through the years.

60 years



Jean Kramer, OP



Emboldened by Faith and Serving with Joy

Thanks be to God for my life, family, friends, and my vocation...to the Grand Rapids Dominicans! All of them have been so supportive.

My life journey began in Pewamo in 1936. I am the second oldest of 3 brothers and 1 sister. My parents were Clem and Hyacinth Kramer who were loving and

faith filled; we lived on a farm with my Grandmother until she died. My education was at St. Joseph School (Sisters of Christian Charity) and Pewamo High School each for six years. The Dominicans Sisters taught us in Religion Education classes during High School. While studying at Aquinas College, I met “young professed” Sisters who inspired me to take up God’s call to be a Sister.

I am most grateful for the many opportunities and experiences for education, retreats, prayer, and personal growth.

The 39 years of ministry as a teacher began at St. Boniface in Bay City and ended at St. Thomas elementary school in Grand Rapids. It was a gift to meet so many wonderful children, parents, and teachers. I have many lasting memories.

While studying at Central Michigan University, the idea of providing a program to support families really began. Thus was born “Partners In Parenting” whose goal is to help family life become healthier and less stressful. It was a privilege to meet and help couples looking to improve their parenting skills.

I have been enriched working with our Sisters on Project Reach Out, Retreat and Formation ministry; as a Spiritual Care Companion I continue to support those needing assistance. In my spare time I enjoy doing “genealogy” with my sister, reading, volunteering, and being a sports fan. A Jubilee of sixty years has been a fulfilling journey.



Through Partners in Parenting, Srs. Jean Kramer and Marguerite Cool have helped many families build healthy and fulfilled relationships.

60 years

Alice Wittenbach, OP



It is a Joy to Be Here

I have enjoyed my life, whether at home on the big farm, whether walking to school along the country roads, whether taking field trips to Mexico, whether learning all about Ireland or Switzerland or the places of Sts. John and Paul.

We kids took advantage of the bookmobile that came to our little one-room country school. As a gift, my mother enrolled us in the book of the month club.

I always enjoyed school. That love of education saw me through high school and into college. I followed my mother’s advice to go to Aquinas College, even though I wanted to go to Michigan State



During an Earth Day tour, Sr. Alice gave the Sisters information on the types of trees that reside on Marywood Campus.

University where my friends were going. That decision, of course, paved the way for the rest of my life.

At Aquinas I met the Dominican Sisters for the first time. I loved their joy and the delight they seemed to bring to each other. At the end of my Freshman year, I went to the Priest to tell him I thought I should go to the Convent, with the hope they would reject me and send me home. He told me that was no way to respond to a Religious vocation and to pray about it. A year later, God won out. I entered the Dominican Sisters as a College Junior, searching for that part of my life which had always seemed lacking. That decision has made all the difference in my life.

60 years



Diane Dehn, OP



“You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
O Lord.” - Psalm 16

We each have a unique path of life, and as I reflect on my 60 years as a Grand Rapids Dominican, I am so grateful for God’s gift of a call to Religious Life. I have come to see quite clearly how God set up this special path for me.

My first stirrings of this call, I’m sure, were inspired and nurtured by my wonderful family. I was born on June 25, 1937 to John and Margaret Dehn in Belding, Michigan, and I joined my two older brothers, Bill and Don. I attended public schools in Belding from Kindergarten through 12th grade graduation.

The Dominican priests helped out at our home parish and from them I learned about Aquinas College. My interest was sparked. God opened up my path to Aquinas with the generous help of my uncles.

It was at Aquinas that I first met the Dominican Sisters. Sr. Aquin Gallagher and Sr. Marie Celeste Stang were among my instructors who were so kind to me. My freshman roommate, who was discerning a vocation, was instrumental in making my path to Marywood clear to me and our visits to Marywood solidified my own calling.

The path led to 8 years of elementary teaching, completion of an M.A. degree, and an assignment to Aquinas College where I served for 44 years in roles related mostly to Academic Advising for adult students.

My path of life continues now with volunteer work and more time for prayer and for enjoying “the fullness of joy in God’s presence” in the company of my dear Sisters.



Sr. Diane meets with one of her regulars, Ethel, as part of her ministry on the Pastoral Care Team.

Anne Francis Erndt, OP



I am proud to have been in his service for 60 years as a Dominican Sister ready to do His will.

I was born in Munger, Michigan to Frank and Marion Erndt. I went to Saint Norbert’s School where the Dominican Sisters taught in a three-room school. This was my early formation. Thanks to my parents and siblings who sacrificed so much, I was able to go to nurses training.

When Mother Victor sent me an invitation in 1957 to become a Sister, I accepted, and worked in Grand Rapids, New Mexico, California, and Bay City. The latter was where I worked prior to entering, so I guess I came full circle.

I read a poem that said “We were assigned where God wanted us to be at the time we are needed for a certain job. There isn’t any service we can scorn for it may be the reason God allowed me to be born”.

As a Dominican Sister nurse for 60 years, I was recognized as employee of the month twice and employee of the year once at McLaren Hospital and memorialized in a book named “Once Upon a Short Story” by Connie L. Hawkins.

Now as a semi-retired Sister, I wait for my next mission that God has in store for me. Not bad for a little farm girl.

60 years 60 years



Gretchen Sills, OP



“If the only prayer you ever say is thank you, it will be enough.”
-Meister Eckhart

On this my 50th Jubilee I recall the saying, “Time flies when you are having fun.”

- August 26, 1967 – Walked through the front door of Marywood
- October 16, 1968 – Became a Novice
- August 1993 – 25th Jubilee

The date given to an event has held memories for me as time has moved forward. The dates in our past are many, some joy-filled and some sorrow-filled. We place importance on events that have shaped us along the way. I’ve listed only three. There are so many more, too numerous to name. I live in gratitude to family, friends, and community for their support, love, and encouragement as they have walked with me, challenged me to be the best person that I can be. As Meister Eckhart wrote, “If the only prayer you ever say is thank you, it will be enough.”



Sr. Gretchen explains to a group of visiting high school students what her ministry entails as Archives Support Services.

Lucianne Siers, OP



Thousands of days have come and gone with laughter and tears as I celebrate this 50th Jubilee.

My ANCESTORS formed me daily by rooting my life with God. With my family and friends and community, I embrace my history and vulnerability, allowing me to let go of fears so that I can travel lightly on this journey.

My journey of EARTHEN ROOTS continues, I have left footprints in Michigan, Alabama, Kentucky, Washington, DC, Romania and in other Eastern European countries, and New York. Each step has graced and challenged me with depth, beauty, and companionship in every turn of my path.



Sr. Lucianne’s craft is stone sculpture. Her themes raise up women, children, and families.

Seeds of family and community ROOTED in FAITH and open to the struggles of our world, helped me to shape my ministries by finding the heart rhythms of what might be needed for fulfilled committed lives.

With my companions, ROOTED IN MISSION, we dig over and over into the rhythms of study, community, prayer, and ministry. These caring friends on the path provide support for the grounding of Dominican Life so that I can be steadfast to walk daily with firm steps.

I am filled with gratitude, love, and hope with every step.

50 years 50 years



Roxane Dansereau, OP



“You have been told what is good and what God requires of you: to do Justice, to love Mercy, and to walk Humbly with your God.” - Micah 7:8

I was born August 8, 1949 to Marian and Ernest Dansereau in Bay City, MI, the oldest of three children that survived.

I have God, my parents and extended family, the Grand Rapids Dominicans, and my cousin Sr. Mary Lee Pitre to thank for my vocation. I was taught from grades 1-3 at Holy Rosary (Sr. Adrienne) and 4-12 at St. John's in Essexville graduating in 1967 and entering Marywood that same year. I attended Aquinas College and later Grand Rapids Junior College where I received LPN and later an Associate Degree in Nursing.

My ministries in nursing have taken me to Ferguson Hospital; Aquinata Hall in Grand Rapids; St. Joseph Hospital in Ann Arbor; Bay City working for two oncologists in their office; and then Brian's House, an in-patient hospice for two and a half years. I spent time caring for my mother and doing massage at a bed and breakfast before coming back to Grand Rapids and ministering to our Sisters in nursing, foot care, and massage.

I am grateful to all who have walked this journey with me and remember that, “Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is Holy.” (Abraham Joshua Heschel)



Sr. Roxane (far right) with fellow staff at the office of Drs. Cook and Abrahamson in Bay City

Mary Morris, Associate



My first contact with Dominicans was my First Communion teacher at St. Mary's in Muskegon. I considered her my angel. Throughout my school years, I was educated by several other Dominicans.

After teaching in the Grand Rapids Public Schools for a few years, I wanted to pursue some classes along more religious lines for my personal growth. I was directed to Sr. Joan Thomas at Aquinas who offered me options. She was my inspiration. I found myself walking many different paths on my spiritual journey as I continued to teach and grow as an educator.

In 1990 I joined the choir at Marywood and began a new chapter in my life. Within a few years, I was encouraged to become an Associate. That commitment has been a 25-year adventure.

As I lived daily life with my third graders, I continued to grow and learn with this Dominican Community.



Mary Morris with fellow Sisters, Associates, and Sunday Assembly members at St. John's Home for Marywood's Annual Day of Service

2002 brought me into retirement from GR Public Schools. As a retiree I found part time jobs as a tutor and as a clerk at a children's bookstore. New freedom allowed me to volunteer more and read to my heart's content.

In 2003 I committed to a new life style when I married Bob. We both find volunteer opportunities within the Dominican Community and in the Greater Grand Rapids Area.

There have been so many blessings in my life. I am filled with gratitude. As Meister Eckhart said: If the only prayer you can say is “Thank you!”, that is enough.

50 years

25 years

*In memory of the Jubilarians
who share eternal life...*

Sister Jubilarians

75 YEARS ~ 1943

- † Geraldine Fox
- † Mary Edward Plamondon

70 YEARS ~ 1948

- † Catherine Ann Winowiecki
- † Carol Ann Nowak
- † Helen Miller
- † Rita Barreras
- † Audrey Sanchez
- † Stella Jozwiak
- † Eunice Cronin
- † Rose Patrice O'Donnell
- † Barbara Ann Seymour
- † Vita Licari

60 YEARS ~ 1958

- † Katrina Hartman
- † Dolores Abeyta
- † Joanne Davey

Associate Jubilarians

25 YEARS ~ 1993

- † Christine Reid



*We remember with fondness the
Jubilarians who celebrate with us
bathed in the glory of Eternal Life.*



Dominican Sisters
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Emboldened by faith, serving with joy

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