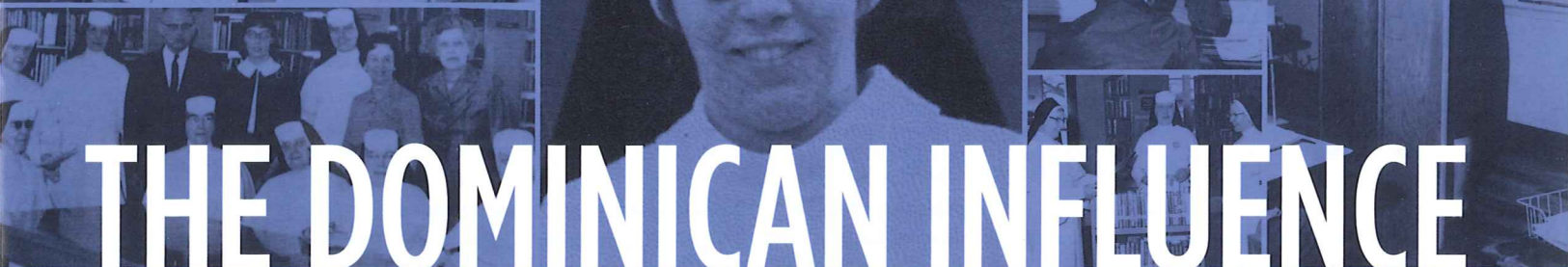


CATHOLIC CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL | FALL 2014

ALUMNINEWS



SR. ROBERT ANN RETIRING — THE LAST SISTER AT CC

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THE DOMINICAN INFLUENCE

HONORING THE LEGACY: SISTER ROBERT ANN ERNO RETIRES – THE LAST DOMINICAN SISTER AT CC

Since 1906, the Grand Rapids Dominican Sisters have helped form the lives and instill Catholic character and values in tens of thousands of CC students. Everyone whose lives have been touched by the Sisters' 100+ year history of teaching here understands how they shaped the heart, the soul, and the foundation of our school.

"The Dominicans nurtured Catholic Central from its infancy," says Principal Greg Deja. "They directed and reflected the entire mission of the school, and continue to inspire the laity who promote that mission today."

For Paul Korte ('64), the Sisters represent the most selfless, giving, and Christ-like group of people he has ever known. "Where would we be without the Sisters' dedication to our faith and our school?" he asks. "Who else would give up all they have to nurture and educate the Catholic youth of Grand Rapids?"

Peter Ragauss ('75), too, has fond memories of the Dominicans throughout his formative years. "They just seemed like a normal part of my 12 years of primary and secondary education," he says. "Whether you appreciated it at the time or not, they instilled a strong set of values in all of the students who were lucky enough to have been taught by them."

"The ministry of Sisters in teaching, advising, administration and even the Sister homemakers who provided for the needs of the dozens of Sisters living in the Catholic Central convent stays with us," says Sister Maureen Geary, OP, Prioress, Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids. "We are proud of our long affiliation with Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School."

The end of an era: Sister Robert Ann retires

As Sister Robert Ann Erno, mathematics instructor, retires from the classroom, she becomes the last Dominican Sister at

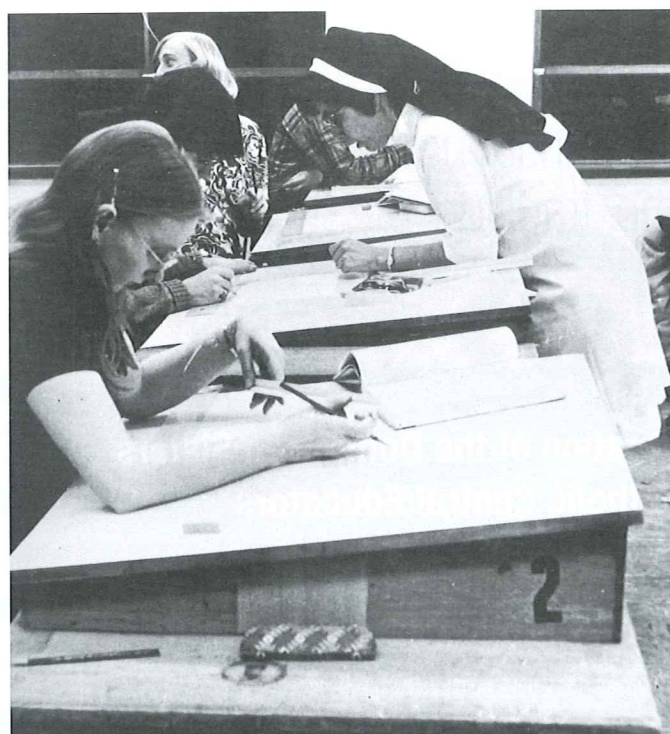


"I had lots of 'star' pupils.
They were all stars."

— Sister Robert Ann Erno

"Sister Robert Ann is a true gift to CC, and we are very blessed to have her with us."

— Beth Banta



Catholic Central – thus inspiring a wide range of thoughts from her peers and former students, honoring the end of an era at CC.

"Sister Robert Ann's ministry as a mathematics teacher for more than 40 years puts an exclamation point to the impact our congregation has had on the school," says Sr. Maureen Geary.

"What I learned from her were lessons in life that were invaluable and shape my life today," says Darren Jackson ('82).

"I may not remember all the classes she taught me, but I do remember learning some of the most important lessons in life from her, about the value of consistency, respect and accountability."

"Being an alumni turned faculty member, I often have fellow Cougars ask a few questions in this order; 'How is it to work at Catholic Central?' and 'Is Sr. Robert Ann still teaching?' From there they go into *their* Sr. Robert Ann story," says Mike Jacobs ('03). "Personally, it is these types of positive stories that rejuvenate my own decision to enter a career in Catholic

education. Sister's dedication to Catholic Central students, our community, and most importantly our Catholic faith is inspiring. Sr. Robert Ann is an outstanding example of what great teachers strive for; success in the classroom and positively impacting student lives."

Outside the classroom, Sister is an avid Cougar fan. "She was the most visible teacher to all of us students, attending every pep rally, every sporting event, and even after graduation, every class reunion," says Peter Ragauss. "I can't think of anyone else who came close to that level of commitment."

And before you think Sister is simply going to ride off into the sunset, think again. She plans to continue tutoring students who need help with math, as well as working on development projects with Beth Banta, Director of Advancement (see next page).

As for stories about Sister Robert Ann, Paul Korte says it best: "Anyone who's ever met Sister Robert Ann has a story or two, filled with good humor, respect and love."

- As proof of her impact on the more than 6,600 students she taught over the years, Beth Banta tells how the two women were walking through a parking lot, discussing the idea of her working on development efforts at CC. "I can't help you much," Sister said. "I don't know anybody." At that very moment, someone yelled from across the lot, "Hey Sister, you got a chalkboard?" It was her former student, David Bulkowski ('81). More than 30 years after graduation, he still remembered her!
- One student, who needed to take a math class during the summer in order to be eligible for fall sports, worked with Sister during the summer. When he made eligibility, he told his mother, "I wish I had had her right from the start, from elementary school."
- In her "spare" time, Sister Robert Ann uses her artistic and culinary talents to create one-of-a-kind needlework and world-class baked goods. "She showed me the most beautiful Nativity scene she had done, all by hand, on canvas," says Banta.

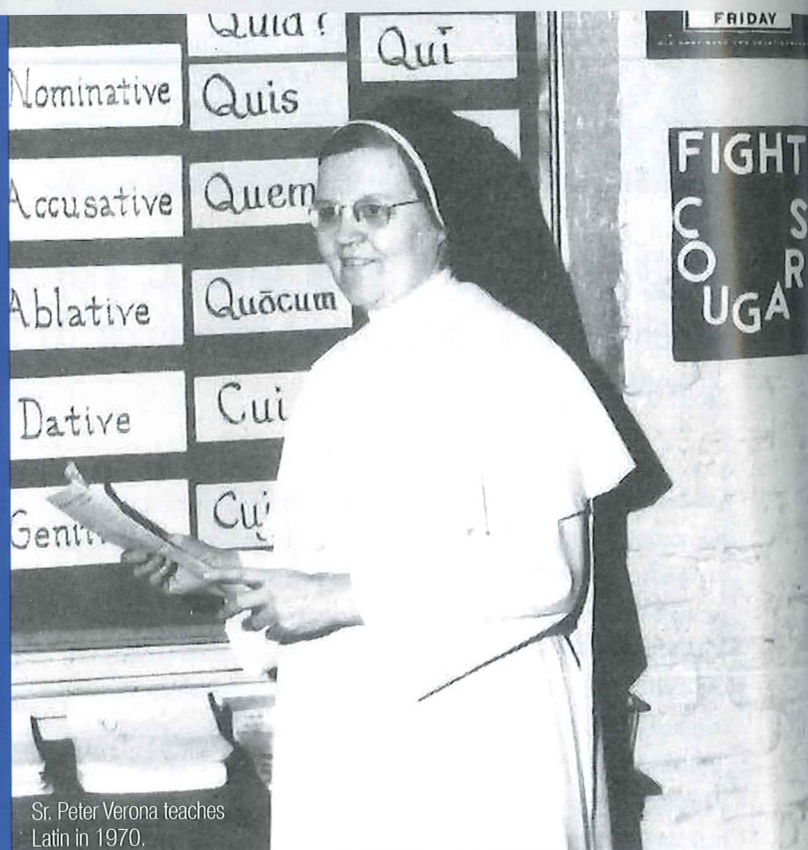
"Our influence carries on in the generations we helped educate in the tradition of St. Dominic: study, prayer, community and service."

— Maureen Geary, OP

Celebration of the Dominican Sisters as Catholic Central Educators

If you know Sister Robert Ann, you understand how much she shuns the spotlight. In lieu of a retirement party, Sister Robert Ann has instead suggested a community-wide celebration of the Dominican Sisters and their long history with Catholic Central.

Plans are in the works for this event in the fall of 2015. Look for details in the next *Alumni News*! If you'd like to help to plan this exciting event, please contact Beth Banta, Director of Advancement, at BethBanta@grcss.org.



Sr. Peter Verona teaches Latin in 1970.

"We are all better people for having the Dominican Sisters in our lives."

— Tom Maj