



SND USA

FALL 2025



FORMER SND STUDENTS NOW HEAD OF THE CLASS

ALSO INSIDE:

A Journey through South Korea

In the News

Lasting Tributes

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Back Cover: Sister Marla Monahan Receives Prestigious Honor

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l-r: Sister Regina Fisher, *Toledo, OH*; Sister Leanne Hubbard, *Thousand Oaks, CA*; Sister Margaret Gorman, *Chardon, OH*; Sister Shauna Bankemper, *Covington, KY*; Sister Patricia Garrahan, *Chardon, OH*

LETTER FROM **SND USA PROVINCIAL TEAM**

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to share this issue of *SND USA* with our many partners in mission. The fall season reminds many of us of back-to-school time, abundant harvests and the glorious colors of fall foliage.

This issue of *SND USA Magazine* contains articles about five individuals educated by Sisters of Notre Dame who went on to pursue careers in education. What a blessing and joy to witness men and women continuing our legacy of ministering to children and young adults while sharing God's goodness and love. We applaud all those serving in classrooms and educational administration across the United States and around the globe. It is a demanding yet incredibly rewarding responsibility to educate our next generation of leaders.

In the News is jam-packed, reporting on many exciting events that occurred throughout our SND USA regions. The July 4th Festival in Covington, KY – our 103rd annual celebration – was our last. Many thanks to all the volunteers and staff who made this event such a success for over a century! Meanwhile, the Chardon, OH region held its annual BBQ & Boutique on September 28 with many old and new friends in attendance. And still to come, our annual SHINE Women's Summit in Toledo, OH, to be held on November 6, will host NDA graduate and actress, director, writer and producer Katie Holmes, as the keynote speaker with panelists Sister Melannie Svoboda, Dr. Jennifer McCary and Natalie Gray to discuss the *Power of Creativity*.

Many thanks for your continued interest, prayers and financial support of our mission and ministries.

Gratefully,

The SND USA Provincial Team

Former SND Students now at the HEAD OF THE CLASS



Cristina Cuellar

NDA '00

Cristina first came to know the Sisters of Notre Dame at St. Lawrence of Brindisi School, located in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, CA. She recalls, “Fr. Peter Banks, O.F.M., Cap., convinced my parents to enroll my siblings and me at St. Lawrence of Brindisi when we moved to Watts. The transition to middle school – which is when I started at St. Lawrence – was smooth, in great part due to the welcoming spirit of the Sisters of Notre Dame and the teachers they hired,” recalls Cristina. “Sister Rebekah Kennedy was principal at the time, and I remember feeling like one of the cool kids because she also taught our Algebra 1 class in the faculty lounge! Little did I know at the time that it was due more to needed classroom space, but it definitely made class interesting.”

Cristina began high school at Notre Dame Academy in Los Angeles, CA for the 1996-97 school year and was given a financial-hardship scholarship. “I was unable to return my sophomore year, but that changed when a generous woman, Ms. Langley, paid for my education, and I was invited to return to NDA,” Cristina states. “Notre Dame Academy is more than just a school in my memories; it’s truly etched in my heart. From the nerve-wracking excitement of my admissions interview and the charming tradition of Freshman Tea to the spirited personal touches – those unexpected moments with the Sisters of Notre Dame – really shine for me. Sister Marie Paul Grech sought me out in the cafeteria early on after hearing about my long, three-bus journey from Watts to West LA. It wasn’t just a concern; it was genuine care. Before I even realized it, she’d opened the door to a carpool with another NDA family, making my daily trek much lighter and more manageable.”

She continues, “And then there was Sister Leanne Hubbard’s theology class during my senior year. Her voice, like an angel’s, paired



Cristina Cuellar

with the soft strumming of her guitar, created an incredibly welcoming atmosphere. It wasn't just a classroom; it was a haven where we could truly be immersed in discussions about faith, God and the unique bond of sisterhood. Those interactions, those NDA sisters, weren't just teachers but guides who shaped my experience and those of my classmates."

After graduating from Loyola Marymount University, Cristina served as an administrator and leader for 17 years at Verbum Dei Jesuit High School in Watts, focused on growing the Corporate Work Study Program. At Verbum Dei Jesuit and now at Cristo Rey Orange County High School, Cristina has used her personal experience and her professional skills to provide a career-focused, college preparatory, Catholic education to students from marginalized communities.

"It's fascinating how time shifts the lens through which we view our childhood," she considers. "Growing up in Watts as a kid, I felt like this is just

"Notre Dame Academy is more than just a school in my memories; it's truly etched in my heart."

- Cristina Cuellar, NDA '00

... life. I had both my parents, a home steeped in faith, enough food, clean clothes, birthday cakes – the essentials were there. And the values? Work ethic, fierce loyalty, family above all else – those were unequivocally ingrained in us. Evenings were a vibrant tapestry of a dozen neighborhood kids spilling into the streets, joyful chaos under the watchful eyes of the adults, sentinels against passing traffic and unseen dangers. My walks to school in my starched Catholic uniform, navigating a surreal landscape of discarded mattresses and forgotten couches, were just part of my routine, leaving my young mind strangely unfazed."

Cristina says, looking back now, she realizes that the undercurrent of violence in Watts was undeniably woven into the very fabric of her upbringing. "The wail of police sirens and the somber tones of the ambulances were as familiar as the hum of the refrigerator and my dad's lawnmower. Silent nights? A rarity. If it wasn't the screech of tires from a getaway car tearing through the stillness, it was the low murmur of the local gang gathering on the corner – a sea of blue cars, blue shoes, blue hats – a visible manifestation of mourning for another lost 'homie.'"

She recalls the quiet courage of her dad after these regular occurrences, risking his own safety to clean up the remnants – empty bottles, discarded cigarette butts and other unsanitary debris – so his children and other neighborhood kids could have a semblance of what he called 'peace in our play.' "It was just our normal. A normal that exposed us to all too much and not enough."

At Loyola Marymount, her college mentor, Pam Rector, gently nudged her to pursue a staff position at Verbum Dei Jesuit High School in Watts.

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“Pam, with her keen eye, deciphered the threads of my passions and skills – my deep connection to community, my fluency in two languages, that inherent knack for organization, and those strong cultural roots that grounded me,” recalls the passionate educator. “She recognized these weren’t just traits, but key ingredients for a role at ‘the Verb’ that I hadn’t considered.”

At “the Verb”, as it is affectionately called, her core responsibility revolved around the Corporate Work Study program where she led the daily operations, ensuring students’ work experiences ran smoothly. However, Cristina says her time at the Verb was so much richer and more varied than that. She also taught Studio Art, guiding students in their creative expression and proudly led the Latino Student Union Club, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment.

“Being able to translate parent seminars and workshops, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps, was incredibly rewarding. I actively participated in several task force groups, contributing to the school’s broader initiatives, and yes, wearing an assortment of hats as needed,” she recalls with a chuckle. “It was a dynamic and fulfilling period of my life, all thanks to Pam’s initial belief in me.”

Cristina says the Verb wasn’t just a job but a powerful catalyst, igniting a profound passion within her. “It was about more than just working with young people. It was about actively guiding their growth, illuminating pathways to opportunities that felt worlds away in South LA, providing tangible access to internships, invaluable network connections, and meaningful professional relationships. Serving the Spanish-speaking community there – the parents – held a particular special significance, resonating deeply with the core values and lived experiences that Mom and Dad had so firmly instilled in me. It felt like coming

full circle, using my abilities to uplift a community that mirrored my own roots,” she ardently describes.

Cristina continues to be committed to empowering youth through educational opportunities rooted in faith, inclusivity and transformative experiences.

“As Vice President of Admissions at Cristo Rey Orange County High School, I am deeply invested in furthering our mission of empowering students through rigorous academics, professional work experience and spiritual development. By providing a pathway to college, career and heaven, we are making a positive impact on the lives of historically marginalized students, changing lives, one student at a time. My unwavering commitment to serving the youth I see myself in, stems from the education and love I received from the Sisters of Notre Dame,” Cristina emphatically states.

She concludes, “My personal experiences and encounters with the Sisters of Notre Dame have been a quiet but powerful current, shaping both my personal values and my professional trajectory. Looking back, their influence wasn’t about grand pronouncements, but rather, those small, meaningful interactions that spoke volumes about their commitment to service and genuine care for the individual.”

“More broadly, the sisters embodied a quiet dedication to education and a belief in the potential of each student, regardless of their background. Their unwavering commitment, their gentle guidance, and their focus on building community left an indelible mark. Those quiet acts of love and kindness made a real difference with students. That ethos of selfless service and a deep belief in the power of education to transform lives is at the very heart of why the Cristo Rey mission resonates so profoundly with me and why I love Cristo Rey Orange County High School. It is a continuation of the values I witnessed firsthand during my time at Notre Dame Academy.”

“My personal experiences and encounters with the Sisters of Notre Dame have been a quiet but powerful current, shaping both my personal values and my professional trajectory.”

– Cristina Cuellar, NDA '00



Kathleen Shaughnessy

NDCL '18

Kathleen Shaughnessy attended St. Gregory the Great School in South Euclid, OH from preschool through eighth grade. She went on to attend Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin School in Chardon, OH, graduating in 2018. She doesn't mince words about the education she received there.

"The education I received from NDCL was exceptional," she exclaims. "The academic rigor prepared me for college, while the emphasis on faith and Catholic values helped shape my character. I was encouraged to get involved and the numerous extracurricular opportunities helped me grow personally and spiritually. My involvement in athletics and campus ministry taught me important values that I carry with me today."

She continues, "During my time at NDCL, my relationships flourished alongside my faith. The supportive community of teachers, staff and classmates created an environment where I felt encouraged to grow intellectually and spiritually. I built lasting friendships with my classmates and had caring teachers who supported me in and out of the classroom. The community at NDCL helped

*"During my time at NDCL,
my relationships flourished
alongside my faith."*

- Kathleen Shaughnessy, NDCL '18

me realize that faith is meant to be shared and lived out with others."

After attending a Kairos retreat during her junior year at NDCL, Kathleen decided to pursue a career in education.

"This retreat gave me a new appreciation for my Catholic faith and helped me understand the importance of cultivating spirituality in the lives of high school students," she reflects. "High school is such a pivotal time in one's life. I wanted to help students understand their faith and the importance of living it out authentically."

Upon earning bachelor's degrees in theology and catechetics from Franciscan University of Steubenville, OH in 2022, she returned "home."

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“Returning to NDCL was an easy decision for me,” Kathleen states. “The school’s commitment to faith, academic excellence and strong community made a lasting impact on me as a student and I want to be a part of that same mission as a teacher.”

“I hope to inspire them to ask deep questions, seek truth and develop a personal relationship with God. Ultimately, I hope they leave NDCL knowing they are loved by God, and He has a purpose for their life,” says Kathleen.



Kathleen Shaughnessy (middle) with students at Freshmen Orientation

She insists, “There is something truly special about the NDCL environment. Faith is not just an aspect of the school, but it is at the heart of everything it does.”

Kathleen says that, as a teacher, she hopes to impart to her students not only knowledge but a deep understanding of how faith can shape their lives.

“I hope they leave NDCL knowing they are loved by God, and He has a purpose for their life.”

– Kathleen Shaughnessy, NDCL '18

“My faith is central to who I am today,” she describes. “The Sisters of Notre Dame at NDCL played a significant role in strengthening my faith by demonstrating what it means to live a life of service to God and others. I was blessed to have Sister Emilia Castelletti as a history teacher my sophomore year and attend school under the leadership of Sister Jacquelyn GUSDANE. Their joy, trust in God’s providence, and unwavering commitment to transforming young people’s lives still inspire me every day. Their authentic witness shaped me as a student and continues to inspire me as a teacher.”

Still, she readily acknowledges that teaching young people can be very challenging. Kathleen states, “One of the biggest challenges I’ve faced is helping students understand the relevance of faith in a culture that often pushes it aside. I try to meet this challenge by fostering open discussions, making theology applicable to their daily lives and meeting students where they are in their faith journey.”

The dynamic educator recently took on a new role at NDCL as the school’s campus minister.

“I was very excited to join campus ministry,” she enthusiastically states. “My goal is to help the students live out their faith authentically through various opportunities NDCL offers.”

Away from NDCL, Kathleen’s hobbies include cooking, reading and watching Cleveland sports.

James Vanek

NDCL '13

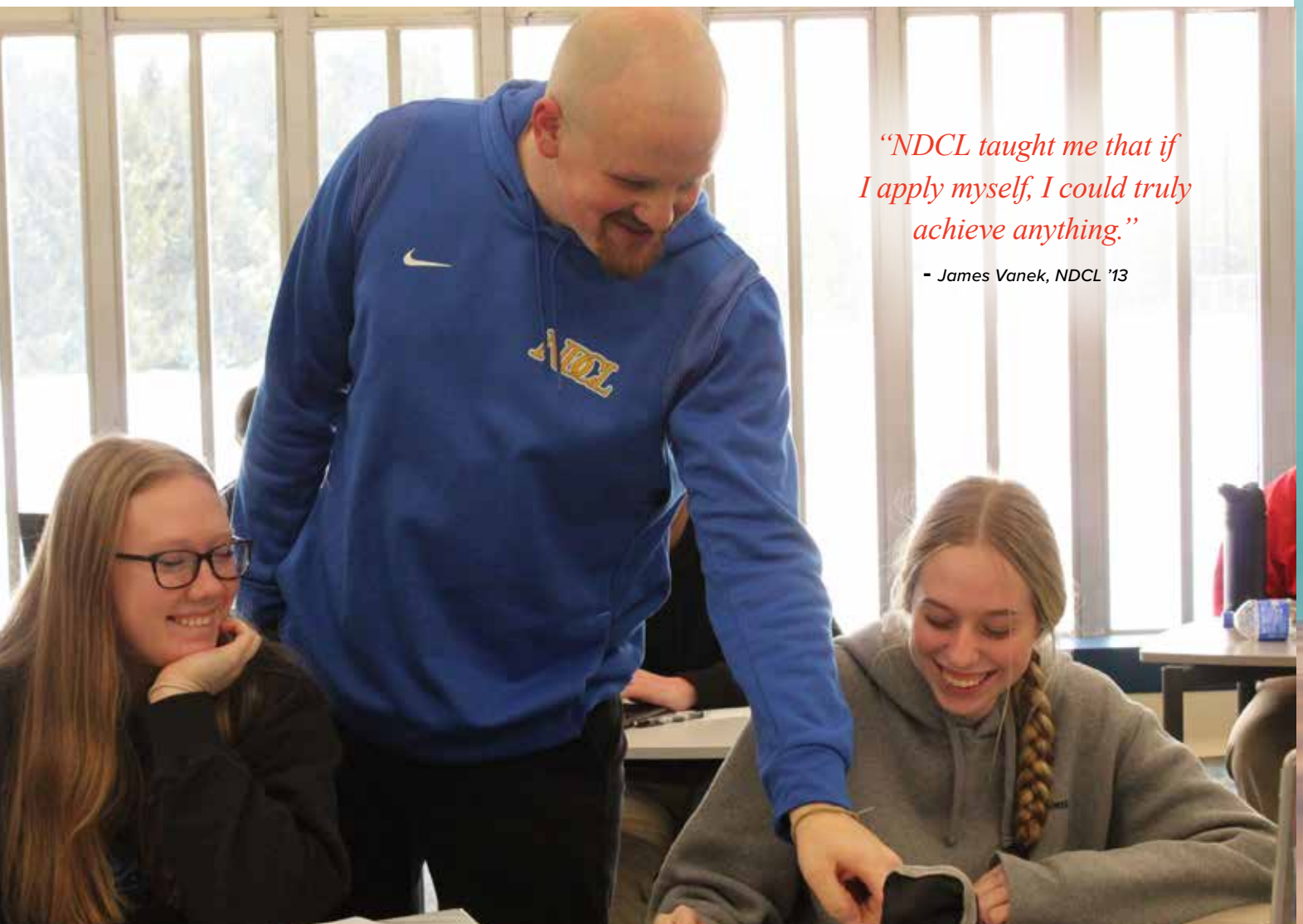
James Vanek attended All Saints School in Wickliffe, OH from kindergarten through eighth grade. From there, he chose to attend high school at Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin in Chardon, OH. He was a member of the football program for three years and became president of the NDCL Executive Student Council his senior year.

"I loved my time at NDCL," exclaims James with a smile. "The education I received was top-notch in both the sense that I was constantly challenged but also lovingly supported. NDCL taught me that if I apply myself, I could truly achieve anything."

James Vanek teaches a class at NDCL

"The Sisters of Notre Dame had such a positive influence during this time of my life and taught me how practical it was not only to have a faith but to live a daily faith," he continues. "The most impactful moment was during my junior and senior years when I had the privilege of going on mission trips with the Campus Ministry department. We visited three Sisters of Notre Dame serving people of Nicaragua in the town of Jinotega. I was so inspired by the way these sisters served the people of Jinotega – not by doing anything overly exuberant but by simply loving the people there. We would spend the day working with people and have prayers and reflections each night. It highlighted to me how the SNDs emphasize prayer and Catholicity as undertones in everything we did. Sister Dolores Mikula inspired me to grow in my own faith and

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"NDCL taught me that if I apply myself, I could truly achieve anything."

- James Vanek, NDCL '13

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James Vanek at his NDCL graduation

to embrace it. I will never forget that she was the first person to tell me that she believed I had a future in my vocation to use my faith to help inspire others. Her words first planted the seed for my becoming a theology teacher.”

Upon graduation in 2013, James went on to the University of Dayton, graduating in 2017 with a degree in secondary religious education. He also earned a master’s degree from Dayton in educational leadership.

“It was actually my time at NDCL that inspired me to pursue a career in education,” James explains. “I built such incredible relationships with many teachers there that I was thinking I want to be like these teachers – two teachers in particular were Doug Murray and Chris Poulos. They were passionate about their subjects while also passionate about their students.”

Today, as a Theology teacher at NDCL, James is emphatic about the role of faith in his life. “I try my best to let it be an undertone to the decisions I

James Vanek teaches about Mary in the SND cemetery in Chardon.



James Vanek on a mission trip to Nicaragua

“A lot happens in the life of a teenager. I love seeing how students grow in both their highs and lows over the course of an academic year.”

- James Vanek, NDA '13



make in my life. My favorite prayer is “A Step Along the Way,” by Bishop Ken Untener. I try to model this prayer with my students. We are all on different parts of our journey, and it is important to recognize this journey. As an educator, it is not just one specific moment, but the individual journey I get to go on with students each year. A lot happens in the life of a teenager. I love seeing how students grow in both their highs and lows over the course of an academic year.”

James adds, “For anyone interested in pursuing a career in education, I advise that there is so much more to the profession than just a job to pay the bills. It is one of the unique roles in society where you get to journey with someone – if only for a little while to be a part of their story. You will not make a major impact on the lives of everyone you teach, but you will make an impact on somebody’s life. That is a really powerful feeling.”

James and his wife Brigid have two sons, Luke, 4, and Ben, 1. He is an avid Cleveland, OH sports fan, particularly of the Guardians.



James Vanek in NDCL Student Council

A Step Along the Way

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church’s mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

Bishop Ken Untener

Saginaw, MI



Deanna Rice in her science class

Deanna Rice

NDA '06

It was her kindergarten teacher Sister Mary Rose Moser at Ladyfield Catholic School in Toledo, OH, who first impacted Deanna Rice's life. "She was amazing!" Deanna passionately describes. Deanna attended Ladyfield through eighth grade. (Ladyfield closed in 2004.)

Deanna continued her Catholic education, attending Notre Dame Academy in Toledo, OH, from 2002 to 2006. "My experience could best be described as fulfilling. I had a great group of friends and was able to participate in many activities and clubs. I was able to remain challenged academically while enjoying school," she recalls.

As an adult learner, Deanna went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in adolescent to young adult education from the University of Toledo, graduating in 2015. And in 2017, she completed a master's degree in education and science, focusing on chemistry and education.

Deanna fondly reflects on the quality of her Catholic education at Ladyfield and NDA. "I remember taking a composition class when I decided to go back to school and become a teacher. When we wrote our first paper, my professor asked me where I went to high school. When I told him, he said he could tell through my writing. Throughout my schooling, I never felt unprepared or that my primary and secondary school lacked anything."

“I hope to impart to my students that they are capable of anything they want to do.”

- Deanna Rice, NDA '06

Deanna is quick to mention the SND teachers who also impacted her life: Sister Ann-Marie Borgess, first grade; Sister Colleen Marie Cousino, fifth grade; Sister Pamela Marie Buganski (deceased), seventh grade; and Sister Mary Irene Gerdeman, honors chemistry. “I look back at all of these women as examples of excellence in education. They pushed me to be my best and to never sell myself short,” Deanna states.

Deanna teaches science at Toledo Early College High School, a public school in Toledo, OH. Toledo Early College offers a college preparatory program focused on the liberal arts. The curriculum is designed to accelerate students into college courses at the University of Toledo.

“Faith is an important part of my daily life,” she describes. “I know that God is in my corner.”

“I hope to impart to my students that they are capable of anything they want to do. They can be scientists or simply scientific thinkers. They can do the things that people think they are not capable of,” she says.

Deanna recently enjoyed having lunch with a former student who told her she was majoring in forensic chemistry and working as an aide in a science classroom at a charter school. “This young woman wanted to tell me that had she not had me as a teacher she would never have thought a career in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) would be a possibility,” shares Deanna. “It was so touching to hear her story.”



Deanna Rice with student

Deanna and her husband have four children, ages 7, 4-year-old twins, and 18 months. She loves to cook, check out new restaurants, enjoy nature and spend time at the Toledo Museum of Art.



Leslie Litmer with students at NDA graduation

Leslie Litmer

NDA '10

Leslie (Schellhaas) Litmer says she always wanted to be a teacher, and math was a particular strength of hers as a student at Notre Dame Academy in Park Hills, KY. “My high school experience at NDA was very influential in determining which age group(s) I wanted to teach,” Leslie states. While in high school Leslie also excelled in sports, playing on the volleyball team all four years. She graduated from NDA in 2010.

“All of my teachers, coaches and administrators at NDA were very involved in my academic, athletic and personal development. Collectively with the student body, they created an environment where I could safely mature and grow in my faith and develop skills that have helped me succeed in my adult life,” she says.

Leslie has many fond memories of her high school years, some that occurred in the classroom while others occurred at school events and during volleyball season. “I remember getting ready for themed mixers and dances with friends, supporting

my friends in soccer, the school plays and other extracurricular activities, and getting to share two years with my younger sister and her friends at NDA. I had Sister Mary Ethel Parrott as my physics teacher. Sister Elaine Winter and Sister Shauna Bankemper were principal and president, respectively. I had many interactions with Sister Paul Ann Hanneken and Sister Rachel Nerone as they often attended my volleyball games and passed through the hallway or cafeteria throughout the school day.”

Although these interactions were not for extended amounts of time, Leslie says she was addressed by name and celebrated for any recent accomplishments. “They were genuinely invested in me and wanted to help me reach my goals, whatever they were,” she recalls. “I was fortunate to be a student-athlete throughout high school and college. I feel this lifestyle largely contributed to strengthening areas of my adult life such as time management, teamwork, composure in high-pressure situations and experience in leadership roles.”

Leslie returned to her alma mater upon graduating from Morehead State University in 2014 and for the past 11 years has served as a mathematics teacher

and volleyball coach at the freshman, junior varsity and varsity levels at NDA. “I feel so blessed that the timing worked out for me to come back to such a special place and pursue my teaching career. Fall can be an extremely busy season for me!”

“The greatest blessing in teaching – especially at the high school level – is being able to participate in a young adult’s life as they navigate their academic and personal journeys,” Leslie describes. “The students are usually excited to talk about their passions and career options, and it is fun to see them grow before heading off to college, moving closer to fulfilling their dreams. There is so much that can go on during a single year of high school for a teenager. I always end the year inspired by their energy and passion for life and the world around them.”

The dynamic teacher says her greatest challenge as a teacher is effectively supporting students when they are going through hard times outside

Coach Leslie Litmer with the NDA Volleyball Team




Leslie Litmer with her husband Jacob and their daughter

of the classroom. “Trying to offer support as they manage a variety of emotions that often filter into their academic performance is difficult, but I always try to remind them that my support is out of care and concern,” she explains.

“My faith is a very important part of my career and life. I credit that to what has been modeled by the Sisters of Notre Dame throughout my time as both a student and faculty member at NDA,” Leslie adds. “It is easy to struggle with our faith and respective beliefs when we encounter challenging times or see the hardships of the world, but I find the Sisters of Notre Dame to be unbelievably inspirational in how they respond to various challenges and hardships. They have a beautiful trust in God’s plan for us. Being in their presence inspires me to want to spread their love and well-established mission with everyone around me.”

Leslie shares this advice with others who are considering a teaching career: “It will be one of the most challenging yet rewarding jobs you will ever do. There will be long days, late nights and varied workloads trying to best teach your students who will be different each year. However, to be a bright light in so many lives is a blessing and will, in turn, be a tremendous learning experience for you as you continue to grow and develop.”

Leslie and her husband Jacob have been married for almost eight years. They met during her senior year in high school. They have a young daughter and are expecting a baby boy this fall to accompany their dog! They enjoy spending time with their families, playing sports and outdoor games and hanging out with friends. 

“The greatest blessing in teaching – especially at the high school level – is being able to participate in a young adult’s life as they navigate their academic and personal journeys”

- Leslie (Schellhaas) Litmer, NDA '10

Sister Rose, Sister Hye-Young, Sister Karlynn and Sister Immaculata enjoy a visit to the historic city of Gyeongju, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built in the 7th century, Cheomseongdae is the oldest known observatory in Asia, if not the world.

A Journey Through Korea: Reflections by Sister Karlynn Werth



After spending years as a teacher and principal at schools in California, I was thrilled to receive the invitation to spend six months teaching conversational English to our sisters in South Korea. English is the international language of the Sisters of Notre Dame. My journey through South Korea was a profound learning experience filled with beauty, history and spiritual depth. I was captivated by the country's majestic mountains, vibrant flowers and the Korean people's deep commitment to preserving their cultural heritage.

As I immersed myself in their lives and culture, I learned so much about faith, sacrifice and community. I visited several palaces that had been destroyed during the Japanese occupation, World War II and the Korean War. These palaces have been meticulously reconstructed using hidden original plans, allowing artisans to replicate their former glory.

The Korean War Museum showcases flags from every nation that aided South Korea in its fight for independence, along with uniforms, weapons and letters of gratitude. Bronze plaques honor the fallen, and a replica of the Busan tombs pays tribute to the dead. One of the most poignant parts of my journey was visiting the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), a 2.5-mile-wide buffer zone separating North and South Korea. There, I viewed the Imjin River and the now-closed Bridge of Freedom. The area commemorates the international efforts to defend South Korea, with flags and memorials honoring volunteers from the United States and other nations.



Sister Karlynn learns to prepare a traditional Autumn Festival (Thanksgiving) meal at the Provincial House in Incheon.


“As I immersed myself in their lives and culture, I learned so much about faith, sacrifice and community.”

Catholic priest who was martyred after returning from the seminary in China in 1846.

My spiritual journey included visits to Buddhist temples, along with Catholic cathedrals in Incheon and Seoul. The Incheon Cathedral highlights South Korea's Catholic history, while the Seoul Cathedral houses relics of St. Andrew Kim Taegon, the first South Korean

I was deeply moved by Korean burial traditions. Graves are often marked by mounds of earth, with the height reflecting the deceased's status. Some are surrounded by stone walls or placed in mausoleums. Families frequently visit these graves, showing enduring respect for their ancestors.

On Ganghwa Island, I visited an ecological convent built by the Sisters of Notre Dame using straw and mud. The sisters cultivate the land, share their harvest with neighbors, and teach environmental stewardship to students and young adults. They are committed to caring for God's creation in every way they can.

I concluded this unique educational and spiritual journey with a profound sense of gratitude and reverence for all the ways our Notre Dame provinces are culturally different, but also similar, in our excitement to educate and share God's love with all people. What started as a dream has become a reality. Now I have other sister friends in South Korea with whom we can share our lives and experiences. I received much more from this experience than what I gave to our South Korean sisters! 

Sister Rose and Sister Karlynn visited the Onsu Anglican Cathedral in Ganghwa, South Korea.



IN THE NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS to the 2025 SND National Network Award Recipients

Transformative Leadership Award

recognizes individuals who are catalysts for growth, inspire hearts and transform lives of those with whom they minister.

Michelle Bonar, *Director of Senior Living,
St. Charles Community, Covington, KY*

Sister Paul Ann Hanneken, *Retired Teacher/
Administrator, Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, KY*

Dr. Jacqueline Hoynes, *President,
Notre Dame Schools, Chardon, OH*

Sister Rachel Nerone, *Retired Teacher/Administrator,
Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, KY*

Lilliam Paetzold, *Head of School,
Notre Dame Academy Schools, Los Angeles, CA*

Gospel Witness Award recognizes those who reflect and nurture the Notre Dame charism, spirit and mission within their professional communities and among all with whom they minister.

Katie Caccavari, *Director of Enrollment,
Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, KY*

Mary Beth Potthoff, *Second Grade Teacher,
St. John the Evangelist Elementary School, Delphos, OH*

Katie Sague, *Vice Principal,
Our Lady of Victory School, Washington, DC*

Jason Wojnicz, *Chief Strategy Officer,
Julie Billiart Schools, Lyndhurst, OH*

Father Bernard Overberg “Teacher of Teachers” Award recognizes educators who demonstrate exceptional, inspirational impact on the formation and professional learning of teachers.

Lara Heidrich, *Social Studies Teacher/Department
Chair, Notre Dame Academy, Park Hills, KY*


Patrick Koenig, *Intervention Specialist,
Julie Billiart Schools, Lyndhurst, OH*



CA Associates 25th Anniversary Gathering

On August 16th, the Associates of the Sisters of Notre Dame celebrated 25 years of Association in the California Region. A liturgy of thanksgiving was held at Notre Dame Center. The pioneer class of Associates was honored for their years of commitment, and five



candidates made their covenant. Over the last 25 years, more than 100 men and women have felt called to Association. Throughout the day, participants felt the joy of community and the ongoing commitment to share the charism, spirit and mission of the Sisters. 



National Gathering



More than 200 sisters of the USA province met July 8-10, 2025, near Columbus, OH, to pray together, discuss current realities and recommit to our mission in a time of great change.




Columbus Meeting with Bridges Ministries

The Sisters of Notre Dame are grateful to our partners across the country who regularly support our East Africa Mission. One powerful collaboration began in 2022 after Sister Valerie Sweeney of the Chardon region made a mission appeal in Lancaster, OH. Subsequently, Bridges Ministry was launched through the Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption and they have chosen to form an ongoing relationship with the East Africa mission. They see their ministry as building bridges, using the structure of the universal church to identify the needs of the marginalized and raising the funds necessary to meet those needs.



Their projects have included access to clean water, emergency repairs to flooded nursery schools, and the construction of boarding facilities for Maasai children.

In July, Sister Lisa Megaffin and Jen Coito (Associate Director of Mission Advancement, CA region) met with Bridges Ministry leaders as they were preparing for two

events to raise awareness and funds for the SND East Africa missions. Sister Christine Syombua was featured on a radio podcast. A concert with singer/songwriter Sarah Hart was held on Saturday, August 16. As expressed in the radio podcast, “out of the providence of God, beautiful things happen...” and for these blessings, the SNDs are most thankful. 



IN THE NEWS

Alive in Spirit: Sister Regina's Journey to East Africa




Sister Regina Fisher, SND USA
Provincial Team member

Throughout her visit, Sister Regina kept coming back to the same words: alive and joyful. The sisters are full of energy, deeply in love with Jesus and passionate about their mission. Whether it was singing and dancing in celebration or quietly engaging in formation and ministry, there was such a strong sense of purpose.

Many sisters are actively teaching, with some of their students traveling up to 15 miles one way just to get to school. Some even board. But there's no sense of complaint, only commitment and gratitude. People interact gently with each other, with nature and with animals. There is a beautiful sense of acceptance, especially across cultures and an openness that doesn't get caught up in differences.

Community
life is strong,
formation
is ongoing
and the SND
presence
is alive and

*There is a beautiful sense of acceptance,
especially across cultures and an openness
that doesn't get caught up in differences.*

well, Sister Regina was happy to report. She was moved by how deeply the sisters are connected to one another and to the people they serve. Their love for Jesus runs deep, but it goes beyond that. Their whole way of life is helping others and being fully alive in the Spirit. The whole experience reminded her of the beauty of SND's global mission and how brightly the light of Notre Dame shines around the world. 

In May Sister Regina Fisher made a special visit to sisters in the East Africa Delegation and what she experienced was nothing short of incredible. From the moment she arrived, she witnessed a community full of life, joy and deep faith.

While she was there, the East Africa Delegation celebrated a major milestone. They welcomed 14 young women entering the novitiate, 12 professed their first vows and three sisters made their final profession. One of the most powerful moments Sister Regina experienced was during the final profession when parents were invited to pray over their daughters as they stepped fully into religious life. That image, rooted in tradition, she said will always stick with her.





Family FunDay Lived up to Its Name


The Sisters of Notre Dame held the 2nd Annual Family FunDay for sisters, staff and families at the SND Center in Whitehouse, OH, in June. Event goers had a fun day as they enjoyed a Subway lunch, a sundae bar, games, a photo booth and, most of all, great fellowship! Thanks to all who were able to attend and to those who helped organize.



Congratulations Sister Joselyn!



Congratulations to Sister Mary Joselyn Weeman (center), former principal at Queen of Apostles Catholic School and current behavioral specialist at Rosary Cathedral Catholic School, for receiving the Reverend Bernard J. Boff Service Award

at the Central City Ministry of Toledo's Spring Gala. The Boff Service Award recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions in the promotion and enhancement of Catholic education in central city schools. Sister Joselyn's selfless dedication continues to have a great impact on the students she serves. 

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IN THE NEWS

Partners in Mission

A brisk yet sunny day welcomed more than 180 guests to the annual Partners in Mission Mass and luncheon in Chardon, OH. This year's celebration recognized Bruce Jarosz, a long-time donor and volunteer who has shared his professional talents with SND-sponsored institutions in the United States, helping them develop effective boards and leadership teams. Also honored was the Conrad Hilton Fund for Sisters, whose gifts are providing funding for important infrastructure improvements necessary to expand SND mission growth in the countries of East Africa. 




Sister Nicole Marie Varnerin Makes Her Final Vows

On August 2, Sister Nicole Marie Varnerin made her perpetual profession of vows as a Sister of Notre Dame during Mass at the SND Chapel in Chardon, OH. We celebrate as a community God's faithfulness and love and pray for Sister Nicole as she takes this huge step in her vocational journey. 




SND Chicken BBQ Event

A BIG THANKS to the many donors, friends, volunteers, alumni and neighbors who came out to the Chardon countryside on September 28th to enjoy the beautiful fall foliage, delicious BBQ, games, raffles, pies, shopping and reconnecting with former teachers, friends and families who support this fan-favorite event each year. This 63-year fundraising tradition continues to support the many ministries of the Sisters of Notre Dame in northeast Ohio. We look forward to seeing you again next year for our 64th annual celebration, Sunday, September 27, 2026! 



Congratulations Sister Lucia!

Sister Lucia Haas received the Exceptional Discipleship Award from Elyria Catholic High School, her alma mater. The Exceptional Discipleship Award celebrates faith in action, recognizing those who have answered the call to serve with extraordinary dedication and love. This award is not presented annually, but at the President's discretion in special circumstances, underscoring its unique and exclusive significance. Mrs. Annie Heidersbach, President, and other representatives from the school were in attendance for the presentation at the Notre Dame Center in Chardon, OH. 

IN THE NEWS


4th of July Final Festival

by Katie Pearce

The Covington, KY community gathered one last time to celebrate the final 4th of July Festival hosted by the Sisters of Notre Dame. This year's event drew families, volunteers and longtime supporters who came together to honor a cherished tradition of the last 103 years.

The event, held at Notre Dame Academy, featured crowd favorites like the grand raffle, silent auction, sisters' market, children's games, farm animals, food trucks and live music.

For 103 years, the support from the community has enabled the sisters to continue their missionary and educational work. Though the festival is concluding, the spirit behind it lives on. The sisters emphasized that the legacy of the event— and the bonds formed through it—will continue through the generous support, shared memories and ongoing prayers of the many friends, neighbors, alumni, partners and donors who make up the greater SND family.

As the festival ended the sisters expressed gratitude and joy. With unwavering dedication, they affirmed their commitment to continue their ministries and to pray daily for the people who have stood by them for so many years. 



Rural Healthcare Student Experience

The 4th annual Rural Healthcare Student Experience was held at UK St. Claire Hospital in Morehead, KY from June 8-12. Twelve students and four chaperones participated from Notre Dame Academies in Los Angeles, Park Hills, Toledo and Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin in Chardon. The students spent one-and-a-half days shadowing medical providers in the hospital and a full day visiting patients in homes with professionals from home health and hospice care.



Rebekah Hazard, Camdyn Escobar and Anyala Paredes from Notre Dame Academy, Toledo, OH

Some of the students packed personal hygiene kits at the new SND Eastern Kentucky Foundation home. All students donated to the food distribution center at the Christian Social Services center and worked for a half day organizing and sorting clothes at the thrift store. They all enjoyed the hands-on suturing and



pig dissection lab on Thursday morning that also included presentations on the need and role of physician assistants as well as tuition deferral options.


During their free time, students enjoyed swimming and playing cards at the hotel. On their last night together, they enjoyed a pizza, cake and ice cream dinner with an inflatable

obstacle course. They also celebrated Mass together in the UK St. Claire chapel. 



Sister Judine Lambert with student participants

Notre Dame Academy in Park Hills, KY Name President and Principal

Notre Dame Academy (Park Hills, KY) announced the appointment of Lauren Hitron as president effective July 1, 2025. Ms. Hitron brings nearly 20 years of experience in enrollment management, program development and strategic mission alignment to her new role. Also, effective July 1 is the transition for Lisa Ruwe Timmerding, a 1997 graduate of Notre Dame Academy, from Assistant Principal for Student Life to Principal. Ms. Timmerding brings more than two decades of experience in education and combines professional expertise with a personal passion for Catholic education and a lifelong love for NDA. 



The Benefits of Giving in Your Will

You probably know a will is important for distributing your assets to the people and causes you care about, but did you know that creating one has personal benefits? This is especially true when you use it to give a gift to a non-profit whose mission you value, such as the Sisters of Notre Dame.

Here's how including a gift in your will benefits you:

- 1. It can lessen anxiety.** Thinking and planning ahead can make it less daunting to talk about what happens when you're gone. How? It gives you reassurance that the people and causes close to your heart are taken care of.
- 2. It can lend perspective.** Taking stock of what's important can help you focus on your goals and be more aware of how you want to impact the world.
- 3. It sets an example.** Your gift can be an inspiration. Your story can have a ripple effect on your loved ones or other supporters of causes near and dear to you.
- 4. It just feels good.** Giving makes you feel good. Really! Research shows that the act of giving reduces stress-related activity in one area of the brain while increasing reward-related activity in another.

Of course, loved ones are the first people to consider when creating your will. Then, think about the non-profits you want to support. Providing for charitable organizations you care about is an excellent way to demonstrate your values, help you gain a better understanding of what's important to you and set an example for others to follow.

We Can Help

Contact your local Mission Advancement representative below when you're ready to discuss how your will can help support the ministries of the Sisters of Notre Dame.

COVINGTON, KY:

MARGIE SCHNELLE | mschnelle@sndusa.org

TOLEDO, OH:

KERRI ROSE-ROCHELLE | krochelle@sndusa.org

THOUSAND OAKS, CA:

SISTER LISA MEGAFFIN | lmegaffin@sndusa.org

CHARDON, OH:

CARRIE HIGGINBOTHAM | chigginbotham@sndusa.org

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A LASTING TRIBUTE

SISTER MARY MICHYL HABERMEHL, SND

(Phyllis Habermehl)



November 13, 1936 –
February 22, 2025

Phyllis Ruth Habermehl was born to Viola and Robert Habermehl, the eighth of 11 children raised in Augusta, KY. She received her early education at Saint Augustine School in Augusta. After graduating from Augusta Independent High School

in 1954, she attended Morehead State University for a year and then worked at the Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company. Phyllis enjoyed her work but felt that something was missing. She joined the Sisters of Notre Dame in 1957 and made her profession of vows in 1960.

Sister Mary Michyl pursued her education at Villa Madonna College (now Thomas More University), earning a BA in Elementary Education. She taught at St. John's School in Covington and at several schools in Ohio and Alabama. Sister also served as a childcare worker at St. Aloysius Orphanage and the Diocesan Catholic Children's Home, where she ministered for 14 years.

In 1991, she moved back to the Provincial House, where she held various positions in housekeeping, dietary and finance. Most recently, Sister Mary Michyl served as the transportation director for over 25 years.

SISTER MARY JEAN ANN LUKEN, SND

(Florence Luken)



May 23, 1926 – March 2, 2025

Florence Mary Rita Luken was the seventh child of Anna Elizabeth and Bernard Luken. She attended St. Augustine School and Notre Dame Academy. Florence was inspired by the example of her sister Loretta (Sister Mary Josine, SND) and entered the novitiate at St. Joseph Heights

on January 6, 1952, making her first profession on August 25, 1954.

Sister Mary Jean Ann was missioned to Notre Dame Academy as a school secretary and part-time teacher. Later, she served as the systems manager for the academy. Sister was then requested to assist as an accountant at St. Charles Nursing Home. Following that, she served as the business manager for 14 years at UK St. Claire in Morehead, KY. She was proud to have been part of the initial group of SNDs serving at St. Claire.

In 2004, Sister Mary Jean Ann retired to St. Joseph Heights. For more than 16 years, she volunteered at Catholic Social Services and St. Elizabeth Hospital. She also assisted the provincial secretary with large projects and daily tasks. Her keen editing and secretarial skills served her community well. Sister Mary Jean Ann moved to Lourdes Hall in 2020, where she engaged in various activities and enjoyed watching the Cincinnati Reds.

SISTER MARY JACQUELYN SEFCOVIC

(Formerly Sister Mary Joseph Frank)



December 22, 1938 – March 5, 2025

Jacquelyn Anne was born in Cleveland, OH to Joseph and Virginia (Katuscak) Sefcovic. She attended St. Charles School, St. Michael School and entered Notre Dame Academy as an aspirant. She became a postulant on February 2, 1957, and as a novice received the name Sister Mary Joseph Frank.

Over the next 62 years, Sister Jacquelyn brought flexibility and generosity to her varied ministries. For 15 years she was a seamstress, first at Ansel Road, Cleveland, and then in Chardon. She spent 14 years at Notre Dame Academy in Middleburg, VA, which was a boarding school and a day school. As Director of Household Services, she worked with her staff to keep the main house and additional buildings in good order.

Returning to Chardon in 1987, she ministered in Food Service and worked as a secretarial aide in the Health Care Center. For eight years she was the receptionist, greeting visitors at the main entrance and managing the switchboard. She also served as the secretary to the Health Care Director during this time. From 2010-2013 she ministered at St. Helen School in Newbury, OH as assistant to the Cafeteria Manager as well as in the school library. Her loving, generous service blessed everyone she met.

A LASTING TRIBUTE

SISTER MARY JOHN SHIN, SND

(Anna Chun-I Shin)



May 31, 1946 – April 22, 2025

Sister Mary John was born Anna Chun-I Shin in Daegu, South Korea. Together with five siblings, she grew up in a family that was devoutly Catholic. In addition to attending a Catholic elementary school, she assisted her parents in providing for the needs of refugees after the Korean War. Her family allowed the refugees to live on

their property, sharing food, shelter and clothing with them.

Over the years, she studied international trade, theology and sociology, both in South Korea and in France. Her financial background prepared her to work in a bank and in the finance office in a diocese in South Korea. Active in a lay Catholic movement, she always helped those in need.

As a member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Mirinae congregation, she came to the United States with Sister Angela Lee in 1990, and they opened a preschool for Korean children in Los Angeles. Complications within their congregation led them to leave that community and find vocational fulfillment with the Sisters of Notre Dame in Los Angeles.

Sister Mary John ministered as a chaplain at Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital. Her deep faith, humility, kindness and generosity touched hundreds of lives. Love of Scripture permeated her life.

SISTER BARBARA MARIE SLOAN

(Formerly Sister Mary Loyol)



April 5, 1940 – May 1, 2025

Barbara attended St. Mary School in Toledo, OH, and then Notre Dame Academy where in her sophomore year she became an aspirant of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Throughout her 85 years of life and 65 years of religious profession, Sister Barbara was intent on being a true disciple, one who is light and salt (Mt. 5:13-16).

Sister Barbara empowered children with the light of truth extending over 45 years and four states including the following: Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in Carmel, IN, (1969-1976); St. Joseph School in Erie, MI, (1969-1979 as a teacher and 1979-1985 as a principal and teacher); and Holy Rosary School in Jacksonville, FL, (1987-1994). In Jacksonville and Carmel, she was a pioneer, glad to serve wherever she was missioned, even when it meant being away from family and friends.

Her ministries in Ohio include the following: St. John, Delphos; St. Wendelin, Fostoria; St. Augustine, Napoleon; St. Mary, Sandusky; St. Richard, Swanton; and St. James, St. Ann, Gesu, St. Martin de Porres and St. Catherine of Siena schools in Toledo. As a teacher and principal, Sister's easy-going personality and ready smile endeared her to pupils, parents and co-teachers. Sister Barbara was also an instructional assistant at All Saints, Rossford. From 2009-2015, Sister was the associate director of Generations of Faith for St. Mary and St. John Parishes in Defiance where she also coordinated sacramental programs.

SISTER MARY REINETTE KROEGER

(Marian Kroeger)



October 10, 1940 – May 7, 2025

Marian Therese was born to Norbert and Ann Kroeger, the oldest of five surviving children. She attended St. Martin School in Cheviot, OH and here, she became acquainted with the Sisters of Notre Dame. She became an aspirant with the Sisters of Notre Dame, graduating from Notre Dame Academy in 1958 as a

postulant. She made her profession of vows in 1960.

Sister Mary Reinette pursued her education at Villa Madonna College (now Thomas More University), earning a BA in Education in 1968 and receiving her master's from Xavier University in 1976, as well as her Administrator Certificate in 1982. Sister's ministry extended over 50 years, including 15 years teaching in the Dioceses of Covington, Lexington and Birmingham, AL. She served for 32 years as principal, ministering at St. Mark, Richmond, KY and St. Joseph, Cold Spring, KY; and St. Martin, Cheviot, OH. She was also the Diocesan School Supervisor and Directress of Schools for the Sisters of Notre Dame.

May our deceased sisters rejoice in God's everlasting love.

In 2009, Sister Reinette became the co-founder and co-director of the Notre Dame Urban Education Center. Working among the impoverished developed her journey of involvement with the poor and homeless. When Sister Reinette retired in 2018, she continued to immerse herself in helping others. She worked with the Mary Rose Mission, the Emergency Shelter and Lourdes Hall. She also began the Blessing Project, which provides personal items for the poor and homeless.

SISTER REGINA DAVALA, SND

(Formerly Sister Mary Glenda)



August 11, 1947 – May 12, 2025

Regina Ann Davala was the oldest of nine children born to Nicholas and Martha (Ferrell) Davala. After elementary school at St. Mary, Massillon, she attended Canton Central Catholic for two years and then transferred to Notre Dame Academy, Cleveland, as an aspirant in 1963. The following

year, she became a postulant, and as a novice received the name Sister Mary Glenda.

After three years of study at Notre Dame College in South Euclid, OH, she taught at St. Francis of Assisi School, Gates Mills, OH. She graduated from Notre Dame College with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She then taught grades 6, 7, and 8 at Holy Trinity School, Avon, OH. Upon completing studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPI) she earned a Master of Education degree in reading and language arts. At St. Michael School, Cleveland, she taught math and religion in grades 5 through 8. In 1982, she was named principal and established an all-day kindergarten to increase language experience for the children. In 1986, Sister Regina joined Sister Virginia Reesing, principal at St. Boniface, and Sister Grace Corbett, principal at St. Stephen's, in a plan that would create future stability for Catholic education and increase programs for children and families. Two years later, Metro Catholic School became a reality. Dubbed "the Miracle on 54th Street," the school was named a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence and was recognized as a National Green Ribbon school.

Sister Regina ministered at Catholic Counseling for the Diocese of Cleveland and served on the province leadership team as regional superior from 1993-1999. In 2001, Sister Regina began a ministry with the newly established Associate program. She was a co-director for six years, ministered as the director for three years, and spent the past two years as administrative assistant. "She knew each one of us," one of the first Associates said. "Not just our names—but from the beginning, there was a personal relationship." At each stage of her life, Sister Regina followed God's plan and encouraged and loved others along the way.

SISTER MARY ROSERIA HELMKAMP

(Carol Helmkamp)



February 5, 1934 – May 12, 2025

Carol Helmkamp was the second child of Ralph Helmkamp and Lutgardis (Scharf) Helmkamp. She attended St. John the Evangelist School before joining the Sisters of Notre Dame in 1952. Her love of the rosary inspired her to take the name Roseria. Obtaining her Bachelor of Science in Education, Sister Mary Roseria began 40 years

in elementary education in towns of the Toledo Diocese.

During Sister's last years of teaching in Fremont, OH, she visited a migrant farmworkers camp which inspired her to devote the next two decades of her life in pastoral ministry with Hispanic people. Wanting to immerse herself in the culture of the people she served, she received certification from the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio, TX. Sister worked in parish ministry from 1994-2003 and with En Camino from 2003-2015. Intent upon meeting immediate needs, she kept busy distributing food, clothing and baby supplies at Care and Share and teaching English as a Second Language (ESL).

When the Sisters of Notre Dame Center in Whitehouse, OH opened in 2015, Sister Roseria was among the first to make the Center her home. Having found it difficult to leave such a life-giving ministry in Fremont, she resumed teaching ESL, stretching her skills to teach a young man from Korea. In the last decade of her life, her ever-attentive service gradually transformed into a life of prayer.

A LASTING TRIBUTE

SISTER MARY NADINE MATHIAS, SND

(Sylvia Mathias)



September 19, 1942 – May 14, 2025

Sister Mary Nadine Mathias was the daughter of Herman and Margaret (Regner) Mathias. Sylvia was taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame and entered the congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame in 1960.

Sister Nadine ministered as an elementary school teacher in

Indiana, Illinois, Florida and Ohio for 21 years. Additionally, she served as a high school librarian for 25 years and an archivist for the Diocese of Toledo for nine years. When living in parishes, such as St. John, Delphos, OH, she often involved herself in parish council, religious education and office work. She was also on the executive board of the Diocesan Sisters' Council.

Whether director of Notre Dame Academy's Resource Center or serving in the community, Sister Nadine was determined to do her best, conveying spiritual energy and infinite patience. Students and her religious community felt comfortable in her presence and assured of her help. Even in her later years, she continued visiting family in California.

SISTER ANNE MARIE ROBINSON

(Formerly Sister Mary Eric)



December 20, 1938 – June 11, 2025

Anne Marie was born in Elyria, OH, the fourth child of Harold and Marie (Wright) Robinson. Anne attended St. Mary Elementary School and graduated in June of 1956 from Elyria Catholic High School. Anne entered the Sisters of Notre Dame on September 8. At investment, she took the name Sister Mary Eric.

With a Bachelor of Arts degree from Notre Dame College in 1961, she was sent to St. Michael High School in Cleveland, OH, beginning a teaching ministry of 29 years. Subsequent assignments found her at Notre Dame Academy, Chardon; Regina High School, South Euclid; Notre Dame Academy in Middleburg, VA, and John F.

Kennedy High School in Warren, OH. At JFK, she served as assistant principal and Dean of Students in addition to teaching. Sister Anne was at St. Michael's for just one year, but a former student remembers her as "an inspiration to us." Sister earned a master's degree in English literature from the University of Minnesota in 1971 and an advanced diploma in catechetics in 1974.

In 1990, Sister Anne was named a councilor for the province leadership team and was the ministry coordinator and education coordinator for colleges and secondary schools. In 1992, she was among the Chardon delegates to an international meeting that is held every six years. Her life changed dramatically when she was selected to serve on the General Council as an Assistant to the Superior General for a six-year term. Stationed at the Motherhouse in Rome, Italy, she helped to oversee the work of the entire congregation.

Upon her return to Chardon, she became a certified webmaster and coordinated the province's technology plan. She served the Cleveland diocese as assistant director of the Office for Women, and at Metro Catholic School was coordinator of marketing and recruitment. She volunteered in the Chardon Mission Advancement Office; she was a college tutor, mentor and hospital volunteer. She especially loved her volunteer work at the Holden Arboretum. For the past eight years, she assisted in the Chardon Archives, expertly sorting and cataloging materials.

SISTER MARIE SAND

(Formerly Sister Mary Edwarda)



February 25, 1932 – June 21, 2025

Marie Anna Sand was the second child of Edward and Margaret Sand. She was baptized at St Mary Church, Alexandria, KY, and attended St. Mary Elementary School and Notre Dame Academy. The Sisters of Notre Dame had a very strong influence on her life. Marie became an aspirant as a

freshman at Notre Dame Academy; entered the Sisters of Notre Dame in February 1950; was professed on August 16, 1952; and made her final vows on August 2, 1957.

May our deceased sisters rejoice in God's everlasting love.

Most of her years of religious life were spent in Ohio and Kentucky where she ministered to children of various ages at St. Aloysius Orphanage and the Diocesan Catholic Children's Home. Sister Marie was also active in community service at various convents and schools in the Diocese of Covington, KY, and at St. Leo School, Versailles, in the Diocese of Lexington, KY.

In 2014, Sister retired and moved back to St. Joseph Heights, where she ministered in sewing articles of clothing for the SND mission in Uganda and crocheting beautiful items for sale at the annual Fourth of July Festival. She happily helped and supported her community.

SISTER CRISTINA MARIE BUCZKOWSKI

(Cristina Josepha Buczkowski)



March 13, 1961 – August 27, 2025

Cristina Marie Buczkowski was born Cristina Josepha Buczkowski in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She was the daughter of Walter and Helen Buczkowski (nee Podlesny). Her family emigrated to the United States of America when Cristina was three years old. She was active in her home parish church, St. Mary

Magdalen in Camarillo, California. She graduated from Loyola Marymount University with a liberal studies degree.

Through her work as coordinator of the Young Adult Ministry at St. Mary Magdelene Church, she met the Sisters of Notre Dame. She was invited to become a member of the pioneer class of SND Associates in 2000. After becoming an Associate, she understood that she had the charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame and God was calling her to the vowed life.

Sister Cristina Marie spent much of her years of service as an elementary educator. During her time as a missionary in the village of Buseesa, Uganda, she was both a teacher and later the headteacher (principal) of St. Julie Model Primary School. After returning to California, she opened an afterschool tutoring program in a low-income area. She later served as a house mother at El Ranchito de los Niños in New Mexico, an alternative home for foster children. Most recently, she worked for Catholic Charities in Laredo, Texas, where she lovingly served the immigrant community.

SISTER MARY DOROTHY LULI

(Formerly Sister Mary Rayanne)



February 10, 1940 –
August 26, 2025

Dorothy was the ninth of 11 children born to George and Mary Louise (Hostler) Luli. With five sisters and five brothers, she learned the patience that comes with sharing and the joy of always having someone to talk to or play with. Growing up in

Rootstown, OH, near Ravenna, the family attended St. Peter of the Fields Church. On September 8, she began her junior year at NDA. On February 2, 1958, Dorothy became a postulant. At investment, she received the name Sister Mary Rayanne.

From 1961 to 1968, Sister Dorothy ministered in Maryhill Convalescent Home in Canton, OH and then in the Chardon Infirmary Diet Kitchen, where she prepared special menu items and oversaw the novices who took the trays to the patients. After basic course work at Notre Dame College in South Euclid, she enrolled in Marymount Hospital School of Nursing, graduating in 1972 as a Licensed Practical Nurse. She cared for the sisters in the Chardon Infirmary for the next 19 years.

In 1991, she became Director of Nursing at Light of Hearts Villa in Bedford, OH, operated by the Vincentian Sisters of Charity. She supervised the health care staff, reviewed medical records of prospective patients, and completed regular assessments of each resident. She was certified to teach and prepare nursing assistant candidates for state testing and re-certification.

From 1999 until 2009, Sister Dorothy was the administrator of the SND Health Care Center in Chardon. After a brief time as an LPN at The Village of Marymount, she went to Saint Helen School in Newbury, OH, as School Nurse. From 2010 to 2022, she enjoyed working with the children, meeting and greeting them and becoming a much-loved part of the school and parish community. During the past three years, she helped with maintaining nursing records in the SND Health Care Center.



*Sisters of Notre Dame
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Sister Marla Monahan Selected as the Helen Carroll Champion of Education Honoree



Sister Marla Monahan, Vicar for Religious for the Covington diocese, was selected as the Helen Carroll Champion of Education Honoree by the Outstanding Women of Northern Kentucky Committee.

Each year, the NKY Chamber Women's Initiative (WI) honors women who exemplify notable achievement, outstanding service in their professions or to the Northern Kentucky community, and the qualities of personal integrity, perseverance, and leadership. This year's awards were presented during the Outstanding Women of Northern Kentucky Awards Luncheon on June 5 at Turfway Park Racing & Gaming.

"This year's honorees exemplify, without a doubt, devotion and dedication to their work, their education, their community, and the people around them," said Catherine Salzman, chair of the Outstanding Women of NKY Committee.

Congratulations, Sister Marla, on this well-deserved award!