

# Remembering



Sister Eileen Connors, CSJ

August 6, 1927—December 16, 2016

Born in Los Angeles, Ann Therese Connors was the fourth of five children. Robert was the oldest, then Eileen, (who died in infancy), Jerry, Ann Therese and James. Their father, Arthur Thomas Connors, was one of ten children, (an even five girls and five boys). He was born in Huron, South Dakota. Their mother, Aimee Grace Hoye, was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The couple met in Los Angeles at a Knights of Columbus dance.

Ann Therese's parents provided an excellent education. She attended St. John Grade School in Hyde Park. At that time the entire faculty was CSJ Sisters. She recalled, "Among the wonderful ones, was Sister Rachael Payne. Everyone loved her, she was a happy soul." It turned out Sister Rachael also taught her brother James and years later her nephew, Brian, in North Hollywood. "It was not until high school at Bishop Conaty (then

named Catholic Girls' High School) that I had a lay teacher." Ann Therese attended Bishop Conaty High School for two years, then transferred to St. Mary's Academy where she graduated in 1944.

During the summers she worked as a typist and file clerk at Farmers' Insurance. Christmas vacations she worked as a mail clerk for the United States Postal Office. When asked if she liked school, Sister said, "I did not like school, I did like sports." She especially liked roller-skating at the Walsh's home on Brynhurst Street, where Sister Marie Bernadette, Sister Margaret and Pat lived.

In her sophomore year at Conaty High School, Ann Therese told her mother she "wanted to be a sister." Her mother said, "I thought you did not like the sisters." Ann Therese recalled she had fond memories of Latin class with Sister Agnes Marie.

On September 1, 1944, Ann entered the Sisters of St.

Joseph at St. Mary's Novitiate. She received the habit on March 19, 1945, and was given the religious name Sister Eileen Mary in honor of her deceased sister. Her first profession followed on March 19, 1947, and she pronounced final vows on August 15, 1950, also at St. Mary's Provincialate. In 2015 she considered it a great privilege to celebrate her 70th Jubilee with her reception.

Sister Eileen Mary received her B.A. degree in 1952 with a major in history.

A M.S. in Education, with emphasis on Supervision/Administration was awarded in 1972 at Mount St. Mary's College. She also had a General Lifetime Credential for Elementary and Secondary School. In August 1991, Sister received a Certificate in Lay Parish Administration at Loyola Marymount University. A first prize award was also given at that time to Sister for excellence in her "Parish Case Study" presentation.

Sister Eileen Mary spent 30 years in elementary education both as teacher and principal. For a total of five years Sister was in secondary education, first at St. Joseph in Lakewood, as a Religion and History teacher from 1971 – 1973. In 1981 Sister returned to Lakewood as a College Career Counselor. For a few years Sister also assisted with the Carondelet Development Program.

Sister served at Mary Star of the Sea Parish in San Pedro for 30 years, as parish sister, pastoral associate, parish administrator, and parish ministry director. From 1984 – 2013 Sister lived and ministered in San Pedro. According to her calculations, she worked with "hundreds of couples" as marriage coordinator. She also took pride in

guiding many candidates to RCIA. She was known and appreciated for her special competence in many areas of parish ministry. Her pastor, Msgr. Patrick J. Gallagher, recommended Sister for a marvelous honor, the "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" medal from the Vatican. It was presented to her in 2006 at the Cathedral in Los Angeles.

Sister made friends easily in many settings. Known as a wonderful administrator, she had a fine sense of humor and could build good relationships. She was "easy going" even in difficult situations and so was greatly appreciated by her co-workers in schools and parishes. Eileen was interested in many projects and activities, not only those related to her work, but also in the world. She loved good music, art, travel, and especially a good laugh. Sister greatly appreciated the love and attention given to her by her nieces and nephews. It was constant, no matter where she lived. Her answer to everything was, "my nieces will take care of it." Her many friends offered loving support to Eileen, especially when she left her ministry and moved to Carondelet Center.

After her many years at the parish, the transition to Holy Family Community in Carondelet Center in 2014 was not an easy one for Sister. She had enjoyed her meaningful ministry and the freedom of her apartment, and the companionship of Brandy, her cocker spaniel. Making the most of a difficult situation and declining health, Sister participated as her energy allowed.

Eileen gratefully accepted the support and care of the loving Holy Family staff members and the

wise assistance of Vitas Hospice. Again her friends, especially Sister Mary Frances Rebel, and her nieces and nephews, provided companionship and love over the long days at Carondelet Center.

And now, dear Sister Eileen Mary, may you fully know the sacredness of your work and life. May your new day in heaven fulfill your every dream and desire. May the love and warmth you so generously gave to others now be yours in abundance for all eternity. ✞

Written by Sister Frances Baker, CSJ



Remembering