

2014 Jubilee



First Profession
July 13, 1954

JUBILEE WISDOM

*...share stories, faith
and a melody...*

-Rita Schweitzer, SSND

-formerly S. Elroy



School Sisters
of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

Rita Schweitzer, SSND

60 Years

Sister Rita ministered as a music teacher in Catholic elementary schools for 24 years. She also served as organist for parishes where she taught. Her ministry locations were St. Alphonsus, Chicago; St. Isidore, Grand Rapids, Mich.; and in Wisconsin at St. James, Madison; St. George, Kenosha and Holy Cross, Milwaukee. In 1979, she was called to Mount Mary College in Milwaukee where she taught for 28 years, as well as serving for six years as chairperson of the music department. Sister Rita earned a bachelor's degree in music from Mount Mary College and a master's degree in music education from the Chicago Conservatory College. Since her retirement in 2007, she has served as a music specialist at the Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee and through her prayer and presence as a member of the SSND retirement community at Notre Dame of Elm Grove.

As a young child I wanted to be like the teachers whom I admired. Yet, as constant as the air we breathe was my awareness that God "was calling." My Messmer High School years brought me in contact with women who strived to deepen communion with God and to serve his people.

Yes I wanted to join these sisters who were strong teachers. They encouraged students, including girls, to seek leadership roles, while reminding all of us of the Blessed Mother's role in our lives. We saw graduates return to thank the sisters for their prayerful support while they served our nation in time of war. The serviceman's return was always followed by a visit to the school's memorial chapel.

My life became a venture as a music teacher-organist in SSND missions surrounding Lake Michigan. I enjoyed years of playing and planning music for classroom and church. A sister once noted that I make music classes look like non-work.

Following years of teaching, another opportunity for service entered my life. With an alto recorder on a cord around my neck and a pack of tunes in hand, I visit bedridden veterans in three units at the Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee where we share stories, faith and a melody that might be their service anthem, a folk song, a hymn or a bar room tune. May God bless our veterans for their service to our country and for all who serve others with their lives.

I thank God for my call to life with the School Sisters of Notre Dame.