



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

2022 Jubilee

Sister Mary Helen Bender, SSND

Formerly Mary Neal

First Profession - July 30, 1962 | Celebrating 60 Years



Sister Mary Helen Bender is originally from St. Louis and made first profession there in 1962. She received a bachelor's degree in English from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis in 1964 and in that same year began teaching at Helias High School, Jefferson City, Missouri. She taught at Helias High School for three years and then went on to teach at two Illinois high schools: Mater Dei High School, Breese and the Academy of Notre Dame, Belleville. In 1971 Sister Mary Helen went to California and taught for six years at Pius X High School, Downey. During this time she received a master's degree in English from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, Illinois. She served as administrator from 1977 to 1978 at Bishop Conaty High School, Los Angeles before returning to the Midwest. From 1978 to 1985 Sister Mary Helen served as principal at St. Paul High School, Highland, Illinois, and in 1985 received a master's degree in private school administration from the University of San Francisco. She then went to Quincy Notre Dame High School, Quincy, Illinois, where she served as principal for ten years. In 1996 she went to St. Dominic High School, O'Fallon, Missouri, where she served as the school's first female religious president until 2011.

Currently Sister Mary Helen serves as a volunteer in the St. Louis area.

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A memory I have to share...

During my years of experience in Catholic secondary education, both as a teacher and administrator, I cherish the many people who mentored me and those who have become life-long friends. All have been a blessing.

