



Birth
Sept. 3, 1924

Baptism
Sept. 14, 1924

Profession
July 27, 1945

Death
Jan. 16, 2016

Burial
Sancta Maria
in Ripa Cemetery
St. Louis, Missouri

*Precious and blessed is
the death of the faithful
before God... for
they die in union with
their dear Jesus, in the
grace of God, in peace.*

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger
Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
Letter 11, September 10, 1831

In Loving Memory

Sister Ruth [Mary William] Hollenbach, SSND

The second of five children was born on Sept. 3, 1924 to Adelaide (Moslank) and William Hollenbach in St. Louis, Missouri. She was baptized on Sept. 14, 1924 at St. Liborius Church and named Ruth Frances. An older and younger sister and two brothers completed the Hollenbach family. In her autobiography, Ruth described her childhood and teenage years as “happy, free, with good health, athletic ability, a questioning mind, an adventurous spirit, idealism, determination, self-confidence, respect and love for other people, a sense of responsibility for my choices and decisions, a willingness to help wherever and whomever I could, and a real faith in God and in Jesus.” These qualities would remain with Ruth throughout her long life.

Ruth began her educational journey at the age of 5 when she entered kindergarten at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School. She received a scholarship to St. Alphonsus “Rock” High School. From kindergarten to high school, she was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Their proficiency as teachers, their happiness and evident joy in community attracted her. Just before her 18th birthday, she turned down three college scholarships and entered the candidature at Ripa on Aug. 26, 1942. During her second year as candidate, she taught third grade children at Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Louis. Ruth was received into the novitiate on July 26, 1944 and given the name Mary William in honor of her father and brother. She professed first vows on July 27, 1945 and final vows on July 27, 1951.

Following her profession, she taught elementary children at St. Peter, Jefferson City, Missouri and St. Martin of Tours, St. Louis. She completed the requirements for a bachelor’s degree in chemistry at Webster College, St. Louis in 1952. She was missioned to teach science, math, religion and physical education to secondary students at St. Joseph High School, Conway, Arkansas.

In 1955, she began full time study at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana. She received a master’s degree in philosophy in 1957 and a doctoral degree in philosophy in 1960. Sister Ruth taught philosophy to the candidates, junior and professed sisters at the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis. During this period, she published numerous articles in religious and philosophical periodicals and was chairperson of the philosophy department.

In 1965, Sister Ruth was missioned to Japan. After 1 ½ years of language study, she accepted a position at Nanzan University in Nagoya in the American Studies Department. She assisted in the planning, organizing and establishing of the international division of Nanzan. From 1974 to 1978, she was the dean of students in the international division. These years of teaching Japanese students in a university setting provided many cultural and professional opportunities. During this time, she was chaperone for 60 Japanese students on an 8-week trip to Europe. Her deep affection for Japan remained with her throughout the rest of her life.

continued

In Loving Memory



Sister Ruth Hollenbach



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**School Sisters
of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD
THROUGH EDUCATION

Returning to the states in 1978, Sister Ruth was a member of the original collaborative team and the director of development for the newly established Maria Center for life-long learning at the former St. Louis motherhouse. She also gave workshops on positive attitudes and journaling to the adults who came to Maria Center. Six years later, she became administrator at St. Mary's Special School for disabled children in St. Louis. She was the liaison between the residential school and the Missouri Department of Mental Health.

In 1987, Sister Ruth responded to the call to another SSND province and another educational institution as the fifth president of Mount Mary College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. During her tenure until 1995, she led Mount Mary through record-breaking enrollment, facility upgrades, development of master's programs in art therapy and education, and accreditation of the master's program in occupational therapy.

Following a sabbatical, Sister Ruth entered into another career, that of using her culinary skills. She cooked for the staff at Fatima Center in Indianapolis; for priests at St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, St. Louis; for the Benedictine Monks at St. Louis Abbey, St. Louis; and then for the Franciscan Friars at St. Francis of Assisi in Oakville, Missouri. Her last years of active ministry consisted in volunteering in a variety of ways at Theresa Center. Her culinary skills were often called upon to enhance a celebration for the sisters. Her friendship bread for Sunday brunch was appreciated by the Theresa Center residents and guests. In late Dec. 2015, Sister Ruth was admitted to Anna House for rehabilitation following a stroke. Further tests revealed that she had stage 4 pancreatic cancer. She went home to God at Anna House on Jan. 16, 2016 at 7:30 a.m.

The wake/vigil was held on Jan. 19, 2016 at Anna House and Theresa Center. The Mass of Resurrection was celebrated the following morning with Rev. Dennis Meyer, MS, presiding. Burial was in the Sancta Maria in Ripa cemetery. Nephews, nieces, their children, other relatives, friends, co-workers, former students and SSNDs attended the funeral services which took place during the first snow storm of this winter season. Sister Ruth is survived by a sister, Vera Yingling of St. Charles, Missouri and a brother, William Hollenbach of Charlotte, North Carolina. She was preceded in death by her parents; her sister, Rosemary Donley and brother, Thomas Hollenbach.

Sister Ruth was an excellent educator and a life-long learner, rejoicing in new discoveries and sharing her gifts with others. A brilliant, educated woman, she was able to explain the complexities of difficult concepts/theories in philosophy and mathematics in such a way that they were understood by her students. Her international experience and missionary heart opened her to the needs of the church and community. She was a gracious hostess and warmly extended hospitality. She deeply loved her family and they cherished her. An organizer, a risk-taker and a person of principle and conviction, Sister Ruth's many talents have enriched SSND and those to whom she ministered during her 70 years of religious life. May she now enjoy her new life as she meets her God face to face and receives the fullness of life God promised!

By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND