

In Loving Memory

Sister Eileen Donovan



Birth
December 20, 1940

Baptism
January 19, 1941

Profession
July 29, 1960

Death
February 7, 2019

Burial
Donated body to
St. Louis University
School of Medicine

*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

Sister Eileen Donovan, formerly known as Miriam Daniel, 78, died Thursday, February 7, 2019, at her local community residence in St. Louis. She was the sixth of seven children born to Dorothy (Murphy) and Daniel Donovan in Boston. She was baptized at St. Thomas Church, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, and given the name Eileen. She described her early life as being a better tomboy than a girl.

Eileen attended Blessed Sacrament School in Jamaica Plain until sixth grade when her father passed away. The family moved to Roxbury, Massachusetts, and Eileen completed grades seven through nine at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. During the summer of 1955, the family moved to California and Eileen entered the newly open aspiranture in Sunland, California.

Eileen received the candidate's veil at St. Monica Church in Santa Monica, California, on August 24, 1958. She came to Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis, and began her college studies. On July 28, 1959, she was received into the novitiate and given the name, Miriam Daniel, in honor of her father and an older brother. She professed first vows on July 29, 1960, and final vows on July 29, 1966. She later returned to her baptismal name.

Sister Eileen received a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, in 1962. She was awarded a Master of Arts degree in history from California State University, Long Beach, California, in 1972; a Master of Arts degree in counseling from the University of Missouri, St. Louis, in 1988; and a Master of Arts degree in Scripture from Aquinas Institute, St. Louis, in 1990.

Sister Eileen began her formal teaching career at St. Dominic Savio, St. Louis. She also taught at St. Aloysius, Tulare, California; St. Marianne, Pico Rivera, California; Althoff Catholic High School, Belleville, Illinois; and Notre Dame Tutorial/Learning Center, St. Louis. She served as an assistant principal at Bishop Conaty High School, Los Angeles.

For over 25 years, Sister Eileen was an advocate for the poor and marginalized of the city of St. Louis. As a neighborhood organizer, she worked with the Penrose Park Neighborhood Association. She managed the College Hill Neighborhood apartments and began the Renaissance Housing Corporation to provide housing for low income families. She taught a weekly bible class and led religious services for inmates at the St. Louis medium security prison. She was an assistant program director at the St. Vincent de Paul Society in St. Louis. She also ministered as a counselor at the St. Clair County Mental Health Center in East St. Louis, Illinois, and was executive director of Our Lady's Inn, St. Louis.

Sister Eileen was recognized with several awards. In 1991, she received the Women of Achievement Award for Human Welfare sponsored by KMOX Radio and the Suburban Journals. This award recognized her work on land use

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and housing development in the inner city. She also received an outstanding achievement award from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for her 20 years of teaching men and women in the St. Louis medium security prison.

Sister Eileen had a passion for justice, politics and history. She worked for a year as a legislative assistant to Sue Shear, democrat from North St. Louis. Concern for the students in the St. Louis public schools led her to run for the St. Louis School Board of Education in 1987. She was the peace and justice coordinator for the Society of Mary for two years. For three years, she tutored students at St. Louis University.

In 2006, she experienced heart problems and underwent several surgeries. Eventually, this condition resulted in limiting her activities. Several days after she was placed on hospice, God called her home in the early hours of February 7, 2019, at her SSND community on Victor Avenue in St. Louis. Sister Eileen donated her body to St. Louis University School of Medicine.

A memorial Mass was celebrated at Theresa Center on February 23, 2019, with Rev. Richard Quirk as president. A reflection was given by Sandra Spencer who had companioned Sister Eileen during her last months of preparing for death. Her sister Dorothy, her local community member Sister Jackie Toben, SSND, classmates, friends, and SSNDs were present to celebrate her life and ministry.

Sister Eileen is survived by her sister, Dorothy Donovan-Broderick of Rancho Mirage, California. She was preceded in death by her parents and her five brothers Daniel, William, James, Richard and Robert.

Although she was raised in California and spent most of her adult life in the Midwest, Sister Eileen never lost her Bostonian accent. Everyone knew where she stood in regard to her political, philosophical and theological convictions. She was deeply committed to the city of St. Louis and the housing needs of the poor. She was sensitive to music, poetry and art. May she now experience the peace and joy of the Resurrection as she enters into eternal life with her God.

By Sister Carol Marie Wildt, SSND

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