

In Loving Memory

Sister Kara Ryan



Birth
August 23, 1935

Baptism
September 8, 1935

Profession
August 1, 1955

Death
March 23, 2017

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

On August 23, 1935, the oldest child of Ruth Marie (Zell) and Francis Ryan was born in St. Louis, MO. She was baptized on September 8, 1935 at St. Pius X Church and named Mary Frances. Two sisters, Catherine and Jeanne, would join the Ryan family.

Mary Frances began her academic education at St. John the Baptist School. In the second grade, she attended Sts. Mary and Joseph School and completed grade school at St. Ambrose School where she graduated as an honor student. During her eighth grade, she visited her Reverend Uncle in Sullivan, Missouri and became acquainted with the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Mary Frances entered the Aspiranture and attended Notre Dame High School for three years. Not certain about her vocation, she spent her senior year at Rosati-Kain High School where she again graduated with honors. During her senior year, she was employed as a sales girl for Woolworth Department Store. After graduation, she worked for several months as a voucher-draft typist for Southwestern Bell Company.

With the advice of a confessor, she entered the candidature at Ripa on August 27, 1953. She was received into the novitiate on July 31, 1954 and given the name Mary Kara. She professed first vows on August 1, 1955 and final vows on August 1, 1961.

S. Kara began her professional career teaching mathematics and physics at Redemptorist High School, New Orleans, LA and Redemptorist Senior High School in Baton Rouge, LA. In 1966, she came to Notre Dame College, St. Louis and taught mathematics until the college closed in 1977. During this time, she was also dean of students for 2 years and director of financial aid for four years. The next two years, she was a computer programmer/analyst for the former St. Louis Province and was instrumental in initiating the computer generated forms for province records, using the computer to tally election ballots, etc. As a pioneer in these early days of technological advances, she spent numerous hours key-punching the data for these various forms and analyzing the data.

In 1979, she began studying for her PhD at St. Louis University. The chair of the mathematics department asked her to assist in developing an introductory course in computers. She taught this course as an adjunct while working on her degree. This was the beginning of the Computer Science Department at St. Louis University.

S. Kara had graduated in 1957 from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, with a bachelor's degree in mathematics. In 1964, she received a master's degree in mathematics from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The following year, she was awarded a master's degree in physics from Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana. In 1984, she received a doctoral degree in mathematics from St. Louis University.

continued

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Sister Mary Kara Ryan



She was missioned to the College of Notre Dame of Maryland in Baltimore in 1984. Here she also developed the computer science program while teaching mathematics. She was department chair for over 20 years, served on numerous college committees, developed courses, published and shared her expertise with others, taught undergraduate and graduate courses. During this time, she was a resource consultant for several SSND provinces.

In the early 1990s, she was selected to participate in a Title VI grant from the Department of Education to integrate language and culture into course work. This took her to the Goethe Institut in Rotenberg, Germany for language study. She redesigned her courses in light of this experience, began studying German and led student tours to Germany to introduce them to the broader world of learning. She remained on the faculty until 2011. For four years, she did volunteer services in the Baltimore area. In 2015, she was missioned to Villa Assumpta, Baltimore.

S. Kara died peacefully at Maria Health Care Center, Baltimore, MD around 5:50 a.m. on March 23, 2017. Her wish was to be cremated. A memorial mass was celebrated at Villa Assumpta on March 28. Her remains were brought back to St. Louis. The Mass of Resurrection was celebrated in Theresa Center chapel on April 6 with Rev. Clyde Grogan presiding. Burial was in Ripa cemetery. Her sister, Jeanne (Edward) Wanner, their children and a cousin joined the SSND community to remember and celebrate her life. She was preceded in death by her parents and her sister, S. Catherine Ryan, CSJ.

S. Kara was a talented and gifted educator, always striving to provide the best in education for her students. Simplicity, kindness, generosity were mirrored in her warm smile. She was at home introducing new courses, teaching students, learning a new language, traveling or crocheting afghans or baby blankets. May she now delight in the new life that God has prepared for her.

S. Miriam Jansen, SSND and S. Carol Marie Wildt, SSND

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