



**Birth**  
May 15, 1944

**Baptism**  
May 28, 1944

**Profession**  
August 1, 1964

**Death**  
February 25, 2022

**Burial**  
Sancta Maria in Ripa  
Cemetery, St. Louis

*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 Marie Juanita Will

On May 15, 1944, the third of five children and the first girl was born to June (Cornell) and Victor Will in Evansville, Indiana. She was baptized at St. Benedict Church on May 28, 1944, and named Helen Antoinette. Helen grew up with her brothers, Victor and Richard, and her sister, Janet; an older brother, Ted, was stillborn. Her family called her “Toni” and she described her childhood years as being a ‘tom-boy.’

When Helen was one year old, the family moved to St. Louis. Helen attended St. Francis de Sales Grade School where she was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). In March of her eighth-grade year, Helen went to a day of recollection at Sancta Maria in Ripa. She met a girl who had signed up for the aspiranture and began to think seriously about religious life. With her parents’ blessings, she entered the aspiranture as a freshman the following year. Helen completed her high school education in three and a half years and entered the candidature in January of her senior year.

Plans were for Helen to receive the candidate’s veil at her home parish on December 31, 1961. However, because of the death of the pastor, plans were changed. The ceremony took place at Sancta Maria in Ripa on January 1, 1962. With her classmates, Helen was received into the novitiate in the investiture ceremony at St. Louis Cathedral on July 31, 1963, and was given the name Marie Juanita, in honor of her aunt. She professed first vows on August 1, 1964, and final vows on August 1, 1969.

She was awarded a bachelor’s degree in music theory from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, in 1965 and a master’s degree in mathematics education from Clarke College, Dubuque, Iowa, in 1977. Sister Marie Juanita ministered in elementary education for 33 years. She taught in Missouri at St. Joseph, Scott City; All Souls, Overland; Blessed Sacrament; Our Lady Queen of Peace, House Springs; St. Anthony, Sullivan; and St. Gabriel the Archangel, St. Louis. She taught in Illinois at St. Peter Cathedral, Belleville; and was principal at Sacred Heart, DuQuoin, Illinois.

In 2000, she served for seven years as a staff member in the finance office at Notre Dame High School, St. Louis. She joined the staff of The Sarah Community in Bridgeton, Missouri, as the SSND transportation coordinator in 2008.

Sister Marie Juanita enjoyed her hobbies of crocheting and gardening. She was an excellent music teacher and enjoyed being a choir member. During a sabbatical, she became interested in Native American heritage and grew to love the rituals and prayers of our indigenous ancestors. She was an avid fan of the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team and the St. Louis Blues hockey team.

Sister Marie Juanita volunteer taught in the Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Program in St. Louis, providing individualized English language tools to foreign-born adults in their homes. During several summers, she volunteered as a tutor for children in the Osyka (Mississippi) Reading Program, a literacy program planned and taught by SSND from Chatawa, Mississippi, and St.

*continued*

# *In Loving Memory*



*Sister Marie Juanita Will*

Louis. As transportation coordinator at The Sarah Community, she made doctor appointments for the sisters, scheduled drivers, kept an accurate record of appointment visits, etc. She crocheted a prayer shawl for each of the sisters at The Sarah Community.

Sister Marie Juanita died unexpectedly on February 25, 2022 at her home in St. Louis. A funeral service, including the sharing of memories and the Mass of Resurrection, was held at The Sarah Community on March 3, 2022. The following morning, the reading of her biography, sharing of memories and the Mass of Christian Burial was held at Theresa Center with Father Brad Modde as president. Attending these funeral services were her sister, brother, and sisters-in-law, other relatives, classmates, friends, and SSND sisters and associates. Burial was in the Sancta Maria in Ripa Cemetery. A luncheon was served to the guests in Theresa Center auditorium.

She is survived by her sister, Janet (Dennis) White, her brother, Richard (Kris) Will, her sister-in-law, Bernadette Will, relatives and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers, Ted and Victor.

Sister Marie Juanita was a kind and compassionate person and deeply appreciated by all who knew her. May she now rest in peace and be greatly blessed by our God for her years of ministry and for her gracious response to the needs of our sisters at The Sarah Community.

*By Sister Carol Marie Willli, SSND*

To make a memorial gift,  
please visit our secure  
online donation page  
[www.ssndcentralpacific.org/donate](http://www.ssndcentralpacific.org/donate)



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

Transforming the world  
through education