



## *In Loving Memory*

### Sister Patricia Wamser

Patricia Ann Wamser was born in St. Louis on New Year's Day 1931. Her birth caused great joy to her parents, Robert and Helen (Leonard) Wamser, for she was their first daughter after four sons. Another daughter, Mary, was born about a year later. Patricia happily remembered her family life, "Mom and Dad were always a part of the group around the kitchen table as the four boys and two girls reveled in much laughter, much sharing, and... much discipline."

Though the family struggled as the country was emerging from the Depression, the Wamsers managed to send all six children to Catholic schools. Patricia attended St. Andrew School and Notre Dame High School, St. Louis, where she was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND).

When asked how she became interested in her vocation, Sister Patricia recalled that in the second grade, her teacher, Sister Clementine Kemper, inspired her earliest interest in becoming a religious teacher. "It was the kindness and gentleness of Sister Clementine who had an infinite amount of patience with all sixty-six of us that made her mark on me."

Instrumental, too, in her choice of vocation were her teachers during her happy high school years. She especially admired how Sisters Timothy Ryan, Elbert Oelkers and Elaine Schaeffer took a personal interest in each student. Observing them in many situations motivated Patricia to ask herself if she wanted to live a life like theirs as a religious and a teacher.

Patricia began her religious and professional training in the candidature of the School Sisters of Notre Dame at Sancta Maria in Ripa, in St. Louis on September 1, 1948. She was received into the novitiate on August 1, 1950, and given the name, M. Helen Robert, a combination of her parents' names. In the 1970s, she returned to her baptismal name. She professed first vows on August 2, 1951, and final vows on August 2, 1957.

She received a bachelor's degree in history from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, in 1958 and a master's degree in secondary education from St. Louis University, St. Louis, in 1964.

Sister Patricia began her 70 years of ministry by teaching at St. Barbara School, St. Louis. Then she taught her favorite subject, history, at Sacred Heart High School in New Orleans, and Redemptorist High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Following the 20-year classroom teaching experience, there was a 10-year period where she assisted the administrations of Redemptorist High School in New Orleans; the University of Dallas; and Holy Ghost School in Houston. She assisted in the dioceses and in parishes in Lafayette, Louisiana, and in San Antonio.

Birth  
January 1, 1931

Baptism  
January 18, 1931

Profession  
August 2, 1951

Death  
May 26, 2021

Burial  
Chatawa Cemetery  
Chatawa, Mississippi

*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

*continued*

# In Loving Memory



*Sister Patricia Wamsler*

In the mid-1990s, Sister Patricia was a research assistant for the University of Kentucky Health and Aging Study, a study which involved traveling to the aging members of the former SSND provinces to evaluate each individual's cognitive, motor and social skills.

Her last formal ministry assignment was director of hospitality for the former provincial house in Dallas, then for the former SSND Retreat and Retirement Center at St. Mary of the Pines, Chatawa, Mississippi.

On reflection, Sister Patricia concluded, "Each ministry had its 'sparks' and its 'thorns!' However during the eighties in working with very little children at Marillac Day Care and at Casa de Esperanza, a home for abused children, I found some of the happiest and most challenging times of my life. I will always be grateful to those 'little professors' who stretched, challenged, and pulled me out of myself to love them just the way they were because they were special and made by God."

In community, Sister Patricia sought to engage others in conversation and to amuse them with stories of those "little professors." One could count on her to drive a sister to an appointment or to the airport, run an errand, type a paper, or sit at the bedside of a sister who was ailing or dying, always willing to share her time and her talents.

And talents she did have. While her sight permitted, she loved to read well-written material and do fine needlework. She lettered beautifully and wrote well. Many benefitted from the products of her culinary hobby; she could spend hours learning from or just enjoying the TV cooking channel.

When she retired to St. Anthony Gardens, Covington, Louisiana, in 2019, Sister Patricia contributed where she could and extended her hospitable graciousness to those she met in her new home. After receiving a diagnosis for an untreatable illness, she recognized God's will and was ready to meet Him. It was probably her closeness to little children that brought her this thought, "When I get to heaven, I'm to crawl up into the lap of God and say, 'Here I am, Lord.'" She died very peacefully in the late morning of May 26, 2021, at Trinity Trace Community Care Center in Covington. She would have celebrated her 70th Jubilee in August 2021.

Sister Patricia was preceded in death by her parents and her four brothers. She is survived by her sister, Mary Wentz, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and many nieces and nephews.

Prayer and visitation were on Tuesday, June 1, 2021, in Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Covington, Louisiana. The Mass, celebrated by Rev. Rodney Bourg, followed the prayer service. Interment was in the School Sisters of Notre Dame Cemetery in Chatawa, Mississippi.

*By Sister MarieClare Powell, SSND*

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