

Legacy

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1957-74.

Sister Evangeline died Wednesday at the age of 90. During her lifetime, she showed particular devotion in serving both the college and Sacred Heart Monastery, where she was a member for 73 years.

She received her doctorate in philosophy from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. and held a number of roles at the college and monastery. She also worked on a national study of parish life for the U.S. Bishops in New York. In 1989, she was asked to serve as the sub-prioress and personnel director for Sacred Heart Monastery until 1997. MMC development director Barb Rezac held a pair of special connections with the nun. They shared the same birthday, and they became prayer partners when Rezac joined the college staff nearly four years ago.

“Sharing the same birthday, we had an instant bond,” Rezac said. “And as prayer partners, we prayed for each other. Sister Evangeline would tell me that she prayed out loud for me, by name, every single day.”

The two women also met regularly for lunch, conversations, games and evening prayer.

“Sister Evangeline remained so interested in the college. She would always ask me about our projects or what was happening on campus,” Rezac said. “It was so amazing how she was always trying to learn more. She was 90, and she was using email and Facebook all the time.”

Sister Evangeline served as MMC’s second president, appointed by Mother Jerome Schmitt, and guided the Catholic college during a crucial time in its history, Rezac said.

“So many changes occurred while she was president,” Rezac said. “The college flourished under her direction.”

At the top of the list was gaining accreditation in 1961 from the North Central Association, opening up academic opportunities and federal financial program. In turn, the two-year college expanded to a four-year program offering bachelor’s and eventually graduate degrees.

“Sister Evangeline and Sister Wilma Lyle returned from Chicago with the news that the college was accredited,” Rezac said. “They literally rolled out the red carpet for the two Sisters. When they returned to campus, they stepped out of the car with a red carpet waiting for them.”

During a campus speech, Sister Evangeline shared a humorous story when she returned with the news. “One of the students made a unique comment about this event when she said, ‘I still get C’s, but now at least they’re accredited!’” the nun said.

Another major change came when Mount Marty High School closed and MMC went co-ed, admitting men for the first time. The co-ed campus meant adjustments in residence halls and the introduction of inter-collegiate athletics. MMC lacked sports facilities, so many contests were played at Nash Gym on the Yankton College campus.

Other changes included a bachelor’s degree in nursing, the introduction of the nation’s first anesthesia program, the incorporation of the college separate from the monastery, strengthening of music and theater programs, and the construction of Corbey Hall and Roncalli Center.

“It also marked the first time that we went from having a kitchen in a basement and serving the students family style to offering a food service program at Roncalli,” Rezac said. “It was a big deal for the students on campus.”

While the era marked a great deal of bricks and mortar, Sister Evangeline emphasized retaining the heart and soul of Mount Marty, Rezac said. The nun could give a stern look but

was very kind and gentle, she added.

“One time, a student had to tell Sister Evangeline that she was going to be \$700 short (in paying her bill) and didn’t know what to expect,” Rezac said. “Sister Evangeline told the student ‘Never think that \$700 is going to keep you from this college. We’ll find how to keep you here.’ The student finished her college degree and joined the monastery, so she became a great investment for \$700.”

RECEIVING SUPPORT

Fred Ertz, a 1974 MMC graduate, recalled that feeling of dread when, as the Student Government Association (SGA) president, he approached Sister Evangeline – his first face-to-face meeting with her – to propose jointly sponsoring a big-name concert with Yankton College.

“Sister (Evangeline) listened and never interrupted. She said, ‘Sounds like a good idea - I think you (and the SGA) should do it,’” he said. “We worked with YC and brought Black Oak Arkansas to Yankton. She never did really give permission; she just didn’t say no.”

The meeting taught him how to handle conversations, which later helped him with his broadcasting career. He received another huge boost when he gave a two-minute speech honoring Sister Evangeline, and the audience included Joe L. Floyd, chairman of Midcontinent Broadcasting – who hired Ertz two weeks later for Sioux Falls television station KELO and the start of a media career which now finds him living in Texas.

A SISTERHOOD

Sister Evangeline leaves behind Benedictine Sisters who feel a tremendous sadness at her passing.

Sister Marie Helene Werdel recalled entering the monastery on the same day as Sister Evangeline. A nun picked them up for the long trip from Pierre and Stephan to Yankton. On the trip across eastern

South Dakota, they were shown every church where the Benedictine Sisters taught and even stopped at a teepee. The arrived at the monastery in time for 4 p.m. prayers and were greeted on their arrival.

Mother Jerome Schmitt would later appoint Sister Evangeline and Sister Marie Helene to the respective positions of MMC president and as monastery procurator/college business manager.

“In the beginning, we felt our way through. We were invited downtown to give a talk about the college to a civic group. They asked us about our budget, and were astonished that was only around \$50,000,” Sister Marie Helene said.

“We had mostly Sisters teaching there and they didn’t get any pay. The laundry was done by the hospital, the monastery baked the bread for the college, the milk came from our farm and the vegetables from our garden. There wasn’t much separation.

“Sister Evangeline did work like the rest of us – cleaned the forms, washing the windows over the summers. You never knew she had doctoral degrees. Nothing was too humble for her to do. She would help where ever it was needed.”

Other accolades came from Sister Madonna Schmitt, who entered the Sacred Heart community a week after Sister Evangeline and Sister Marie Helene.

“I was 14, and they were wonderful big sisters for me and marvelous substitutes during my adolescent years,” she said. “I’ve looked upon them as pillars of the community from early on.”

Sister Evangeline exuded a presence that demanded respect, Sister Madonna said.

“As president, I saw (Sister Evangeline) as a woman of tremendous integrity,” Sister Madonna said. “She radiated a belief in her God-given gifts as well as deep trust in God. She was a loving gracious person all her life.”

Sister Rosaleen Dicks

described the late nun as a gentle and precious friend. “She loved baseball, especially the World Series and the Twins,” she added.

Sister Cynthia Binder was on the college faculty during Sister Evangeline’s years as president.

“As president, there was always such a calmness and graciousness about her and at the same time, she could be firm in her decisions. She was firm and logical,” Sister Cynthia said.

“She would talk to you about decisions she made especially if she thought the decision would be difficult for us to accept. She was a philosopher – she had thought problems through, was not hasty and capricious and tried to give people the best possible answer.

“She was a wonderful, nuanced writer; she wrote clearly, as philosophers do.”

Two of Sister Evangeline’s successors as MMC president, Sister Jacquelyn Ernster and current interim president Tom Lorang, spoke of her wisdom and inspiration in moving MMC forward during challenging times. Sister Evangeline also remained an avid fan of the Lancer teams and rarely missed a game until she could no longer physically attend.

Mike Healy noted he worked with Sister Evangeline dating back to 1969 when she was MMC president and he served as vice president of finance at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital.

“Sister Evangeline was a person whose talents were very diverse, ... making a difference in whatever and with whom she was associated,” he said.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Sister Evangeline commanded respect far beyond the MMC campus and Sacred Heart Monastery, said Miner, who currently serves as the MMC interim vice president for academic affairs.

“Sister Evangeline served on the South Dakota Board of Regents (governing public colleges). Governor (Dick) Kneip wanted somebody in private education sitting on the board because he

thought there should be greater discussion and less competition between the public and private sectors,” Miner said.

“I remember how the public college presidents, particularly Hilton Briggs of SDSU (South Dakota State University), always asked about Sister Evangeline and held her in great esteem. When they had meetings of college presidents, she was a woman of stature and great intellect. I can imagine that she just sat and talked about what was needed for interaction. She had a lot of presence.”

Sister Evangeline was also very spiritual with a strong background in Catholic theology, Miner said.

“We were at a luncheon when somebody started a very theological discussion and they were spouting theology. Sister Evangeline went to the bathroom and didn’t come back, so I went to see if something was wrong,” Miner said. “She said, ‘I’m fine, but that person’s theology is way off and I don’t want to ruin things by starting an argument.’”

For MMC graduates like Ertz, Sister Evangeline provided life-changing guidance.

“Attending Mount Marty gave me confidence to set and achieve big goals. It also gave me a lasting friendship with several great people, especially Sister Evangeline,” he said.

“She had a special ability to direct and guide without ever letting a person know it was happening. She had a gift and was a gift to so many people and communities. We will all miss her, but we all know we were very, very lucky to have had her in our lives.”

A wake service will be held at 7 p.m. Sunday, and the funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. Monday, both in the Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel. Burial will be in the monastery cemetery.

Follow @RDockendorf on Twitter.

Green

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Vermillion and Yankton law enforcement received Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to help with situations involving manic or suicidal mentally ill people.

This year’s NAMI Walk will be held in Sioux Falls Saturday, May 16. Yankton’s affiliate team name is the Bridge Builders, captained by Janet DeGroot.

The NAMI organization has several signature programs to help individuals and families learn to cope with mental illness: NAMI Family-to-Family, NAMI Fam-

ily Support Group, NAMI Connection, NAMI In Our Own Voice and NAMI Basics. More information on these programs can be found on www.namisouthdakota.org.

To learn more about mental health, contact Diane Nicholson at 605-661-3043 or Lewis & Clark Behavioral Health Services, Inc. at 605-665-4606.

Music

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“It just so happened the band has played a couple pieces from David Shaffer,” Carr said. “I like the way he writes because he writes so strong. He writes good pieces that are well played. He is respected. So I thought I would just contact him. I wasn’t sure if he was going to say, ‘Sure,’ or ‘Forget it. I’m too busy, kid.’”

But Carr got a response he wasn’t expecting.

“He said, ‘Absolutely. I would love to do it,’” Carr chuckled. “So I told him about Ted and what I would like to do with the piece. We went back and forth and negotiated what music would best tell the story and honor Ted.”

Carr also told Shaffer about the YHS band.

“I told him where our strengths were and I told them where we were grow-

ing,” he said. “I also told him what we should feature. He structured the piece based on all of these items.”

Powell said that he was really excited when Carr told him Shaffer would be writing the piece.

“David Shaffer is an internationally known composer,” he said. “At the high school, we played a lot of his music with the upper bands. I was real honored when they told me.”

Shaffer initially gave Carr a timeline of a year and a half, but right before he could start writing the piece, Shaffer’s mother became ill.

“He asked me if it was OK to delay. I told him, ‘Absolutely,’” Carr said. “I knew that when somebody goes through something that strong, there is a lot of emotions. We wanted something that we would all be proud of. Our patience was absolutely rewarded.”

Carr said the composition is everything he wanted it to be.

“We have a stunning

piece of music that is guaranteed to impact many students in the future because of its accessibility to the widest array of abilities and its striking melodic, harmonic and rhythmic technicalities,” Carr said in an email to the *Press and Dakotan*.

Following the premier performance, a publishing company will release the music commercially with the following dedication on every score: “Commis-

sioned by the Yankton High School Band, Yankton, South Dakota, and dedicated to Ted Powell by the students, parents, colleagues of the Yankton High School Band, Todd Carr, Director.”

Carr said this is the best gift he could ever imagine giving to Powell.

“It’s going to be around for a very long time,” he said. “This is just another way the work and dedication a teacher gave will be

remembered forever.”

Carr said that Powell had such an impact on people, including himself, during his 20 years in the Yankton School District and he wanted to acknowledge it.

“Over the course of about 16 years, he and I worked very closely together every single day,” he said. “I believe we had a great relationship. We would have great days, and sometimes horrible days. But at the end of

it all, we were successful and had a great time. I learned a lot from him and we learned a lot from the kids.”

The piece will also be played June 2 at the first concert of the Yankton Area Summer Band at 8 p.m. at the Amphitheater of Riverside Park.

Follow @hartjordynne on Twitter.



With Fondest Memories

We remember those who have passed away and are especially dear to us.

On Saturday, May 23rd we will publish in print and online at Yankton.net a Memorial Day section devoted to those who are gone but not forgotten.



Aneta Burrows

Dec. 30, 1960-Nov. 8, 2002

Your courage and bravery still inspire us all, and the memory of your smile fills us with joy and laughter.

Dan, Ann & Sarah

Select one of the verses below to accompany your tribute.

- We hold you in our thoughts and memories forever.
- May God cradle you in his arms, now and forever.
- Forever missed, never forgotten. May God hold you in the palm of His hand.
- Thank you for the wonderful days we shared together. My prayers will be with you until we meet again.
- The days we shared were sweet. I long to see you again in Gods heavenly glory.
- Your courage and bravery still inspire us all, and the memory of your smile fills us with joy and laughter.
- Though out of sight, you'll forever be in my heart and mind.
- May the light of peace shine on your face for eternity.
- May God's angels guide you and protect you throughout time.
- You were a light in our life that burns forever in our hearts.
- May God's graces shine over you for all time.
- You are in our thoughts and prayers from morning to night and from year to year.
- We send this message with a loving kiss for eternal rest and happiness.
- May the Lord bless you with His graces and warm, loving heart.
- I have written my own message and it is included.

Name of deceased _____

Date of birth _____ Date of passing _____

Number of selected verse _____ OR Personal message (25 word limit) _____

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