



Wake Stories of Deanna Randall, BVM (Mariel)
Marian Hall Chapel, Feb. 7, 2019

Juanita Johnson, Sister (*Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM*)

While she was only three years older than I, our life interests and activities were very different. She was quiet and unassuming as I was a risk taker in all things I experienced. Our early lives were supported with the study of piano and music had a special place in our home. She was a perfectionist; I an experimenter never really playing the musical selection as it was intended. That really frustrated her at times.

Deanna had learned how to sew under our mother's guidance, so when she arrived in Dubuque, she was quickly assigned to work in the sewing room. Her knowledge and skills in sewing and making her own clothes must have been leaked to her superiors. When they saw her ability to manage those treadle sewing machines she was a "shoe in."

I remember her first driving lesson with our Dad and how seriously she took that skill which served her well (stick shift and all) when the Sisters were given permission to drive.

By the time I was married and had two young children, we looked forward to Deanna's home visits during the summers when she brought with her many different BVM companions. Meeting my sister's companions gave us a special perspective of Mt. Carmel and the sisters' lives. For a few years, we became the Colorado tour guides.

When Deanna opened her Montessori School in Denver at one of the many Catholic schools that had space for her program, her assistant Theresa Hester, my husband and I would lend a hand with cleaning and painting each space! After several moves, we felt like we had cleaned and painted every Catholic school in Denver. The cleaning was supervised by Deanna because there were certain parameters that must be met if young children were to occupy the space.

One of Deanna's early classrooms was in the basement of St. John's Catholic Church and the graying acoustic tiles on the ceiling bothered her greatly. She wanted it painted white. After 12 gallons of Sears' guaranteed-one-coat-coverage white paint, Sears began to give the paint to her free. I am sure they were hoping we would get it completed before they ran out of white paint.

Many of her pieces now adorn our home. She and I spent some wonderful days in my quilting room as she helped me put quilts on my big machine or just sat and worked on her current cross stitch project.

Our entire family and friends looked forward to her Christmas visit when she got into her holiday baking mode - cookies, candy and coffee cakes for us all to share. She could cook all day long and have it all cleaned up by evening, then start again the next morning.

These wonderful memories will help ease our loss of her to her Eternal Reward in Heaven! While I don't have a community number, my love for the BVM sisters' community will be with me through the remaining years of my life!

Sister Mary Nolan, BVM *(Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM)*

I remember visiting Deanna and Francile (Luking) in Clarksdale, Miss., and share their daily routine: rising before dawn; praying the Morning Office together; and then going for a walk around the parking lot of their apartment complex, rain or shine...all before breakfast. They both were focused on mission and ministry. They were devoted to each other and shared a common love for the poor, especially women and children. Montessori was a way of life for them both in and out of the classroom. Many an evening they spent making activity packets for the next day's adventure in the classroom.

Deanna was a kind teacher but she was also strict. The rule in the classroom was if a child behaved well all week, they were allowed to take one library book home for the weekend, but they must bring the book back on Monday morning. One little boy returned on Monday without his book. Days went by and he never brought the book. Deanna met his Mom at the grocery store and mentioned the missing book to her. She started to cry and the mother said, "But Sister, the only way I can get him to bed and sleep is if I read him that book every night. It is the only book in our house!" Needless to say, Deanna assured her it was just fine that the book had found a new home.

Probably one of the most difficult decisions Deanna had to make was realizing that it was time to bring Francile home to Mount Carmel. Deanna was experiencing a lot of pain in her knees, the consequences of spending a career on the floor (Montessori style) with little ones. Francile was dealing with gradual memory loss but couldn't imagine leaving Deanna, her reading ministry or the cotton fields of Jonestown. Deanna packed up the car and drove with Francile to celebrate Thanksgiving at Mount Carmel. She told Francile she wanted her to stay where she was safe and cared for and that she would join her as soon as possible. And indeed she did. When Deanna moved to Mount Carmel, she visited her every day. When God called Francile home in 2015, Deanna lost the spark in her life. Now we know a quiet reunion is taking place in heaven.

Sister Mary McCauley, BVM

I, along with these distinguished women in the first two rows, are members of the Set of 1956. All of us met Deanna about 62 years ago. I think we can acknowledge that every quality mentioned about Deanna is very, very true. She was a quiet, steady, faithful, committed woman and she loved getting together with the set. As already mentioned, Deanna was a great seamstress. As proof of this, when Deanna was beginning to lose some of her mental acuity and I was spending time with her, she said, "Oh, I'm so frustrated. I would love to go shopping." I wanted to be sure that I would take her to the right store so I said, "What would you like to get?" She said, "I just want to touch the fabric." A sign of a true seamstress. It reminded me of Biblical Lydia with the purple cloth. We do know that she was a wonderful Montessori teacher. She was particularly concerned about those who did not have access to many resources. I have a note from a Precious Blood sister who worked with her in Denver. I think it epitomizes not only our core values but also Deanna's gift.

Sister Judy Niday, CPS, Former Coworker *(Read by Sister Mary McCauley, BVM)*

Deanna believed in guiding little ones to live into their potential through Montessori principles of choice and taking responsibility for those choices. She knew her stuff.

Sister Mary McCauley, BVM

Finally, I would like to express gratitude for the privilege I had in the last two or three years and especially the last couple of months journeying with Deanna during her final years. It also gave me the privilege of knowing Juanita. It was a true gift.

Sister Kate Keating, BVM

I have a postscript to Deanna's story. When Deanna was talking to Father Beckman about the BVMs, he also mentioned that there was a BVM visiting her mother in the city of Okarche, Okla. He said to her, "Why don't you go over and talk to her sometime. She knows a lot about the BVM community." She did. Guess who the woman

was – Mother Mary Consolatrice! Our set is so glad that she was the one chosen to be prepared by Mother Mary Consolatrice.

Sister Eileen Fuchs, BVM

The first time I ever met Deanna was at a mission ministry in Chatawa, Miss. This was when I was just discerning religious life and not necessarily the BVM community. I remember at one point in time that I had to walk away from a whole bunch of people I didn't know and stare at a beautiful pond. The beautiful retreat center in Chatawa, Miss., is absolutely gorgeous. There was this beautiful pond. I was just sitting there looking at the pond when Deanna showed up in the area. I think she, too, was just looking for some solitude. I can still see her simply enjoying that pond. As quiet as Deanna was, I would imagine the most noise she ever made was when we started this prayer service and the skies opened up and you could hardly hear anything in here. I know that Deanna is enjoying all of this very much.

Sister Brigid Mary Hart, BVM

I am also part of the Set of 1956. I first met Deanna when we had fixed duties. I was in the laundry and she was in sewing. When I was in Colorado, Deanna came out with Margaret Kasper to the black school Cure d' Ars. It was middle class; I don't know if they knew that when they came. They worked in that school and was welcomed into the Colorado cluster. I was a DRE and not terribly happy. I had been a primary teacher. Deanna invited me to study in Chicago at the main Montessori training center. She allowed me to intern at her school in the basement of St. John's Church. (The ceiling was very white!) I was ready for a 9 to 5 job. Of course, it was a thorough job, more than 9 to 5 by the time I made materials. I am grateful to Deanna for welcoming me, giving me a very thorough training and probably allowing me to have my happiest days as a Montessorian.

Sister Mary Angele Lutgen, BVM

I lived with Therese Jacobs one apartment over from Deanna and Francile Luking in Jackson, Miss. There were a number of religious from different communities living in Jackson at that time. We usually gathered on a Friday evening for prayer, a potluck and socializing. That was one way that I got to know Deanna and Francile. I also visited Christ the King School and their apartment in Clarksdale, Miss., when they worked in Jonestown. I was always aware that they were very interested in the outdoors – walking and going to the park – and in cross-stitching. In the evening whenever I stayed with them, they would be doing *big*, very professional, cross-stitch projects. They were both quiet and very supportive of each other. That support continued as Francile's health began to fail and Deanna brought her to Mount Carmel. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to know them both on a personal level.

Sister Irene Lukefahr, BVM

I had the privilege of both working with and living with Francile. Francile and I lived together for one year in Georgia. She was always ready to pack a picnic lunch and go to the mountains or the lake. Often we would walk around the neighborhood and look at the flowers. I would ask, "Francile, what's the name of that flower?" She would tell me, but the next time we walked around the same place, I would say, "What's the name of that flower again?" She would tell me again. She said, "You have to remember that I grew up around flowers since I was six months old." Years later, I had the opportunity to visit Francile and Deanna when they were in Clarksdale, Miss. We took a side trip to New Orleans. We made wrong turn, but it was a beautiful turn because there were giant azaleas in full bloom! The three of us were walking around the neighborhood as Deanna was doing the same thing I had done with Francile. "Francile, what's the name of that flower?" Deanna said, "I can never remember the names of the flowers." I said, "We have something in common." The last couple of days while I was visiting Deanna, I hoped that she could hear me. I was saying, "Deanna, I hope that Francile is so eager to show you every single flower that is living in heaven." May you both enjoy the beauty of God's creation.

Sister Kathryn (Kitty) Lawlor, BVM

Sue Rink, Janine Moran, Adele Henneberry and I were traveling to Chatawa, Miss., for a weekend workshop. Sue and Janine decided that we would stop at Jonestown along the way. They had a collected a number of items to

bring to Deanna's school in Jonestown. We arrived and both Deanna and Francile were so happy to see us because they thought we were coming for the dedication of the school. They were so pleased at our coming and bringing those items. The bishop was coming to celebrate the dedication. We continued on the trip so full of guilt and so sorry that we were so ignorant. We stopped at Clarksdale at the florist and orders bouquets of flowers to be sent for the dedication in the name of the BVM congregation.

Sister Kathleen Mullin, BVM *(Read by Sister Georgeann Quinlan, BVM)*

At the final senate held in the Chicago area, Deanna came from Mississippi as an observer. She and I happened to be at the same table for several lively sessions. Deanna and several more of us had several meals together. She questioned and commented quietly about the happenings. Having attended only a few senates over recent years, Deanna paid close attention to the presentations and processes of those days. She appreciated the evolving style of the Senate gathering. Now, from her new home in life eternal, Deanna can support our 2019 and 2020 assemblies.

Sister Georgeann Quinlan, BVM

On a personal note, I do a program "Angels Everywhere" about the miracles that happen in our life all the time. Many of the stories told are about children, about car accidents and about death. I hear many stories from people who had been present when a loved one dies. Often times, the person who is dying reaches out with a smile on his or her face because an angel is coming to get them. I heard that about Deanna's death from the ministry presence people. Deanna had no expression on her face and suddenly her eyes opened and she had a smile of peace. I think her angel came to get her and bring her to the other side.

Sister Carol Cook, BVM

Jonestown, Miss., is very close to Clarksdale, but we didn't go there. Sometimes people would come to our church from Jonestown. When I was in Clarksdale, Deanna was years from coming, but one of the Holy Name sisters came, Sister Kay Burton. She taught with us two years. She went back and after a few years in leadership in her community, she came back to Jonestown. At that time, when I was visiting Clarksdale, I went to Jonestown. It was my first time being in the classroom with Deanna and Francile. As we heard, both of them were so taken with the children. I remember Francile, who was probably beginning to have some troubles, sitting there with a child. It was beautiful to see them. Later, after Francile had come to Mount Carmel, I was able to visit Deanna. Both of those experiences were part of a very rich time with Deanna. Peace, Deanna.

Sister Anne Buckley, BVM

Bernadette McManigal and I were with Deanna when she passed away. I had been with her for over an hour prior to that. When Bernadette came in to relieve me, I said, "I'd like to stay because I think she's about ready to go." She had just been sleeping very quietly on her right side with no awareness of the people around her. All of a sudden, she sat completely up, her eyes opened wide. She saw something and she looked at it for about three seconds. I don't know who or what she saw, but it was the most awesome experience I ever had. Then she laid back down on her right side and a few seconds later, she died.

Sister Jean Beste, BVM

If Teresita Poulin were able to come down to the chapel, I'm sure she would tell you about Deanna and herself at the Bishop Helmsing Early Childhood Center in Kansas City, Mo. The two of them were both Montessori teachers. Teresita always came home and said what a wonderful teacher Deanna was. In honor of Teresita and Deanna, we thank you both.

Sharlyn Simon, Mount Carmel Nurse

I had the privilege of asking Deanna Randall about three things that would help teach children. She said to get to know the children's names, to call them by their names and to engage with them. God has called us by name. He has also come down from heaven to engage with us. He knows every hair on our head. I thank God for the privilege of getting to know Deanna Randall.