



Wake Stories of Anita Therese Hayes, BVM
Marian Hall Chapel, April 17, 2019

Kim Staub, Friend (*Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM*)

So glad I visited Sister in February of this year. She was in marvelous health and we had a wonderful visit. May she rest in peace. I know she will be greatly missed.

Camilla Papin, Former BVM (*Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM*)

Sister Anita Therese was so welcoming and a source of encouragement for me. Every time I would see her at Mount Carmel, she would ask how I was doing and if there was anything she could do for me? Her kindness and genuine interest through the years was greatly appreciated.

Becky Hagerty, Friend (*Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM*)

I met Sister Anita through Sister Gabrielle Hagerty. What a treasure! She was always so friendly and always had a twinkle in her eyes! I am sure they are now enjoying an Irish coffee together again.

Paul Gardner, Nephew of Sister Marilyn Thomas, BVM (*Read by Sister Diane Forster, BVM*)

I first met Sister Anita Therese in Burlington in late 1972. I had just been hired in the middle of the school year to teach sixth grade at St. John's elementary school. The previous teacher had planned to retire at the end of the school year but was driven into early retirement by an unruly class of 44 sixth graders. To say I was clueless about how to manage my first classroom is to understate the challenge I faced. The St. John's principal meant well but was as in over her head as an administrator as I was as a teacher. To the rescue came Sister Anita Therese who was the principal of the other Catholic elementary school, St. Paul's. I don't remember exactly when we first met but I do remember how she became a mentor – a kind, calming and competent presence. Anita Therese modeled grace under pressure. She showed me how to manage a classroom and, just as important, how to manage myself, something every young man needs. I have always said that I could have quit that St. John's job every night the first year. Anita Therese was one of the reasons I stayed the course and grew from a boy into a man. I was so blessed to be able to re-connect with Sister the last decade or so. I will miss seeing and talking with her. Well done, faithful servant."

Sister Kathryn Lawlor, BVM

I began working with Sister Anita Therese in 1991 when she took on the position of Archivist. She went to Madison, Wis., every weekend for a semester to learn how to be an archivist and become certified as an archivist. We had monthly meetings. At each meeting, people would share what their activities had been during the month. Anita would always say, "I'm preparing finding aids." Now we had not a clue what that meant, but at each meeting, Anita would say, "I'm preparing finding aids." We eventually learned what that meant. When she started, Archives consisted of one, small storage room. Now, Archives consists of five rooms on the lower level of the BVM Center. That's what happened from all the finding aids that Anita was preparing. Also, Anita had an institutional memory. When people would come to the Archives and ask for information, we never went to the files to find it. We would say, "Anita, what happened to . . ." and she would tell us. We will always know that our Archives and Anita Therese go together in one sentence.

Jennifer Head, BVM Archivist

Anita Therese worked in the archives for 29 years, first as the archivist and then as a dedicated volunteer. She and I bonded over the fact that we were both White Sox fans in a sea of "Cubbie Blue." Her dedication to the Archives was unwavering; even as she began to slow down, she would spend almost every morning in the Archives and would return in the afternoon when she felt up to it. Whenever I couldn't find some piece of information, the first person I asked was Anita and she would be relentless in her search; I soon learned not to ask her if it was a relatively trivial question where an acceptable answer would be "We can't find it," because she would never give up! One of her unique skills was the ability to recognize BVMs in old, unlabeled photographs. She would look at the photo and name (almost) every sister, usually adding, "She was a darling." One time, she did say, "She was interesting." I immediately wanted to know more about that sister! All of us in Archives are so grateful for all of her work in the Archives and take comfort in the fact that we now have our own "darling" watching over us.

Lori Ritz, BVM Associate & Former BVM,

I'm sharing on behalf of the Set of 1974 – Mary Lou Wetzell, BVM and myself. Anita Therese was the administrator for the Motherhouse when we were in the novitiate. Her office was in the main first floor hallway currently marked "Office of the Mothers General." Often we would return from our classes at the Aquinas Institute, walk down that hallway and, before going up the center stairs, stop at Anita Therese's office to see if she was there. Together we would say, "Hey, Grandma, we're home." She would walk over to us, hug us and say, "Oh, you two." It became our standard greeting, which we have shared for many years since. On another occasion, Mary Lou and I knew that she had candy bars in her office closet. There was a day when we wanted a candy bar. Knowing that Anita Therese was in her office, we walked in and nicely shut her in her closet until she promised to bring us candy bars when we let her out. She did keep her promise, exiting with a candy bar in each hand. Again, "Oh, you two." Our teasing with Anita Therese continued until we left Mount Carmel, always remembering it years later. A final story is a personal one. When I made my first vows here at Mount Carmel on Jan. 6, many people came from a distance in cold, snowy weather. One such group was a singing group from St. Pius in Chicago called La Estudiantina. This group of singers came on a bus, but the bus broke down. It was going to be two hours, so my ceremony was going to be two hours late. Anita came to me and said, "Don't worry, Dearie, the sisters do not care. They are here for the celebration. There are going nowhere. We will have Mass when the singers get here." What a relief that was to me. And so it happened. She often reminded me that when she went to the chapel, she could see those singers on the left-hand side of the altar and what a joy it brought to all. Again, I say, thank you, Anita Therese.

Maryann LoGuidice, Former Unitarian Universalist Pastor

It was my honor to work with Sister Anita through the annual CROP Walk (Communities Responding to Overcoming Poverty). We worked together for over ten years. Since leaving this leadership role, we have continued our sweet friendship. I would come to visit Sister every few months, mainly to get a candy bar or cookie. This year has been a tough one for me with being in and out of the hospital three times. Sister attended to me with phone calls and beautifully handwritten notes. I last saw Sister three weeks ago; I miss her already. I think Mother Teresa's quote about "A Lifelong of Sharing" speaks beautifully to Sister Anita. "Love cannot remain by itself - it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action, and that action is service. Whatever form we are, able or disabled, rich or poor, it is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the doing - a lifelong sharing of love with others." This to me speaks a lot about Anita. I'm rather disappointed that at her age she still looks so beautiful. I'm having a little trouble with that, but God bless her. I'm just so happy she blessed my life.

Bob Krayner, DACU

I am the membership coordinator of the Dubuque Area Congregations United, aka DACU. I've known Sister Anita for many, many years as a delegate representing the Sisters of Charity. We never had very much interaction as far as the DACU was concerned. I always chuckled and we always had a good time when she was looking for her nametag. I also remember Sister Anita relative to the CROP Walk, perhaps the area where we had the most interaction. She was the one who would send out the notices to the congregations about the upcoming CROP Walk. She would put a little urge in there to support it. She is the one you would see on CROP Walk day at the

membership table. As I reflect on Sister Anita, I think that she would share with us these words. "And so when death brings weeping and the heart is filled with sorrow, it beckons us to seek God as we ask about tomorrow. In those hours of heart-hurt, we draw close to believing that even death in God's hands is not a cause for grieving, but a time for joy in knowing that death is just a stepping stone to a life that is everlasting such as we have never known."

Sue Hattel, Church Women United

I knew Sister Anita Therese Hayes through Church Women United, World Day of Prayer and DACU, all of which she participated in. When I was president, I called her my cheerleader, my supporter, but more my encourager because that's the person she was. She encouraged everyone to be his or her best. Truthfully, I could not have done it without her. She brings smiles and tears. Amen.

Sister Eileen Healy, BVM

This is a totally different subject. Sister Floria Shannon asked me to bring it up because the family would enjoy it if they don't already know it. At cluster on Sunday evening when we were talking about why we are here, she talked about all the sisters at St. Martin's that she had known. She ended her little talk by saying, "Well, I went on a date the night before I entered." We all laughed. Then she said, "Well, it was the only way I'd get a ride home." Her sense of humor was right there. We all laughed because it was totally different from all her work later.

Theresa Glancy, Former Student

My memories of Sister Anita Therese go back to 1965 when I was one of her fourth grade students. She came to Burlington to be both teacher and principal. My class was lucky enough to have her. We were 40+ students that I'm sure were not the most cooperative. Because she was principal, she put our class on the second floor of the building where the upper classes usually were. She had her office across the hall from our room. She wasn't just our fourth grade teacher; she was our fifth grade teacher as well. We were such a large class that she kept us in the same room and continued to be our principal. She had the opportunity to be our teacher for the next three years also because each of those years the teacher became ill and she had to finish the year. Apparently, one of the students said to her at the end of the year, "Are you coming with us to high school?" Her answer was, "Not on your life!"

I lived just a few blocks from St. Paul's in Burlington. I went every summer before school started and every year when school ended to help clean up those rooms. I always wanted to be a teacher, I'm sure partly because of her, and did teach for 38 years. Many of my memories as a teacher came from what I learned from her. I have some significant things that I remember. The fact that she was our teacher for five years, gave her the opportunity to know us quite well. I'm not sure we all wanted her to know us quite that well. As children, we always wondered what was under those habits. One Monday morning, she walked in with the new habit that exposed hair. She didn't tell us that she was coming in looking different. We were quite startled to see that she not only had hair, but it was *red* hair. That caused quite the buzz in our classroom. She had the most wonderful laugh. A wonderful smile too, but oh that laugh.

My own children attended Carmel High School in Mundelein and through that, I was able to get Sister's e-mail and start another sixteen-year friendship with her. Every summer, after I got out of school, I would come to visit. She was such a force for us. One of my classmates came with me one time to see her. After I contact him to let him know of her passing, he commented, "She will always be in my heart, a special lady I will always remember. She had such an impact on my life. The great memories of my childhood school days include her and all of our classmates at St. Paul's. I didn't realize how good we had it until it was over." Sister Anita Therese once was on her way with a couple of other sisters to a Wisconsin lake. I was living in Gurney, Ill., and teaching in a public school system quite larger than St. Paul's. I invited her to come and visit my classroom. She was so amazed, not just by the size, but that I was one of 32 fourth-grade teachers in that building. I retired a couple of years ago. That's a completely different story; it was time. However, these last sixteen years meant so much to me. We wrote letters. I had my students write to her. They wrote wonderful things. I suggested things, but I also expected really great

cursive. I said, "This is what her looks like. This is what yours better look like, too." For the lessons I've learned, for the friendships I've had, and for the role model she was, I thank her.

Sister Karen Conover, BVM

I met Anita when she was principal at St. Paul in Burlington and I was a brand new Scholastic. That means I just made vows and was at Clarke College when two of us were assigned to summer school of religion. I have no younger siblings -I have no siblings at all – so little children are a great mystery to me. She just laughed me, and my young BVM companion, through the experience. From that experience, we began a lifelong friendship. I sent her my long missives, an update of the whole year. She always said, "Oh, I look forward to that so much." She would laugh and share. It was my privilege to come back here to work for almost four years now and talk with Anita about her funeral, which we never dreamt would be quite this soon. "Yes, I want to wear this. I want to wear this." Everything is just as Anita would like it. She would laugh, as you know.

Sister Eileen Fuchs, BVM

I want to follow up on the lake house in Wisconsin. Anita Therese opened and closed, which means cleaned, that lake house every year including last year. I was with her the last couple of years. I'm not her age; I had to sit down every once in a while, but she didn't! She would say, "That's OK, Dearie, you rest." She did twirls around me in the opening and closing of the Spiders.

Sister Roberta White, BVM

I want to share some of the last moments that Anita Therese spent with us. She had an amazing Sunday from Schola in the morning to the cluster in the evening and sitting with Pat Harrison who was dying. At about 8:30 p.m., she came up to sit with Sister Teresita Poulin, who was also dying. Sitting she didn't do; she stood of course and talked with Teresita who was one of the members of the Fabulous Five. She started to tell her all the wonderful things she had done for her mother and her father, especially talking in her father when her mom died. She said, "Now, Teresita, you can go and be with them. It's time and they're waiting for you." She then went back to her own room that night and she went home to God. I'm sure that's how she called Pat and Teresita so soon after her. It was a great blessing to be there that evening with Anita Therese.

Marybeth Myrick-Steen, Niece

I represent the Texas in Aunt Mary's life. I, too, wondered what Aunt Mary had under her habit. I also wondered why she didn't have hands. I knew that she had that smile. I'm named after her, as are two of my cousins. I often asked why she had to wear the habit. My mom tried to explain it the best she could, but my dad, who was a practicing Baptist but converted to Catholicism for my mom, said that she was too big, that her heart was so big that it had to be covered. It was. All of you knew that. If you knew Mary, you knew her heart. That's what we knew. After I questioned her about her hands when I was little, she always showed them to me. She spoke to me about her hands. They were loving hands. My mother was gray, well-earned with all of us kids, but Mary had that vibrant red hair. I asked about that too and mother said, "She has no children. She has no husband." That makes complete sense to me now, having children and a husband. When she called, it was also "Marybeth, it's your Aunt Mary." We would have the litany of tell-me-about-everybody. If I forgot someone, "Well, what about . . .?" I would get the news about all the cousins, all the sicknesses, all the sisters and her life. Although I live in Texas, thirteen hours away, I never was disconnected from her. I am so grateful for the love that she had from all of you, for how you cared for her, and how special she felt. Now she's with her family again. She'd always ask what my prayers were and we'd talk about our prayer lists. Honestly, she was the easiest, even easier than my mother, to tell about the hard things, the things we hide from our family because we were embarrassed or it wasn't right. She would say, "Well, let's pray about it. We'll love them through that." We love you, Aunt Mary.