



Wake Stories of Deanna Marie (Bernita) Carr, BVM
Marian Hall Chapel, Jan. 8, 2020

Anne Kendall, BVM, Set Member (*Read by Diane Forster, BVM*)

Having known Deanna for 60 years and since I am a member of her set, I found her to be a gifted writer, a champion of the underdog, and a loyal friend and family member. She was long suffering, compassionate toward the poor, possessing insightful intelligence with a keen, clever sense of humor. Throughout her vowed religious life, she lived the BVM core values and used her talents in various ministry experiences. She will be missed by our set, the BVM community, and her family. Our loss is heaven's gain . . . and I'll wager that she is presently engaged in heaven in a lively discussion on some theological topic.

Jean Bray, Tahuya, Wash. (*Read by Diane Forster, BVM*)

Deanna and I only became acquainted about the time she left for Dubuque. She has been remembered at our weekend liturgies at Prince of Peace and St. Gabriel's parishes. She will long be remembered by parishioners of both parishes for her thoughtful leadership. It was her idea to advance the adult catechetical formation to three years so as to advance layperson's knowledge and formal formation should we wish to help teach our faith. I am so grateful for this. When Prince of Peace parish in Belfair, Wash., celebrated our 25th year of our building, the parish installed an outdoor brick garden and one brick has her name.

Maria Murphree, director of religious education, St. Gabriel's Parish, Port Orchard, WA (*Read by Diane Forster, BVM*)

Sister Deanna was a blessing to our parish as a leader when we were without an assigned pastor. With energy and enthusiasm, she engaged parishioners and helped revitalize our parish.

Barb Francetich, Sand Coulee, Mont. (*Via email*)

Sister Deanna was a great friend. We have kept in touch since her service to our parish, Holy Trinity, in Centerville, Mont. She was a great leader and taught us many things that we still do at our church. She truly will be missed by many. She really was a great helper to me when my husband died in 2017, calling and writing many a note to cheer me, giving lots of great advice and help to get back in the groove and go on by myself. She will never be forgotten. I loved her dearly. She was one great lady in my world and the rest of the world too. Lots of love and prayers for all of us left behind. We will see you in our next journey.

Kirk LeDoux, friend (*Read by Diane Forster, BVM*)

She was a beautiful woman and human being. Just a very strong, beautiful lady; a real angel on earth. She never slowed down; always busy, something to get done. I will miss Sister Deanna. This world is a lesser place without her. Heaven is blessed with her.

Jim, friend (*Read by Diane Forster, BVM*)

This wonderful lady led me through Confirmation as an adult. I am thankful for the gift of her presence in my life.

Jean Farmer, friend (*Read by Diane Forster, BVM*)

Sister Deanna was my boss and mentor for many years. She had high standards and taught us well. She was my favorite boss to work for, I also loved her wicked sense of humor. I just loved her.

Ann Nachtigal, friend (Read by Diane Forster, BVM)

Deanna was a treasured friend when we were in high school. While I am sad at her passing, it is heartening to read of the wonderful life she led over these 61 years since our paths diverged. She will not be forgotten.

Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM

As Teri alluded to in Deanna's own words, we entered the community in 1959 with our final vow summer in 1967. Those years spanned pre-Vatican II and Vatican II. We had a clash of theologies. Deanna used the phrase "challenging times." In some ways for us, they were turbulent times because the tension in theologies affected our early formation years. There was a lot of pressure to go in one direction or the other theologically and to live that out in very different ways. Deanna was very clear about wanting to be faithful and living with integrity and fidelity to the God within her. I can't speak for everyone, but I think that in different ways, we all experienced that courage of integrity on Deanna's part to make her own decisions. At least for me, that became contagious. We made different decisions, but we made them out of that place of integrity thanks to Deanna's witness. I believe that has continued through all the subsequent years.

Mary Jo Keane, BVM

I, too, was in the famous Set of 1959. We were a humongous group of over a hundred. People were all very excited. We were all teenagers except for me and my friend who is with me today. People would say, "I'm so excited to be here. I'm so excited to get up in the morning. I'm so excited to listen to the lectures." Deanna was in front of me. I tapped her on the shoulder and said, "Deanna, are you excited too?" She said, "Oh, it's a mess!"

Kathryn Lawlor, BVM

I knew Deanna's family before I knew Deanna. I taught with her father at Blanchet High School in Seattle. He was the chemistry teacher and the dean of discipline. He was truly a gentle man. He loved Deanna. He loved Bernadette. He loved Colleen. He loved Judy. From her dad, she acquired that quiet, gentle approach before she really ran things. From her mother, she inherited a delightful sense of humor. Her parents lived near the convent. We enjoyed her mother because she had such marvelous comments to make about things. Deanna, indeed, inherited that from her mother. Deanna had marvelous comments to put things in a fast perspective because of her sense of humor. Deanna actually brought the entire family into the community. I taught Judy and I taught Patrick [a cousin and BVM Kathleen Carr's brother]. They were both very smart so we were happy to have the family come in as part of the community. We are certainly very grateful to all of you and to Deanna.

Mary McCauley, BVM

We were all talking about Deanna's giftedness and mentioned about a thousand gifts in the beginning part of our prayer service. I think I'm going to mention a thousand more. In 2018, when we were planning the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Postville [Iowa] immigration raid, I knew that I needed the help of many, many people. In my wisdom, I asked Deanna if she would be part of that committee and she graciously said yes. I knew we needed her giftedness. I was most grateful for her presence on that committee. Following Deanna's death, I emailed a few people on the committee, in particular some of the women in northeast Iowa who I knew had greatly appreciated Deanna's presence. One of the women, Ruth Palmer, wrote back and said, "Deanna's spirit will live on in those whose lives she touched." This gave me great comfort. In believing this to be very true, I am going to boldly ask for a double portion of Deanna's spirit and suggest that all of you in the chapel do the same. I am asking for a double portion of her wit and wisdom, her pastoral understanding of theology, her compassion, her commitment to social justice, her love of our BVM *Constitutions* and the spirit of Mary Frances Clarke, her inner strength and indomitable spirit despite physical challenges, her journalistic ability, her ability to live with mystery. I suggest that you name the gift that you identify with Deanna, and be confident that these gifts will live on in our hearts.

Lori Ritz, director of BVM Life and Mission

I first met Deanna Carr at Wright Hall in Chicago as I walked through the door wanting to enter the BVM congregation in the 1970s. I got to know her in a different way than many of you when she was the director of associates at that time. I am here to read a memory from Linda McBride.

Linda McBride, Chicago

My first encounter with Sister Deanna was when my good friend Sister Mary Lou Wetzell entered what was called at the time the Associate program in approximately 1970. Sister Mary Frances Shafer and Sister Deanna saw the importance of people in the program having their friends along for the journey. When Sister Mary Lou and I were in Spokane in April 1970 we stopped at Fort Wright College to see Sister Deanna's sister Judy, who was a student there at the time, with a greeting from her sister. Working at St. Joseph Hospital in Chicago, I frequently would run into to Sister Deanna visiting a BVM who was hospitalized. After Sister left the Chicago area, I did not see her again until she came to Dubuque and I was able to visit the archives and get a *grand* tour. I am grateful she was able to celebrate her 60-year jubilee this past year and had hoped to see her when I came for benefactor event in November, but that was not meant to be. I will be always grateful for her friendship and maybe someday Father Donaghoe's safe will make it to the first floor history rooms.

Joyce Cox, BVM

Deanna, her family and I have been friends for many, many years in Montana and in Seattle. I remember many things about Deanna because she worked so hard as an administrator in two parishes—one in Aberdeen, one in Port Orchard. She was great with priests; she would tell them outright what she was thinking. Most of them heard the word and *obeyed* her. She was called in to the Archbishop's office once to give a report on how things were going. She said, "Archbishop, I have been here seven years in Aberdeen and seven years in Port Orchard. I have 43 priests. The *system* is *not* working." The Archbishop said, "I don't know what to do with it."

Virginia Forte, Seattle, former BVM

Those of us from Seattle are few and far between, so the BVMs who were missioned in Seattle treated us with tender loving care. When it was time for Deanna to enter the congregation, they contacted me because they wanted someone here to welcome Deanna to Dubuque. Fortunately, I was in summer school at Clarke College at that time. When the women who were entering stopped at Clarke before coming to Mount Carmel, I was fortunate to be there to give her a big hug and say, "Welcome to Dubuque." Throughout the years, our contact in the community was very precious. I was fortunate to be with her through the years we were on the *Constitutions* committee together and to experience her many, many gifts. There was another connection with the Northwest. There must be something in the water out there, because it nourished three of us who entered the community. It nourished us being secretaries. Ellen Morseth from Seattle was secretary for Sister Joan Doyle. Deanna followed as secretary for Mary Frances Shaffer. Then Deanna passed on the reins to me as secretary for Sister Helen Maher Garvey, a great privilege and one to never be forgotten. When Deanna returned to the Northwest, it was not only her family who was grateful for her return because she experienced many wonderful times with them, but it was also the BVM cluster that became very vibrant because of her presence with us. On behalf of the Northwest Cluster, I want to express how grateful we are that she returned to her homeland. As I welcomed her in 1959, I am very grateful to be here to say goodbye to her in this sacred place.

Ellen Morseth, BVM (Excerpts from letter)

Though we're both natives of Seattle, growing up in neighboring BVM schools and graduating a year apart from the same high school, we didn't know each other until we were professed BVMs. When we were both pastoral administrators in the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, Mont., we were located about 10 driving hours away from each other. The telephone became our most regular vehicle for communication, and it was not long before calls often began with "Ellen, you're not going to believe this!" or "Deanna, you're not going to believe this." Deanna enjoyed retelling the true stories that we shared over the phone. So much for the theology updates we were trying to foster in our Montana ministries!

Just one more recent memory: A few years ago when I arrived at the BVM Center to volunteer in Archives, Deanna asked if I'd be willing to take a little trip up into Wisconsin with her. She said she needed a couple of days off. We left for the Wisconsin Dells the next morning and had a good time there. On the drive back to Dubuque, we decided we were going to stop in all the small towns just to see their quaint features. In one town we found a street sign with the word "Restaurant" and an arrow pointing north. We walked there. It was a cute place; it looked like a library with just a few tables scattered about. We ordered sandwiches and then saw the restaurant sign we missed on our way in. It read "Confessional!" So we had another good story to tell and certainly another good laugh. Deanna was such a good friend. She will be greatly missed.

Irene Lukefahr, BVM

I had the privilege of being with Deanna the morning after her sisters had left. I was surprised to see her all by herself. I went in and Deanna started sharing with me that her novice mistress was SM St. Etienne (Sister Ann Marie van de Voorde). She loved St. Etienne. When Ann Marie was dying, Deanna visited her. Anne Marie said to Deanna, "You know, I'm not afraid to die, but I am very curious about what's going to happen after that." Deanna's eyes lit up as she said, "Curious. I am so curious about what's next." Deanna, I think a bit of your curiosity has been resolved, but you have a lot more to find out. Thank you for your love. One of Deanna's gifts was that of friendship; she was a very good friend. We've known each other for over 50 years. We've spent time together on vacation, working together. She is so interested in the people she knows and loves and so supportive. She gifted herself to everyone she could. I am very grateful for the friendship we shared.

Jennifer Head, BVM archivist

Sister Deanna was my predecessor and then remained working in Archives for several years after I began to help me "find my way." She was a valuable resource for many questions I had on BVM history and customs, even (or perhaps especially!) when it was a question with an "obvious" answer. I will miss her wicked sense of humor and her stories showing the many twists and turns her life as a BVM took. Her dedication and devotion to her ministry in the Archives was unwavering, even after her retirement. All of us in Archives will be forever grateful for the time and effort she put in to our shared mission.

Eileen Healy, BVM

One thing Deanna was very concerned about was the mess in Washington, DC. She would sit here before Mass a couple of times a week and discuss the current mess. She would be a good person to whom to pray to help us settle the mess in Washington, DC.

Bernadette, McManigal, BVM

We have spoken of Deanna's sense of humor and also her ability to bring people together to work for the common good of all. I recall when she was working with the three missions in Montana, Deanna said, "We can come together on the big things. The difficulty is which parish's recipe for pigs-in-a-blanket will be chosen."

Bernadette Hart, sister

There is a photo of Deanna taken right before she entered. She is wearing her postulant dress. She posed; it is a very posed picture. I found it among the family photos a couple of years. I framed it and sent it to her for Christmas. When she got it, she sent this comment to me: "Sort of otherworldly. Little did I know what would be ahead. A thousand and one funny and wildly improbable stories, but my intentions were good. You enter religious life for certain reasons. Only rarely do you stay in religious life for those reasons."

Kathleen Carr, BVM, cousin

It was a special blessing to be part of Deanna's family on several levels—as "family family" and as BVM family. She was such an inspiration to me. In fact, she and Mary Frances Shafer helped guide me and the other young sisters when we lived at the Scholasticate. They were a very positive and powerful influence in our lives. I always marveled at Deanna because, although she was small in stature, she was very strong. She lived a great life of integrity and commitment to our BVM mission and ministry. I always was amazed by how much she could

accomplish. Thank you, Deanna, for all you have shared with us, especially what you have shared with us as family. May God bless you and may you rest in peace.

Anne Buckley, BVM

In the eulogy, the word “exigencies” was spoken. It is not a word that just slips off my tongue every day, but it is in our *Constitutions*. Now I am beginning to wonder if it was a gift from Deanna. She certainly was one of the exigencies of our times.

Sharon Rezmer, BVM

Two things that I remember Deanna for are her strong spirituality and her love of Mary Frances Clarke. She talked about Mary Frances as though she was her best girlfriend. She shared some of those things with me. She was a wonderful mentor for me, especially as I work with the seminarians. She was such a good example of faithfulness to God and to her vocation. I thank Deanna for that.

Colleen Wartelle, sister

When Deanna came home to visit us, it was always a big occasion. Mother would send out a little note; I found one the other day that said, “Deanna is coming home. Come for dinner. I know you’re busy, but please come.” All of us would gather our kids, who got to know Deanna pretty well. It was an occasion for them too; it was a big party when Deanna hit town. She loved our children and relished in every good thing they accomplished, even the crazy things. She was a cheerleader. She was a positive influence for all of us. We all felt good when Deanna was there because she approved of the things we were doing. She gave us such great strength and wonderful feelings. At my husband’s encouragement, I want to say thank you to the order for all you have given to Deanna and to us as a family, especially for these last hard years. We always felt so comfortable because she had someone with her. That was a great gift to us all. Thank you very much for that.

Judith Downing, sister

Since my sisters spoke up, I have to also. I am the youngest so a lot came down to me because of that. When Deanna entered the order, I was 12 years old. I missed her terribly so I started this little tradition, and my mother assisted me in this. I would write every week and then sometimes would go to the store and buy her a little something and send her a little package. In one of the letters, I said at the end that I missed her very, very much and would always miss her. Then I added, for some reason, “And you, Deanna, will miss the joy of watching me grow up.” A little dig there, I guess. When Deanna came back to the Pacific Northwest, we were thrilled because we sisters bonded all over again and she got to meet our husbands, children, and grandchildren. They truly, truly loved her. I enjoyed the nights that she and I would stay up and talk after everybody went to bed because Deanna was the person, and I’m sure you all know this, who would listen to you. She never interrupted; she never gave her opinion. She listened to what you were saying. After that was done, she might have a comment. I appreciated that and have tried to echo that in my life. There are so many times when someone is talking and you want to tell them what to do. Don’t do it. Just don’t do it. I’ve told this story a couple times, but I want to tell it again because it just cracks me up. My grandson who is 13 now was 4 and Deanna was coming to visit. I took care of him on Tuesdays. He came while I was getting the guest room ready. He was very suspicious of it. Why was I moving this? Why was I doing that? I said that my sister was coming in May and that he would get to meet her. The next Tuesday when he came, he and I were at a little table playing and he asked me when May was coming. Being a mother and a primary teacher, I was thinking of the months of the year so I went into a little explanation. He stands up, comes over to me, takes my hands and says to me, “Grandma, your sister May, when is she coming?” He thought Deanna’s name was May. He laughs about it today. Deanna has been a gift to all of you and to everyone she worked with and a very special gift to our family. We were all lucky to be sisters together.

Bob Doud (*Read by Diane Forster, BVM*)

Deanna

A quiet, consecrated lady

slips into heaven, not leaving her bed.

Closes her eyes on earth and opens them in heaven.

Classy in prayer, on a first class solemn feast,
the solemnity of her friend, Our Lady.

Sicut liliam inter spinas, she prays to herself
with half a groan, half chuckle in her throat,
and a twinkle of big and beautiful brown eyes.

Without a movement, it seems,
she transits over a thin threshold
and joins the choir of eternity.

Always young in memory, always wiser than her years

I wonder now who will replace her as a voice
in prayer for those she favored in this world?

Yellow roses she put before Mary for many years.

Are those roses, kept by Mary, waiting for Deanna now?