



## **Wake Stories of Dolores Marie McHugh, BVM** Caritas Studio, July7, 2020

### **Mary McCauley, BVM**

As most of you are aware, it was my privilege to serve as one of Dolores's vice presidents during the years she served as president of our community. Dolores was a fun loving, joyful, strong, conscientious, determined, and ever faithful BVM. She was an excellent administrator—highly organized, honest, and hard working. Yes, she worked hard and had the same expectation for all who worked with her. She was a woman of principle who loved our BVM Community and every member of it. She also loved every member of the McHugh family and had a special relationship with each one. In my experience of working with Dolores, I would like to acknowledge her gift or ability to empower others to develop their gifts and become their best selves. If you had an idea and wanted to pursue it, Dolores supported you in it. She truly believed in and witnessed to our BVM mission of freeing people in God's steadfast love and for this I shall always be grateful. I have wonderful memories of my years of ministering with Dolores in service to our community.

I also have special grace-filled memories of how she lived her final years. Despite the fact that Dolores could not articulate her ideas or feelings, she never lost her spirit, her warmth, her care and concern for others. She never lost her innate kindness or fun-loving spirit. Her sparkling, loving, concerned and sometimes mischievous eyes spoke the words, the thoughts, the feelings she wanted to express. So what else can I say except thank you. Yes, thank you, Dolores. You were a joy to know, a joy to love. I learned a lot from you. You were a good friend and for this I shall always be grateful. Now that you are experiencing the fullness of life, just keep up loving, directing, and freeing us to be the women we are called to be at the deepest core of our being.

### **Mary Martens, BVM**

Like Mary McCauley, I had the privilege of serving in BVM Leadership with Dolores Marie and Mary McCauley. During our four years together, Dolores' wisdom, mentoring, and friendship were a blessing. Her good humor and her sense of fun enlivened the team approach she encouraged from the outset as the three of us collaborated and journeyed together. We gathered with BVMs around the country for town hall meetings in various geographic areas, an opportunity for contact with many sisters and BVM ministries. A favorite memory of mine was the time I accompanied Dolores to a triennial meeting of the International Union of Superiors General in Rome. It was a chance to be present with her throughout the meeting itself, and to enjoy observing her easy interactions with our table group of English-speaking women religious. At the conclusion of UISG, a trip to the Vatican provided a group audience with John Paul II for all the participants. We jockeyed for position among the enthusiastic crowd, with Dolores commenting on their "sharp elbows" as everyone tried to get close enough to shake hands with the pope. She did! Generous hospitality with the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Rome and a two-day visit to Assisi at spring festival time further enriched our time in Italy. Building relationships, always a primary consideration for Dolores, happened in a wonderful way for me during that special week.

### **Jean Gordon, BVM**

Dolores loved life! She would often say "I work hard and I play hard"—that was so true! She put her heart, soul and energy into whatever she was doing: planning a meeting; preparing a talk; ministering to BVMs; planting a garden; riding a bike on the Heritage Trail; grilling outside in the midst of a winter storm; playing with Jet, our neighbor's dog. She gave all the energy she had to whatever she was doing. She was a trusted mentor and a faithful friend.

Not only was she faithful to the BVM Community, she loved her family, called them often and was a frequent guest in their homes and at their parties. Dolores loved children—and children were drawn to her. She had a sense of their wonder and joy. In Dolores' last few months, she found it difficult to find the right words. However she never found it difficult to say "thank you" and "I love you." I believe that Dolores would want to say the BVM Community, her family, faithful friends, and caregivers, "Thank you and I love you!" Dolores' death came quickly and unexpectedly. She now lives in the peace and the presence of the God she so loved.

### **Joellen McCarthy, BVM**

During my time serving as vice president with Dolores, she was most understanding of my relationship to my parents as their only surviving child. She warmly welcomed them when they flew to Dubuque for the beginning of our term in 1996. As their health deteriorated in the subsequent four years, she gave me the space I needed to be present to them. I remain profoundly grateful to Dolores and I am sure Sis and Joe McCarthy were among those warmly welcoming Dolores to her new life.

### **Annmarie Sanders, IHM**

I remember Dolores, having met her several times at various events over the years. I know she was beloved and a truly great leader. Helen spoke of her so often, as well as Mira, and I remember seeing her at Helen's services. What a loss for all of you! It must be especially hard when you cannot mark a life like Dolores' in your usual beautiful manner. Count on my prayer for all of you at this time.

### **Sisters Jeanie and Elaine Hagedorn, CHM**

As two Sisters of the Humility of Mary, Elaine and Jeanie Hagedorn were thrilled in the mid-1970s to welcome Dolores into our Des Moines home—and very quickly into our hearts and our lives. It was one of the first intercommunity living situations for either congregation and it was truly a blessing!

In our nine plus years living together, the three of us shared so many good times—hosting parties and prayer with each other's religious sisters especially at Christmastime, celebrating special occasions like BVM and CHM jubilee celebrations, surprise birthday parties with family and friends; Dolores singing at our sister Mary Jo's wedding; enjoying McHugh family gatherings in Des Moines when the lights went out in a storm and Bishop Dingman laughed as if it was all planned; family reunions with a zillion cousins (she got to know them all); and so many memorable vacations like driving down the beautiful Pacific coast or jumping on a trampoline like foolish kids. We shared ordinary daily living too, supporting one another in the ups and downs of our ministries, sharing household responsibilities like cooking and washing windows, and life-changing events like the sudden loss of Dolores' nephew John and the deaths of our dad and mother. Our family and community became her family, and hers became ours. And through it all Dolores was the sunshine that lit up our lives and our home. One of her favorite songs was "You Light Up My Life." Those words truly describe our lasting friendship with "D."

In each of life's moments during those blessed nine years, Dolores' deep faith in God and her commitment to her BVM congregation were never in doubt. She gave 110 percent to her community, making frequent trips to Dubuque to serve on committees and boards while still giving her *all* to the Des Moines Diocese in the Schools Office, first as curriculum coordinator and then as superintendent of Catholic Schools. And regardless of her professional responsibilities, Dolores was *always* available for her family, friends, and anyone in need, supporting, encouraging, guiding, challenging, entertaining with her sometimes impish grin, contagious laugh and twinkling eyes. Her warmth earned her the endearing name "McHug."

Now in Dolores' absence, two Humility sisters feel a huge hole in our hearts. We send our gratitude and deepest sympathy to her family, her BVM sisters and staff, and the many friends whose lives she also touched. Dolores always said she wanted to die with her boots on and she did, living life to the fullest, giving to the very end. Now we can only rejoice that our "D" is released from Earth's limitations and is in the *eternal light* and fullness of God's presence! It is with deep sorrow but tremendous gratitude that we send you home, dear Dolores, with much love and virtual hugs, til we meet again!

### **Clara Rudroff Clark, former BVM and former student**

Dolores Marie was my favorite elementary teacher at Holy Family in Glendale, Calif., in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1965 when I graduated from Holy Family High School and decided to enter the BVMs at Guadalupe College, I asked Dolores to be my sponsor. It may have raised a couple of eyebrows that I chose a sponsor from the elementary school, but I know it didn't bother her. Dolores was always very down to Earth and a great support. I can still hear her voice, her laugh, and see her smile. I am thankful for her.

### **Michael Morgan, former student**

Sister Dolores Marie is my last link to the BVMs, whose distinguished service blessed many at St. Catherine's in Kansas City, Mo. Sister Dolores Marie taught me in fifth grade and later assumed the principal's duties. Imagine the bad old days where there was no air conditioning in Missouri in June! After lunch, Sister put on records and instructed us to put our heads down on our desks. Many promptly fell asleep. *The Cask of Amontillado (an Edgar Allen Poe short horror story)* is forever etched in my brain. But, then again, so is Sister's remark that she took a course in the Playboy philosophy at Mundelein College. Well done, Sister. Rest in peace.

### **Sister Gail Fitzpatrick, OCSO**

Sister Dolores was a good friend over the many years we served our communities in leadership. She was extremely kind to me and together we survived some trying times as major superiors and bishops began to dialogue and really listen to the whole church. Dolores had many good stories to lighten our sharings and I enjoyed her humor very much. May God bless her abundantly as only God can.

### **The Phelps Girls (Patricia Vincent, Carol Hamerly, Vicki Bergheger, Shelley Penderson)**

I was very sad to hear about Sister Dolores's passing. My sisters and I have some very fond memories of Sister Dolores. We first met her when our sister, Sister Mary Ann Elizabeth Phelps, BVM passed away in 2005. She was so kind to us the whole day and continued with her kindness to us in future visits. She always remembered who we were and made us feel special. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her family and friends. We will never forget her.

### **Pat Judge**

It was my privilege to have Sister Dolores as my supervisor for 15 years of my 20 years at Mount Carmel. Although I was a bit afraid of her at first (this is no secret as I told her many times), I found her to be approachable, supportive, and encouraging as we expanded the BVM Development Program. She was not only interested in work performance but in my family and life outside of work. My admiration for her as an administrator and as a personal friend has deepened throughout the years. I will miss her. Rest in peace.

### **Margaret "Becky" Molloy Nelle, former BVM**

Dolores possessed a warm beautiful personality. She loved people and developed skills to show it. Her life of service to the world as a BVM is outstanding.

### **Mary A. Healey, BVM**

Sally McHugh was the youngest member of our set. She grew up in the East and went to a Catholic grade school there. About the time she finished, the family moved to Phoenix because her older sister who had married and moved there needed help. Sally went to a public high school there, because they couldn't afford Xavier. Her sister's children went to a BVM grade school. When her sister died, the BVMs were so kind to the family that she found her vocation.

Once I was on some committee that planned a conference call for an evening when I would be staying at my nephew's home after some family celebration. I wrote to tell Dolores his phone number, but her secretary forgot to make the change. That night she called Wright Hall in vain. The call was scheduled after most relatives had departed; I sat by the phone well past the designated time and gave up. Dolores did not give up. After the call, she

went back through recent correspondence, found my letter, phoned the right number, woke my nephew's wife and caused a little confusion because she also is Mary Healey but doesn't sound a bit like me. (Who does?) When Dolores finally found me, she was abjectly apologetic. It wasn't her fault. You would have thought the congregation couldn't survive without my wise contribution to the phone call.

**Sandy Blake**

My condolences. I met Sister at Clarke during a Musical Menus program, and remember her as charming and vital.

**Sister Jeanie Hagedorn, CHM**

For Dolores

A part of me died today...  
my dearest friend  
whose love warmed my heart  
whose courage made me stronger  
whose honesty sometimes troubled  
whose wisdom enlightened and guided  
whose humor brought joy and laughter  
whose faith challenged my own  
whose comfort released fear and sadness  
whose Hug was her very name.

A treasured friend  
whose very life encouraged growth  
whose tenderness was strength  
and whose strength was always tender,  
whose faithfulness was sacrament  
whose absence now is loss  
for all whose lives she touched.

Go now in peace, my friend.  
Your dolors have earned you resurrection.  
Your life of selfless giving  
now receives a gift,  
promised from the cross,  
The Presence of One for whom you longed.

Your day of birth 87 years ago  
has become the day of your birth into eternity.  
You acted justly  
Loved tenderly  
Walked humbly  
with your God.

Now, may you rejoice and give praise  
with beloved family, sisters, friends, a whole communion of saints!  
Now may you sing, express yourself, laugh and love again, dear friend  
until we meet again.

Jeanie Hagedorn, CHM, 4-24-2020

**Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Kirkwood, Mo. (Sent by Sister Angelo, Collins, OP, Secretary, LCWR Region 10)**

My heart breaks for all the BVMs. I remember Dolores so well. She was such a gifted leader—so articulate, so insightful, and so welcoming. She is surely one of the great leaders in the BVM's congregational history. And she served the charism of religious life in numerous ways. The prayers of the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help are with all the sisters.

**Marilyn Huegerich OSF, vice president, Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa**

Dolores Marie was a welcoming person who took the time to speak with everyone. When we were at meetings, I was grateful for her positive conversations and time spent together. Her smile and gentle humor fit every occasion. She will be remembered at our communal prayer. Blessings to you and your community.

**Sister Rebecca Stramoski, OCSO, Abbess, Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey, Dubuque, Iowa**

Thank you for letting us know about Sister Dolores' passing. We spoke about her at Chapter this morning with some great memories of a woman with such great talent and love. She was a dear friend of ours and will be greatly missed! She had especially been a wonderful friend to Sister Gail Fitzpatrick, OCSO, during some rough times as well as good times. It must be hard to have funerals in the midst of quarantine and the COVID. It makes the grieving process more difficult. Our prayers are with you.

**Patricia Donahoe, BVM**

It was in 1980. Dolores Marie and I had been in Des Moines at the same time. She was Superintendent of Catholic Schools, and I, with my mother in her last days. Dolores was in the hospital recovering from thyroid surgery and I stopped in to see her. She laughed and told me this: "Well, Doctor, there have been a lot of people who have wanted to slit my throat, but you're the first one who got away with it!" And she laughed the hearty Dolores Marie laugh. Recounted with love.

**Charles and Suzanne Adams**

Fond memories of our years at St Catherine's in Kansas City, Mo., and our trips to Avila each Saturday morning working in classrooms filled to capacity. I will always remember your positive leadership; beautiful smiling Irish eyes. You are smiling in God's eyes now. Love always.

**Tammy Seay**

I had the privilege of working at the BVM Center while Sister Dolores Marie was a vice president and then president of the BVM congregation. Her love of God and her quick wit and humor have remained with me over the decades. While my thoughts and prayers go out to family and friends left behind, I rejoice that she has joined our God and is smiling down upon us. Rest in peace, dear Sister.

**George Vander Vennet**

Thank you for including me in the notification about Dolores Marie's death. She was a wonderful person. I got to know her when I was on the congregation's pension fund committee. May she rest in peace!

**Barbara Hamill Leva**

I am saddened to read this and, at the same time, know she is with God and at rest. Sister Dolores Marie entered and left her Earthly home on the same day, truly a beautiful gift in praise of her life's work. I hope to read more about her life.

**Brendan and Evelyn Haggerty**

Another saint gone home. Prayers of rest for His work well done.

**Patrick Barrett, alum, Our Lady Help of Christians, Chicago**

I am very sorry to hear of these recent deaths. They were great women who dedicated their lives to others.

**Maureen Dugan**

While I did not know Dolores well, I absolutely adored her. She was so very warm and kind. Thanks so much for keeping me in the loop.

**Patricia Brock**

I remember meeting Sister Dolores Marie when we visited my aunt, Sister Kathryn Lawlor. God bless.

**Coralia Diaz Salazar, Miami, Fla.**

May she rest in peace. I will offer my next Sunday Mass for her. God bless you all.

**Anna Mahoney**

Lord, grant eternal rest to Sister Dolores McHugh that she may rest in your heavenly peace, Amen.

**Ralph and Rita Manternach**

Our sympathy to all of Sister Dolores' family and the Sisters of Charity with whom she shared her life. Our prayers are with you.

**Mike Johnson**

I can't say that I ever met Sister though I undoubtedly did. I certainly have her name ingrained in my memory from communications during her presidential years. May she rest in peace. I will pray for her repose.

**Carole Jaroch, Warsaw, Ind.**

I give my sympathy to all the sisters and staff. I do remember seeing her picture in many places. Eternal rest grant onto her, Oh Lord. Thanks for letting me know. God bless you.

**Pat (Prindiville) Nelson, Mundelein College, Class of 1961**

May she rest in God's Eternal Peace!