



Sharing of Memories of Carolyn (Lester) Farrell, BVM

Caritas Studio, June 24, 2020

Betty L. Voss, BVM

In 1967, I went to Clarke College (now University) to teach and live in community with 80+ wonderful BVMs. At that time, the BVMs and other religious congregations around the country were discerning and creating small groups. It was very appealing to me, Rita Garvey, and Barbara Kutchera. We decided to invite Carolyn, who was coming to Dubuque to be principal, to be a fourth in our proposed group. She eagerly agreed.

Our apartment living adventure on Alta Vista began. Many of you have probably visited there. We didn't want the Clarke community to think of us as some radical, renegade group, so it was Carolyn's idea to invite small groups to dinner at our apartment. Carolyn loved to cook and was the best cook among us. The rest of us readily agreed that we would do all the peripheral tasks. For the next several months, twice a month we would have a dinner party for three to six people. About eight months later, we were relaxing in the living room, a couple of us on the floor giving ourselves what we called "the carpet treatment," and laughing about the dinner we just had. One of the group realized that we had all these dinner parties and we've never been invited anywhere. Of course, nobody else had an apartment and nobody else had a kitchen. By the same token, we could have joined them at a meal at Clarke if we wanted to. During that year, the congregation asked me to continue my studies so I applied for grants and went off to the University of Colorado in Greeley. That was the end of my year at Alta Vista. In later years as we review that era of our lives, Carolyn would usually say, "Yeah, you got it started and then you left. I could have killed you."

Fast forward through all the wonderful mystery we heard about. In March of this past year I moved to Mount Carmel and was welcomed by Carolyn and all the wonderful folks here. But you know how hard it is to leave good friends behind and a beautiful site like Colorado. I was here about two or three weeks when the closing hymn at the Sunday liturgy was "Sing to the Mountains." That was enough to bring an ache to my heart and tears to my eyes. As I sat after Mass a bit trying to swallow my tears, Carolyn, leaving chapel, saw me and came over and sat next to me. She reached out and took my hand. We sat there a few minutes and then she said, "It will get better." And it did.

Then less than four months ago, COVID-19 and chapel repair conspired to put us again in a small community on the first floor of Marian Hall. An incident about a month ago again brought out Carolyn's compassionate and caring self. My sister-in-law had died. While it seemed for a while I could join her 10 children for a service later in the summer, the pandemic news made me realize this would not happen. So after a Zoom call, I am weeping again in the kitchen, making myself a midnight snack. Carolyn was getting the morning coffee ready. She came over and hugged me. It surprised me. Her sensitivity brought this brief story about her becoming mayor. When she was on the Dubuque City Council and it was time to choose the next mayor, a gentleman was next in line to become the mayor by seniority, but Carolyn was chosen. She turned to the gentleman and was heard to say, "I'm sorry." Carolyn was not a hugger, but she loved with a huge, compassionate, humble heart—a wise and caring heart—that was the underpinning of all her service, all her work, all the struggles for justice, and everything she did. All emanated from that huge, loving heart. Carolyn, enjoy the presence of the beloved Blessed Mother and all the rest of the saints in heaven. Thank you, Carolyn. Thank you, God. We love you and we'll miss you, Carolyn.

Jim Farrell, brother

I am a younger brother of Sister Carolyn Farrell. My wife Caroline and I live in Bellevue, Wash., which is a suburb of Seattle. Sister Carolyn, who was the oldest of our family of six children, has been our spokesperson and representative since our parents passed away several years ago. She has kept us informed concerning our extended family's births, graduations, marriages, and deaths. She has been the anchor of our family. We will miss her greatly. The first word that comes to my mind when I think of my sister Carolyn is leader. Even in high school she was a leader. Sister Carolyn was the best kind of a leader. She led by hard work and example. Sister Carolyn was truly a woman of faithfulness.

Bridget Gilbert, niece

Carolyn Farrell was my aunt. She was fun, kind, caring, and truly a great role model. As kids, we couldn't wait to hear that she was coming to town to visit her parents, our grandparents. She would pick us up and take us to a nearby Busbee Park to play. We always played a number of games when she was in town, including one of our favorites—Uno. A visit wasn't complete without her amazing Chex Mix that she always made for us. Carolyn always did her best to show up for all our special moments from childhood to adulthood. Even when she wasn't around, we knew she was always thinking about us because we would get postcards from all the places she traveled. I am thankful for all the wonderful memories and her laugh that I will never forget. It's one of those laughs that you can't help but smile and it warms your heart. It's hard to say goodbye to such an amazing woman—a strong foundation for our family. But I am glad to know that she is reunited with her parents and my dad John, her younger brother. As Carolyn would always say, "Hugs for the road."

Dolores (Dee) Farrell Zeller, sister

Carolyn was a leader—a leader in our family, a leader for peace and justice, a leader for women's rights, a leader in each endeavor she undertook. Carolyn never met a stranger; she was comfortable in every situation. Yes, she had her opinions; if she thought it, she said it. We traveled together for many years, grand adventures. She had her "post card ministry." Post cards were sent to friends and relatives from wherever she traveled. Carolyn will be remembered by many and missed by all. May she rest in peace.

Margaret (Marg) Whitman, sister

Carolyn left for Mount Carmel when I was starting first grade so we didn't really grow up together. I have a couple of memories of her before that and others during the years we would go there to visit or at St. Paul's in Davenport, Iowa, or from the summer home visits. Although, during those couple of days each summer, we were more interested in the companion who came along, since we would be spending time with her while Carolyn and the grown-ups visited.

It was as adults that we really got to know each other. As life worked out, I settled in Chicago and between Carolyn working there and the endless reasons for coming to Chicago for meetings and gatherings over the years, we ended up spending a lot of time together. I got to know the person you know—the talented, organized, thoughtful, funny, determined, and so much more, person. I also was able to add a dimension to her life that was a bit of home life. My husband and daughters enjoyed her many visits, as she did too. Ed once told her that we were her bed and breakfast place and she delighted in calling to let us know she would be coming to stay at the B & B. After her retirement, the reasons for coming to Chicago continued and she spent holidays and other occasions with us, always enjoying the big events and the ordinary ones, celebrating the good times and supporting us when we needed it most. In the past few years, grandchildren have been added to the mix and she was delighted to spend time with them and they thought she was fun and special too. They call the bed in the guest room Carolyn's bed and I think we'll always call it that. Needless to say, I will miss her. And I am trusting that there will be "more later."

Caroline Farrell, sister-in-law, wife of Jim Farrell

I'll remember Carolyn as a beam of light, radiating love, energy, and optimism, caring for all of us and accepting us the way we are. I watched her use her capabilities with kindness and intelligence to make this world a better

place. For over 40 years, my sister-in-law was my role model. Although our family visits were infrequent, they were always special to me. My favorite times with Carolyn were our early morning chats, just the two of us by the fireplace with our coffee. We quietly talked and shared our lives. Hers was full and rewarding, everything and everybody mattered. Her opinions were measured, her wisdom undeniable. I'm grateful for the times we had together. Carolyn's loss leaves a huge hole in my heart but the memory of her will always make me smile. She'd like that. A fond farewell wrapped in love.

Ray Paul, friend and colleague, Mundelein College

Engaging, hardworking, and non-assuming as she was, Sister Carolyn Farrell, throughout the years I was privileged to know her, 1967-2020, never displayed, or even alluded to, the tremendous contribution she made to the painstaking Mundelein-Loyola transition.

Mary Gene Kinney, BVM

Carolyn was a woman of integrity and strength who was also willing to be vulnerable as she shared her life with others. I have experienced her support in many ways over the years as she was involved in many projects and issues. She always had time for a phone call, which always contained a nugget of wisdom. She was open to new things, even when she did not want to be. How many times did we hear her say, "I'm not into Zoom?" Then the pandemic brought about isolation and Carolyn "got into Zoom" because she needed people. Carolyn's support for Intercongregational Addictions Program (ICAP) over the years was a great help to Letty Close, BVM and me. At the time of her death, she was helping us plan an ICAP retreat by Zoom since we had to cancel the in-person retreat. She was the one who kept saying, "We can do it by Zoom." She ended her last conversation with me, the day before her death, by saying, "Keep on keeping on." I know I speak for all the members of ICAP who knew Carolyn when I say thank you, Carolyn. We are eternally grateful for your friendship and all the ways you touched us. We miss you. We will miss your physical presence as we "keep on keeping on."

Sharon Till

Dearest Carolyn, my heart is aching to hear your voice, the voice of inspiration that helped me improve my life and become a better woman! Your words of kindness, honesty, and sincerity will remain in my heart forever, along with the many hours we spent together just talking about life and families and my grandchildren and your great nieces and nephews! I will miss you terribly, Carolyn, but will never forget all that you helped me with to make my life much better! Thank you, Carolyn! Before I end my words this morning, I looked up who Saint Carolyn was. It was no surprise. Saint Carolyn spent her life helping women grow to their greatest potential!! Saint Carolyn lived life by having courage, believing in herself, and being kind to everyone! Amazing how Saint Carolyn and the Carolyn we knew are exactly alike. So Carolyn, as I say my final goodbye, I am remembering the one thing you always told me: "Remember who is in charge, Sherry, and it isn't you, it's God!!" So long, Carolyn. Now I really do have an angel in Heaven! Big Hugs and lots of love.

Margaret Mary Cosgrove, BVM

I first got to know Carolyn when I went to Clarke College (now University) in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1975. We became good friends in the 1980s. She was very gifted, a servant leader, a good friend, passionate about women and justice. She was always involved in politics, always working for the underrepresented. When she had her sabbatical at the Hubert Humphrey Center, she and I drove her belongings to Minnesota, Carolyn driving a U-Haul truck, I followed in a car. Her sister and family met us at her apartment and we unloaded everything. It was a fun trip and Carolyn was excited about her new venture. During our friendship, Carolyn also was a wonderful mentor, encouraging me in so many ways, opening doors for me. Leaving Clarke to serve at Loras College was a difficult decision and Carolyn was one of the few people who encouraged me to accept the challenging new ministry. It was one of the best decisions of my life. I will miss our conversations and frequent lunches, we had a date for after the pandemic for lunch!

Mary McCauley, BVM

It is a challenge to write any one memory of Carolyn. Without a doubt she was a “Woman of Wisdom,” who was open and responsive to the Spirit within her and the Spirit within each person she encountered! What a joy and a privilege it was to know her. She had a special gift for sensing what others were experiencing. She listened carefully and then often responded with what she called “*free advice*.” She had the ability to be forthright, sensitive, and affirming, all at the same time. I had the privilege of knowing, loving, and admiring Carolyn for the last 40 years. In particular, I will always be grateful for the years she served as my regional. Carolyn had that unique ability to show up just at the right time. So many people, especially within the BVM and Dubuque communities, are going to miss her presence, her clear thinking, and evident commitment to social justice. We have to trust that she will continue to guide and direct us as we face unique and challenging days in the political arena. May our prayer be simple and direct: *Come, Carolyn, continue to show us the way. May we learn from you and may the reality of our learning be evident in our continual commitment to peace, non-violence, and the rights of women and to the poor!*

Marilyn Wilson, BVM

Carolyn was truly an amazing woman. She was a mentor for me on so many occasions—at Senates, especially Long Range Planning, SALT editorial board, planning meetings for the BVM Network for Women’s Issues, and discerning leadership. I treasure her presence and encouragement when I was co-coordinator of the Women’s Office 2000-2006. I am forever grateful for her wisdom, integrity, insight, and inspiration. May she continue to urge us all on with her grace, courageous creativity, and blessings.

Ken Steckle, colleague, Loyola University-Chicago

After working for Mennonite organizations for many years, I had the opportunity to work at Loyola University-Chicago in the development office. During my first week, a welcoming person stopped by and introduced herself and the work she was involved with at the Gannon Center. I was privileged to work with Carolyn on the renovation of Piper Hall and other fundraising projects. She graciously received me as a stranger into the Catholic world, more the specifically the BVM and Jesuit environments. I learned to appreciate Carolyn in so many ways. I mentioned to her that she was one of the first people to welcome me to Chicago and that meant a lot. As I got to know her, I came to realize that in addition to welcoming me that first week, she may also have been determining whether I was going to be part of the problem or part of the solution. When I asked her about that, she just smiled and said that maybe she was checking me out. Thank you to Carolyn and the BVMs for visionary service, empowering women, progressive theology, and a commitment to social justice.

Susan Ross, professor emerita, Loyola University Chicago, director of the Gannon Center 2006-08

I was so fortunate to count Carolyn as a friend and a mentor. We first met when Mundelein affiliated with Loyola in 1991 and then really got to know each other when I became the director of Women’s Studies at Loyola in 1992. During my three years as director, I worked closely with Carolyn as she was establishing the Ann Ida Gannon Center for Women and Leadership and navigated the university’s bureaucracy to make it happen. She raised the considerable sum of money it took to transform Piper Hall into the showcase it is today; some of you know that the original plan was to tear it down. Carolyn had other plans! I was honored to succeed Carolyn as the director of the Gannon Center and helped raise the funds for the Carolyn Farrell Professorship—with the considerable help of Ann Ida and Carolyn!

Carolyn was not only a dedicated BVM sister and educator but also an astute politician who knew when to push and when to hold back. The Women’s Conferences that she organized every year were not only a showcase of women’s talent but an opportunity to share connections—and she had connections all over the world. She had a wonderful sense of humor, an uncanny ability to size up people, and a boundless optimism combined with a realistic sense of what could reasonably get accomplished. Her leadership helped immeasurably to advance women at Loyola. But most of all, to so many of us, she was a loyal friend, a cheerleader, and a tireless feminist. Even in her retirement she was constantly advocating for others, but never forgetting the personal touch. I know that Carolyn would hope that we would all just “keep on keeping on” making the world a better place. Cheers, Carolyn! You will always be in our hearts!

Janet Sisler, vice president, Mission Integration, Loyola University Chicago

As I mourn the loss of Carolyn Farrell, BVM, I also am filled with gratitude for the myriad ways in which Carolyn participated so gracefully in shaping a better world than the one we inherited. She was particularly gifted in discerning the presence of God in her life and in empowering others to discern God's movement in our lives. Well-grounded in the love of God which sets people free to risk discovering themselves, Carolyn helped shape generations of people to become leaders themselves. It was in observing her steadfast belief in others' God-given talents that led many to adopt a similar model for leadership. One of the many exceptional characteristics of Carolyn that I admire (and hopefully emulate) was her absolutely confident manner of creating leaders rather than followers. We have much to mourn, but we have much more for which we are grateful in the well-lived and fully alive person of Carolyn Farrell, BVM.

Jim Collins, president, Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa

Carolyn was a true trailblazer and she made such an impactful difference on so many communities, including ours. The Loras community and I will keep her, all the BVM sisters, and her family in our prayers.

Mary E. Hunt

One key to Carolyn's rich and productive life was her ongoing openness to learning. When fax technology arrived, I recall our excited exchanges from the BVM Women's Office to WATER (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual). Then came email, which was perfectly suited to her crisp communication style. Each time she embraced the new, not for novelty's sake but as additional resources for doing justice. In her last few weeks, she engaged in a private tutorial with a tech savvy and patient WATER intern, Laura Carr-Pries, to learn the finer points of Zoom. Then she Zoomed with the best of them, including joining in our anti-racism work. None of this newness substituted for her handwritten notes and cards, her frequent phone calls, and her daily prayer. She was a learner who added not subtracted.

Carolyn relished the Roberta Kuhn Center offerings. The music appreciation course was one of her favorites, where she could enjoy the music and learn about the composers from an accomplished professor. It was good education, and good education in her book was key. Rare was the day when Carolyn missed the evening news or the daily newspaper. She consumed information critically, always with an eye toward justice. What impressed me most over the years of our deep and rich friendship was her ability to hold so many people and so much of the world—from local art exhibits to global conferences—in her mind and heart. Learning was a skill, a daily practice as she carried out her responsibilities as citizen and friend with equal commitment. Carolyn is someone to emulate to make justice flower.

Catherine Jean Hayen, BVM

I recall that when Carolyn was mayor of Dubuque she would gather BVMs to discuss different justice issues which then led to actions. Another memory is when she was congregational representative and had her office in the Visitation Motherhouse. In the spring of 1988, she called me and encouraged me to apply to be Visitation Motherhouse administrator, a new position there, and certainly for me. I had just earned a gerontology certification, but was very hesitant to apply. However, I did apply and was hired, which led to an enriching six years with the Visitations. There were more BVMs than Visitation Sisters living there at that time. Thanks to Carolyn's encouragement and invitation, I had six blessed years there. Thank you, Carolyn, for sharing your gifts with so many.

Mary A. Healy, BVM

When Carolyn and I worked at Clarke College (now University), our offices were across the hall so we saw a lot of each other. While she was on the Dubuque City Council, the members realized that one year when they appointed to open positions on boards, committees, commissions, etc., that a civic minded, retired gentleman was on almost all of them. Each year he applied for openings and usually was chosen because everyone knew how good he was. However, there can be too much of a good thing.

Carolyn came in one day and asked me to apply for the ambulance committee. When she outlined the duties, I proved incontrovertibly (I've know that word for decades but doubt I've ever had occasion to use it before) that I was entirely unqualified. Then she said, "What about the library committee?" I couldn't think of a single negative, so she submitted my name and I got the job. It was a stimulating experience. A larger addition was being built and I learned a lot about construction. When a date was set for its opening, the librarian said she would like to invite the president of the American Library Association to speak, but she'd probably be too busy. If the president declined, the librarian would prepare a list of other names with their qualifications. I was sure she wouldn't decline because she was a Clarke graduate, a classmate of Therese Mackin, BVM. I told Therese, who began making plans. As soon as she accepted, Therese invited her to stay at Clarke and began contacting alumnae. They had a reception in the solarium the evening before the ceremony. The opening was a big success on the stairs of the old library on a beautiful Sunday. The president spoke of how she enjoyed leading story hour in this library when she was studying children's literature at Clarke. The city put up a plaque in the entrance of the old part that named Carolyn as mayor and me as board member, but that entrance is closed now so nobody sees the plaque.

Cooking was Carolyn's hobby. She used to read cookbooks from her collection before she went to sleep. I bear witness to what an excellent cook she was. When she was in politics in Dubuque, sometimes she would invite me and somebody she wanted to cultivate to dinner, give me enough to drink to make me talkative, and leave us to chat while she made a wonderful meal.

Carol Cook, BVM

Participation at the United Nations Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995 was a highlight event for Carolyn. She returned home committed to working on the goals set there. The passage of the Equal Rights Amendment became one of the issues for her efforts. Carolyn also appreciated the history of women's rights and invited many to join her, especially during women's history month. Carolyn claimed the number 8, the power place, on the enneagram. She used her power so wisely, involving many others in attaining goals. She often told me, "I know I am not in charge. There is a higher power." Her death showed us how true this is. I give thanks for your gift of friendship, Carolyn.

Patricia Bombard, BVM

A few days after Carolyn died, I was going through files that I am cleaning out and moving following our most recent flood in our basement. I came across a copy of SALT magazine from 1991 that was opened to the article I wrote on the transition of Mundelein College to Loyola University. On the first page of the article, there is a photograph of Carolyn along with Ray Baumhart, SJ, and Helen Garvey, BVM, signing the affiliation agreement. All three are now discussing the pros and cons of that decision together in the afterlife, I am sure. Seeing the photos and articles reminded me of my years working with Carolyn and how much she taught me about leadership. We are two very different personalities, but whenever I need Carolyn's energy and bravado to come to the fore, I think, "What would Carolyn do in this situation?" Charge ahead, certainly. Never take "no" for an answer, definitely. And somewhere in the midst of it all would be a reason for a hearty laugh, no doubt. I am deeply grateful to have had Carolyn as a mentor and friend.

Margaret Sannasardo, BVM

From the time we both entered in 1953, I recognized early on as a postulant that Carolyn was a mover and a shaker! Her energy and exuberance was so evident. My admiration continued on through the years into our retirement. I never lived or ministered with Carolyn but there was a bond and friendship that I treasured. Her wise and insightful advice always hit the "nail on the head!" I will miss her presence around our dear Mount Carmel home, but believe she is stirring up action in her new presence in eternity! As she often signed off her notes or letters with "in haste," we now know she really left us that way! Love and miss you, Carolyn.

Karen Kane-Herber, director, Roberta Kuhn Center

I had the pleasure of really getting to know Carolyn when I began as director of the Roberta Kuhn Center. We worked side by side for about a month as she passed the reins to me, but we continued to grow closer as she navigated retirement and her move to Mount Carmel. What I admire the most about Carolyn is that she was a catalyst. She saw potential in people and somehow set the stage for that potential to unleash. Sometimes it was inviting people with different talents or opinions to come together in a committee working on a shared project. Sometimes it was asking someone who may have been frustrated about something to come join a larger group to see why a specific decision needed to be made. She was honest and funny and knew when to take things and herself seriously and when to laugh and let go. Goodbye, my dear friend and mentor. I am so grateful for our time together. As Carolyn would say, "Cheers."

Judith Dewell, BVM

At the time of the affiliation of Mundelein with Loyola in 1991, Carolyn invited all of the BVMs who became part of Loyola to come together each month for prayer and reflection called 'New Beginnings' (the title we gave to this group.) The tone of our gatherings was "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land." Carolyn rather insisted that we be positive; this was not going to be a time to complain or lament. We cheered each other on as we gradually became assimilated into the fabric of Loyola while remaining true to who we were as BVMs from Mundelein. These gatherings showed us all a side of Carolyn's leadership style: she was always inclusive and positive. As part of a committee on Women and Leadership which was part of the Gannon Center, I observed Carolyn's untiring way of reaching out; her inclusivity went way beyond just BVMs. She quickly invited women faculty at Loyola to become part of this committee and the inclusive ripples continued. I'll miss Carolyn's joyful, positive spirit admonishing us to "keep on keeping on." I'm grateful for all I shared and learned from Carolyn.

Maureen (Dunphy) Frommelt, BVM Associate

Carolyn Farrell, BVM was a good friend of my Dubuque family. Before she ran for election to the Dubuque City Council, she visited my father-in-law Leo Frommelt, our much-respected city clerk. She asked for his opinion on whether or not she should run. He said, "If you decide to run, run to win," and she did. Leo swore her in, took minutes at city council meetings and dealt with her often about city business. She frequently visited with my in-laws at their Dubuque home, and my husband and I ran into her there on Sunday afternoons. My own dad was fire chief at the time, and he lived near Clarke College (now University) where Carolyn worked. When he attended council meetings, he'd give her a ride and so she became a friend of the Dunphys as well. I personally befriended Carolyn at the Roberta Kuhn Center and as a BVM Associate. I simply loved her and grieve her unexpected death.

Elaine Hagedorn, CHM

I was a high school classmate of Carolyn's at St. Joseph Academy in Des Moines. I admired her total commitment as an adult to justice for women in the church, in politics, and all phases of life. She believed that women should be included in all areas of decision making. A delightful experience several of us from St. John's Parish had with Carolyn were the "slumber parties" she hosted at her home during nice weather. She and Sister Carola Broderick, BVM, of fond memory, were from Holy Trinity Parish and they were warm and fun hostesses. These times together became the beginning of lifetime friendships. God bless you, Carolyn.

Carol Spiegel, BVM

Carolyn was our regional at the time of the Clarke College fire, which destroyed the homes of over 25 BVMs. In the days that followed, Carolyn led many group discussions and negotiated creative solutions for future BVM housing in Dubuque. Her wisdom and humor helped us through those painful days.

Trish Laraia, graduate and former Alum Association President, Mundelein College, Chicago

When my mom was in her 90s, she decided she wanted a sweatshirt from Mundelein. Sister Carolyn offered her one of hers, but my mom wouldn't accept it saying it was too gracious of her. She received one in the mail a short time later and she wore it 24/7.

Carol Marie Baum, BVM

Carolyn has been a part of our family ever since she and my oldest sister JoAnn attended St. Joseph Academy in Des Moines and then entered the BVMs together in 1953. Our paths did not cross again until 1963 when I was professed and sent to St. Paul's in Davenport to fill in as the second grade teacher. Carolyn was my mentor along with her many other jobs at that time. You can be assured she took this task seriously and made sure I was prepared for the week. Carolyn had a wonderful wit, was always quick to laugh, and was a very serious bridge player (I think that was Carolyn's way of following in her mother's footsteps.). Carolyn has always had a passion for doing whatever she could to bring to the table the issues of the day that kept us from being our best selves. She worked tirelessly to bring about a more inclusive, welcoming way to live large in a world that at times bruised her heart by its indifference. Thanks for the memories, Carolyn. Give Sis a hug for me. I am sure she is there to greet you with your mom and dad and a host of BVMs.

Rose Mary Meyer, BVM

Carolyn was an activist for women's issues. Many times she reminded us at the Women's Network gatherings that we were to focus on *women's* issues. This conviction was voiced in other gatherings as well. Thank you, Carolyn.

Nancy Bryers, Clermont, Fla.

Carolyn was a special treasure in my life for over 50 years. What began as a teacher-student relationship turned into one of the most meaningful and cherished friendships of my life. She was a mentor and inspiration to me. My deep sympathies to Carolyn's family and other friends and her BVM sisters.

Tom Lo Guidice

Willing to serve and be mayor of Dubuque. Service in teaching at all levels. A wise voice for the Coalition for Nonviolence (CNV). Also praiseworthy for being willing to work with others in the mundane of flyer production and distribution. A person of true faith. More than missing her, she will be remembered. Praise be to God and this fine servant!

Gregory Shanley, former student

I was fortunate to be in Sister Mary Lester's first class—fourth grade at St. Paul the Apostle in Davenport, Iowa. She was young and sassy and we all loved her. I had lunch with her 50 years later in 2015 and she kept bringing up my classmates by name. I couldn't believe she could remember all those names. I asked her how she did it. She said nobody ever forgets their first class. After us she went on to a highly distinguished career as a BVM both within and outside of the order. A truly remarkable person that I've always admired. My sympathies to her family and the BVM community. She will be missed. I feel blessed just to have known her.

Cathy Sass, former BVM, Oak Brook, Ill.

I was in Sister's set and I will miss her! May she rest in peace amen!

Christine George

I met Carolyn when I first started working at Loyola University in the mid-1990s. It was a gift to know her. May her memory be eternal!

Jackie Gebhardt

Sister Carolyn was a mentor to me, always demonstrating that women can do anything they put their mind to with grace, dignity, and respect. It wasn't about what you looked like, your gender, or your political views. It was about working together, respecting each other, and treating each other the way you would want to be treated. Sister Carolyn's accomplishments will live on forever in people's hearts and minds. Deepest sympathy to her family and friends.

Matt Toohey, former student

I was fortunate to have Sister Mary Lester (as we knew her then) for two grades at St. Paul's in Davenport, Iowa. She was a great teacher and left me with many fond memories. She truly was a great role model with concern for all people. She will be missed. I wish there were more people like her in education.

Gail Weitz

I am so glad someone had the foresight to make a video of Carolyn explaining her decision to run for Dubuque City Council. The clip reflects the eloquence of the truth she embraced in plain and simple language—her hope that other women would follow her lead and take their place at the table. Carolyn approached every issue in that same insightful manner and I learned a lot from her. Thank you, Carolyn! What an honor it was to know you.

Maggie Cullen

She was someone that you could put into any situation and she would stand her ground in the most diplomatic way and come out a winner—maybe not at that moment, but history would prove her right. She knew where she was and knew how to move forward into any situation. May all of us who knew her continue to pursue what she believed in now and forever. Amen. Now celebrate her life!

Ayesha

Sister Carolyn was an amazing and important leader for me during my time with the Gannon Scholars Leadership Program at Loyola University-Chicago. She was an outstanding mentor who helped shape me into the leader I am today. I am grateful that I was able to see her just under two years ago at Loyola. I always looked forward to my visits with her. Her legacy will live on through the lives of all the people she touched.

Patricia Fitzgerald, BVM

I sense Carolyn's presence as if we talked yesterday. That has to be because she was both confident in herself and open to others and filled with life.

Louie Roseman, former student

I was fortunate to have Sister Mary Lester at St Paul's in Davenport, Iowa, so many years ago. She was so good to all the young kids in her class. My thoughts and prayers are with her family and her BVM community.