



Sharing of Memories of Therese Mackin, BVM (Jeremy)
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, June 21, 2021

Catherine Dunn, BVM

Therese was a strong and vibrant woman who with her Irish wit and faith touched the lives of many. In her relations with people, she was always in a “building” mode and never “tearing down!”

Joan, Kate, and I had the privilege to live with Therese—first in the Clarke residence halls as resident assistants for a number of years and then for more than 30 years on Clarke Crest Drive. Therese was a joy to be with no matter what we were doing. We rarely left the dinner table each evening without much laughter.

We were all very busy in our respective roles at Clarke, but we managed to find time to play, pray, travel, and just be with each other. That which helped us was the precept that “no work was ever discussed at home!” Another was having a dog to brighten our lives. We had three lovely dogs in the time that Therese was with us.

Therese’s work at Clarke is legendary from drama/speech, dean of students for 17 years, creating a strong institutional advancement office for 16 years and raising lots of money with the president her last six years at Clarke.

Mary Frances Clarke has to be proud of Therese’s 70 years as a BVM, even with her struggles the last few years. Blessings and thank you to all who spiritually and physically lovingly cared for Therese at Mount Carmel and Mount Carmel Bluffs.

Therese, you are now with your God, Mary Frances Clarke and family and all the people you love dancing and singing with joy. Thank you for touching our lives so profoundly. Be at peace loving friend. You will always be a part of us.

Pat Mackin Burns, niece

I am the eldest daughter of Joe Mackin. I have so many wonderful, wonderful memories, so it was really hard for me to choose just a few. But before I begin that, from the bottom of my heart and from all my family, I would to thank all the sisters and the caregivers at Mount Carmel who so lovingly and compassionately cared for her. I know that Catherine would go every day to visit her. Thank you so much for all the love that came to my Aunt Therese and how much we are grateful for that.

Therese and I had the opportunity to actually spend quite a bit of time together considering that we live so far apart, being that I’m a California Mackin. She would come out for money raising efforts and visiting alumni. She would always stay at my parent’s home. We had many, many fun dinner table conversations. The eulogy so beautifully mentioned her wit and her humor and her ability to just say what was on her mind, which I hope I got a little bit of that too.

The one thing I remember above all is when I was a freshman in college and I went to Washington, D.C., to visit Aunt Mary. Therese came there as well. This was right after she was released from the habit and allowed to put on everyday clothes. We were dressing her and I convinced her to let me put on a little makeup. I was applying

mascara and she looked so pretty. She looked in the mirror and screamed, “I look like Betty Boop! Take it off! Take it off!” She absolutely freaked out with all that mascara on her.

During that visit, we had the pleasure through Dad’s military connections—he had a good friend who was working at the White House—for Therese, Mary, and I to go to the White House for General Westmoreland’s recognition medals. All three of us were in the line and met President Lyndon B. Johnson and had our photos take. It was such a wonderful memory. We went out for dinner afterwards. I was underage, but they gave me a gin and tonic. That was a big trip for me: drinking in a restaurant with my two aunts whom I loved dearly and who left a big mark on who I am as a human being. I love, love, love her.

Jack Mackin, nephew

Therese was my aunt. She was the eighth child of John and Josephine and grew up in St. Anthony, Iowa. I also grew up in St. Anthony and came back home after college and serving in the army. Therese, to us, was always Auntie Tam. You heard earlier how she got that name. We got used to calling her Sister Jeremy and, a little later on Sister Therese, but that wasn’t easy to do.

She was always full of life and very independent, a force when she needed to be, but always compassionate. She impacted the lives of anyone who knew her. She loved life and enjoyed getting together with family where there was fun and laughter.

I do remember years ago when she and a companion arrived for a visit from Dubuque. They were still in the habit. Therese had not explained that the hand pump outside over the dug well wasn’t the only source of running water in St. Anthony. I don’t think she ever gave them a straight answer of what to expect at the end of that road trip to a small village in Marshall County.

Therese was the spiritual leader for our family. When my brother Jim was in his last days dying from cancer, he and Therese talked on the phone. He lived in Colorado and asked Therese to pray with him and for him. It was just a few days later that he passed away. His wife Sue told me that he was prepared and at peace.

Like the eulogy said, she was a true grammarian; we never got away with anything without being corrected. I twiddle my thumbs. She would always get after me when I would sit and twiddle my thumbs. I always knew I would be in trouble when I did that.

We will never forget Therese Mackin. She was a giant influence on all who knew and loved her. May she rest in eternal peace.

Lori Ritz, director, Office of BVM Life and Mission

Dear Therese, we first met when you addressed all the new resident freshmen in 1969 in Alumnae Lecture Hall at Clarke College. You set the tone for expected behavior, how to be a college student, and how to set goals for the next four years. You very much stressed that we were adults at that point—when, actually, most of us were already homesick.

One statement and voice tone I remember almost 50 years later was “you are responsible for your own behavior. Should you do something that involves law enforcement, you have one phone call. It is not to Clarke College.” In my mind the underlying message was you are an adult now—act like it.

Another memory was the Senior Program the night before graduation—a tradition for a number of years where seniors sang parodies about our four years at Clarke. Each year you made a star performance—but no one ever knew what you were going to sing. For us, the graduates of 1973, your song was based on Helen Reddy’s “I am Woman”—and you proudly sang “I’m Therese Mackin, hear me roar. . . .” You brought down the house. For years after, when I would refer to you, my dad would sing, “I’m Therese Mackin.”

During my first year of teaching I finally decided to enter the BVM Congregation. I wanted to talk to you about the whole idea, the process, what to do, and how to tell my parents. I made an appointment with you and was literally sick to my stomach before we met. Interestingly enough you must have known because you put me so at ease, nodded your head as I talked, and had this slight smile on your face as I nervously tried to convince you (or was it me) of what I wanted to do—and you were there to support me as my Contact Sister through the process.

I wanted you to give a reflection at my first vows in the Mount Carmel chapel. In 1973 that could not happen but you were able to share a reflection after communion. When you finished you walked down to me in the front pew with Joan Doyle and handed the reflection to me. I still have it, Therese.

But something I remember most about you is a most important interaction. At one point in my first years in the congregation, I was frustrated about a situation. I called you and shared my thoughts pretty emphatically. I said, “So I will just leave. I do not have to stay.” Calmly and matter-of-factly you said, “Do what you want. But be careful to never make a decision based on one person.” During my career and personal life, I have used that piece of advice with teachers, students, parents, and friends.

Therese, you touched my life in so many ways, through your sense humor, matter-of-fact discussions, fun, helping me to be a better bridge player, advice, and even learning to drink 7 & 7s. I thank you. I have been blessed with your presence in my life. May you rest in peace.

Susan Mackin, niece

Therese’s brother Gerard (Jerry) is my dad. My Aunt Therese was a force of nature. Smart, funny, loving, indomitable, and sometimes, to be honest, demanding. She set a high standard for herself, and expected others to live up to it as well. Her lifetime of accomplishments is a testament to that. And she was so much fun.

In the weaving of the tapestry of her life, the shuttles carrying the weft were numerous and diverse. Her class. Her students. Her colleagues. Her dear friends and housemates Catherine, Joan, and Kate. Their dogs. Sister Mary Xavier (Coens). The Coffee House Theater Troupe. The servicemen who attended their shows. Legendary golfers. Her friends in Ireland. Just to name a few. And the warp for the fabric of her life? Her family. Her dear parents. Her beloved older sister Mary, who once gave her the best pair of roller skates. Her brothers, who loved her fiercely and whom she loved equally in return. Her sisters-in-law, including my mother Rosemary. My sisters Anne and Sarah and Sarah’s husband, Larry, and all Therese's nieces and nephews and their families.

Often during my many visits with her at Mount Carmel, the cornerstones of the day were her family photos, her well-thumbed address book, and our reminiscences. I played her saved cell phone messages for her. We enjoyed a Snickers bar. Once she sent me home with a small stone engraved with the word LOVE.

Our last day together a few weeks ago, for which I am incredibly grateful, was difficult. We were holding hands when she looked me in the eye and spoke her one complete sentence of the day. “Please, please, help me to be happy.” As I neared Bellevue yesterday enroute to my last visit to her, I passed a beautiful alpaca farm, Irish Meadows. In that moment I felt certain Therese is happy now, reunited with and in the welcoming arms of her family. I hope as we carry on without her all of us will find joy in the chorus of Mackin laughter I am sure I hear emanating from the heavens.

Thank you, Therese, for all you were and will always be for me. I already miss you terribly. I love you, Therese Mackin, more than words can tell.

Maurine Mackin Elliott, niece, Clarke College Class of 1963

I have known Sister Therese all of my life as she is my aunt. She was only 13 when I was born so we sort of grew up together. Since we lived in the same small town, she was a close part of the family. We entered the drama

program at Clarke the same year—1959; she as an instructor and I as a student. Luckily, I didn't actually take a class from her until my senior year, so there was no "problem" about our being related. We did work on many shows together during those four years. I learned a great deal from her and enjoyed working with her and the whole department.

As the years went by, we stayed in close contact. I will miss her. She was an exceptional woman, and I am proud to call her aunt.

Sarah Mackin-Goscha and Larry Goscha

We admire Therese for her dedication to her family. As the youngest child, she felt a responsibility to assist her older siblings. Personally, we witnessed the love, care, and support that she gave to her sister, Mary, and brothers, James Carroll, and Jerry. In recent years when visiting with Therese she wanted to know, "What have you done for fun?" So, take time "to do something fun" in honor of Therese.

Martha Mackin Nielsen, niece

Sister Therese is my aunt, the younger sister of my dad, William (Bill). I always remember her endless questions with interest in our lives and her infectious laugh. It wasn't just one or two questions; every answer led to more questions.

Her passion and competitiveness for Clarke to be the best was amazing. In her pursuit to raise funds for the college, she was always looking for new innovative angles. While I was working and representing the Northwest as a marketing manager for Starbucks, she didn't hesitate to ask me for an espresso machine donation to use as an auction item at her golf tournament. I shared that I'd have a hard time explaining how my limited budget was used for a college in Dubuque, Iowa. That didn't stop her and after much back and forth, a \$400 machine was sent to Clarke Drive, Attention Sister Therese Mackin.

The idea got bigger and I was dumbfounded that she wanted to open a Starbucks store on Clarke's campus. At the time, Starbucks was not a known entity and not a household name beyond major cities in the country. She was thinking ahead to the next great thing, another opportunity to put Clarke on the map and raise money for the college. Again, I explained that my focus and the people I worked with would not be helpful in pursuing a new location in Iowa. Did that stop her? No, and lo and behold a Starbucks store opened on campus.

While maybe it was before its time, I'll never forget her pursuit for excellence, innovation, and the millions of dollars she raised for the college and people she loved at Clarke College.

Mary Zipse, niece

Sister Therese—a strong woman who was devoted and loved her Catholic faith, believed in women's education, gave her life to service and long dedication to a noble calling.

As a little girl, I knew her as Sister Jeremy. Going back to Dubuque for summers, we always reserved a special day to visit her at Clarke College. I was intrigued with her "uniform" [habit] and the swish sounds of her rosary. Similar but different than the Holy Name nuns who taught us. I wanted to see her red hair as Dad had told me we had the same color.

She would greet us with a hearty laugh and smile very much the same as her sister, our Aunt Mary. It was a pleasantry I'll never forget. We would listen as she spoke to Mom about the drama department. I thought, Wow! An Aunt who is a nun and a movie star!

Another memory was her ice skating with us on the Mississippi River—the only Christmas we spent in Iowa. She got the Clarke College swimming pool all day for my siblings and cousins. Super special!

Over the years I got to see her hair. We called her Sister Therese and watched her shop with Mom getting some Pendleton clothes. She giggled when we asked her to show us the one or two new sweaters.

Whether it was at the Oregon coast or at Mom and Dad's home, she would update us as we would to her. She loved meeting her grandnieces and grandnephews—many with red hair. We enjoyed her stories of Ireland. She gave us all special mugs from an artist in Ireland whom she liked. We just lost our mom Marianette. My hope is that they are giggling and laughing today.

Hisae Hasegawa '78

I would like to express my deepest condolence to Sr. Therese Mackin. While I was at Clarke College, she always warmly watched over me as an international student from Japan and gave me guidance with patience. When my choir, the Little Singers of Tokyo, visited Clarke during our U.S. concert tour and performed, she presented us with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Clarke College community after the concert. Since then, the certificate has been a treasure for the choir. I commend Sr. Therese for her long-standing achievements and pray for her peaceful departure to Jesus.

Kathleen Van Steenhuyse, Clarke College, Class of 1971

Sad but also serene about the news of Therese Mackin's passing, as she was my powerhouse of a dean when I attended Clarke. In her heavenly home she is fully restored to her talented, energetic, creative, humorous self! When I became a dean at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, I would often think, "What would Therese do?" as a situation arose and a nuanced decision had to be made!

I still remember the first freshman meeting where she laid down three rules:

- 1) Clarke girls don't chew gum. (And I still don't!)
- 2) Clarke girls don't wear curlers in public. (And I never did that either!)
- 3) Clarke girls only wear slacks to a "sporting event." (Cannot say I followed that one!)

She was firm but compassionate, and you always knew where you stood with her, as her honesty was above reproach. In later years, we talked about living in the "gray areas" of life's decisions instead of seeing everything as legalistically enforced, and being comfortable with ambiguity.

Therese Mackin enriched my life and thousands of others, too. She was a true difference-maker! RIP, faithful one!

Helen Black, Clarke University, Class of 2007

I will always cherish the smile and charm of Therese. She was a mentor to me at Clarke University and encouraged me to do my best work. I remember her Irish humor peeking out at just the right moment and her annual Super Bowl contest.

I am most grateful for the compassion shown to me when my brother passed away. She prayed with me and attended his funeral even though they had never met. I am so blessed to have been able to work alongside of her for many years. I bid her a fond farewell until we meet again. Deepest sympathy to her housemates and BVM sisters.

Norm Freund, chair and professor of philosophy, Clarke University

For me, Therese Mackin, BVM, was a powerhouse of energy and can-do attitude. Like so many BVMs of her generation, she was a workaholic. But in her case, she was contagious! I remember being at a Clarke event once where a Clarke student was expected to make an important speech. Said student was nervous, so Therese came over to me, took me by the elbow, and instructed me to go over and "settle her down." I thought about protesting. After all, I have no expertise in psychology. But it was virtually impossible to say no to Therese! I dutifully complied, and, somehow, did calm the student down, who then gave a good speech. Perhaps what so many

generations of BVMs proved true became true once again—that God does not call the qualified but qualifies the called.

One other story, the first Clarke Madrigal Dinner after the fire (December of 1984, I believe) Therese recruited several male students to dress up as lords of the manor for the event. After saying yes, she informed the men that they needed to wear tights for this! They said “no” but Therese insisted “yes.” Then, after they grudgingly said yes to that, they found out the attire was full of mold and mildew due to water damage from the Clarke fire. She insisted a washing with bleach would make them just fine. ALL of the male students wore those tights!

Lastly, this is a story from the late, great Francine Gould, BVM. Francine attended Clarke in the 1920s and returned to Clarke to serve there in the mid-forties. That first fall she caught a first year student sliding down a banister. Not knowing yet if Clarke was as strict as she remembered, she did not verbally reprimand the student in question. Instead, she just glared at said student, who rejoined her friends and said, “Did you see how that sister looked at me?” Said student was the indomitable TAM (Therese Ann Mackin)!

BVMs Linda Roby, Joanie Nuckols, and Lynn Winsor

As the set of 1967 began their postulancy, one of our first teachers was Therese Mackin. The class she taught us was speech. Therese was a wonderful teacher—energetic, funny, and knew her subject. She taught us what speech was really about—confidence and communication. When you look at our set—Linda Roby, Joanie Nuckols, and me, Lynn Winsor—Therese's training obviously worked. We believe we are silver-tongued, fabulously eloquent, and fairly understandable. Thank you, Therese, for the love, care, fun and knowledge you provided as we entered the BVMs 54 years ago.

Mary Frances Reis, BVM

FOR THERESE MACKIN

Our friendship began at Mount Carmel
at a time when friendship
was not exactly considered a priority.
Yet it lasted through the years,
in times of congratulations and condolences,
sharing perspectives, accomplishments, and ideas.
In retrospect, I see her outstanding virtue as
Encouragement,
always ready to applaud and challenge.

I think of Tam's last years of suffering
as a bird whose wings were clipped,
longing for freedom.
It seems her final months have
helped her fly safely through with peace.
She will know my gratitude forever.

June 17, 2021

Alecia Thiele

A little over a decade ago, Sister Therese agreed to be part of a video project that I completed for a national presentation for the American Physical Therapy Association conference. The presentation was about generations in the workplace. The video got great kudos and I continued to use that video in my DPT presentations to students and colleagues over the years.

Sister Therese represented for the traditionalist generation and offered amazing insights. She offered thoughts on her generation having to learn how to disagree agreeably. She offered heartfelt feelings on the challenge of coming to grips with your own mortality, and in the always absolute favorite part of the video, she offered (in her own Therese way) that she was from "THE Greatest Generation- I might add!!!" This always got smiles and laughs from the audience. She definitely had a way of stealing the show! I am so grateful she agreed to the video project and I will always have such fond memories of the taping and playing of that video. Rest in peace, Sister Therese.

Shirley Brown, BVM congregational employee

I have known Therese Mackin for most of my life. I started working at Clarke when I was 19, and I'm 65 now. After a few years in various departments, I started working in the development office and Therese became my boss. I worked with her for over 20 years.

She was a gem with many facets . . . some a little dull and rough around the edges . . . some smooth and brilliant . . . some silly and a little off kilter. But when you put them all together, they were molded into the Therese that many of us knew and loved. She was a "by the book" boss, a fun-loving, adventurous person. She was serious, she was compassionate, she was dramatic, and she was silly. Which brings me to a story.

One day, as I recall kind of a hectic day in the office, a few of us were talking in the outer office about some issues we were having and getting very frustrated. I'm sure it had something to do with our computer system. Anyway, after we went on for a bit, Therese had had enough. She came out of her office, handed me some money, and said, "Go get some ice cream for everyone from Dairy Queen!" Of course I went, and in her infinite wisdom she knew that would calm us all down—and it did! I will miss you Therese. God bless you.

Madeline Powers Beery, Clarke College, Class of 1969

I so adored Sister Terese and will miss her. I was blessed to have her my freshmen year when I was in drama. I had a radio show that she monitored. It was called "Youth Speak Out," with the intro music being Bon Dylan's "Eve of Destruction." She always listened and commented. Only later it dawned on me it could have been that she thought I was a 1966 radical.

During my senior year, I was one of six students on a Tri-College Council for which she was the faculty advisor. We dealt with lots of issues, including how to work across colleges without acrimony. She was terrific to work with.

Patricia Kennedy, Clarke College, Class of 1975

Sister Therese Mackin, BVM, a woman of strong faith who listened with the ear of her heart. Her generous spirit lives in the abundant fruit of the work of her hands and heart through her community and many, many Clarke alums. I am most grateful for her guiding presence and wisdom, especially during the 1974-75 academic year.

Carolyn Hauptert, Clarke College, Class of 1966

One of my favorite memories of Therese is from a number of years ago when she introduced Maya Angelou at Clarke and spoke of heroes and "sheroes," describing Maya of course as a "shero." Therese in all of her many ministries, was truly a "shero."

Rena Kerker Lignugaris, Clarke College, Class of 1980

I had the honor of working with Therese from 1984 to 1987 when I was director of alumni and she was director of development. I am fortunate to have numerous fond memories of this strong, willful, warm, and kind Irish woman.

She was a force in her own right and I learned many life lessons from working with her, including how to train volunteers, how to speak correctly to groups, and most importantly, how to be loyal and understanding no matter the situation.

I must admit, I was in fear of her as a student when she served as our dean of students but when I returned to Clarke as an adult, one month after the fire, I became respectful of her. I am 63 now and I will forever be in awe of Therese. How blessed I am to have known her. She will always have a special place in my heart. Rest in peace, dear lady!

Carol Spiegel, BVM

I will always be grateful to Therese for enriching our BVM community life at Clarke in the early 1980s. A group of us were resident assistants in Mary Fran dorm, and we did not have a place to gather. So, Therese helped us convert a suite of rooms into a community room plus kitchenette. This gave us a place to process some significant events at that time, including Sister Marianne Joy's illness and death. Therese's care truly made a difference.

Kay (Doty) O'Brien

Sister Therese Mackin was one of the best teachers I had the pleasure of knowing during my years at Clarke and with whom I maintained a valued friendship with for years after. Being a drama major and coming from a farm background, I had very little theater experience. Fortunately for me, Sister had the patience and the knowledge to encourage me and had so much to do with my successful education. I will miss our visits and her quick wit. May she rest in peace.

Bonnie Barr

My first encounter with Sister Therese Mackin was in a dark hallway where class pictures from years past were on display. Somehow, in 1969 I managed to spot her graduation picture out of the hundreds on display. I was showing my nursing classmates my discovery when someone tugged at my pony tail and told me my day would come. I turned to face Sister Therese Mackin and was instantly embarrassed and terrified as to what would happen next. She asked my name and what I was studying. She predicted I would be back at Clarke after I achieved my nursing diploma. Some 20 years later I returned to earn my BSN. I wasn't prepared for her to remember me as well as the incident which introduced us!

My condolences to the Mackin Family and especially the Sisters of Charity, BVM. Her legacy is yours to carry on!

Kathleen Mullin, BVM

As we prepare for a virtual Assembly, I remember a long ago Senate hosted by Clarke. On the eve of people arriving, campus preparations were completed . . . we thought. That evening I left the library and entered the main corridor above. At the extreme opposite end two buildings away, I saw Therese Mackin. She appeared in a panic, and began signaling to me. Finally she found her voice but was unable to recall my name, so called loudly, "There's a flood in Catherine Byrne Hall. A water pipe broke. Come and help, Robert Sullivan." [Therese remembered that my name had been Robert Mary and my last name was Irish.] I quickly joined the mopping crew. Repairs and restoration occurred in good time. Therese led us through many campus adventures.

Sharon Conlon

Sister Therese, may you rest in peace. You were such a loving friend to Michael and me. May the choir of angels come to greet you and speed you to paradise.

Mary Ann Straub Burns

Oh, I have so many memories of Sister Jeremy and then Sister Therese. She did every task she was assigned in such a way she left the situation better than she found it. She was just plain fun to be around. Rest in peace, good and faithful servant.

Kathy Tillman Porter

So many tears for an incredible woman who impacted the lives of so many Clarke graduates. Your light will always be in our hearts!

Geri Kay Frommelt

Sister Therese is one of the handful of women who left a huge impact on my life. I have always cherished my four summers working for her when I was a student at Clarke. God bless you, Sister.

Shirley Keyron McDermott, Clarke College, Class of 1967

Sister Jeremy/Therese Mackin may have earned her eternal crown early: Of all the Class of 1967, I may have been the most problematic/problem-ridden, a welfare kid trying to bootstrap my way through. Sister was an immense help giving me a perspective and keeping me righted in the water. In the last few years, now that we are retired, my dear friend, Abigail (Szujewski) Costello, and I have always made it a point to stop and visit or go to lunch when we were in Dubuque. Fondest memories of a fine teacher/person.

Sandy Rodemyer BVM (Clarke 1959 - 1961)

Clarke University sent out a beautiful notice regarding Therese Mackin's death. It was at Clarke University (then Clarke College) where I had Sister Mary Jeremy for speech class. She was a lovely woman, teacher and BVM. Rest in peace, Therese! You've earned it.



Dear Clarke Alumni and Friends,

With a heavy heart, we share the news that the venerable Therese Mackin, BVM '50, passed away this morning at Mt. Carmel in Dubuque.

Therese dutifully served the Clarke community for more than fifty years in various leadership capacities, including Dean of Students, Vice President of Institutional Advancement, and Executive Vice President. She also taught in the Drama/Speech department for many years. Therese's energy and enthusiasm was felt by all who knew her and her strong commitment to Clarke was admirable. The positive impact of Therese's dedication to Clarke is apparent across campus, and through the long list of students who value her and all she did for them. Her legacy will live on in the lives of the many alumnae she touched for so many years.

We ask you to please keep Therese and her family in your thoughts and prayers.