



## **Sharing of Memories of Dolores Doohan, BVM (Sarah James)**

Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, Dec. 2, 2021

### **Kevin Doohan, Nephew**

Dolores was my aunt, the older sister of my father John, who we called Jack. My father and Dolores spoke probably every week about football, about the 49ers. My dad was a Raiders fan so that might have been a problem. But knowing Dolores, she never was judgmental; she probably just listened and agreed with what my dad had to say. They had a lot of great conversations. Sometimes I would be able to pop by my dad's house during one of those conversations and participate. Dolores loved her sports. To think that she coached sports too, well, I thought that was amazing especially with the leg she had to deal with. She was always pushing through every kind of challenge.

Dolores never missed a celebration. We would get so many cards. We would wait for our card to come in the mail. When we didn't get, we always thought something had happened, but it was just late; it always arrived. She always made sure you knew she was thinking of you. That was really special. The word perseverance – every time I say or think of that word, I think of Dolores. When we visited, we saw that she actually had a sweater that said "Perseverance" across it. That really was her word. When I need to persevere through tough things, I think of her. Dolores will live on with that word.

My dad passed away about two years ago. I did my best to continue those conversations. I called her every month. She was always caring and very non-judgmental. She may not have agreed with everything I had to say, but she never judged. She was just a very loving aunt. She will be missed especially by my family and my sister's family. We wish we could have gone out more. We did get the chance to get my dad out there a few years back. But due to his difficulty getting on a plane, it was hard at times. So they kept their connection through conversation. My dad really did enjoy those conversations with his sister. She really was the shepherd of the family. She will be missed. We love her.

### **Linda & Bill Halvorson** *(Email sent to Dolores shortly before she died)*

Word on the street here in Portland is you're ready to leave for more promising pasture. If you're still here to hear this, let me say: In a world where it's not the barn you live in but the cows you moo with – you've been the one to moo with. Your humble persistent shoulder to the plow, your empathy and support for the little people, your "Oh my gosh!" recoil to the wayward world – these keep us mindful of you and the work to be done. Thanks for your nourishment and support to us. God speed.

### **Thomas and Filomena Rothschild, St. Clarke Parish, Portland, Ore.**

We are long-time members of Saint Clare Church in Portland, Oregon. All three of our children (now adults and married) had Sister D. as a teacher. She was soft-spoken, but she was absolutely firm in her belief in God. On our "Highway to Heaven," we have truly been "Touched by an Angel."

### **Sister Linda Roby, BVM**

It's hard to believe it's been 14 years since Dolores left St. Clare's here in Portland. Every time I'm at church someone will ask me, "How's Sister Dolly?" Even after all this time she's still so present in their memories and their hearts. The Northwest Oregon air has been "buzzing" this week with stories and fond remembrances of "Sister D." and her 38 years here. Again and again I hear, "What a blessing she was to all of us!" How very true!!

### **Sister Gwen Farry, BVM**

I first met Dolores in 1976 when I went to St. Clare in Portland, Ore., to be interviewed by the school board as a prospective principal. From the first day I felt her support and encouragement.

It was the religious education director, Len Leritz, who nicknamed her "Dolly" and she soon became "Sister Dolly" or "Sister D" to all. Dolly was the athletic director at St. Clare. She coached and represented the school with the CYO, although she herself had never been able to participate in sports. She was born with a dislocated hip and eventually her hip was fused. She enjoyed watching sports on television and had her favorite teams. She especially enjoyed watching ice skating competitions and often said that she would ice skate in heaven. However, her competitive side was evident in card playing, especially "May I." She kept track of when sets, runs or sets and runs were being played, as well as the score sheet.

Perseverance was her byword and she certainly personified perseverance in her daily life. Although Dolores was very self-disciplined, she was compassionate and non-judgmental of others. For a time she visited women in the Portland city jail on Saturday evenings and she arranged for students to bring sack lunches to the homeless on Portland's skid row. It is not surprising that she admired Caryll Houselander who saw Christ in everyone. We will miss you, Dolores. Thank you for your example and your friendship.

### **Jeanne Donaldson**

Dolly, or Sister D as the kids called her, was the teacher that all will remember. I was the parent of a student. I never heard her raise her voice to any of them. She calmly but firmly helped them figure out a better choice to make. She led by example. At the beginning of each school year, she ate her lunch from food that was tossed out in wrappers. As she pulled it from the trash, she explained how not to waste anything. She asked the kids to let their parents know what they wouldn't eat, and the quantities that they were able to eat for lunch. No child ever forgot that, nor will they forget her motto "Perseverance." I am so happy that I made a couple visits back to Dubuque in the last several years. I will treasure that time and the phone calls we shared.

### **Janet Dupzyk, Former Student**

Sister Dolores was my 5th grade teacher in 1959 at All Hallows Grammar School, Sacramento, Calif. I have been blessed to maintain a lasting contact with this amazing woman through letters, telephone calls and, only a few years ago, a visit at Mount Carmel. She was always an inspiration to me. She lived her life with great love for and faith in Jesus, humility, gentleness, kindness, a sweet sense of humor and especially perseverance. She instilled the virtue of perseverance in all of her students. I can always hear her sweet voice when I feel moments of despair or frustration, "Persevere, Janet!" I'll never forget her telling us to always pray to Mary if we have a special request because Mary will take it to Jesus and he would never tell his mother no! She is with her God now and I will be eternally grateful for the profound impact she and many other BVM sisters had and will continue to have on my life. God bless you all.

### **Judy & Paul Sherbo, Former St. Clare Teacher & Husband**

"Oh, Glory. My, my, oh, Glory." I can hear her quiet and calm voice saying those words in tickled amazement. The smallest and simplest of things would bring forth such gratitude and wonder to Dolores. I can still see her room at Mount Carmel with its twin bed, uncluttered desk, and modest chair. When she shared with us how challenging it was for her to turn off her lamp and carefully shuffle over to her bed in the dark, my husband, Paul, exclaimed, "I can fix that for you, Sister D." and drove to the nearest hardware store to buy the needed plugs and remote. As soon as the task was accomplished she sat on her bed and clicked it on and off and on and off for several minutes. With a look of heavenly insight she said, "Isn't it something that mankind can figure out how to turn on a light switch remotely but can't solve world hunger?"

I'm sure she persevered to the end of her days and heard these words from her beloved God as she reached her eternity, "Well done, good and faithful servant." We will never forget what she taught us through her life's work. Godspeed, Sister Dolores.

### **Marie Acurso**

Thank you for all of your unwavering example of what a strong, loving, progressive follower of Christ looks like. You were fun, supportive, and sometimes brutally honest. I love you.

### **Nancy and Fred Salas, Cousin, Denver, Colo.**

So many warm memories of Sister Dolores over the years. I first met my second cousin from my paternal side of the family probably in elementary school when my family moved to California. Sister Dolores was teaching in Sacramento, I believe, and occasionally during the 1960s she would come to our home with a fellow nun to visit us. Her brother Jack also visited and later with his family; he lived in California.

Eventually in the 1970s, Sister Dolores and I both lived and worked in Portland, Ore. So we became close friends besides being cousins. My dad traveled with work and would come to Portland and I would pick up Sister to join us for dinner at my home. As first cousins, Sister and Dad would tease each other constantly and occasionally my dad would get kicked under the table by Sister for saying this or that. So much fun and laughter over the years. I became friends with all the Sisters that lived by St. Clair's Convent and enjoyed several birthday dinners which included Sister Dolores' homemade rum Bundt cake, very good! I made dinner for several of the sisters at home and prepared duck (my brother's hunting gift) for the first time.

Eventually I met someone and Sister and Fred became good friends and would tease and argue over sports, especially football. On occasion Fred would also get kicked under the dinner table. Fred nicknamed Sister "Lola" after the famous song "Whatever Lola Wants Lola Gets" which for most of us meant we were volunteered to do something before we knew it. For me it was coaching a 6th grade girls' basketball team; never mind I knew nothing about coaching. Fred was my assistant coach long distance; he was working in Puerto Rico at the time. Eventually Fred and I got married and our wedding was at the St. Clare's church with the reception at the St. Clare convent with champagne chilling in the bathtub!! I stayed at the convent the night before my wedding – really helped to calm me. Lola and Sister Gwen were witnesses for our marriage certificate – so very special and meant so much to us.

We moved to Colorado and Lola came for a visit which included climbing Mother Cabrini "Stairway to Prayer" – all 373 steps leading to a 22 foot statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Yes, Lola insisted all 373 steps. Several times Lola came solo for a visit. Whenever we were in or near Portland we would visit. So, yes, we were very close and Lola was part of our family. She is missed and loved by Fred and me. We are happy she is home now with the Lord as she desired.

### **Emily Zweber Hazard**

It was Summer of 2012 that I last saw Sister D. I was road tripping across the country from New York City where I spent my summer working as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) with the Little Sisters of the Poor in the Bronx. I showed up unannounced to 1100 Carmel Drive, and told the kind woman at the reception desk that I was there to visit Sister Dolores Doohan. It had been a little over five years since I had last seen her. I walked into her room and found her lying in bed in a full body cast just gleaming with recognition. The only word I can recall her saying was "marvelous" and reflecting on having received a call from the front desk and wondering what "young lady" would be there to visit her. Not thirty seconds after arriving, she was directing me to help myself to some sort of sweet in a box on top of her dresser. Sister D was at peace wherever she found herself. Even bedridden in a full body cast after falling she had no complaints.

I was taught by Sister D in a small group setting through elementary at St. Clare School in Portland, Ore. We would walk side by side up 17th Street on our way home after school, and spend many rainy recess days playing Kings in

the Corner in her office. Sister D's presence consumed one with validation, security and hope, a feeling I will never forget. I will continue to be reminded of her message of perseverance when met with adversity and work to be filled with gratitude as she was with each new day.

**Chris Hannibal, Former BVM**

Well, Shep, you lived up to your decades-old nickname (short for "shepherd" to those who were young in the community and welcomed your guidance) Whenever you heard that nickname, you would just smile that little smile of yours, and with that twinkle in your eyes, nod your silent approval. You were a beloved mentor, a profoundly gentle woman, filled with compassion, understanding and empathy. You were openness and acceptance personified and lived your grace-filled life with quiet courage. I remember your incredible faith and drive to overcome every obstacle, including those early morning stretching exercise sessions on the dining room floor at St. Clare's. You will always be a shining example of the divine in our world. I will miss your annual birthday cards and holiday greetings filled with BVM news, the sharing of your personal challenges and hopes for the future, and your slipping of worn out \$5.00 bills into those birthday envelopes, to share what little you had. It always meant a lot. The world will be a little less kind without you in it, Shep, but may you run now, not walk, toward that beautiful light. We loved you as much as you loved us. Rest now, dear friend.

**Sister Ann Marie McKenna, BVM**

Some people rescue pets. Dolly rescued apples. She could not bear to see windfalls rotting under a tree or raked up for disposal with the leaves. She persuaded people to bring her their "throw-away" apples, and spent many fall weekends in the kitchen salvaging those apples and turning them into the most delicious apple pies with her amazing pie crusts (she claimed ice water was her secret ingredient). By the end of apple season there would be well over a dozen pies (I think I remember 20 one year) in the freezer waiting to be pulled out and baked throughout the coming months. Thank you, Dolly!

**Sister Diane Forster, BVM**

Dolly was a happy and cheerful member of our Schola, our sisters' choir, for all the years she was able to be here. She didn't mind coming in her wheelchair. And before the wheelchair, she would take the long walk to the Marian Hall Chapel, which took her about half an hour. She did it faithfully and we will miss her in our choir.

**Michael Ching, Former Student**

I arrived as a new student in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade at St. Catherine in Kauai, Hawaii, the same year Sister Dolores (Sarah James) arrived to teach the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She has taught me so many life's lessons. Perseverance was the primary word in her vocabulary. She also had so much control in the class room via voice and speaking calmly. She gave us trust and taught us to trust ourselves and to be honest all the time. Dolores was such a kind person. I know sometimes I am a Pollyanna and wish good people would live forever.