



Sharing of Memories of Jean Marie Brady, BVM
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, Feb. 8, 2022

Sister Lynn Winsor, BVM

In 1969 as a novice I was sent to obtain my master's degree at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. I had the wonderful experience of living at St. Mary's Convent with a delightful group of BVMs including Jean Marie and a few sisters from other religious communities who were studying at the University. As part of my attending the University, I was given the job of teaching physical education to the first and second graders at Iowa City Catholic Grade School where Jean Marie was the principal. She was loved by the students, faculty, staff and parents. She was organized and, as we all would say "ran a tight ship". Under her guidance the students were well prepared academically, socially, morally and also learned much about the BVMs, our mission and history. Jean Marie loved planning parties and was the complete hostess. Through her we all met so many people from the Iowa City Community. Jean Marie and the Iowa City BVMs made a tremendous and positive impact on me. I will always be grateful to Jean Marie and the Iowa City crew for starting me out in BVM community life.

Sister Veronica Higgins, BVM

I had the opportunity to live with Sister Jean Marie in 1976. She was principal of St. Mary Grade School, in Iowa City, Iowa, which would soon move into the many changes in education in the mid-1970s. Indeed, she was a fine educator and mentor to many.

When Saturday football season arrived, the atmosphere focused on the University of Iowa. There were pre-game tasks like getting the weekly trip to the beauty salon. After a quick lunch, the loyal fans were off to the game. Post-game (win or lose), all returned to the convent to "debrief the game."

Jean Marie had a wonderful smile, and it was usually accompanied by what I called the "Jean Marie giggle." Another aspect of life was her close relationship she had with her family. Now she joins her family, Mary Frances Clarke, and all of our BVM saints. She has found a new freedom and peace. Jean Marie, now God gives you eternal day. Rest in peace.

Sister Mary Agnes Giblin, BVM

"I did it MY way!" (Quoting Frank Sinatra's song.)

Jean Marie's way was her being in charge. In her professional life as a principal, her way was the right way. Her priority was always caring about and for her faculty, staff and students. She wanted the students to receive the best education possible. Jean Marie encouraged and challenged the faculty to be creative, supporting them and making sure we supported each other. She also made sure that everyone working in the school was of equal importance. She faced challenges during her tenure. Her first year in Iowa City, she was faced with combining St. Mary's and St. Patrick's Elementary Schools into one entity. At the end of her time, she coordinated and supervised the building of the new Regina Elementary Facility. Both were accomplished.

A couple years later following her retirement from the Iowa City schools, she joined the administrative team in the Catholic Schools Office for the Archdiocese of Dubuque. The schools she was responsible for were spread out far and wide across the diocese. Yet her priority was the same; basically ministering to the principals. She drove many miles in all sorts of weather, but she always did it. There were scheduled meetings, but if any need would

arise, Jean Marie would go, whether it was to assist the principal, the teachers or put out fires caused by parents or whomever.

Jean Marie was also a person of compassion. She always responded to be at the University Hospital to welcome a BVM, sit with them or just visit. She also ministered with great loving care to her siblings in their final days. Jean Marie loved a good party, especially if she was the hostess, and a glass of fine wine.

Due to health reasons, her transition to Mount Carmel Bluffs arrived unexpectedly. She was going for rehab, but other problems arose and she remained at Mount Carmel permanently. As a result, she was never able to say goodbye or experience closure in Iowa City, which could also have attributed to her never being able to settle in and experience love, happiness and peace at Mount Carmel. It did not happen her way.

However, her final days were her way. She left, quietly, peacefully during the night at the beginning of Catholic Schools Week! Once again, she is finally at peace. Jean Marie is still remembered, respected, and loved by many people in Iowa City – so we are planning a memorial Mass at St Mary's in the spring, followed by a party to celebrate her life. Part of the plan will be her way --but most of it will be our way.

Mary Ann Fremgen

My memories of Jean Marie are in connection to my dog Bronx. When I began visiting Mount Carmel Bluffs–Arbor last July, I found Jean Marie sitting in a chair in the living room. She agreed to have Bronx on her lap and smiled. As she petted him she said, “He’s so soft.” This became her favorite saying as we visited each week. She repeated it over and over as she petted him. The Thursday before she died she was sitting on the couch and wanted Bronx on her lap, she smiled and said, “He’s so soft. Isn’t he soft?” This time she looked up at me, asked how old he was and said, “He’s so soft.” When I took him off her lap she smiled and said, “Thank you for bringing Bronx to visit.” As she said that she looked very happy. Jean Marie, it was an honor for me to bring some happiness and peace into your life. May you rest in peace and joy.

Sister Kathryn Lawlor, BVM

Jean Marie's grandfather, John Brady, in charge of the Motherhouse farm on the prairie, was entrusted with the task of transferring the bodies of the sisters buried on the prairie to the Mount Carmel cemetery. According to Jane Coogan in her book, *The Price of Our Heritage*, "Five wagon loads of this strange cargo completed the transfer in the next year or so." (1909-1910). Jean Marie often told me this story.

Sister Carol Spiegel, BVM

In the 1970s and 1980s, several of us stayed with our Iowa City BVMs when we took courses at the University of Iowa. Jean Marie was an essential player in that local community who welcomed and involved us in creating a home away from home. I have many happy memories from that time. More recently, in the last months of my sister Ginnie's life, Jean Marie was the Eucharist minister who visited Ginnie and her husband Fred on Sundays. She was a gift to them. So many lives are richer because of Jean Marie's kindness.

James Osterberger

I had the privilege of working with and being a friend of Jean's all the years she worked for the Office of Educational Services of the Archdiocese of Dubuque. Jean was very professional, a life-long learner and teacher and a person of boundless joy. Her laughter was infectious and everyone who met her most likely left feeling they were the most important person in the world. She was extremely generous with her time and her many talents. For me her greatest gift was that she made the person of Jesus a real and genuine reality in everyone she encountered. There is an old Eskimo legend that says the stars at night are really our loved ones shining and telling us all is well. I'm confident that Jean's star is one of the biggest and brightest in the heavens. Go in God's peace my friend.

Lori Talbert

Jean Marie's smile lit up the entire room! She had such an appreciation for life and family, and she brought joy and grace whenever she arrived.

Carol Volk

Sister Jean Marie was always there to support us in times of trouble or loss. She will be remembered as a role model of strength and independence for the women in the Brady clan.

Sister Diane Forster, BVM

I remember that when she was a resident at Marian Hall, she found a sister who had slid out of her chair and was on the floor calling for help. Jean Marie, of course, went and got the nurse immediately. But even though there were eventually three nurses in the sister's room, Jean Marie waited at the door to be sure the sister was alright. Clearly she cared about people, especially someone in need of help, and followed through to see if there was anything else she could do.