



Sharing of Memories of Genevieve M. Freund, BVM (Leonine)
Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, Oct. 6, 2022

Sister Mary Angele Lutgen, BVM

On behalf of Sister Genevieve Freund, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Cheri Regan and the staff in Arbor and to Susan Bailey and the staff in Gables for your care of Gen. Special thanks to the residents in Arbor who were Gen's community these past years. Gen enjoyed being with all of you and participating in the various activities that Amy had planned for each day. Gen was always looking for "work" to do and rolling the silverware in napkins for the next meal and working in the garden gave her a sense of serving others. Perhaps this desire to serve was in her genes because Gen's aunt and uncle, her mother's brother and sister both entered Maryknoll and served in China. Finally, thank you to the sisters who came to see Gen in her final days in Gables, and all the sisters and staff who were praying for Gen. She is at peace with her loving God.

Steven Wilkes, Former Student, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Chattanooga, Tenn.

This woman changed the tenor (pardon the pun) of my life, which still affects me today. Had it not been for her giving me an audition for boys' choir in fourth grade, my life would have been dull in comparison. To this day, I praise her memory. A few years ago, I wrote her a letter, thanked her, and told her about her positive effect on me. Maybe I'd have become a singer in church without her influence, but she instilled in my heart, mind, and soul the innate value and joys of music, and in singing. She taught me (or maybe reinforced in me) the "ear" for harmony – and I've never looked back—except for those good early memories. God bless us all who were influenced by this great lady!!!

Paul Cronkleton, Nephew

My memories of my Aunt Gen began as far back as I can remember. We celebrated almost every Christmas, every Thanksgiving, every birthday together. She was always there to listen and provide support, advice, and prayers. She was a pillar in our family, and I loved her dearly. My Aunt Gen was always smiling and positive. She influenced hundreds, if not thousands, of students in a positive way throughout her career of teaching. Aunt Gen's life was truly a life well-lived. She will be greatly missed by many. I love you Aunt Gen.

Sister Mary Stasia Stafford, BVM

After several years of commuting from Cardinal Spellman in Omaha, Neb., for those regular checks on my parents [in Davenport, Iowa], in 1978, I was hired at St. Pual's School. With support of the sisters at Spellman, my transition was made so much easier. I was home about two weeks and my dad, Eddie, began his new life in eternity, which provided me an opportunity to enrich my time with my mom, Libbie.

Genevieve was off at Notre Dame learning new things. When she returned, her school duties were lessened and she was taking on many parish duties like visiting the sick, the elderly and homebound. You can only imagine the many lives she touched. Her prayers, care and concern were a comfort to them. Since the convent was closing and Gen and I were the only sisters remaining, a former eighth grade student of Gen's was able to help get us a place.

In 1984, we began our new lifestyle on Judson Court. My mom told Gen that she would come to rue the day she lived with me, so Gen had fair warning. My baggage – an only child, my mom, her five sisters and my eleven

cousins. Gen's family included her sister Mary with her husband Larry and sons John and Paul, Aunt Jane and even Aunt Ann, and later came Heather, Ian and Stacie.

At our home on Judson Court, Gen's love and appreciation of all God's creation was able to come alive – her rose bushes, African violets, feeding the birds, our fish tanks, our three dogs Holly, Lucky and GiGi, and our hospitality and prayers for the many filled lives. Mary Frances Clarke's "Leave the future to God" was our hope.

When Gen retired from school, she became fulltime with the parish. She had many titles and tasks and her "Circle of Friends" only got larger. With her retirement, she still managed to check on many.

Gen's walking, I know, was part of her spirituality. Her joy and love of nature just helped her share God's love for all. After a hospital stint in 2017, her fragility became more apparent. She could still go for walks, but not alone. Not a problem; she always had a dog! (I am more like her good friend Peggy Devereux, the bench person, but I tried to fill the bill.) We began attending Mass at the Kahl Home (senior living). Sister Lois and all the [Carmelite] sisters always welcomed us and we knew most of the residents.

Gen had more health issues in October of 2018. Instead of our annual trip to Door County with Widge and Dave, our trips turned to Genesis East ER. JT (Judith Therese McNulty) was my in-the-know person. I would call and say, "Guess where we are?" and check back with the latest. After many visits and follow-up appointments with a variety of doctors, it was on her 85th birthday at her visit with the cardiologist that Gen was told her heart was wearing out. After about four weeks, Gen made her journey home to Mount Carmel, a safe, happy, and holy place. Angele [Lutgen], once again in Gen's life, became her go-to person.

The Genevieve I knew and loved would want me to say thank to all our sisters, the staff especially at Arbor and then Gables for enabling her to enjoy those walks, water those flowers and just be in God's creation. Mary Frances Clarke's "Leave the future to God" was much a part of Gen's life, and now, with our community, I believe she is alert, present and certainly doing something new.

Norm Freund, BVM Associate

My earliest rhythms and connections to the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary was through family. My grandfather's sister, Jean Freund, was a member of this congregation. The relationship between Gen and myself is a little more complicated. Her grandfather and my great-grandfather were brothers. I don't know what that makes us, but it makes us kin.

I remember joyfully as a child when Gen and Jean, sometimes at the same time, sometimes at different times, would come to visit and my Grandmother Freund's house. Gen would always bring her dad Leo. For me as a kid, he was quite the character as I remember and recall. Gen and Jean were both graduates of that late, great Immaculate Conception Academy in Davenport, Iowa. They both joined shortly after graduating. When I moved to Dubuque and became very busy at Clarke University, Gen was still in Davenport and my dad, who was Gen's cousin, his health declined. He was in a nursing home at the end of his life. Gen was always a good contact for me about how my dad was doing. So in between the weekly visits I had with my dad, if there were any needs or concerns, she was very helpful with that. I will miss her as I miss SM Jean. But I am delighted that those two are together now. Amen.

Sister Donna Bebensee, BVM

When I was at St. Paul's, I lived there for four years. I lived there while I taught at Alleman across the [Mississippi] River. I didn't know any of the sisters when I moved in except for Catherine Jean [Hayen] who invited me to come. I am a very shy person. Because I am, it's hard for me to make friends. My bedroom was kitty corner from Gen's. She made it easy to become friends. One of the things that the sisters at St. Paul's did was having what they called "parent weekend." Any of us who had living parents invited the parents to come on Friday or Saturday and stay through Sunday. My parents, Frances and Fred, came, Gen's dad Leo came, and Rose, Joan Opatts' mother came.

Those four loved to play 500. The rest of us would be sitting around and chatting. All of the sudden we would hear a yelp coming from the card table. Somebody obviously won a hand or beat somebody close to winning. Those four became quite the regulars at that table. During that time, we got to know a little bit about each other's families. I know Gen's family meant a lot to her. I got to know Leo pretty well because he would come over to the house. I also went out to meet her mother who was in a nursing home. I know Gen loved to play the organ and I loved to go in to listen to her practice. I wasn't at St. Paul's long, but Gen and I became friends, and I will miss her.

Sister Diane Forster, BVM

On the posting of Chattanooga Our Lady of Perpetual Help Alums, there were about 35 responses, most of them expressing how wonderful a person, gentle, kind, wonderful teacher that Gen was for them. One person wrote, and I didn't get her name, "I'm sorry to learn of Sister Leonine's passing. She was my piano teacher from second to tenth grades. She was a very nice, humble person and good teacher. I will miss her.

Jacquie Reese

Sister Mary Leonine, BVM came to St Patrick's in Cedar Falls, Iowa, when I was in third grade. I believe it was her first mission. She taught music and piano that year to fourth through eighth grades. I thought she was the most beautiful nun in the world. I could not wait to have her for piano lessons the following year. Both my sisters had taken them, and I could not wait. WRONG!!! The next year Sister Mary Leonine was moved to another mission and St. Patrick's no longer continued the music program. I was crushed. I never really knew Genevieve. but I always felt left out. And to this day I cannot read music. But as I look at her picture today, I still think she was so beautiful.

Sister Eileen Healy, BVM

I am in Gen's set. I never heard of ICA (Immaculate Conception Academy) until I entered with her in 1952. We had about five people from ICA in our set to begin with. I'm so happy that Sister Carol Marie mentioned Sister Marilyn Thomas in the eulogy because she had a great influence on those from ICA. I recall that everybody was talking about Sister Marilyn. Apparently, she was coming to Dubuque to visit. The ICA people were so excited. How important she was to those young girls entering, especially to Gen.

Sister Irene Lukefahr, BVM

In the mid-1970s, I was blessed to live with a wonderful group of BVMs at St. Paul's in Davenport, Iowa. Among them was Gen. She was kind, patient, wise, and the first BVM I ever met who could tease me over and over, even to the last week of her life. It was Gen, who on Ascension Thursday, had the common sense to call the fire department to report a fire in the convent. Within minutes, three fire trucks and ten fire fighters arrived to put out a kitchen fire that I had caused preparing a feast day breakfast for the community. After school that day, about nine of us, including Gen, gathered in the dining room area to begin cleaning up the mess from the morning fire. While we carefully washed all the soot from the dining room table, chairs, and cabinets, we shared experiences of what had happened that day. I was touched that not one of the sisters blamed me for the fire. Instead, they only expressed gratitude that none of the sisters had been hurt, including two elderly sisters whose bedrooms were near the kitchen. Their acceptance of me is an indelible memory of the many times I have received the Charity of the Congregation.

Thank you, Gen, for your wisdom and love. May you delight in the presence of our Loving God.

Dianne Reistroffer, Friend

Sister Gen was an exemplary religious, an outstanding educator and pastoral associate, and a dear friend to me, my mother, and our entire family. She and Sister M. Stasia [Stafford] were fixtures at St. Paul's-Davenport, Iowa, and served in multiple ways in the parish and in the school. I shall remember our shared love of dogs and times of sharing on a wide range of issues and topics facing the Church and society. Gen and Stasia generously extended hospitality on my visits home, and I recall with joy their visit to my home in Louisville. Rest in peace, Gen.

Sarah Coussens, Friend

Sister Gen was the sweetest dearest friend. We were so blessed to have shared such a fun friendship with her, Sister Stasia [Stafford], and our dogs, with whom we shared many walks together. We're so grateful for all the years we shared love and friendship.

Beverly Pangle Scott, Former Student

(Excerpt from Beverly's book Thank you, Sister! about her years as a student at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Chattanooga, Tenn.)

All of her students loved Sister Leonine. She demonstrated an inward beauty that only enhanced her natural physical beauty. She was tall and graceful with a very gentle sense of humor. During music class that year, I particularly remember singing in rounds. We did not sing the usual "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," but rather things we had never heard of before. One of the songs was called "Zumgali." We had classes on music theory, too, but the corny, unusual songs that broke up classroom monotony were what I remember most.

Sister Leonine taught us spelling too. We probably thought that she would be a pushover, but she was much too conscientious for that. Throughout my grade-school experience, my teachers exhibited high expectations for all of us, and Sister Leonine was no exception. Gentle and tenderhearted as she was, she never compromised her high standards with regard to learning.

Sister Mary Jean Ferry, BVM

I am a member of Gen's set. We have something at Mount Carmel Bluffs that is very important to us called a fob. It gets us in and out of the building. My friend Sister Roberta White lost hers. For over a week, every morning she would say, "I can't find it. I can't find it." The day that Gen died, I was talking with Roberta, and she said, "I still can't find my fob." I said, "Let's pray to Gen." Roberta puts her hand in her pocket and there it was! I encourage you to pray to Gen for your needs.

Sister Anne Buckley, BVM

I just need to say this. I only met Gen here, in passing maybe somewhere else, but she certainly epitomized for me that "to know Gen was to love Gen."