



Sharing of Memories of Eugena Sullivan, BVM

Mary Frances Clarke Chapel, April 21, 2025

Mariann West, Niece, Daughter of Mary (Sullivan) Zidek

I remember when Aunt Rosalie and Sister Marguerite Newman would come in for the weekend. We would get to play games with them at our kitchen table with my dad and mom, Aunt Rosalie's sister. They would always have their happy hour which was fun to be around them! Cheers and rest in peace, Aunt Rosalie!

Jan Scahill, Niece, Daughter of Jack Sullivan

What I remembered most was her telling stories to me and my children about how her grandmother would make my dad take her to the show on Saturdays. He would always make her walk a block behind him. He didn't want anybody to know she was with him.

She entered the convent in 1953. I don't remember it because that was the year I was born. I always know how long she was a sister. My first real memories of Rosalie are when she used to come and visit. It was a big deal because the nuns were coming! There were always two of them. They came in twos just like on the ark. What I remember the most about sitting next to her were those big, heavy, brown rosary beads. They were fascinating to a little kid. We would ask her if we could play with them. She said, "No. They are not for play." She loved California; she always said that.

When we were at Clarke College, it was always a little scary because she was the registrar and knew our grades before we did. We didn't want that news to get back home before we had a chance to talk with our parents.

Aunt Rosie was very, very good to my daughters Molly and Maggie when they were at Clarke. She would invite them to lunch, invite them to the Motherhouse for Mass on Sundays. They enjoyed it very much.

My dad was a part-time bartender. That's where she got her bartending skills. I know my dad is making her a Manhattan right now.

Beloved daughter, sister, aunt, and great-aunt to many. Rest in peace, dear Aunt Rosalie. We will miss you. Love, Jan, Steve, Mollie, and Maggie Scahill.

Mary Kay Walsh, Niece, Daughter of Jack Sullivan

I also attended Clarke College. Rosalie had a huge impact on our lives. It's obvious after listening to the eulogy and my own sister's sharing that her influence was great. Three of her nieces attended Clarke, three second cousins, two of her grandnieces, and Jackie, hopefully, maybe, two of the great grandnieces. Also, maybe some of those nephews, too. I was in the first graduating class of the co-ed college.

We knew growing up that Aunt Rosalie was a very special person who had a distinguished place in our family. She was the kindest and gentlest person we knew. I am grateful for her presence in my life. I am grateful for all of you – your presence and sisterhood with Rosalie.

Sheila Castanada, Former Instructor at Clarke University

I taught at Clarke for 35 years. Of course, many of those years were spent with Sister Eugena, either in the computer center – I was in the computer science department, and she was in the computer center for many years – and as registrar. I have one cute little story about her. It was graduation time in the spring. One young man who was supposed to graduate was failing my course. He failed it royally. It would have prevented him from graduating. I was in the registrar's office for some reason and Sister Eugena brought it up. She said, "You know, Chris won't be able to graduate." I said, "He really failed my course." She said, "You know, there's not much difference between an F and a D." So, I changed his grade to a D and he graduated the next day. She was always so kind and looking out for all of the students. She was always very meticulous about her job. She knew that if Chris got a D instead of an F, he could graduate. She was a great lady.

Sister Karen Conover, BVM

I entered the community in 1965 at our novitiate in Los Gatos, Calif. When we approached making vows, our set, the second and last set to enter there, had a choice about going to Mundelein College [Chicago] as the entire set ahead of us had done, or going to Clarke [College]. Three of us, for some strange reasons, decided to go to Clarke. I was going to major in chemistry and the other two were musicians. Mundelein had fine departments in those areas, but as it turned out, I went to Clarke. Our credits from Guadalupe were registered through Mundelein College. I remember several brief interactions with Eugena in the registrar's office making sure our credits were transferred. How gracious she was when her good friend and my department chair, Sister Marguerite Newman, BVM, encouraged me to go on to graduate study, which I did at the University of Minnesota. It was always an interesting thing to me to look at that document and the copies that went to institutions and to know that Eugena's signature was there. It was a calming, wonderful experience. I always hold her in my memory as a professional, kind, thorough person for whom I was so grateful.

Catherine Dunn, BVM

Eugena was registrar while I was there. What a wonderful woman! She was the nicest, gentlest, most helpful person I can remember. She was a loving person. When I was there as president, I never had a complaint come to me. I never had Eugena come to me with a problem. She always resolved issues in her own area. She was a gem. While she deserved to retire, we very much missed her when she left. I am grateful that I got to see her before she died to say a few words into her ear, as we know hearing is the last sense to go. Our congregation was blessed by her presence. I am thankful to God that she was in my life.

Sister Margaret Mary Cosgrove, BVM

I knew Eugena from Clarke when I worked there. Eugena and Marguerite [Newman] were very different. They were like night and day, opposites of each other. There were times that Marguerite could be like a Mac truck and Eugena was just lying in the wake. They also loved each other. They enjoyed living together. Before they moved off-campus, we lent them our house for several days when we were out of town. They were cooking, something they had not done a lot before. I forget what they were making, but it required flour. They took this stuff out of the canister and added it to the recipe. Well, it wasn't flour; it was sugar. It caramelized. They were very surprised and didn't know what they had done wrong. When they told us about it, we explained that the canister had sugar in it.

They had a car that was very low to the ground which was difficult for them to get in and out of it. They had it for a couple of years and then traded it for one more like a sedan which was easier for them.

Colleen Clark Ebbesmeyer, Former BVM

I first met Eugena in 1961 when I arrived at Holy Family in Glendale, Calif., my first mission. We both taught in the high school. Eugena was kind and helpful in many ways to this "newbie." She was also in charge of the financial books for the archdiocese. Even lightbulbs had to be purchased through them. I remember her frustration when the balance was off by even a dime. I offered to give her a dime from the candy money sold at lunchtime, but of course she couldn't do that, and she continued to work as hard on balancing those books as on everything else she did.

I have many good memories of our years at Holy Family, and I have remained in touch ever since. It was very hard as her health declined through the years. Now I have another good BVM friend who has a high place in heaven

Sister Kathleen Antol, BVM

It was my first semester of teaching at Clarke College in the chemistry department. One day the phone rang. I answered the phone. It was Eugena who was the registrar. She said, "Kathleen, I don't have your grades." I said, "Well, they are sitting right on my desk." First year, you know. I said, "They are sitting right here." She said, "Sitting right there. You need to get them to me." I said, "I could bring them at noon." She said, "No. Now." She taught me how it works.

What I really remember her for are the times visiting her apartment that she shared with Marguerite. If you have a pen and a paper, you might want to write down this recipe. It was one of her favorite desserts. Take a toaster waffle and put it in the toaster and heat it. Put it in a dish. On top of it add a scoop of vanilla ice cream and a scoop of chocolate ice cream. Over the vanilla, pour chocolate syrup. Over the chocolate, pour strawberries. Put Cool Whip on top. She was so proud of that dessert. I had never had one like that before. However, frequently, I have served that.

Sister Mary Ann Zollmann, BVM

My first memory of Eugena was Thanksgiving time in 1980. I came to Clarke at the encouragement of Therese Mackin, BVM, to see if I would be drawn to move from my much beloved ministry in high school to working in a college atmosphere. It was a real discernment time for me. This is about what was referred to in the eulogy and by so many of you as her hallmark characteristic hospitality of home and heart. When I arrived, Eugena wanted to make sure that, in addition to finding out about my professional ministry at Clarke, that I would get to know something about the BVM community there. So, what did she do? She hosted a party. I remember sitting at that party and her saying, "You can ask us any questions that you want. And we'll ask you some questions." Actually, that experience was critical to my making the decision to come to Clarke in 1981.

Eugena was always interested in your life, in how you were, in what you were doing. I could always relax in her presence where I felt so at home. This was true also during the months of Covid when I had the gift of being able to bring her meals to her room and share a brief visit.

Today is Easter Monday. Often at a holiday time, especially the day after or maybe the evening of, she would invite us over for some leftovers. She loved being together, both in her home in the Carmel Circle apartment and in her apartment on Asbury, and in her home in Letter Wing at Clarke. Mostly, it was to share community. I think about that a lot. Important to her were these little snippets and events of community where we could share BVM life in a comfortable environment at holiday or ordinary time. I'm thinking of her today. We don't know exactly what happens in the afterlife. But I am very sure that whatever it is, is more homely and hospitable because Eugena is there.

Sister Margaret Sannasardo, BVM Set of 1953

I'm from the Set of 1953 and with Eugena when the 72 of us entered. I didn't know Eugena very well. She was older, more quiet, gentle, and friendly in the Novitiate and always just as loving as can be compared to a lot of us who were just young kids and 17 when we entered. I always looked at her as a gentle, loving person. Eugena was very special and loving. The set of 1953 will miss her.

Sister Irene Lukefahr, BVM

Eugena was a woman filled with gratitude. Whenever I visited her in Marian Hall and did something seemingly insignificant like offering her a drink of water, handing her a Kleenex, or picking up something from off the floor, she would always say "Thank you!" Eugena, may you now be shouting out thank you over and over again to our Loving Creator who has brought you to new life.

Patricia Schueller

I was in the registrar's office when Sister Eugena retired. I worked at Clarke College for ten years. She was always only there half-time. One of the things we did was that every morning at 10:15 we stopped and had animal crackers. She talked about her family and growing up in Chicago all the time. I always told her she should write a book. She was great to be with. I loved the lady.

Sister Gwen Farry, BVM

My favorite memory of Eugena is from just a couple of months ago. I was walking along the corridor in the Motherhouse while Eugena was being wheeled back to her room after getting her hair done. I said, "Hi, Eugena!" She called me by name and then said, "Glendale, Calif., history major." I did not graduate from Clarke College, but of course our grades were registered. The aide said, "She remembers everyone's major."