

# Bylines

Ursulines of the Eastern Province

FALL 2014

## MARY JANE ROBERTSHAW

*Bridget Puzon, OSU*

**A**t Andrus on Hudson, Sister Mary Jane Robertshaw, CNR '51, has a view of tall trees, lush and green, and silent. A thought-provoking invitation she received at an Andrus event focused her reflections. Participants received a one-page form with suggested topics and questions. After a lifetime of teaching and making art, she has much to reflect on. One entry question: "What do I really love to do?" Her written response: "Taking delight in doing for others where their gifts could be admired."



Photo: Alice Marie Giordano, OSU

As a teacher at The College of New Rochelle from 1957 to 1997, she taught modern art, philosophy of art, sculpture, ceramics, and weaving. She recalls her early missteps in teaching and says, "If there's a mistake, I've been there." As an Ursuline in the residence halls, she lived with students and knew them "after hours." For her, interacting with students outside classroom

formality was a fun experience. It was where friendships developed as she got to know these women.

During her early years of teaching, she was asked to make a sculpture of St. Angela. She chose African mahogany and set up a studio where she could work, mostly in summers. She is modest in talking about what she produced, yet the sculpture, finished in 1960, achieved a new vision of the foundress of the

Ursulines. Most artistic renderings of St. Angela had been modeled from her death mask. Mary Jane envisioned and created Angela as a young woman,  
*Continued on p. 6*

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

*Jeannie Humphries, OSU*

**W**ith my appointment this summer as principal of the Academy of Mount St. Ursula (AMSU), my alumnae well-wishers were many. Their notes, emails, and phone calls included phrases that resonate with graduates from the '50s to present day students.

They speak of the tradition of Serviam, sisterhood, strong women and community. Some well-wishers expressed their encouragement in noting: "four years to last a life-time," "an oasis in Bedford Park," "family spirit," "excellent education." The educational values they want to see continue include thinking critically, love of learning, a broader global view, as well as communication, integrity, values, leadership, and spiritual awareness. All noted that they are grateful for their Ursuline education, our home away from home, our treasure in the Bronx. How pleased and humbled I am to continue in this great tradition.

In June, I attended the Ursuline Global Education Conference held at The College of New Rochelle, the first international convocation of its kind. About 150 Ursuline educators gathered from around the world. Speakers and discussion groups reflected on the core values of Ursuline Education, the value of Catholic education in today's world, administration, spirituality, and St. Angela Merici.

The conference participants visited AMSU and were joined by its teachers and students. We were impressed by how articulate and well-spoken the students were, telling how they want to make a difference in society, and how St. Angela's breadth of vision is alive in them.

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Photo: Patrick Dannenhoffer

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## LETTERS to the EDITOR

*Thanks to those of you who accepted the invitation to send a note about an Ursuline recollection. We will feature these as our space permits so please send your comments. A neighbor of the Ursuline Convent in New Rochelle offers a reflection below. RZ*



Photo: John Vecchiola

**T**hirty-five years ago our family moved next door to the Ursulines on Liberty Avenue in New Rochelle, NY. From teas on our porch, we learned about their careers and ministries. We told our children how Sr. Alice Gallin had worked for the Office of Strategic Services during WW II. One of our young daughters eventually assailed Sr. Alice, "My parents told us you were a spy during the war. Can you teach me to be one, too?"

When our children took a shortcut through the convent's backyard, they met Sr. Irene Sosnowska planting flowers. One day she told them how the Nazis sent the nuns and the Jewish children sheltered in her convent to Auschwitz. When one of our sons was studying civil rights, he interviewed Sr. Alice Alexander about her experiences teaching at a Mississippi Freedom School during the 1960's.

Sr. Mary Boyan won our children's hearts by inviting them to pick up the delicious leftovers from family parties at St. Augustine's. We also had fun at Halloween when Sr. Anne Therese trick-or-treated as Big Bird.

Both of our boys were on the wrestling team. Our older son left the house one morning after pinning his brother. The younger responded by throwing his brother's dresser out the third floor window. It crashed into pieces, leaving underwear and socks in the convent's shrubs.

Once our younger son became one of New York City's "Finest," we left him in charge of the house during Labor Day weekend. When I inquired about bags of beer cans on our return, he owned up to the party. I protested, "You could have woken the convent with all that noise!" "Oh, the nuns crimped our fun, all right. Just when we were hitting our stride, about 1:30 or 2:00 am, they told us to lower the music." "They could have called the police," I groaned. "But, Dad, we are the police!"


The sisters prayed unceasingly for our older son when hospitalized with lymphoma. When trimming the front willow tree resulted in my breaking many bones, Sr. Mary Boyan accompanied my wife in the ambulance. The next spring, while climbing a stepladder to clean first floor storm windows, Sr. Teresa Weed demanded, "Get off that ladder!" I complied at once. "Yes, Sister," forever after foregoing the windows.

Nancy and I want to add, as we move on now to a new address, "Thank you, Sisters, for immeasurably enriching our lives, and for remaining ever so discreet!"

*Jim Magee*

## MAY CALENDAR WINNERS!

Congratulations to the winners of this year's May Calendar drawing. Our sincerest thank you to everyone who participated in this annual fundraiser.

	<i>May</i> 2014				<b>1</b> Sharon Parente \$100	<b>2</b> Noreen Schifini \$100	<b>3</b> Maureen Lynch \$100
	<b>4</b> Sue Lebrija \$250	<b>5</b> Camille Mandini \$150	<b>6</b> Beatrice MacKenzie \$100	<b>7</b> The Adult Learning Cntr. \$100	<b>8</b> Mary Wakeford \$250	<b>9</b> Eileen Sammon \$100	<b>10</b> Mary Beth Read, OSU \$100
	<b>11</b> Joseph Nappi \$500	<b>12</b> Carol Gourlie \$100	<b>13</b> Rose Marie Waldron \$250	<b>14</b> Rita Gurry \$100	<b>15</b> Mary Hart \$250	<b>16</b> Delphine Koblentz \$100	<b>17</b> Norma Freire \$250
	<b>18</b> Betty McIntyre \$100	<b>19</b> Mary McMillan \$100	<b>20</b> Constance Kelleher \$250	<b>21</b> Helen Monica Carroll \$100	<b>22</b> David & Claudia O'Leary \$100	<b>23</b> Patricia Beers \$100	<b>24</b> Constance Kelleher \$100
	<b>25</b> Judy Perez \$150	<b>26</b> Ann Rowland \$1000	<b>27</b> Dorothy Sturek \$100	<b>28</b> Helen Toneatto \$250	<b>29</b> Rosetta Sicilia \$250	<b>30</b> Thomas Malloy \$250	<b>31</b> Carol Muzas \$250

## PROVINCIAL NOTES

Jane Finnerty, OSU

**A**s I begin my term as Provincial of the Eastern Province, I am struck by the vibrant spirit of St. Angela that is alive in 2014. St. Angela's breadth of vision, optimism and flexibility make her an ideal guide for me.

Several characteristics in the person of St. Angela resonate with me. Angela grasped the essentials of Christian living. Bypassing secondary considerations, she went to the heart of the matter to address the real needs of the Church of her day. Convinced that love is the basis of Christian action, she was at ease in discerning the spirit of the law rather than the letter. Throughout her life, her buoyant confidence in God convinced her that God would never abandon her. She was able to communicate this certainty to her friends and followers. Since she was in touch with the needs of her times, she knew that needs would change. In fact, she encouraged her followers to make necessary changes after seeking good advice. She had no fear of innovation.

The charism of St. Angela stands out in several events

this year. We were surprised and delighted with the canonization of St. Marie of the Incarnation, a French Ursuline and the first woman missionary to the New World. What a great honor it was for the Ursuline Community of New Rochelle to be recognized by The New Rochelle Council of Community Services for outstanding contributions to community, education, and social services. In June the first Global Education Conference sponsored by Ursuline Education Services was held at the College of New Rochelle. Ursuline educators from 20 countries and 11 different language groups came together united by a common mission. St. Angela's legacy of courage, risk, and innovation was embodied in each of these events.

As we move ahead with hope in these challenging times, we strive to open our hearts to the invigorating and hope-filled spirit of St. Angela



Photo: T. Eppridge

## ST. MARIE OF THE INCARNATION

**O**n April 3, 2014, Ursuline Mother Marie of the Incarnation was canonized. Saint Marie has been called the Mother of the Canadian Church. Marie, a widow with a son, Claude, believed she was called to a life of prayer and service. She became an Ursuline leaving her son with relatives. After some time in the convent of Tours she became leader of a group who left France to minister in the colony of New France as it was then called.

There were three Ursulines, three nursing sisters and Madame de la Peltrie, who promised to support the mission from her inheritance.

After a three month trip, they landed in Quebec in 1639 and were enthusiastically welcomed. Living conditions were primitive and austere but the work of education began. The Ursuline community, though cloistered, was aware of the work of other missionaries and the growing city around them. Marie's spiritual life was profound, even mystical in her relationship with God. Her writings are rich with accounts of these prayers and experiences, the foundation of her missionary life

She died April 30, 1672 in Quebec, Canada. Her writings and a large number of her letters have been preserved, revealing her spiritual life. Ursuline Sister Irene Mahoney has written a biography of Marie, entitled *Marie of the Incarnation: Mystic and Missionary*.



Photo: Sheila Murphy, OSU

*This nine-foot high banner hangs in a stairway at the Ursuline Monastery school in Quebec. The original, a stained glass window made in 1904 is on display at the Musée de l'Amérique francophone, an intercultural museum in Quebec City.*

### *Ursuline Bylines*

Editor: Roxanne Zimmer

Editorial Board:

Martha Counihan Bridget Puzon

Martha Reddington

Production: TE Graphics

Published by

The Development Office of the Ursulines  
of the Eastern Province of the United States.

Michele Foran Director of Development

Ursuline Provincialate

1338 North Avenue

New Rochelle, NY 10804

914-712-0068 E-mail: devofc@aol.com



## IN MEMORIAM

### SR. WINIFRED DANWITZ, OSU

June 25, 1920 – April 29, 2014

Sister Winifred Danwitz died peacefully at Andrus on Hudson at 93 years of age. Fondly called “Winnie,” she was a member of the community of St. Teresa in New Rochelle before moving to Andrus.



Winifred entered the Ursulines in 1945. Her first ministry was at The College of New Rochelle (CNR) where she taught speech from 1948 to 1959. In 1961 she founded the Mount St. Ursula Speech Center, serving children with speech and hearing disabilities. She was also Director of Speech Therapy for the Archdiocese of New York. From 1980 to 1987 she was Coordinator of the Program in Language Learning in the Graduate School at CNR. Retiring in 1987, she worked to found Angela House in 1997, a transitional residence for homeless women and their children, preparing them for the workplace and for independent living. She served as Executive Director until 2006.

Winifred’s teaching and service awards were many and include the Nitchie Award in Human Communication, Association of Teachers of New York, and the NY Orton Dyslexia Society. She served on the Boards of NY Speech, Language and Hearing Association, the Orton Dyslexia Society, and NY Supreme Court Committee on Juvenile Justice, among others.

### SR. KATHRYN FITZ-GERALD, OSU

Feb. 25, 1914 – July 15, 2014



Sister Kathryn Fitz-Gerald, formerly Mother Barbara, died peacefully at Andrus on Hudson in her 100th year.

She held a bachelor’s degree in French from The College of New Rochelle, a Master’s in French from Fordham University, a certificate in theology from Providence College, and a certificate in Oral French from the Institut Catholique in Paris.

Kathryn entered the Ursulines in 1933 and made her final vows in 1938. She taught at The Ursuline School from 1935 to 1974. From 1977 through 1994 she was a travel consultant at Windows of the World, Travel Help, and Casti Travel. She was a member of the community of St. Teresa before moving to Andrus. Her graciousness and good humor were characteristic over a long lifetime.

### SR. MARY WALTER SANTER, OSU

July 21, 1933 – May 21, 2014

Born in the Bronx, on July 21, 1933, Eileen Santer entered the Ursulines in 1952, taking the name, Mary Walter.



After earning a BA in mathematics at The College of New Rochelle in 1958, she taught in the Bronx at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula and then at St. Joseph’s in Middletown, NY. Her dream of becoming a missionary was realized in 1959 when she was sent to Thailand. There she taught in several Ursuline schools. She noted in an interview that living in a Buddhist country had led her to live a life patterned on Jesus’ life rather than preaching.

Her world view expanded while working for the Federation of Asian Bishops, eventually serving as Executive Secretary. She convinced the bishops to establish an Office of Consecrated Life to include the thousands of women religious, stating that the service of women religious to the bishops was more than sharpening pencils and distributing aspirin! She traveled extensively throughout Southeast Asia as a courier for bishops, always happy to be of service, living the missionary life she desired.

Mary Walter, a member of the community of Mater Dei in Bangkok, Thailand died there on May 21, 2014.

### SR. TERESA WEED, OSU

October 15, 1921 – March 28, 2014



Sister Teresa Weed, known by many as Mother Mary Louis, died at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx. She was a member of the community of St. Teresa in New Rochelle. Teresa entered the Ursulines in 1939 and in 1945 was assigned to Blessed Sacrament School

in New Rochelle. She then earned a B.A. in English from The College of New Rochelle.

In 1948 she went to The Ursuline Lower School in New Rochelle and became a beloved first-grade teacher. From 1961 to 1972 she taught at the Ursuline Academy in Bethesda, MD, returning to teach at New Rochelle Catholic Elementary School. She then began a new ministry, working with children at the Headstart Children’s Center for Learning in New Rochelle from 1991 to 2009 as an assistant teacher, and from 2009 to 2013 she volunteered as a Foster Grandparent. Teresa was best known for her gentle care for children, guiding and assisting them in their early years. She also assisted in the formation of young sisters and from 1992 to 2004 was editor of *Bylines*.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE *continued from p. 1*

AMSU will celebrate its 160th anniversary in 2015! As the oldest continuously operating Catholic high school for girls in the State of New York, AMSU's mission continues to be one of empowering young women of diverse cultures to be leaders while instilling in them a love of learning and a broader global view.

What else will the girls of the Academy of Mount St. Ursula need to be women leaders in society for the next 50 years? How are we helping each of today's young women develop to her full potential? To achieve this goal, continued creativity and flexibility are needed.

These are questions in my mind as I prepare for the academic year of 2014-2015. Today's AMSU students come from a variety of ethnic cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, family life and academic abilities. St. Angela advises us to build community wherever we go. As I meet with faculty, staff, and students, it is heartening to find they are committed to the mission, community, and academics. I am committed to keeping that spirit alive and growing.

## NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM

On February 8, 2014, the Roman Union Ursulines of the Eastern Province elected a new Provincial and Provincial Council. On May 1, 2014 the new leadership team assumed office.



Photo: Maria Rosa Deiso, OSU

*Seated from left to right: Councilors Sr. Ann Peterson and Sr. Patricia Russell. Standing from left to right: Sr. Joan Woodcome, Councilor, Sr. Jane Finnerty, Provincial and Sr. Maureen Welch, Councilor.*

## JUBILEE CELEBRATION FOR 12 SISTERS HELD AT ANDRUS

**T**he Jubilee celebration of 12 sisters was held at Andrus on Hudson on May 10, 2014. The Jubilarians are Anne Marie Kelleher (75 years), (60 years) Mildred Hapt, Carole Marie Keaney, Marie-Celine Miranda, Mary Jane Robertshaw, Elizabeth Ann Sommer, Dolores Yanshak, Bridget Puzon, Doris Therese Walbridge, and Mary Walter Santer (recently deceased). The 50 year jubilarians were Mary Alice Duggan (presently stationed in Rome), and Eileen Finnerty. The location at Andrus enabled all the sisters of the province to be present. The Mass, held in the auditorium, began with the jubilarians entering in procession. At the Offering of the Gifts, they renewed their vows.



Photos: Alice Marie Giordano, OSU



*Luncheon at Andrus after the Jubilee Mass brought together all the sisters and friends who shared the occasion. In the center is Sr. Dee Yanshak, one of the jubilarians. On left is Hugh Galloway, a neighbor, on right Sr. Marion Bohen.*



## NEWS AND NOTES

The **Angela Spirituality Group** will hold a retreat on Saturday, October 4, 2014 at the Province Center. Sister Danielle Baran, Sister of the Resurrection, will lead the retreat with reflective talks, private prayer and small group discussions.

**Sr. Kathleen Finnerty** has been selected as a mentor for new principals and school boards for the Diocese of Brooklyn.

**Sr. Marilyn Muldoon** was appointed Director of Inclusive Support for Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut. This includes 32 elementary schools and 5 high schools. She will assist school administrators and teachers to accommodate students with disabilities.

**Sr. Sandy Wardell** will be spending one month with Ursuline Sisters in Laredo, Texas working to aid refugee children.

**Sister Maureen Welch** is the new coordinator of the Roman Union Office of Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation.

Rev. Thomas Brennan, SDB, presided at the **Mass of Thanksgiving** on June 21, 2014, at the Province Center. Concelebrating with him was Rev. Brian Muzas, son of an alumna, Carol Keenan Muzas, TUS '60, CNR '64. The



Mass brought together Ursuline friends and benefactors who filled the chapel with resounding joy and song.

The reception after the Mass spread from the Angela Garden Room to a perfect Spring evening outdoors in St. Joseph's Garden where Ursulines and friends gathered.



Photo: T. Eppridge

### MARY JANE ROBERTSHAW *cont'd from p. 1*

purposefully stepping forward to deliver to workers the bread she carries in a basket, a fitting metaphor for Angela's joyful desire to serve others. It is an original representation that was new, rich with meaning, and a pleasure to look at. It now stands at the entrance to the college chapel.

Sister Anne Marie Kelleher serving in Serowe, Botswana, invited Mary Jane to travel there to teach wood carving to Bushmen of Kalahari. In 1989 on her sabbatical, she responded, working to help the carvers hone their skills to create works for sale at market. An earlier sabbatical took her to Helsinki, Finland in 1968, to learn weaving. Without knowing Finnish, she intently followed presentations, at all levels, by the instructors at Helsinki Art and Craft Making, with help from the Finnish students, encouraging her on. The result was the creation of a campus weaving studio with looms for students, where she and students produced beautiful and intricate weavings, some used as wall hangings. One of these, titled Finlandia, grand in size, in gradations of blue, hangs in the Gill library.

Through the Faculty Resource Network, she studied Islamic Art at New York University in 1991. The following summer she obtained a certificate in the art of India. Other sabbaticals enabled her to travel to places where she would expand her experience of art of other cultures.

These activities represent her curiosity, going beyond borders to experience a wide range of artistic expression. Her appreciation of people, her good-natured openness to new experiences made her value artistic expression wherever she found it. And, as could be expected, she was called upon to create works for special occasions. When she retired from CNR in 1997, she still served with her artistic abilities.

Recognizing that we spend most of our lives trying to be in control of what happens, she smiles broadly and says of her present state, "It ain't gonna be"; she learned that and finds peace. "We're looking for truth. When we begin to accept what's happening, there's a truth that comes up, and I keep reminding myself there is freedom in truth; let it flow."

## INTERNATIONAL URSULINE CONFERENCE *Joanne Kelly*

**U**rsuline educators from twenty countries gathered for the Ursuline Educational Services (UES) Global Conference in June 2014. Held at The College of New Rochelle, it welcomed Ursuline educators from Australia, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Chile, England, France, Germany, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, Peru, Poland, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, and Venezuela. The conference was a catalyst in sparking a renewed, joyous and collaborative spirit among the participants.

The Academy of Mount St. Ursula, The College of New Rochelle and The Ursuline School in New Rochelle were the hosting schools that helped educators connect with other sister schools, worldwide.

Ursuline Educational Services is a network of Ursuline schools in the US and Canada and its Board of Trustees (including Judy Wimberg, Executive Director; Eileen Davidson, President of The Ursuline School, and others) worked for three years on this global conference. The dream of uniting and energizing sister Ursuline schools was realized at the conference.

The program for the Global Education Conference included speakers and break-out sessions for participants who wished to celebrate their common heritage as followers of St. Angela Merici and to discover together how they can enhance the charism of St. Angela in Ursuline schools in the twenty-first century.

The theme of Global Education in the Ursuline Spirit was reflected upon by five key presenters. Ann Garrido, Associate Professor of Homiletics at Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, author and administrator, addressed the Conference on the topic of Redeeming Administration. The College of New Rochelle's professor emeritus Sister Mary Virginia Orna, OSU spoke on the topic of The Value of a Liberal Arts Education. Mary Cabrini Durkin, member of the Company of St. Ursula and experienced educator reflected on St. Angela Merici as A Wise Guide on the Path of Life. Diana Stano, OSU, President of Ursuline College in Cleveland, Ohio entitled her presentation Ursuline Education: Global Impact. Bro. Raymond J. Vercruysse, CFC reflected on the topic: Seeking to Extend the Kingdom to the Ends of the Earth with a Great and Longing Heart. A panel on the UN addressed the activities of Ursuline sisters, NGO groups and Academy of Mount St. Ursula students at the United Nations, in New York City. Ursuline sisters Alice

Marie Giordano, Michele Morek, and Maureen Welch coordinated this segment with the assistance of Anita Benn (AMSU '14).

Additional goals of the conference were to establish collaborative relationships among Ursuline educators, celebrate their common heritage and values, and share collective wisdom about 21st century education.

As a participant and a planner of this conference, I was impressed by the eagerness of the participants to bond with each other and to learn about the way that each school celebrates its uniqueness while sharing the same Ursuline charism with its community. The energy present was truly miraculous. The spirit of St. Angela was clearly felt as a bonding energy and source of revitalization to the mission that each representative took home.



Photo: T. Eppridge

*Ursuline Educational Services held a Global Education Conference of Ursuline educators at The College of New Rochelle, June 16-20, 2014. One hundred-twenty participants represented Ursulines, faculty and administrators from Ursuline schools.*

The UES board brought this energy into its planning and its cultivation of ideas throughout the years of preparation. Their deep-rooted sense of the need to pull together the family of St. Angela and create bonds for future generations shone through in each activity.

The topics of the above speakers laid the foundation for this but the other social activities -- dinners at the schools, trips to Manhattan, and the boat ride around the Long Island Sound and NY Harbor brought us together so that we could see the uniqueness in each other and recognize the Spirit that is drawing us together, renewing and revitalizing us all as we continue to bring the mission of St. Angela into the future with a resounding, fervent energy.

*Editor's note: Joanne Kelly is a teacher at the Academy of Mount St. Ursula.*



# Bylines

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## PROVINCE MISSION STATEMENT

We, Ursulines of the Eastern Province of the United States, are women religious in an international community, united by the vision and spirit of our foundress, St. Angela Merici.

Impelled by deep personal love for Jesus Christ, Angela sought in a life of prayer and action to bring people from all segments of society to a deeper love of God and one another.

We follow Angela in the service of this twofold love. While we continue to proclaim the Gospel in our traditional work of education, we welcome the call of the Spirit to new ministries.

In response to the needs of our times, we commit ourselves, in both our life and our work, to solidarity with the poor; to the pursuit of justice for all, especially women; and to collaboration with the laity.

As a community that values both tradition and progress, we move into the future with courage and with trust in God.

## Ursuline Community Honored by NRCCS



Photo: Kathy Gilvrit

*Sister Jane Finnerty, OSU, second from the right, accepts the New Rochelle Council of Community Services (NRCCS) award for the many years of service the Ursulines have given to the people of New Rochelle since 1896.*

*Also in the photo from left to right are Barbara Davis, co-president of NRCCS, award recipients Janet Guarasci, Recreation Supervisor of New Rochelle, David Biskup of the Rotary Club and scholarship recipient Nicolette Loaiza.*