



Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate

It was fitting that in the midst of the Jubilate celebration of Joliet Catholic Academy on the evening of March 9, Sister Maurice White responded to the Lord's call to come home. An announcement of her passing was made to the guests, many of whom were "her guys" from Catholic High.

The eldest of three children, Caroline Mary White was born in Hammond, Indiana, on September 12, 1922, to Maurice and Caroline (Gerngross) and shared family life with her siblings Maurice and Mary Ann. Caroline was raised in a strong Catholic family. Sunday afternoons were times to be together as a family, and after homework was completed, the family would attend Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

She attended St. Joseph School in Hammond, Indiana, and when her family moved to Columbus, Ohio, it was at Immaculate Conception School where she was introduced to the Joliet Franciscans. She wrote: "From my early youth, especially at Old St. Mary's, I learned about Franciscan life. The Sisters seemed to find so many things in life to enjoy." The joy that she saw in the Franciscans encouraged her to choose to come to Joliet for her high school education, graduating from St. Francis Academy.

Caroline entered the Congregation as a postulant in 1938, and entered the novitiate on August 12, 1939, and received the name Sister Maurice. She professed her first vows in 1941 and final vows in 1944. She subsequently received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of St. Francis (University of St. Francis) and a Master of Arts degree from DePaul University in 1957. After her master's degree, she continued her education through grants at various universities in the United States.

Sister Maurice entered the world during a decade of historic significance: the League of Nations was established, women's suffrage, the Constitution was amended twice, and Edith Wilson became a de-facto president, assuming the role when her husband, President Wilson was gravely ill. So it is ironic that Sister Maurice's study and love was in the field of history and civics, at which she excelled. In 1974, she received special recognition from Phi Alpha Theta in "recognition of conspicuous attainments and scholarship in the field of history." Her scholarship was also recognized in the field of civics when she was inducted into Phi Gamma Mu, a social science honor society.

She loved our Congregation and once wrote: "I believe in my Congregation. Since Vatican II, the trying of "new" things – going back to roots, we have gotten in touch with each other and ourselves. I find it stimulating, but definitely challenging." Sister Maurice was a woman ready for those challenges!

Sister Maurice began and continued her ministry of 50 years in the field of education, serving as a teacher at the elementary, secondary and collegiate levels in Ohio and Illinois. She spent ten years in various grade schools and forty in high schools where the Congregation served. Her longest tenure was twenty years at Joliet Catholic High School where she taught American and World History and served as Athletic Secretary for eight years. She wrote: "I am proud to say that I taught at JCHS for 20 years! Those 20 years were the best years of my life." She also taught and directed student teachers at the College of St. Francis (University of St. Francis) for eight summers.

Alleluia!



Sister M. Maurice White, OSF

Her love of sports was instilled in her at an early age. Being a professional golfer, her father had a golf club in her hand at the age of 5. She enjoyed watching professional golf, baseball and football, but everyone knew that her favorite team was the football team at JCHS — "My guys" as she called them. She also attended, and volunteered as a worker, at as many athletic events as possible at Joliet Catholic Academy, her allegiance broadening to include the girls.

While living at St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Joliet, Sister Maurice was especially admired for her garden and her needlework. She was one of the founding members of the Paulites, St. Paul's senior group, a member of JACOB, a lector, and a substitute teacher at St. Paul's School, all in her retirement.

In 1999, the Council of Catholic Women of St. Paul the Apostle named her their Woman of the Year and she was honored by the Diocese of Joliet. In their acknowledgement, the CCW wrote: "To all those who work with her, she has been one who makes herself available to assist whenever a need arises." She was a Franciscan who deeply understood her call to serve. Before moving into Our Lady of Angels, she had given 3,633 hours of volunteer service to OLA, many of those hours spent at her sewing machine, mending, hemming and adjusting the clothing of our Sisters. When Sister Maurice became a resident at OLA, she continued her volunteer service as long as she was able and then lived out her final days in quiet prayer for all the people of our world.

As an avid reader and historian, Sister Maurice read the newspaper every day, watched the news, and enjoyed murder mysteries and good, historical novels.

When asked how she wished to be remembered, she wrote in typical "Maurie" fashion: "What I did, where I did it and how I enjoyed it. My years spent teaching and where."

Sister Maurice, we know that you loved change and so you must be exuberant in the new life you are now enjoying. Your life on earth was filled with serving others' needs. Now may you find rest in your new life with the Lord.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Sister M. Maurice White, OSF

September 12, 1922— March 9, 2019

Born: September 12, 1922
Parents: Maurice J. White and Caroline Gerngross
Postulancy: September 8, 1938
Novitiate: August 12, 1939
First Profession: August 12, 1941
Final Profession: August 12, 1944
Entered New Life: March 9, 2019

Ministry History

1941-1942 Student: College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois
1942-1943 Teacher: Grade 3, Corpus Christi, Columbus, Ohio
1943-1944 Student: College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois
1944-1947 Teacher: Grades 5 & 7, Sacred Heart, Hubbard Woods, Illinois
1947-1948 Teacher & Librarian: World History, Sacred Heart, Englewood, Illinois
1948-1951 Teacher: Religion, History, Civics, Librarian, St. Francis de Sales, Chicago, Illinois

1951-1952 Teacher: Religion, History, Civics, St. Peter, Mansfield, Ohio
1952-1953 Teacher: Religion, History, English, Sacred heart, Englewood, Illinois
1953-1954 Teacher: English, World History, SS Peter & Paul, Chicago, Illinois
1954-1955 Teacher: History, English, St. Mary High School, Columbus, Ohio
1955-1956 Teacher: Grades 7 & 8, St. Boniface, Chicago, Illinois
1956-1959 Teacher: English, History Civics, St. Clement, Chicago, Illinois
1959-1963 Teacher: Religion, History, Civics, Librarian, SS Peter & Paul, Chicago
1963-1966 Teacher: World Geography, History, American Government, St. Francis Academy, Joliet, Illinois

1966-1970 Teacher: History, Government, Bishop Ready High School, Columbus, Ohio
1970-1973 Teacher: Joliet Catholic High School, Joliet, Illinois
1973-1976 Instructor & Librarian: English, College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois
1976-1990 Teacher & Secretary: Joliet Catholic High School, Joliet, Illinois
1990-1998 Driver, Substitute Teacher: Joliet, Illinois
1998-2009 Volunteer Seamstress, Our Lady of Angels, Joliet, Illinois
2009-2019 Community Service

Wake: Tuesday, March 19, 2019, 2:00-6:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Prayer Service: Tuesday, March 19, 2019, 4:45 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Mass of Christian Burial: Tuesday, March 19, 2019, 7:00 p.m., Our Lady of Angels, Joliet
Burial: Friday, March 29, 2019, leaving Our Lady of Angels at 9:00 a.m. to Resurrection Cemetery, Romeoville, Illinois

Interment: Section 8, Lot 29, Grave 5, Resurrection Cemetery
Predeceased by: By her parents, Maurice White & Caroline (Gerngross) White; her brother, Maurice, her sister Mary Ann Smerk and niece Caroline Smerk

Survived by: Nephew: Paul Smerk

Rest in Peace, Sister Maurice!