

# SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS, CLINTON, IOWA

## ST. FRANCIS DE PAULA NEWSLETTER

August 2022

### — Commemorating 100 Years in 2023 —

2023 will mark 100 years since the conversation began, and ground was broken, to establish St. Francis de Paula School! Construction on the new school began in August 1923, and it was dedicated in September 1924. The text transcribed below is from the original letter, pictured at right, dated May 4, 1923, from Father Ambrose Murry, Pastor of St. Francis de Paula Parish, to Mother Fidelis Ruddy, Mother Superior of the Sisters of St. Francis in Clinton, Iowa.

*Rev. and dear Mother:*

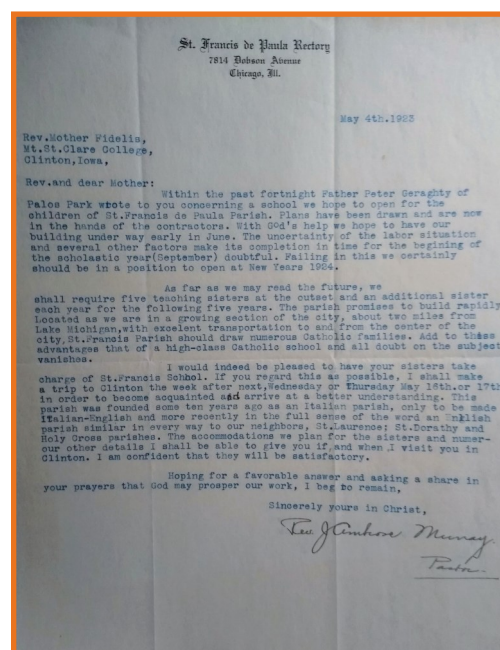
*Within the past fortnight Father Peter Geraghty of Palos Park wrote to you concerning a school we hope to open for the children of St. Francis de Paula Parish. Plans have been drawn and are now in the hands of the contractors. With God's help we hope to have our building under way early in June. The uncertainty of the labor situation and several other factors make its completion in time for the beginning of the scholastic year (September) doubtful. Failing in this we certainly should be in a position to open at New Years 1924.*

*As far as we may read the future, we shall require five teaching sisters at the outset and an additional sister each year for the following five years. The parish promises to build rapidly. Located as we are in a growing section of the city, about two miles from Lake Michigan, with excellent transportation to and from the center of the city, St. Francis Parish should draw numerous Catholic families. Add to this advantages that of a high-class Catholic school and all doubt on the subject vanishes.*

*I would indeed be pleased to have your sisters take charge of St. Francis School. If you regard this as possible, I shall make a trip to Clinton the week after next, Wednesday or Thursday, May 16th or 17th, in order to become acquainted and arrive at a better understanding. This parish was founded some ten years ago as an Italian parish, only to be made Italian-English and more recently in the full sense of the word an English parish similar in every way to our neighbors, St. Laurence, St. Dorothy, and Holy Cross parishes. The accommodations we plan for the sisters and numerous other details I shall be able to give you if, and when, I visit you in Clinton. I am confident that they will be satisfactory.*

*Hoping for a favorable answer and asking a share in your prayers that God may prosper our work, I beg to remain,*

*Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Rev. J. Ambrose Murray, Pastor*



## — Updates on Former Faculty —



**Sister Anne Martin Phelan** served at St. Francis de Paula from 1965 to 1967, and again from 1968 to 1982. She taught

sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, sang in the gospel choir, and was a cantor. She organized a summer volunteer program through the Job Corps in which sisters and Mount St. Clare College students worked with students at St. Francis de Paula School.

Sister Anne Martin celebrated 60 years of religious life this summer! She publicly renewed her vows during a Jubilee Mass on July 16 in Clinton. Sister Anne Martin currently ministers as the Religious Education Coordinator at St. Cajetan Parish in Chicago, and serves as the Coordinator of the Sojourner and Associate programs for the Sisters of St. Francis.



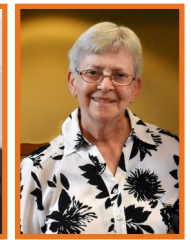
**Sister Ann Martinek**, or Sister Ann Therese as students at St. Francis de Paula knew her, taught grades seventh and

eighth from 1965 to 1972. She retired from full-time ministry in 2014. Starting in 2015, she served as the Assistant Finance Director for the Sisters of St. Francis.

This past May, Sister Ann made the decision that she needed to fully retire to preserve her energy for other things in her life. The Administrative Office staff celebrated her retirement with a special luncheon.

**Sister Deborah Schneider** ministered at St. Francis de Paula from 1967 to 1972 teaching fifth grade. After 38 years in

education, Sister Deborah transitioned from teaching children to ministering with elderly adults. She has served individuals with



a variety of special needs, including many forms of dementia, especially Alzheimer's. Presently, Sister Deborah voluntarily makes frequent visits to socialize with the residents of The Alverno senior living community in Clinton.

Sister Deborah also volunteers in the Sisters of St. Francis' development office. While filing, she enjoys coming across the names of St. Francis de Paula graduates. She keeps a list of all the students that she taught and a picture of many.

She shared this recent exchange she had with alum Brian "Toby" Tucker, whom she taught in 5th grade during the 1970-1971 academic year:

*Hello, Sister Deborah! You were my absolute favorite teacher in all of grammar school. My nickname was "Toby" and my family and I lived directly across the street from St. Francis de Paula. I remember being in the spelling contest in your class and I came in second place. I lost to my classmate, Rachel Wheeler, and if my memory serves me right, you and Sister Ann Therese rewarded us by taking us downtown to see a ballet performance.*

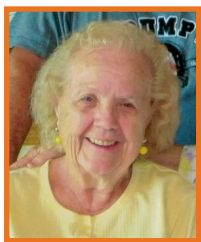
**Brian Tucker and his siblings a mere 50 years ago!**



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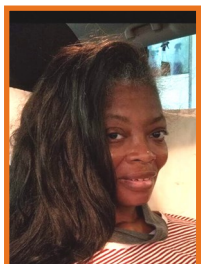
## *We pray for the repose of the souls of:*

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**Lois (Sievert) Mandarino** — April 25, 2022

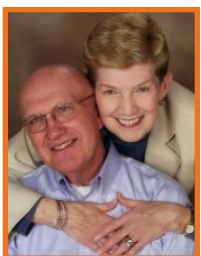
Lois was the wife of St. Francis de Paula Class of 1952 alum Joseph “Joe” Mandarino. She is survived by her husband, four children, eight grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. Lois was a past member of the Midlothian Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary.



**Rhonda (Marsh) Banks** — December 15, 2021

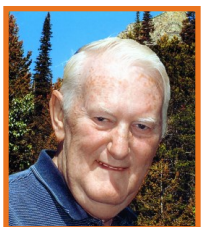
Rhonda was a member of the St. Francis de Paula Class of 1983. She is survived by her husband and two children.

Rhonda is also survived by her brother, Michael, a member of the Class of 1981. Her mother, Peggy, who worked as a teacher assistant during the 1972-1973 academic year preceded her in death.



**James “Jim” Philpott** — October 30, 2021

Jim grew up on Chicago’s East Side, attended St. Francis de Paula Parish, and graduated in 1952 from Hirsch High School. He married Kathleen Sweeney in 1958. Jim raised his family in Chicago’s Mount Greenwood neighborhood. He had a 30-year career in banking, retiring in 1996. Jim is survived by three children, eight grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. He was preceded in death by his parents, wife, one son, and four siblings.



**Jack Hackenbroch** — September 3, 2021

Jack was a member of the St. Francis de Paula Class of 1956. He was born March 30, 1942, and he married Catherine Novicky in 1972. Jack was a retired Chicago public school teacher. He had a love for trains and was also a ham radio operator. Preceding him in death were his wife and one sister.



**Jean (Mitchell) Kruse** — August 3, 2021

Jean was a member of the St. Francis de Paula Class of 1945. She was born May 29, 1931. She graduated from Little Company of Mary School of Nursing in 1952. Jean is survived by six children, eleven grandchildren, fourteen great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband, Earl Kruse; two sons; and one sister, Susan Mitchell.



**Virginia “Pat” (Campbell) Clark** — June 15, 2021

Pat was the wife of St. Francis de Paula Class of 1940 alum James Clark. She attended secretarial school after graduating from Hirsch High School in 1945, while modeling for an agency in Chicago. She was a stewardess for American Airlines from 1948 until she and Jim married in 1951. They raised four children. She was preceded in death by her husband. She is survived by four children, eleven grandchildren, and eighteen great-grandchildren.



## *— We pray for the repose of the souls of: —*



**Ronald "Ron" Cara — February 25, 2021**

Ron was a member of the St. Francis de Paula Class of 1951. He had a 35-year career at Standard Oil Co./Amoco Pipeline as a policy writer and analyst. Baseball was his passion! He was a college and semi-pro umpire for over 55 years. Ron was preceded in death by his wife, Patricia (Ditchie), and one sister. He is survived by two children and three grandchildren.



**Mary Patricia (Brady) Ryan — February 1, 2021**

Mary Pat was a teacher at St. Francis de Paula School from 1958 to 1960. She was born April 28, 1926. Mary Pat is survived by two children and four grandchildren.



**Catherine (Novicky) Hackenbroch — September 9, 2020**

Catherine was the wife of St. Francis de Paula Class of 1956 alum Jack Hackenbroch. They were married for 48 years. At the time of her death, Catherine was survived by her husband and one sister.

## *— A Word of Thanks! —*

*from MaryAnne (Andrick) Sigel, Class of 1953*

When reading over the March newsletter, which I always enjoy, I found many names of sisters and people I went to school with. One was Sister Yvonne Gehant, who was my 6th grade teacher. I was remembering the enjoyable times and memories in her class!

The names of the neighborhood section brought names of retailers I knew well. High-Low Foods — my two brothers-in-law worked there. Millas on 76th & Dobson for the delicious bologna sandwiches. Grand Crossing Park for the wonderful activities

played there and Cornell Public Grammar School, which I attended until 2nd grade then went to St. Francis de Paula.

Also in the newsletter were my classmates Joan Wyand, Patricia McArdle, and Bobby Glynn. In the past, I have seen my entire class. That, too, brought back many memories!

I graduated in 1953 with the teachings I learned at SFDP giving me values I live by today. I thank you, and I am grateful to all the sisters who taught me.