

**SISTER MARY MEL MCMILLAN OSF**  
**1928 - 2015**



Sister Mary Mel McMillan (Shirley Jean McMillan) was born on September 5, 1928, in Alhambra, California, the only child of Jaquith Harold and Hazel Mae (Hickox) McMillan. A convert to Catholicism, she was baptized on April 7, 1951, at St. Therese Church in Alhambra.

Shirley Jean attended Victory Elementary School in Stockton, California, and graduated from Riverside Polytechnic High School in Riverside, California, in 1945. After graduation, she worked for several years and attended college before entering the congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis at Mount St. Clare Convent, Clinton, Iowa, on September 8, 1955.

She received the name Mary Mel at her reception on June 15, 1956. She made her first profession on August 12, 1958, and her final profession on August 12, 1963. Her novitiate classmates were Sisters Marcella Marie Narlock, Ann Marie (Alice) Weber, Christopher (Elizabeth) Skube, Ida Green, Virginia Krakow, Mary Smith, and Maria (Teresa) Trimble.

Sister Mary Mel earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education at St. Ambrose College, Davenport, Iowa; and a Master of Religious Education degree at Seattle University, Washington. She held an Iowa K-14 Professional Music Teaching Certificate.

Sister Mel's ability to light up a room with guitar music and song was her hallmark, and it supported all of her ministries. She taught upper elementary grades, as well as music and choir, at parochial schools in Clinton and Danbury, Iowa, and Rochelle and Toluca, Illinois. She was band and chorus director at Spalding Institute, Peoria, Illinois; campus minister at Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; and a religious education instructor at St. Anthony, Manteca, California. She also served four years as assistant director of student affairs at Mount St. Clare College, Clinton, Iowa. Most recently, she ministered in liturgical music ministry and pastoral care at The Alverno, from 1985 to 1998.

A member of the Clinton Franciscan Singing Sisters, Sister Mel composed and performed several musical pieces for the group's album, "Come Along", recorded in 1972. For many years, Sister Mel assisted with music for weekly congregational liturgies, as well as for sisters' funerals, annual retreats, and other community celebrations and gatherings.

Sister Mel moved to The Canticle in 1998 where she assisted in the reception office welcoming visitors and directing phone calls. She moved to The Alverno in July, 2009, where she resided until her death on May 2, 2015.

She is survived by several cousins and the Sisters of St. Francis with whom she shared life for almost 60 years. She was preceded in death by her parents.