



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO BOX 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036

WWW.OLDENBURGFRAUCISCANS.ORG

FACEBOOK: FRANCISCAN SISTERS OF OLDENBURG



Dear Sisters and Associates, Co-workers, Family, and Friends,

*“It is a moral imperative for us to share what we have with other people,
to love each other not just in words but in giving what we have.
The service we do helps us to come close to God and experience God.”*

S. NORMA ROCKLAGE, OSF

Such is the conviction that Sister Norma Rocklage expressed upon receiving one of her many awards; it is the belief that she **lived** throughout her 86 years of life. And it is the service which she has given that has enabled each of us to experience God.

Mary Ann Rocklage was born on July 18, 1933, the second oldest of eight children born to Henry and Catherine Rocklage. Having grown up amidst a close-knit family in St. Louis, it was her early “courage to venture” that brought her for her high school education to Immaculate Conception Academy in far-off Oldenburg. She attests to being homesick and “quite shy”—a characteristic that she obviously outgrew in later years!

“I was raised by parents who taught us we needed to share what we have,” S. Norma once reflected. “If you can’t share materially, you share with service.” A lesson she learned well!

Finding a kindred spirit among the Oldenburg Franciscans, Mary Ann joined the Community in 1951. She found the “courage to venture” to be the spirit that guides the Oldenburg Sisters, and she adopted that same spirit as, after teaching in elementary schools for eight years, she ventured on to Marian College (now University). By this time Norma had earned a master’s degree and doctorate in Latin and Greek. During a career that spanned over 40 years, she served in various capacities at Marian—Assistant Professor of Classical Language, Dean of Academic Affairs, Vice President for Mission Effectiveness and, most recently, Executive Director of Education/ Formation/Outreach. In between her time at the College, Norma ministered in formation with the Franciscan Friars, as director of the newly-professed Sisters of St. Francis, and as a member of the Congregation’s leadership team.

It was in 1989 that Norma’s “courage to venture” took her into a new field; she became one of only 27 persons nationwide to hold a position of Vice President for Mission Effectiveness and Planning in a higher education institution. With fewer priests and religious on campus, such a position emerged to ensure that the values of the Oldenburg Franciscans would continue to be integrated into the lives of Marian’s college students.

Another initiative, one which was to be a 30-year endeavor, was to coordinate an Indiana Catholic Principals Institute. This was designed to help all those beginning this ministry in Catholic schools throughout the state to grow their schools’ Catholic identity and develop faith formation for their students and teachers.

Part of Norma’s most recent ministry included her work with the Marian Hispanic Advisory Board, Project Stepping Stone, and the support she gave to various Indiana Latino organizations; she was also active with the Center for Interfaith Cooperation. She was a champion for students of diverse backgrounds and often found scholarship funding to support their desire for education. In her “spare time,” Norma participated in Pax Christi, volunteered at Holy Family Shelter, served on several high school Boards, offered spiritual guidance to the Secular Franciscans, provided spiritual direction for numerous individuals, led retreat programs, and gave countless presentations far and wide.

Recognitions including the Marian College Distinguished Alumna Award and its Franciscan Values Award, the Archdiocesan Spirit of Service Award, the Indiana Council for Latino Affairs Distinguished Service Award, and the Interfaith Ambassador of the Year Award are only some of the many honors received. In accepting these tributes, Norma always humbly quoted a favorite line from the Sisters' Constitution: "Where one is, there are we all."

Norma could be seen, day and night, all over the Marian University campus. There was seldom an event to which she did not at least put in an appearance. Athletic teams at every game scanned the bleachers for their loyal "Marian Knight." And the famous "Norma hat" became a good luck charm for every competition!

Marian President Dan Elsener, in reflecting on Norma's legacy at the College, spoke of her "generous, indomitable" spirit. Others would comment on her compassionate, listening heart. With her love for life itself, one could often hear Norma's infectious laughter as she heard or related a humorous story. The depth of her spirituality gave her the "courage to venture" through every difficulty.

We offer our sympathy to Norma's brothers Joe and Al, to her sisters S. Mary Roch, RSM, and Dee, as well as to her nieces and nephews; to her classmates and Community members; to all who call her "sister," "guide," or "friend." We thank those who have provided her with care and support as well.

When Norma reflected on her life's journey, she commented, "Each person who has touched my life has graced me with a unique expression of God's beauty." Today, Norma, we thank YOU, who has been for each of us "a unique expression of God's beauty!"

Norma would frequently repeat, "Let us begin today, for up till now, we have done very little...in the light of all that can yet be accomplished." We pray that you who have accomplished so much during your lifetime may find eternal joy in all that is yet to be!

In gratitude for a life well lived,



Sister Christa Franzer

For the General Council

SISTER NORMA (Mary Ann) ROCKLAGE, OSF

Birth: July 18, 1933

Entrance into Religious Life: September 8, 1951

Entrance into Eternal Life: June 22, 2020

MISSIONS AT WHICH SISTER NORMA SERVED:

1953-1956	St. Mary, North Vernon, IN
1956-1961	St. Francis, Portage des Sioux, MO
1961-1965	Holy Trinity, St. Louis, MO
1965-1974	Marian College (University), Indianapolis, IN
1974-1982	Leadership, Motherhouse, Oldenburg, IN
1982-1983	St. Francis Center, Cincinnati, OH
1983-1987	Formation Team, St. Anthony Friary, Cincinnati, OH
1987-1988	Director of Novices, Motherhouse, Oldenburg, IN
1989-2019	Marian University, Indianapolis, IN
2019-2020	Motherhouse, Oldenburg, IN

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Weigel Funeral Home – visit their website to view Sister's online memorial, and if desired, an online condolence may be left on the site to share with her family and the Franciscan Sisters – www.Weigelfh.com

Memorial Donations in Sister's memory may be given online at www.OldenburgFranciscans.org