



SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS

PO BOX 100 OLDENBURG, IN 47036
WWW.OLDENBURGFRAUCISCANS.ORG

January 17, 2022

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

*“Before the philharmonic starts
The players all take out their parts.
The concert master taps his bow,
Takes his violin and starts the show.
And all the players each do take
Their instruments a tune to make.
And tuning up they all do play
Each one his song in his own way. . .”*



S. MARY PAUL LARSON, OSF

While the lines above introduce “The Symphony,” a poem composed by Mary Ann Larson in grade eight, they are perhaps also a fitting beginning to the way her life unfolded. Mary Ann Larson’s “song” began at her birth in Vincennes, Indiana, on May 6, 1929, the first of six daughters born to Paul and Mary Larson.

Mary Ann played the violin from the age of seven on, often singing and playing for entertainment as well as in school ensembles and choruses. In high school she added piano to her repertoire. In her autobiography Mary Ann wrote, “After 19 years of ‘ups and downs’ in deciding my vocation, I met the Oldenburg Sisters at Marian College, and my life was changed. At Marian I observed the great Franciscan spirit firsthand. I was so taken by it that I felt God had led me to the right spot. Each step of the way I felt called and led, somehow knowing that God would provide the path and the strength.” Having made her decision to enter the Franciscan Community, Mary Ann switched her major at Marian to Elementary Education.

During her early years in the Community, Sister Mary Paul taught in a variety of schools in Indiana, serving mainly in the primary grades—and occasionally as principal. Longer periods of time were spent at St. Anthony School in Dayton, Ohio, as well as at St. Athanasius in Roseville, Michigan. She returned to Marian College in 1976 as an Instructor in Education and as a Supervisor of Student Teachers.

Larry Cunningham, principal at St. Charles School in Pryor, Montana became acquainted with S. Mary Paul later in her active ministry life. Before her retirement he wrote an article for the St. Labre Indian School newsletter in which he summarized Mary Paul’s life: “Responsibility is a word that has characterized Sister’s life. Her passion was to teach, and teach she did.” After recounting Mary Paul’s ministry experiences, Mr. Cunningham wrote, “In 1983 S. Mary Paul was granted a sabbatical year. Coincidentally, S. Rose Mary Schroeder was leaving St. Charles to begin serving in Mexico. Rather than take a much needed rest, S. Mary Paul agreed to spend her sabbatical year as coordinator of religious education at St. Charles.” He quotes Mary Paul’s reaction to her time there: “This was the beginning of a deep love for the Crow children, the Crow elders, and with the ‘Big Sky Country’ called Montana. I was struck by how welcoming and warm the Crow people were. They invited me to their feasts, their cultural celebrations, and to their homes. At the end of my sabbatical year, I couldn’t bear to leave.”

Asked about her plans for retirement after 17 years in Pryor, Mary Paul responded, “We have many elderly sisters whom I will be helping, and I want to do more with my music and art. I will spend a good deal of time experimenting with different mediums of painting. I will enjoy that very much. I will also have more time for my love of reading, writing poetry, creating art and playing music. I am going to miss my friends in Pryor, though. And I am going to miss looking out my window every morning at the

Pryor Mountains stretching across the landscape in such regal beauty. To me they symbolize the Indian people; they have been worn down and trampled, but they have prevailed and still stand tall and proud.”

S. Mary Ann Stoffregen, another friend from Montana days, remembers S. Mary Paul as a “lady,” and one who was loved by the Crow people. She spoke of her as always ready to take a trip, especially to Yellowstone and to other points in Montana. She too commented on Mary Paul’s creativity.

Now as the “song” of S. Mary Paul’s life has reached its final measure, we offer our sympathy to her two sisters Phyllis and Kathleen, as well as to her other relatives and friends. We also express gratitude to our nursing and pastoral care staff in St. Clare Hall.

Excerpts from Mary Paul’s early poem continue:

*“And as the strains play on and on
The listener lives within each song.
When oh, too soon the end does come
The music has the people won.
The players bow and bow again
And all good things must come to end.
With heart and mind uplifted so
They look anew on life’s long road.”*

As we now “look anew on Mary Paul’s long road,” we celebrate her creative spirit and her life among us. Her “music has the people won,” and we are grateful.

In loving memory,



Sister Christa Franzer
For the General Council

SISTER MARY PAUL (Mary Ann) LARSON, OSF

Birth: May 6, 1929

Entrance into Religious Life: September 7, 1952

Entrance into Eternal Life: January 17, 2022

MISSIONS AT WHICH S. MARY PAUL SERVED:

1952-1953 Holy Family, Oldenburg IN	1968-1972 St. Athanasius, Roseville MI
1953-1954 Novitiate, Oldenburg IN	1972-1973 Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis IN
1954-1961 St. Anthony, Dayton OH	1973-1974 St. Wendel, Evansville IN
1961-1962 St. Michael, Indianapolis IN	1974-1976 St. Michael, Indianapolis IN
1962-1962 St. Joseph, St. Leon IN	1976-1983 Marian University, Indianapolis IN
1962-1963 Holy Trinity, Indianapolis IN	1983-2000 St. Charles, Pryor MT
1963-1966 Our Lady of Lourdes, Indianapolis IN	2000-2022 Motherhouse, Oldenburg IN
1966-1968 Holy Family, Richmond 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