On March 4, 1916, Evangeline Marie Nestor greeted her parents, William Nestor and Louise Beck, at 2 pm. Of the three children born to this couple, only the two girls survived childhood. Evangeline’s brother, Leo, died of spinal meningitis at the age of 3. Her sister, Mabel, married and raised four children. Coming from good Catholic parents of German and Irish descent. Vange was educated in IHM schools on the west side of Detroit. She attended both Holy Redeemer and All Saints for grade school and graduated from All Saints in 1934.

Vange was considered quite a scholar by her peers. She was valedictorian for her class as well as vice president. She was also president of the Student Spiritual Council.

Her talents lay in the aesthetic fields of music, dance, art and writing. However, her love of order and the discipline of exactitude led her into the field of mathematics with its configurations of numbers and their combinations.

As a young girl, Vange had a normal healthy love of books and studied every night. Since Mabel was 12 years older, Vange sought companions closer to her own age. She loved to play outside with her friend, Marion who later became Sister Marion Farrell. She also enjoyed visiting her cousin, Sister Rose Ethel, who entered IHM when Vange was in the first grade.
Vange first thought of becoming a sister at age 6 when her mother explained that Sister Rose Ethel was a teacher and maybe she could be one. She enjoyed visits with Sister Rose Ethel in the convent through the years.

After graduation from high school, Vange followed her cousin and entered IHM in Monroe. She and her friend, Marion, who entered the next year, had often gone to devotions at Holy Redeemer together and discussed the idea of being an IHM Sister.

Vange became Sister Carmeline when she entered the Novitiate. This was a hard time for her. Her sister, Mabel, married that summer and Sister Carmeline could not attend the wedding. Her thoughtful Novitiate classmates cheered her up by reenacting the wedding and pretending the wedding car had a flat tire.

Through the years, Sister Carmeline pursued higher education with a major in mathematics from Marygrove College. Her graduate work began with language arts in elementary education at St. John’s Diocesan College in Cleveland. She later received an MA in mathematics from Villanova University in Pennsylvania. She also took courses from Case Institute of Technology and Notre Dame University. Later she rounded off her education with many courses in theology of religion from the University of Detroit.

Her teaching assignment spanned 21 years in elementary education and 45 years in secondary education, finishing her career with 35 of these years at Marian High School where she tutored and subbed wherever she was needed after retiring.

Along with her long years in the classroom, Sister Vange was a supervising teacher and was involved in all the extra-curricular activities each class entailed. Early, she prepared children for the sacraments. Later she was a National Honor Society moderator as well as Mathematics Department chairperson and class team leader. She
loved sports and attended most of the students’ games. As a child she enjoyed Tiger games with friends and family.

Sister Vange had a great zest for both education and people. She worked zealously in the classroom and was very well-liked. It was not unusual for her to stay after to assist those needing extra help. She was a good team person, both in school and the convent, sharing her gifts with others. She credits the Holy Spirit and living Gospel values for her successes in life. Her aim after retirement was to stay in education as along as life permitted.

Numerous notes and letters from former students attest to their appreciation of her love and care for them as well as her skill at making math a class to enjoy. One girl wrote, “When you subbed in math class, you were a real treat.” Another girl stated, “When we went to college, we discovered our best preparation was in math, especially calculus.” Others were impressed by her lasting friendship, the influence in their future lives.

On Jan. 30, 1993, Sister Vange was honored by the Dads’ Club and invited into the Marian High School Hall of Fame. This was for outstanding contributions to Marian High School.

In her IHM Book of Life page, Vange mentions the spiritual dimensions of her life. She says she has been guided all her years by the living breath of the Spirit. The quiet beauty of the waters of Lake Erie at Crawfton beckoned her to Love! Love! Live Love! With this in mind, she discovered a call to help the handicapped as the L’Arche Community founded by Jean Vanier did. She helped formulate “Mary’s Children.” This group aided handicapped teenagers. They met Thursday nights from 4 to 10 p.m. Vange continued with them for 10 years. At this time they had built a
home and school for these young people. I believe they are still in operation today, due much to Sister Vange’s dedicated work.

When Vange finally came to spend her days in Monroe, she arrived with joy and a grateful heart for all the blessings God had given her. She also impressed the staff, meeting her for the first time. Nurse Yvonne described her as very prim and proper in her dress and manner.

Those of us who knew her found her fun to play cards with, and she could fit into almost any game we wanted to play. As her health declined, she succumbed to using a walker, and eventually moved to the Health Care Center, where she still was ready and willing to challenge us to a good game of cards whenever health permitted.

Thank you, Vange, for your dedication to education and love of all God’s gifts to us.

Sister Rita Rennell, IHM
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