

Remembering Patricia Glaab, IHM

Oct. 31, 1939 - July 11, 2014



We gather here to celebrate the life of Sister Patricia Emma (Elizabeth Seaton) Glaab, more affectionately known as “Chee-Chee.” Her brother, Pete, called her this when he could not say Patricia. I would like to welcome in a special way all of Pat’s family: her sister Marie and husband Bo, her brother Pete and his wife Judy, her sister Sue and husband Chuck and brother Bill and his wife Jo Ann. Also, I would like to welcome her many nephews, nieces, grand nieces and nephews. Also welcome to the members of the Providence Mission Unit, sisters, associates and friends.

Pat was preceded in death by her parents Peter and Leona, brother Jack and sister Anita. Pat told the story of when her brother Jack passed away, she was in Kentucky. There had been a snow storm, which made it impossible for her to get out. She heard on the radio that you could call the National Guard to see if it was possible for them to help. Pat called and explained what had happened. The next day they picked her up in a Humvee and drove her to where it would be possible to get home.

When I asked Pat what she felt was important to share in this Remembering, her answer was to express all the different ministries she has been in and to talk with some of the people who took part in these with her. Today I would like to share these with you and some in Pat’s own words.

Pat was born in Romulus, Mich., to Peter Glaab and Leona LeBlanc. Her father worked at the Romulus Dairy that was owned by her mother’s father. Her mother was the organist for St. Stephen Church in New Boston, Mich., a position she loved for over 30 years. Pat would tell many stories from those years of working at the dairy and playing in the fields. She spoke of her dad delivering milk with her brother Pete as a helper. She told stories of her dad teaching her many things, among them, about the stars. In her life, her mantra was: “there is always something new to learn every day.”

Her schooling began in a two-room school house where she attended kindergarten and from there moved to St. Mary’s of Wayne. The history of Glaab at St. Mary School spanned a period of 30 years. From St Mary of Wayne, she moved to the 10th grade to St. Mary’s Academy, Monroe. Pat loved going to school and living at the Academy. She spoke highly of all the sisters who were her teachers. Her sister, Marie, shared that as Pat’s graduation day grew closer, her mother asked what she would like as a graduation gift, a trip or some other option. This was the moment for Pat and she casually said “I’ll take the trip since I am going to the convent.”

“Well, talk about surprise! My parents were very happy to have a family member in the IHM order that had taught all seven children all through school.” Marie went on to say that the IHMs have been an extended part of the family for over 75 years.

Pat came to the IHM community in 1957. For her Book of Life page, Pat chose to make a quilt square and used the Log Cabin pattern to express her journey. For her, the pattern represented the congregation at its humble beginning and the spirit that has been our binding force throughout history. The center square is a shade of red, representing the hearth, warmth, love and the source of life and unity in the home.

She shared with Sister Mary Anna Riley and me that sitting in her room on the third floor she felt an overwhelming sense of being at home in her heart, a spirit of being comfortable, *HOME* in every sense of the word. The quilt square she made is placed on her casket.

Pat’s first mission was St. Raymond Elementary, Detroit where she taught second grade that she enjoyed very much. In 1971 she moved to St. Patrick, Carleton and the first grade. I found a letter that a student had written to her. It said: “Sr. Pat I will miss you very much. I would like you to stay but mom says you have to go. So I will go swimming now and think about missing you. Love, Amy.”

Pat moved on to Holy Redeemer and up to grades 11 and 12 to teach religion. Then in 1974 she went back to her beloved St. Mary’s Academy as assistant resident director and teacher in the very school she had attended. Her next ministry was St. Cyril of Jerusalem Parish serving as the staff and high school religious education director. It was here that she met Pam and David Gordon. They worked as catechists, planned bible school and parish campouts. After their first year at fifth and sixth grade camp, Pam told Pat she needed a pair of jeans to wipe her hands. Pat said she didn’t own any, so Pam bought Pat her first pair, which she wore to camp every year. Their friendship has lasted for over 30 years. During these years Pat became a member of the Gordon family. She developed a special relationship with their daughter Samantha. Over the years, the two had many adventures together and special conversations. Pat’s support helped her to become the person she is today. During the time they worked together, Pat was asked to be the secretary to the Southeast Province, living in Allen Park with the provincial, Sister Eva Schoell. From 1982 to 1988 Pat served as the Southeast Provincial.

“Ultimately the story of those years is not in the number of meetings or reports generated but in the lives of our members and the impact we have had on one another for our own growth and the transformation of the communities in which we find ourselves. It is my belief that the impact has been significant.”

After her term in leadership, Pat took a sabbatical at Sangre de Cristo Spiritual Renewal Center in Santa Fe, N.M. She was deeply affected spiritually by this experience and the lasting friendships that were formed.

She had a wonderful sense of humor that would show up when others did not expect it. Loving horses as she did, the group from Sangre went to a store in town and in front was a carousel horse to ride for a quarter. Of course each of them had to take their turn on the horse. Upon her return to Michigan, Pat worked in various positions in the Motherhouse until her move to David School in Kentucky. How did she feel about this new ministry? In her words, “*I fell in love with the place!*” Once again I found a letter, this time in the *Floyd County Times* of Prestonsburg, Ky.

Editor: The students of Sr. Pat Glaab in GED class of Drift would like to give a special thanks to Pat. She has given us hope for a brighter future. Pat is a kind and gentle person who cares about adult education in Floyd County.

From the students,

We think you're the greatest. Thanks,
Janet Miller, Langley, Kentucky

The qualities that made Pat the beautiful person we all knew are echoed by her sister Sue:

“When I think of Pat, I think of generosity, gentleness, thoughtfulness, kindness, helpfulness, understanding, caring, acceptance and peacefulness.”

When Pat returned from Kentucky, around Thanksgiving in 1994, she wanted to work with adults. Her transition back to Michigan was difficult but the one thing for sure was her desire for a position in adult literacy. She pursued and was accepted into the Vista Program and was assigned to Dominican Literacy Center in East Detroit. By the end of the second year, she was becoming proficient with computers and through her brother Pete was able to obtain computers for the Center. As a result, after her Vista grant ran out, she was hired as the computer coordinator at the Center. She was given the task of writing an “easy to read guide” for students and others to familiarize themselves with computers, computer terminology, computer purchasing, the Internet and an additional leaflet titled *MOVING*, since so many of the Center's students were in transition.

During her years with Literacy, the Center was presented two awards: the Michigan Governors Service Award and the Points of Light Award, signed by President Clinton. The Center was also featured in one of Channel 7's, “From the Heart” segments with Eric Smith. Pat was also honored along with two other staff members by the Alpha MU Chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society for their service to adult literacy. In her papers from this part of her life, I found a letter written by one of her students. “I would never been able to learn the computer had it not been for the patience and kindness of Sr. Pat Glaab.”

In May of 2004, Pat received encouragement from a couple of IHM Sisters to apply for the position of Motherhouse Resident Service Director. She was ready to leave Dominican Literacy after 10 years. Looking for a new challenge she was eager to be of service to the congregation. Out of a sense of gratitude to the sisters who have gone before us, built the congregation and educated her, this was, in her words, a chance to offer something in return.

During her time as director, her lifetime family friend, Sophie Menka, came to live at the Motherhouse. Sophie was the woman her mother had hired long ago to help care for the children. Now, when Sophie needed caring for, Pat, her brothers and sisters became the caregivers. She loved having Sophie here and being able to see her and share in her care. When Sophie passed in 2008, Pat remarked that she would find herself heading toward Sophie's room only to realize she wasn't there anymore, but that she was always in her heart.

In April of 2007, Pat was diagnosed with breast cancer. She remarked that it was no surprise to her since all of her sisters had also had breast cancer. She had surgery, followed by chemotherapy and radiation. The treatment was successful and in 2008, again through the encouragement of many IHM Sisters, Pat took on the job of opening and running the IHM Gift Shop. She was up for the task. In 2009 she resigned from the Motherhouse Resident Service Director position and took on the Gift Shop full-time. One of the volunteers remarked that no matter how busy Pat was, she would always stop to help a sister or other shopper who came in. She, along with her volunteers, helped the Gift Shop grow as a place of welcoming hospitality where people went to get items to help support the congregation. Pat also touched back into her love of horses when, Kim, one of the volunteers in the Gift Shop, happened to own a few of them. Pat told her that when she was young she used to ride. So, one day at Kim's house, Pat got on a horse named Martha. Martha took Pat to the gate and refused to budge and that's when Kim got Pat some riding lessons.

Pat loved flowers and recalled two special memories concerning them. She told of a time when she was taking care of her brother, Bill. Pat had scolded him for something. She left for the kitchen and coming back turned around and there was Bill with a bouquet of flowers. He had gone outside and picked them for her. Often she spoke of the fact that violets reminded her of her mother who, every spring, would pick and place them in a vase in the house. Another favorite was trillium which reminded her of her time in Kentucky.

As many of you know, Pat also loved reading and passing on comic strips. If she found one that reminded her of you, it would show up in some way.

Pat loved poetry and selected the portion of E. E. Cummings' poem, "I thank you god for most this amazing," which is printed on the booklet cover. The photograph was taken by Pat standing

on the shore of Lake Huron in the early morning hours, waiting for the sun to rise. I invite us all to read it together as our farewell closing.

i thank You God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

e.e. cummings
1894-1962

Written and delivered by Mary Ellen Hochkins, IHM Associate
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