

Family and Education Years

I was born in Detroit, middle of three sibs. Rosemary was older by three years and Bill younger by four. My mother, Catherine, returned to teaching when Bill entered first grade. My father, Vincent, was a life-long social worker. After Precious Blood grade school, I went to Immaculata, entering the IHMs shortly after graduation. Subsequently, I earned my BA at Marygrove, an MA at U of D, and did post-graduate work at U of M. Following 13 years of teaching full-time in high schools, at university level and with adults, I became a licensed social worker.



A Transformative Event

Chile's 1973 coup and the U.S. role in overthrowing democratically elected President Allende opened my eyes, reshaping my understanding of the world. Forces favoring international financial elites crushed the struggle for equality, especially among Chile's poor. My eyes have not closed since to such realities.



A Variety of Ministries

For nearly 50 years, I worked in education, political activism and human services, primarily in Detroit's low-income communities. Initially, through national and local projects, we focused on the role of the Christian churches in social and political change. This period included coordinating 11 chapters of Christians for Socialism, and planning two major conferences of Theology in the Americas.

I then worked 20 years in local programs around Detroit's criminal justice system. First efforts focused on educating about sentencing patterns of the criminal court and changing conditions in Wayne County Jail. Then for 14 years at Women Arise, we implemented an alternative sentencing option for women in jail, or on probation or parole. Across these years, my sense of solidarity with women whose difficulties arise from poverty deepened immensely.



Love of Music and Poetry

I began playing clarinet in fifth grade. Eventually I found myself sitting right next to grandmother Burns on the piano bench at family gatherings. In the early 1990s, drawn to its rich tones and the continuing experience of shaping sound with body's breath and flying fingers, I bought a soprano sax. In Novitiate, I began keeping my "scratches," and later called them poems. The first, *May Magnolia*, featured the tree on back campus, ready to release its full pink blossoms. Many years later, *Today You Leap* begins "I first knew myself to be wood to the Fire of you" as I grasped more profoundly how God and world had "fired" my heart across many years. The last line, "God of Wound, God of Search" speaks to the whole of my life: the always-deepening search for God, and being bound to the God of Wound in everyday work and life.

Joy and Gratitude

Rich friendships with extraordinary IHMs, generous friends and talented coworkers outside the congregation are among my greatest joys.

Older sisters with "more experienced hearts" assisted my spiritual growth, and I am continually encouraged by the lives and choices of my classmates and friends.

Through all these years, I experienced renewed strength and deepening awareness from the congregation's capacity to constantly renew its vision and deepen the mission.