

## Margaret VanVelzen, IHM

Margaret was born and raised in Marshall, Mich. with her brother, Thomas. Her father came from the Netherlands, leaving his family behind. He worked as a bulb farmer, raising tulips, gladiolas and lilies. He often worked at the parish during the winter months as a maintenance person or at factories in Marshall. Her mom loved the sisters and would frequently take baked goods to them. Her dad would get up early to shovel the walks so the sisters could get to Mass in the winter. Her parents had great respect for the sisters. As an eighth-grader at St. Mary's in Marshall, she became ill. She was diagnosed with a ruptured appendix and all thought she would die. After many prayers and a trip to Ann Arbor hospital, she survived. Her mother spent much of the time going to Mass daily, praying for her recovery and asked the Ann Arbor sisters to pray for her recovery. Ann Barnes was one of those who came to visit and would later join the IHMs at the same time as Margaret.



Joan Mumaw had helped the first and second grade teacher, Sister Joseph Ellen, after school and invited Margaret to join in that endeavor. Her relationship with Sister Joseph Ellen led her to decide to become an IHM. Margaret was then in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

Her high school years were spent at Marshall High School. It was a great time to share with teenagers of many religions. She enjoyed all the social life of the high school years, but was still interested in joining the community.



She was encouraged to wait a year before entry and spent a year at Marygrove. She loved it there and made many friends. At the end of the year, she and Joan Mumaw took a trip to Monroe. After her years in Monroe, she did her student teaching at St. Francis de Sales in third grade.

She then went to St. Hugo of the Hills in Bloomfield and there found a forever home. She loved teaching young students and when Sister Marie Winifred visited one time and asked the students why she was a good teacher, one boy answered, "because she loves us" and she did.

During the years at St. Hugo, she taught primary grades, seventh and eighth grade religion, rising to the position of assistant principal with Sister Mary McClellan and finally principal and principal emeritus.

After fifty-six years, she moved to the IHM Motherhouse, where she enjoys reading, playing games and having time for prayer. She maintains contact with many of the parishioners at St. Hugo. Because of these friendships, they have been very generous to the community. As a principal she encouraged generosity to the poor and the missions.

She is very grateful for all the people she has lived with through the years and gotten to know and appreciate as friends.

