

Remembering Margaret Babcock, IHM
March 1, 1929 - May 30, 2022

This remembering was prepared with affection for our classmate, Margaret Babcock. It is based on Margaret's own autobiography and concludes with her own words from the *Book of Life*.

Margaret was born March 1, 1929, in Detroit, Michigan to parents John and Anne (Cameron) Babcock. She was baptized by her uncle Fr. Allen J. Babcock, March 11, 1929, at St. Mary Hospital and given the name, Margaret Anne.

She was the second oldest of five children. Her brother, John, preceded her and James, Edward and Paul followed. Her mother was a busy housewife taking care of all of them. Sadly, after becoming pregnant, she contracted pneumonia and died Dec. 13, 1933; the baby did not survive.



Her father was a young lawyer and was helped by Mary Bancroft, a woman who lived with them for several years. But as Mary's health failed, she had to move to a warmer climate. Since the children were all in school by that time, they were enrolled in boarding school in Monroe. This was a very hard, lonesome time for Margaret who had never been separated from her brothers before.

In 1940, her dad met and married Catherine Ann Mahoney. At the end of the school year in June 1941, the children all returned home. The family then grew as Tim was born in 1942 and Allen in 1944.

Margaret was enrolled at Blessed Sacrament School from grade seven to high school graduation in 1947. That month, she entered the IHM postulate June 29, 1947. The hardest thing for her about leaving home was leaving Tim and Allen. Before her parents left her that day, her mother assured her that she wanted her to be happy. She asked Margaret to promise that she would never let anything happen to the little boys. This was a promise Margaret tried to keep and she often wondered if her mother had a premonition of her failing health, for Sept. 18, 1947, she died of pneumonia. After three months in the postulate, Margaret left for the funeral and knew in her heart that she was needed at home as Tim and Allen were only five and three years old.

Because the Babcock family had some outside help coming into the house, Margaret was able to enroll at Marygrove College. Her schedule allowed her the time she needed to care for Tim and Allen.

After she spent three years at Marygrove, both boys were in school and the need for her at home was less, so she returned to Monroe in September 1950.

She was received into the Novitiate Aug. 15, 1951, as Sister Paul Therese. During that time, she completed her education, graduating from Marygrove and she did student teaching. As time for profession approached, a home situation arose, influencing her decision to request vows. Margaret felt she had to return home to see what she could do. It only took 10 months to settle it for her and her family. This time she returned to Monroe, spent one more year in the Novitiate and then made her profession of vows.

Margaret's mission life began in 1955, teaching first grade at St. John, Fenton. Other assignments included St. Martin, Detroit and St. Mary of Redford where she taught middle and upper grades. She spent one year at St. Mary Academy with seventh and eighth grades along with some high school classes.

Her ministry at IHM High School, Westchester was next, followed by principle-ships at St. Joseph, Erie and St. Vincent, Detroit. Margaret then returned to the Academy as business manager and assistant principal.

In 1976 she was asked to join the Motherhouse Team as an assistant. She was then elected Provincial of the Motherhouse in 1982 and she was able to be of service to the Motherhouse Sisters until 1994.

Volunteer time came next; she worked in the Children's Creativity Center and the Archives. She spent 14 years running the community house in Southgate, which not only provided a group of IHMs with a living space, but it also provided hospitality for returning missionaries, as well as for sisters looking for transportation to and from Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

After a hip replacement in 2011, it became clear to Margaret that it was time to forego managing the Southgate house and return to Monroe. She put in her request for a room at the Motherhouse. In August 2011, she became a permanent resident of the Motherhouse Community. There was no shortage of opportunities for ministry here. She loved having time for prayer and visiting those who were confined to their rooms.

Margaret continued to help in Archives. She actually spent 24 years assisting there! She became a specialist in handling the personal files of individual sisters after their deaths. She grew to know the sisters through the documentation of their lives and wrote, "In the Archives, I learned more than you learn any other way." She grew to treat each life with respect, confidentiality and honor their contribution. She said, "It's important that we have a record of what each sister meant to the community in their time." She said it bothers her that some sisters think they haven't done anything special. "If they've taught a child, they've done a lot. Every life matters. They've all led beautiful lives."

In the *IHM Book of Life*, Margaret identified her caring spirit on her page by a quote from Colossians 3:

“Clothe yourself with heartfelt mercy, kindness, humility and patience. Sing gratefully to God from your heart. Whatever you do whether in speech or in action, do it in the name of Jesus...”

Dear Margaret, help us to live always with your caring spirit, ever in the name of Jesus.

Written and delivered by Amata Miller, IHM
June 3, 2022