

Recalling family history is an armchair sport in Virginia. Patrick Leary Etheridge came to Virginia in 1723 and his sons fought with the Virginia Militia during the Revolution. Near the fireplace in their home hung a picture of Capt. Jeremiah Washington Lane, CSA, who served in the Princess Anne Cavalry in that "other wah."



Later, the Virginia Cavalry merged with General Lee's Army. That tradition was so inbred in me from childhood that it never occurred to me that anyone would ever willingly chose to leave "The Old Dominion" until I came nose to nose with my decision to enter the Pennsylvania IHMs in 1963.

My mother Mary Louise Ennis was also a native Virginian. Her paternal grandfather had come from Northern Ireland and her grandmother from County Clare. Because their family so strongly opposed a "mixed marriage," the young couple settled in America and passed on the Catholic faith to their children.

My father's entire family were Protestants who could never reconcile that Russell C. Etheridge, Jr. chose to marry a Catholic and worse yet, before a priest! Even more so, they were incredulous to have a granddaughter become an IHM Sister in West Chester, Pennsylvania; most of them figured I would be home by Thanksgiving!



Though both my father's company and our home were located in Norfolk, my dad's first love was always his little farm in Pungo, Virginia where he kept a goat or two, a sow and piglets, chickens and a couple of very fertile rabbits. The best perk of all was riding "Whitey the Mule" with my sibs, Rusty and Charlene. We would hang on for dear life and joke that "Whitey" must be a Methodist mule since he definitely wanted to get three Catholics kids off his back!

In 1986 with the help of good spiritual direction and a yearlong discernment, I requested a transfer from our Immaculata IHM branch to the Midwest IHMs in Monroe. During this Jubilee "year of grace and favor," I thank God for His unfailing grace, gracious fidelity, the lavish gift of so many amazing companions on this remarkable journey, and the many good times in which I have shared.

I've had abundant opportunities to grow both spiritually and professionally. For example in studies: Immaculata (AB, B.Mus) Villanova (MA-Eng), Loyola, Chicago (MPS) and a joint program with Notre Dame and Oxford (Ph.D in Pastoral. Psy).

What a privilege it has been to serve God and His People in so many scattered corners of the Vineyard. Perhaps it is time for Dr. Seuss to pen a Jubilee Sequel for his famous book, ***Oh, the Places You'll Go!***