

Remembering Noreen Therese Tenbusch, IHM
Sept. 25, 1933 - Jan. 6, 2025

“With a song in my heart...there is a hymn for every season” reads the first line of Noreen Tenbusch’s *IHM Book of Life* page.

She began life as a song in her parent’s heart on Sept. 25, 1933, and was named Nora Ellen Tenbusch. Her parents, Honorah and Fred, had 4 other children: sons William, Fred, Frank and daughter Theresa.

Nora attended Epiphany grade school and Immaculata High School in Detroit. This proximity to the IHM Sisters drew Noreen and her sister Theresa to the IHM community. Upon graduation in 1951, Noreen followed Theresa, who had entered in 1948, to Monroe. We may wonder if Noreen’s formation was cushioned a bit or just the opposite by having an older sister in the community.



Whatever the case, Noreen began teaching before finishing her degree, a common practice of the day. It seems that she had a gift for and a love of teaching. She taught in Catholic Schools from 1954 for 37 years and in the Hamtramck school system for 12 years. Upon retiring from the Hamtramck Public Schools system, she taught as a substitute teacher at the Clinton Township schools for several years. This was a remarkable journey in a valued profession. When you think about this, it seems she could not stop teaching. One wonders, did she sing the song from the movie *The King and I*: “... if you become a teacher by your students, you’ll be taught?”

Many sisters have spoken of Sister Noreen’s love for teaching. An article from the Hamtramck newspaper, *The Citizen*, testifies to this love and praises her ingenuity in getting donations to help fund books for students in need, many of whom spoke English as a second language and had scarce family resources.

Noreen is also remembered for having a close, loving relationship with her sister, Theresa. It was said that she frequently let Theresa do the talking and laughed at Theresa’s jokes at all the appropriate times. The two sisters were truly a gift to one another and to all who were the beneficiaries of their warm hospitality.

When the two sisters could no longer engage in full-time active ministry, they became active volunteers at St. Margaret’s of Scotland in St. Clair Shores. This was one of the most rewarding seasons of Noreen’s life. The sisters lived and ministered together for over 13 years engaging in various pastoral ministries and as members of the choir, bringing comfort to all those they served.

Noreen spent her final season in Traverse City, close to her family. There, she continued to be a gospel presence to those with whom she journeyed. Despite suffering from declining vision, there was a song in her heart. We do not know much about Noreen and the many things we would like to ask her about: the song in her heart, the seasons of her life, the people she loved. We will hear more when the family shares their memories.

***Written by Barbara G. Stanbridge, IHM and delivered by Margaret Alandt, IHM
Jan. 10, 2025***