

TODAY AND YESTERDAY

A COLLECTION OF RECENT DISCOVERIES AND
ACTIVITIES IN THE IHM ARCHIVES

Reverence for the past, vision for the future

By **Jennifer Meacham**
IHM Archivist

I recently attended the eleventh triennial conference of ACWR, Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious, in the heart of downtown St. Louis. Archivists from 40 U.S. states gathered to discuss the challenges of our profession: budget cuts, new technologies, and the fate of an archival collection when its congregation comes to completion.

The sessions were thoughtful and informative. There were discussions on our work with researchers,



Meeting Scranton IHM Archivist Sister Beth Pearson

congregational leadership, and Communications, and news of religious archival consortiums created to house the collections of those who lack the staff or physical space to manage it themselves.

What I enjoyed the most was connecting with other archivists and talking about how much we genuinely love what we do. It was a weekend of information and affirmation—an experience I look forward to revisiting in 2027.

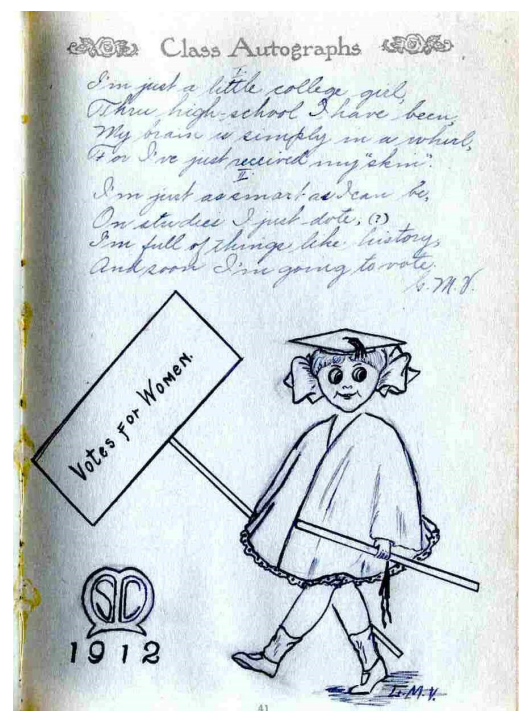
A timely message from Academy grad

Gladys Marie Voorhees was an honor roll student with a brand-new “sheepskin” in English from St. Mary Academy. She was writing in the memory book of her classmate Hilda Martin when she included this poem and drawing. She wrote on the preceding page that she was “the girl who’d rather draw than eat.”

Gladys presented the Class Will at commencement on Friday, June 14, 1912. She was spirited, talented and, typically for an IHM-educated girl, a bit ahead of her time. Michigan did not give women the vote until 1918. Here’s her poem:

**I’m just a little college girl,
Thru high school I have been,
My brain is simply in a whirl,
For I’ve just received my “skin.”**

**I’m just as smart as I can be,
On studies I just dote,
I’m full of things like history,
And soon I’m going to vote.**



Another Micallef is in the House

By Jennifer Meacham
IHM Archivist

Many visitors to the IHM Archives have a connection to, and memories of, sisters, schools, or the Mother-house campus. A recent visitor has a lifelong bond with this community, formed by the mutual love and admiration between her father, Spiro Micallef, and the generations of sisters who knew him.

In late July, Spiro's daughter, Carmella "Mikki" Micallef, brought two friends to the Motherhouse to tour of the chapel and the Heritage Room. Mikki's friends were treated to more than just the usual history lesson as the daughter of this congregation's long-time carpenter and master craftsman shared some of his stories about Marygrove, the

Motherhouse, and St. Mary Farms.

Of course, there is no escaping Spiro's fine work. We encountered his craftsmanship in the chapel, community room, Heritage Room, and in the shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, for which he constructed the altar, pedestal, and prie-dieu.

One of the antique desks on display (pictured, right, in the background) is also adorned with Spiro's signature inlay pattern. Another desk once belonged to Sister Miriam Raymo. That sister's name brought a smile to Mikki's face as she spoke of her father's admiration for Miriam and their decades-long friendship. In fact, not long before she died in 1965, Miriam gifted Spiro her rosary and her father's gold pocket watch as a

show of gratitude and affection.

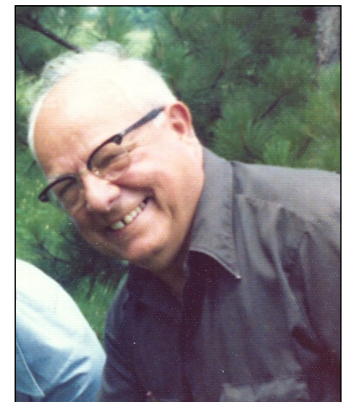
It was an honor to both educate new visitors and to accompany Ms. Micallef down memory lane, recollecting a man beloved by his family and the IHM community.



Mikki Micallef stops next to one of her father's wood-inlaid tables

A Spiro bio

- Born on Malta in the Mediterranean Sea
- In 1924 came alone to the U.S. at age 14 to join his father
- Got a job at Fisher Body Plant in Detroit
- Met Irving Raymo (Sister Miriam's brother) at work
- Hired on a trial basis to work at Marygrove College, stayed 50 years
- In Monroe first worked at the old convent and Academy II
- Specialized in woodworking and carpentry
- His inlaid-wood tables are still seen around the Motherhouse
- Worked on all convents, high schools, Crawfton, Visitation, Puerto Rico
- Wife Edith, daughter Carmella. Retired in 1974 but continued to work on special projects
- Died on Nov. 6, 1999, age 91



— *Information taken from Spinnaker, Feb. 15, 1987 and obituary*

Revisiting Sisters' poetry

Consider This

Letting go
 opens possibilities.
 Hanging on
 closes out growth.
 Change is the constant,
 stasis, an illusion.
 Look how easily
 trees shed leaves
 to the whim of winds.
 And still, even
 if they do not survive
 winter, they rise
 each spring
 in new sapling
 or are transfigured
 into tulip or rose,
 reassuring us that
 death is the most
 temporary state of all.

— Patricia Rourke, IHM
 2005

Synergism

Fuel, friction, force
 Surge, transform, electrify
 Motion, sound, heat, light.

Person, spirit, life
 Transfigure, transform, transcend
 Freedom, Peace, Love, Joy.

The electrician's daughter,
 Pat Aseltyne, IHM

IHMs and the right to vote

Nuns on the Bus 2014

IHM Sisters in 2014 joined a hard-to-miss, multi-state effort to “get out the vote.” Called Nuns on the Bus, the project was organized by NETWORK.



Sister Christine Dobrowolski

The bus was scheduled to tour 10 states. It stopped at Marygrove College on Sept. 29. The stop was co-sponsored by the IHM and M.O.S.E.S.

In December, the Sisters received an e-mail of thanks from NETWORK’s Community Mobilization Manager. It read, in part: “Of all the NETWORK-affiliated groups, the IHMs far and away spread our Voter Pledge to the most places!”

South Africa 1994

“One of the most extraordinary moments of IHM history in South Africa was the election of April 1994. For the first time in 350 years, persons of every race were allowed to vote.” *-(From A Compelling Vision)*



Sisters Annette St. Amour and Eileen Karrer were election monitors and six other IHMs served as election observers. In an atmosphere of tension, threats, awe and hope, they stood for the integrity of the people to vote in a “free and fair” election. In this photo are (left to right), Sisters Sue Rakoczy, Judy Coyle, Annette St. Amour, Rita Rennell, Peg O’Shea and Eileen Karrer. One of these IEC (Independent Electoral Commission) T-shirts is preserved in the Archives.

Among Ourselves



Fun and fellowship were common attractions for spending time at the Sisters' getaway, Crawfton, across the border in Ontario. This group gathered there in 1994. They are (left to right) Sisters Jean Burbo, Marguerite Gibbs, Anne Crane, Rita McFarland, Margaret Brennan, Mary Jo Rosenau and Marge McFarland.

The IHM Archives seeks to preserve any and all materials that document the history of the IHM Sisters. Please contact the Archivist if you have items to donate or have questions about the types of items appropriate for the collection.

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