

Patricia (Anne Michelle) Westover



I grew up in Monroe with seven siblings, just a block from St. Mary Church. I attended St. Mary Elementary School and then went to St. Mary Academy. I was blessed to be taught by IHM Sisters who loved teaching. The days were a quintessential IHM experience. My everyday experiences at school formed the foundation of my vocation.

They reinforced the prayer, service and ministry lessons I learned at home, intimately bound together in faith, prayer, study and service.



I joined the IHM community right after I graduated from the Academy. Feeling called to a religious vocation, I just knew that this was what I had to do.



I went to the congregation to determine if it was the right fit; teaching was secondary to a religious life. Women had few opportunities to serve in the Church at the time.

I was first sent to Marian High School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where I taught biology and then to Immaculate Heart of Mary High School in Westchester, Illinois. While there, my mother was diagnosed with cancer and I wanted to be closer to home. So, I returned to Michigan and served as a nurses' aide in the Motherhouse Infirmary for a year before teaching at Lumen Christi High School in Jackson, Michigan. Afterward, I went to Providence-St. Mel in Chicago, where I taught

biology and later became the Dean of Students. Providence-St. Mel is in a high-crime area and students' home lives were challenging. Seeing them work through these challenges and go on to attend colleges and universities was very rewarding. After 20 years there, I realized the environment had worn me down and that it was time to leave.

I accepted a position at Mother Theodore Guerin High School in River Grove, Illinois and taught for a couple of months when I fell and broke my femur in three places. After my recuperation, I couldn't stand for long periods, which ended my teaching ministry. I then began working with medically fragile adults who also had profound intellectual disabilities. Then, I served as a case manager, directing clients' care.

I completed my master's degree in educational supervision at DePaul University. I also have many postgraduate hours in biology. Since joining the IHM community, my greatest joy has been the opportunity to minister to the individuals I have been fortunate enough to have come into my life. I enjoy seeing what wonderful people my students have become: It is touching. I am grateful for the support of the community and for being part of a community that is so gracious. The IHMs amaze me at how much they love each other and ministry. I remain inspired to serve the poorest and those with the greatest need.