

Amata Miller

Within the IHM congregation and across the diverse landscape of U.S. religious communities, Catholic higher education institutions, and not too few corporate C-suites, I have joyfully lived 75 years as an IHM.



Born in Detroit as the eldest daughter of a respected business owner and well-read peacemaker, my early years focused on school, practicing the piano and, from an early age, desiring to live my life as a religious. Having been magnificently taught by our IHM Sisters, I never considered a congregation other than our own. I simply wanted to be like the IHMs I so admired at Gesu and Immaculata High School. My early life certainly



centered in my school and parish but, each Sunday, I walked to play the organ for the parishioners at Our Lady of Victory, the predominantly African-American parish on Eight Mile and Wyoming.



After entering, I earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics at Marygrove; taught upper elementary grades in

Detroit, and then set aside my personal wish to study theology and music and, at the congregation's request, attended graduate school at Saint Louis University and the University of California at Berkeley, earning master's and doctoral degrees in economics. After teaching economics at Marygrove and St. Edward's in Austin, Texas, I served twice as the congregation's chief financial officer, assisted in the founding of Groundwork in Michigan and also worked at NETWORK in Washington, DC. After a second stint as professor at St. Ed's, I finished my formal career as Endowed Chair in Mission and Professor of Economics at St. Catherine University in Minnesota. Less formally, I taught some young IHM friends how to sail and tent camp and assisted the Haitian child adopted into our congregation to successfully navigate high school and

graduate from college. I enjoyed playing flute and piano duets, and sustained my daily passion of both scrutinizing the *New York Times* and completing its crossword puzzle, while frequently crisscrossing the country for speaking engagements.

This work ignited and deepened my true passion — Catholic Social Teaching and the Gospel's social justice imperatives. Through writing, speaking and consulting, I worked hard to guide numerous religious congregations and our own congregation as well, especially during the Community of Goods process. I hold several honorary doctorates and was humbled to receive national and life-time awards from LCWR and the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. I have served on many boards, among them Marygrove College, Mary's Pence, and 40 years at St. Edward's, once traveling by bus from Detroit to Texas for a finance committee meeting to circumvent a "no fly" directive from my physician; not, however, circumventing the dismay of my housemates.

Looking back on 75 years as an IHM, my thoughts sing of joy and gratitude for a life that has allowed me to love — seemingly all at once — God, learning, teaching, and serving; hot dogs, peppermint ice cream and ravioli; writing, researching and playing music; my birth family, our congregational "nephew," and his family and, above all, my dear IHM family.