

As I look back over my 70 years as an IHM Sister, my first thought is simple: *I can't believe I made it!*

I was born in 1937, the fifth of six children of Charles W. Wade and Margaret Etta Clancy Wade. When our family moved to Detroit, I met the IHM Sisters. My seventh grade teacher at St. Martin's on the Lake, Sister Rose Daniel Shanahan, told me I had a religious vocation. I had absolutely no desire to be a sister or a teacher. I loved sports and planned to attend college and enter the corporate world. That became the road not taken.

On the eve of my first day at Marygrove College, I was overcome by a persistent sense that I might be meant to be a sister. I told my parents I wanted to visit Monroe to find out. The following Monday, they drove me there. I changed my mind on the way, but my father refused to turn the car around. By the time we arrived, I was sick with nerves. Mother suggested we visit our cousin, Sister Mary Gael. I left Monroe with application paperwork.

Adjusting to my new life while taking college courses was challenging. I got through it with the support of my classmates and by "acting the part" until I fully understood it. Things began to come together during my student teaching when my mentor told me I was a born teacher. My teaching ministry began at Sacred Heart Dearborn for three years, then went to Our Lady of Miracles

in Gustine, California, for two years. It was there that gifts I never knew I had were called forth and developed. I loved the Portuguese families. My next three missions were either one or two years until I went to Oklahoma City.

I taught fourth grade and completed my master's degree in Elementary counseling. I began a counseling program between two Catholic schools, which included group guidance and family programs. It was also here that I developed my administrative skills. When my mother needed care, I moved to Pompano Beach, Florida, where I served as a school counselor and parish religious education coordinator while caring for her. After her death, I remained in Florida for several years before returning to Monroe.

Since then, I have stayed active, taking on many small roles; there is always something to do. My hope is to continue serving and contributing to the community's future.

I am grateful to my family for all their love and support and to our employees, parents and the IHM Sisters, who encouraged me over the years and helped me develop my skills. I appreciate the IHM commitment to the poor and marginalized, and its inclusive vision that reaches everyone and spreads our values of deep faith, courageous spirit and action for justice.

