

Noella Cavallero, BVM
Wake Stories/Reflections
Marian Hall Chapel, Dec. 28, 2017

Sister Mary McCauley, BVM

My memory of Noella begins in 1990. I did not know Noella before that time. I was asked to serve as Regional for Region Two area of the country. Not having a lot of computer and secretarial skills, I was delighted to have Noella as my secretary and Ange Cadigan as my treasurer for the region. You can imagine that pair trying to help me. I loved Noella. She was such an excellent secretary. I know she was known for her education, leadership and concern for children, but in her retirement years, she used her skills. She was such speedy typist and always so accurate. This was before the days of the computer. She did a lot of work, as the secretarial work moved into other areas of giving service to the region. For this, I shall always be grateful.

Sister Joan Stritesky, BVM

I have memories of Noella taking care of Sister Teresita Poulin, so in a way, I speak for Teresita now. They formed a friendship here at Mount Carmel greater than they had in California. Noella cared for her through the years when they both journeyed through Alzheimer's. That's a credit to her. She was gentle, loving and directive.

Sister Anne Buckley, BVM

Noella really could not hear anything in her last years. When I would speak to her, I'd speak right into her ear. Before I said something, she was a little bit stoic because she didn't know what was happening. However, right up to this last year, she would give the grandest smile.

Sister Anne Cronin, BVM

In 1994, the sisters moved out of St. Paul convent; most of them to Mount Carmel. However, a couple of them, Sister Dorita Clifford and Noella, moved to St. Philip convent. When they moved to St. Philip convent, Sisters Pat Lucy, Pat Lynch and maybe Camillus O'Connor were living there at the time.

Along with them was a little white dog named Schatze. Schatze had been owned by Mrs. Lucy, Pat Lucy's mom. When Mrs. Lucy died, Pat got the dog and brought it to the convent. When Pat Lucy died, Pat Lynch took care of Schatze. When Pat Lynch got ill and came here to Mount Carmel, Noella got Schatze. When Noella and Dorita were leaving San Francisco, guess who got Schatze? I did. I had Schatze for a few years. In those years when Noella was still pretty with it, I would write letters to her and I would send her pictures of Schatze. After Schatze died, Noella eventually turned off the idea of Schatze.

I just have to tell one other story about Noella. When Sister Ange Cadigan first came back here and I was on the Development Committee, I convinced Noella to come back with me to visit with Ange while I was at my meeting. We had a wonderful time over the weekend and then it was time to leave. At that time, Northwest was flying through Minneapolis, so the two of us got on the plane. We had a layover in Minneapolis so we wandered around that beautiful airport with all those wonderful shops. I just happened to glance at the departure marquis and saw that our gate had been changed. The two of us raced like maniacs to get to the gate and did manage to catch our plane. We laughed, huffed and puffed all the way home. Those were fond memories that I have of Noella.

Sister Mary Angela Buser, BVM

My memories of Noella are of a very welcoming person and a card player. I did not know Noella until I moved here to Mount Carmel. At that time, she was living on letter wing. We had a group that played cards several nights a week. She would always give a wonderful smile, welcoming each person who came in. I tended to be one of the last ones, so she would give me a really wonderful smile. That smile stayed with her every time I would go visit her and be able to, in some way, communicate with her. She and Sister Teresita Poulin were card players together and very close friends, as someone as already mentioned.

Sister Julie O'Neill, BVM

When I became Noella's letter writer, I really didn't know her very well, other than the fact she had been an outstanding principal for a very long time at All Hallows in Sacramento. I noticed in a drawer in her room, that she had many letters from a lady named Bonnie. I wrote to Bonnie to try to figure out their connection. It turned out that Bonnie had been a parent with two children in the school when Noella was principal. Bonnie was going through a very rough time financially and every other way. Noella took care of Bonnie and her two children. Bonnie, who had been writing Noella at least twice a month all these years, wrote, "Noella was always more of a mother than my own," which is a wonderful tribute to a person.

Sister Roberta White, BVM

In 1964, Sacramento All Hallows was my first mission and I was with Noella for about two years. She was in the upper grades. In those days, all the sisters in the convent sat according to number, so I didn't really sit with her. A few of us younger ones were at the end of the table and the Superior and Noella and the older sisters were at the head of the table.

I was teaching in first grade and Noella in seventh. The principal said that I should get used to observing and teaching in a lot of the grades, not just the primary. I was fortunate enough during my free periods to observe in Noella's room. I will tell you that she was an excellent teacher. I learned a lot by just being able to observe her in the classroom. She was firm, but fair, and students appreciated and knew that she was fair. She was a very competent teacher. I was fortunate to have observed in her classroom because I did teach seventh and eighth grade later on and it helped a lot. Thank you, Noella!

Sister Mary Agnes O'Connor, BVM

I did not know Noella very well until she came here. However, during my days at Marian Hall, every month a letter came from Noella with a check for the sisters. I didn't check with you, Julie, but I would guess she did the same for the Motherhouse. Not only was she a great leader and educator, but what a community woman, thinking about Mount Carmel all the years we were invited to send a little bit here and there to help our sisters here.

Sister Karen Conover, BVM

As we all know, as convents closed, we pass on BVM property. We are always glad when someone wants to take things. "Oh, that would be nice in our house." In San Francisco, I remember that when Noella came from Sacramento to St. Paul, she brought with her several lovely things from their kitchen and dining room.

One was a magnificent, large, dark wood bowl and 12 salad bowls and the tongs. I'm sure there were other items, but this item stood out. I knew that she had gone through the cleanout and distribution process when she left Sacramento after many years. She was also part of the disbursing of items at St. Paul convent when the sisters were leaving in the fall of 1995. One of the things that Sister Maureen

O'Brien and I coveted from the house was that salad bowl set. It sat prominently on our credenza, which came from somebody else, of course. We used it so often to entertain. I always thought of Noella and how pleased she was that something that had come from Sacramento to San Francisco and then to another house and then to someone from my faculty when I left over two years ago.

I sensed her great care of things, her stewardship. The word I always used in describing her is precise. She stood tall, always dressed beautifully, not extravagantly, but always put together. Her hair was coif. You knew, as she spoke to you, she said exactly what she wanted to. Precise. I'm grateful that I knew Noella in that capacity. Bless you.

Sister Catherine (Kitty) Ornellas, BVM

I have to put in a plug for Hawaii. Noella served in Hawaii. I didn't know her because she was already gone. I know of her as someone who was very, very kind.

Sister Diane Forster, BVM

Noella had pinned a poem among her funeral clothes. She had written on the paper, "I would like this at my prayer service. The poem is titled, "To Those I Love and Those Who Love Me." There is no poet named, nor source given.

To Those I Love and Those Who Love Me

When I am gone, release me, let me go.
I have so many things to see and do,
You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears.
Be happy that we had so many years.
I gave you my love. You can only guess
How much you gave to me in happiness.
I thank you for the love you each have shown.

But now it's time I traveled on alone.
So grieve awhile for me, if you must,
Then let your grief be comforted by trust.
It's only for a while that we must part.
So bless the memories within your heart.
I won't be far away, for life goes on.
So if you need me, call and I will come.
Though you can't see or touch me, I'll be near.

And if you listen with your heart, you'll hear
All my love around you soft and clear.
And then, when you must come this way alone,
I'll greet you with a smile and, "Welcome Home!"

In addition, among the materials I read was a comment an interviewer included in an article about Noella as she was leaving All Hallows School after 25 years there. There was a reception honoring her years of service. Afterward she commented, "I've been hearing so many nice things. It's like I'm at my own funeral."