



Sister Hilda Skelley was the third of five children. She grew up in Birmingham, Mich., when the town was small and surrounded by farmland. Her parents came to Michigan from Pennsylvania during the Depression. Her father was an engineer at General Motors in Pontiac.

Sister Hilda attended Holy Name (Birmingham) and St. Mary, Royal Oak. It was St. Mary's pastor, Father Cairns, who spoke highly of the IHMs and encouraged her to join the congregation.

She was impressed with the IHMs. "I liked the way they lived their vow of poverty, so that no one had material goods of better quality than another."

She eagerly joined the congregation. Her younger brother was angry about her decision; he was afraid he'd lost her. At a family visiting day during her second novitiate year, her little brother ran back to her after everyone else had said their good-byes and told her he was sorry he was so selfish; now it was OK for her to be a sister to others. He died a month later. This gift of his acceptance before he died let Sister Hilda know she had made the right decision.

Sister Hilda began her ministries at Gesu in Detroit, where she taught first grade for two years. She then went on to St. Felicitas in Chicago where she taught primary grades, supervised student teachers, was the reading coordinator for the archdiocese and taught archdiocesan teachers how to teach the new math. With Jean Vonier as her instructor, she learned how to teach children with developmental disabilities. (Sister Hilda's fondest memory includes a little boy practicing for his First Communion. He looked at the host and said, "Hi, Jesus.") She then served for one year at St. Rene in Chicago, before returning to the Motherhouse. In the Business Office, she conducted internal audits of the provinces and IHM-sponsored schools, managed health insurance for the sisters, was personnel director and helped wherever needed. She felt as if she was touching the whole community.

She ministered in the business office for 19 years; then worked on the finances during the merger of St. Mary Academy and Monroe Catholic Central High School. This was followed by five years at Springbank Retreat Center in Kingstree, S.C., where she was in charge of building and grounds maintenance and meal preparation. Sister Hilda returned to Monroe where she ministered as a cashier at Danny's Fine Foods. She was hired by QSAI; she wrote a syllabus on the use of Microsoft Office for their main client, MCMHA, computerized their specialized reports and trained the staff. Leaving MCMHA, QSAI transferred to Evans Street Station in Tecumseh where she served as the accountant for 12 years.



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She loves joining her family with the various activities of her grandniece and grandnephews.

Hilda enjoyed meeting diverse people throughout all her ministries, always grateful “for community life. Every mission I’ve been on was happy.”

