

Grace Mary Olfs

Sister Grace Mary Olfs grew up in Detroit, along with her younger sister, and became a boarding student at St. Mary Academy in Monroe.

As a boarder, she went to many functions at the Motherhouse and got to know the sisters well. She joined the IHM community after high school graduation. "I just loved the nuns. Their way of life spoke to me," she says. Once Sister Grace Mary entered, she knew she was where she belonged.

After completing a bachelor's degree in math at Marygrove College, she began her ministry teaching at St. Boniface in Detroit for two years. Those years were followed by teaching assignments in Michigan: St. Charles, Newport; St. Anne, Warren; St. Cyprian, Riverview; and in New Mexico: Holy Ghost in Albuquerque. She completed her master's degree in mathematics at the University of Detroit and taught math at Immaculata High School in Detroit.

In the mid-1960s, Sister Grace Mary went to Austin, Texas, to teach math at St. Edward's University. Later, she became associate Dean of Students for Advisory Services at St. Edward's. In this role, she directed the advisory and orientation programs and served as liaison between faculty and students. She also served as the academic advisor to students, including many from foreign countries and diverse cultural backgrounds.



She began ministering at Austin Community College when it first opened in 1975 and stayed until 1985, first as director of Arts and Sciences and later as coordinator for Curriculum and Instruction and then as associate vice president.

Needing to be nearer her mother and sister, Sister Grace Mary became the academic dean at St. Catherine College in Kentucky. During her tenure, she had experience as a library and resource director and academic advisor, as well as the dual role of academic dean and vice president.

Sister Grace Mary returned to Michigan and taught math part time at Cardinal Mooney High School in Marine City. In her retirement, she cared for her sister and elderly mother.



In her leisure time, Sister Grace Mary likes all outdoor activities. She is a birder and has identified 178 birds from Alaska to Nova Scotia, California to Florida and Mexico City. She has enjoyed volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and she has a strong interest in Native American cultures, spirituality and current issues.

Sister Grace Mary's greatest joy has been being assigned to her various ministries; and getting to know all the wonderful sisters she has worked with and receiving immense support from the community. She is grateful to the community for their friendship and the experiences she had at her ministries. "I could live a life of thanksgiving."

