

In Memoriam

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Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois
November 1, 2024 - October 31, 2025

Our gratitude to these sisters who lovingly prepared the welcoming remarks, remembrances, and preaching for our sisters' services. A special thanks to our Dominican brother Father Bob Kelly, who preached at the funeral liturgies.

Sister Patricia Burke, OP

Sister Kathleen Gallagher, OP

Sister Marie Michelle Hackett, OP

Sister Beverly Jeanne Howe, OP

Sister Rose Marie Riley, OP

Sister Phyllis Schenk, OP

Sister Margaret Schreiber, OP

Sister Rose Miriam Schulte, OP

Sister M. Joan Sorge, OP

Note: All cities are in Illinois unless otherwise indicated.

Sister M. Gabriella Luebbers, OP

It is a great testament to the impact of Sister M. Gabriella’s life that when she celebrated 75 years of religious profession in the spring of 2024, she welcomed five of her students who festooned her with bouquets of flowers—70 years after they first sat in her kindergarten classroom.

During her funeral ceremony, Sister Phyllis Schenk shared Sister Gabriella’s story of being called to religious life. She had given no thought to the idea whatsoever, until she was 15, when she was overtaken by what must have been Spirit-led preaching during a Lenten retreat. “I loved school and worked hard for good grades. My one dream was to grow up, get married and have a big family like our own,” said this middle child in a family of eleven. That seems to have changed quickly when the preacher “spoke of God’s special and personal love for each one of us, and I was touched by the Spirit. I knew this was a special time of grace for me and I responded,” she wrote.

The first 27 years of Sister M. Gabriella’s religious life were given to educating children, primary grades through high school. She was prefect for the borders at Sacred Heart Academy and principal at Rosary High School. Then in 1988, she began 34 years of humble service to her sisters living at Sacred Heart Convent. She cared for the sisters’ needs by cleaning their rooms, mending their clothes, and using the gift of her beautiful voice as a cantor at liturgies. She also served a term as subprioress at the motherhouse (1997-2003).

In the fall of 2024, after several bouts of increasing congestive heart failure in the intervening months, Sister Gabriella moved to *Regina Coeli*. Even then, still committed to a ministry of service, she requested a good sewing machine so she could continue to mend the other sisters’ clothes.

In the end, surrounded by the sisters and the music she loved, she went to God, giving witness even in death to the nurses at St. John’s, who commented on the peace they felt in her presence.



“God used her gifts and skills to build the kingdom.”
—Sister Phyllis Schenk, OP

Born February 28, 1931, in Carlyle, Ill. to Herman and Margaret (Lake) Luebbers and baptized Patricia Ann.
First profession August 4, 1949
Perpetual profession August 4, 1952
Entered into eternal life January 6, 2025

Our Lady of Grace, Chicago	1949-1952
Little Flower, Springfield	1952-1960
St. Thomas, Crystal Lake	1961-1962
Routt, Jacksonville	1962-1963
Marian Catholic, Chicago Hgts.	1963-1971
Sacred Heart Academy, Springfield	1971-1975
Rosary High School, Aurora	1975-1979
Marian Catholic, Chicago Hgts.	1979-1988
Sacred Heart Convent	1988-2025

Sister M. Michaela Collins, OP

When Sister Michaela’s nephew Vince Heaton asked his mom and her siblings to tell him what words they’d use to describe her they gave him a long list: “creative, driven, hard-working, motivated, detail-oriented, strong-willed, and perfectionist,” he rattled off during his moving eulogy.

That covers a lot of the territory of Sister Michaela’s life! As Sister Rose Marie noted, “Nothing stopped her determination to keep going, do her many projects, and decorate her room according to season.” Equally, nothing stood between Sister Michaela and her love her Chicago baseball teams: White Sox primarily, then the Cubs.

Her perfectionist nature seems to have been honed early on, when she was often responsible for her siblings while her parents worked. Her experience with them transfered to the classroom. She worked hard to make sure her classroom decorations were delightful and educational. She often went above and beyond to meet the needs of the diverse students she encountered in her many years of primary education in Michigan, Minnesota, and Illinois. Sister M. Joan Sorge described her as an “outstanding teacher of children in primary grades” and said she was especially patient and understanding with children who needed encouragement and reteaching.

As Vince noted, his aunt’s life was joy-filled but not without suffering. “While she had numerous lapses in her health and well-being, she always remained faithful, trusting, thankful and in love with her Savior Jesus Christ,” he said at the funeral. “Like Job, she never gave up or lost hope, never blamed God or lost faith in God.”

Through all that suffering, Sister Michaela remained down-to-earth, and in her way, quite practical. While instructing Sister Rose Marie how to preach at her funeral on the beatitudes of Matthew’s Gospel, she was succinct: “When you preach at my funeral, don’t use a lot of words. Remind the people to pray with the Beatitudes and grow into them. Be people of joy for the Kingdom of God.”



“When my time comes
To drop from the stem
And return to the source,
May my tumbling
Toward the One,
Be a dance of surrender.”
—Sister Michaela

Born November 1, 1929, in Chicago to Michael and Kathleen (Healy) Collins, and baptized Catherine Theresa at St. Brendan Church, Chicago.

First profession: August 5, 1952

Perpetual profession: August 5, 1955

Entered into eternal life: January 15, 2025

Holy Rosary, Duluth, Minn.	1952-1956
St. Agnes, Springfield	1956-1962
St. Augustine, Richmond/Lenox MI	1962-1968
St. Anne School, St. Anne	1968-1969
St. Mary, Mt. Sterling	1969-1972
St. Margaret Mary, Algonquin	1972-1980
Marian Catholic Convent	1980-1981
St. Edwards, Chicago	1981-1986
Holy Family, Decatur	1986-1993
Little Flower, Springfield	1993-1995
Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield	1995-2025

Sister Anne Lawrence Buchmiller, OP

Sister Anne Lawrence’s death, caused by a massive stroke, was unexpected and shocking. As Sister Patricia Burke noted in her rememberings “We are certainly happy that you are with God whom you loved so intensely and, at the same time, sad that we never got to say good bye, to tell you that we love you, to thank you for your time among us.”

Sister Anne Lawrence’s quiet, patient demeanor made her approachable for students, especially those who struggled. One former student sent her a message in 2020 to mark the occasion of her 60th anniversary. “Even though I was raised in a Catholic household, I made my first Communion freshman year. You gave me a gift of a cross on a chain. It was the only acknowledgment from anyone that I knew. That act of kindness showed me that one kind act could make a change in another’s perspective. You may not remember your act of kindness to me. It is something I will never forget.”

She taught for many years in elementary school classrooms and was principal at Little Flower School in Springfield and Sacred Heart School in Granite City. In 1978, she moved to secondary education, teaching civics and U.S., world, and church history at Marian Catholic. Many students in Springfield will also remember Sister Anne’s patient tutoring skills, which she employed at Sacred Heart-Griffin.

At the motherhouse, Sister Anne was known for her patient assistance for sisters in the supply room, her friendly visits with those she passed as she circumnavigated the hallways, and her tenacious attention to whatever jigsaw puzzle she happened to find on the community room table.

“God lavishes Wisdom upon those whom God calls into friendship.” This line from Sirach, chosen by Sister Ann Lawrence for her wake, was shared by Sister Rose Miriam Schulte to tell us something important about who our sister was: a woman whose relationship with God guided her path through life.



“She was indeed a friend of God.”

–Sister Rose Miriam Schulte, OP

Born June 15, 1940, in Greenville, Ill., and baptized Constance June by her parents, Erwin and Stella Schnyder Buchmiller at St. Lawrence Church in Greenville.

First profession August 5, 1960

Perpetual profession August 5, 1963

Entered into eternal life: October 21, 2025

St. Bernadette, Evergreen Park	1960-1961
Sacred Heart, Granite City	1961-1962
St. Bernadette, Evergreen Park	1962-1966
Christ the King, Springfield	1966-1968
St. Mary, Paris	1968-1969
St. Francis Cabrini, Springfield	1969-1970
St. Peter, Aurora	1970-1971
Little Flower, Springfield	1971-1977
Sacred Heart, Granite City	1977-1978
Marian Catholic, Chicago Hgts.	1978-1993
Sacred Heart Griffin, Springfield	1993-2019
Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield	2019-2025

Sister M. Elise Bocke, OP

When the 108-year-old Sister M. Elise slept peacefully away on October 24, no one was surprised at her departure—but that didn’t mean she would not be missed. “She brought us joy,” Sister Rose Marie noted during her remarks at the wake.

Early in her life, Sister Elise’s remarkable longevity was not self-evident. She was so ill as a child that a neighbor was supposed to have said to her mother, “You will never raise that child.” Sister Elise herself attributed her subsequent wellbeing to her love of learning, saying she was rarely ill once she began school.

Her Dominican vocation seemed to have been rooted in her early devotion to daily Mass, which she said began once she’d made her First Holy Communion. In their parish church was a statue of St. Dominic receiving the rosary from Mary. “I cannot help but feel that for this reason, St. Dominic drew me and many Quincy girls to the order,” she wrote. “We all learned about him at an early age.”

Of the many ministries Sister Elise fulfilled, perhaps her favorites were her role as reading consultant for the Archdiocese of Chicago and her final years of active ministry at St. Edward Parish. She wrote in her autobiography, “I have been challenged by the children who have come and gone through my little clinic: the learning disabilities, the emotionally disturbed, the non-English-speaking from Poland, Hungary, Romania, Mexico, and the Philippines. And also, those children who needed just a little encouragement to get them on the way to easy reading.”

As Sister Kathleen Gallagher recounted during her preaching at the wake, Sister Elise shared her light by teaching reading and sharing her “deep and passionate love of learning.”

A young woman at Sister M. Elise’s wake service, a graduate of St. Edward School, testified to the brightness of that light, saying she was present to represent her family because, “When my little cousin arrived from India, Sister Elise taught him to read.”



“Your greatest legacy, spoken by many of your students over the years, is just five little words: ‘She taught me to read.’”

—Sister Marie Michelle Hackett, OP

Born June 19, 1917 in Quincy, Ill., and baptized Elizabeth Christine by her parents Bernard and Emma Hacker Bocke at St. John the Baptist Church, Quincy.

First profession: April 30, 1939

Perpetual profession April 30, 1942

Entered into eternal life: October 24, 2025

St. Agnes, Springfield	1939-1951
SS Peter and Paul, Cary	1951-1957
Little Flower, Springfield	1957-1958
Christ the King, Springfield	1958-1964
St. John Bosco, Chicago	1964-1965
Archdiocese of Chicago	1965-1973
Marian Catholic, Chicago Hgts.	1973-1983
Rosary High School, Aurora	1983-1985
St. Edwards, Chicago	1985-2010
Sacred Heart Convent, Springfield	2010-2025

“Christian holiness consists not of trying as hard as we can to be good but of learning to live in the new world created by Easter, the new world we publicly entered in our baptism.”

– N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*

We remember our Dominican Associates

Carolyn Kampe	July 6, 2021
William Scanlon	December 20, 2024
Darlene Rae Froehlich	February 20, 2025
Josephine Richardson	May 29, 2025
Judith Mathes	May 30, 2025
Ann Corty	June 8, 2025
Marilyn Ann Murphy	July 1, 2025
Dorothy Ann Glogowski	August 11, 2025
Anna Francis	August 11, 2025

In Memoriam is a publication of:



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