

Sr. Rita Mudd receives posthumous award

Sister Rita Mudd was nominated for and received the Missoula (Mont.) Honor Court's "Old Pro Award" in May. The award is given to the "Old Pro"

whose work has reinforced and supported athletics in Missoula. John J. Mudd, a grand nephew, accepted the award on behalf of Sister Rita, who died last August 3.

The Mudd family asked Sister Dorothy Zimny for pictures of Sister Rita that could be used in the award program. Sister Dorothy contacted the archives of the Sisters of Providence and received three pictures, one of which is shown here, with Sister Rita flanked by cheerleaders from Sacred Heart Academy. Sister Dorothy also was asked for stories about Sister Rita and her love of and excellence in sports. The following is one of those tales:

Vera Mudd (her name before she entered religious life) attended school in Winnett, Mont., from grade one through her freshman year, and the family then moved to Missoula. Vera enrolled as a

sophomore at Sacred Heart Academy in Missoula. There was no sports program at all, so she recruited girls in her class and others to form a basketball team. They practiced and felt they were good enough to challenge the public school girls' team. And the SHA girls WON! But, to Vera's surprise, she was called to the principal's office the next day and was suspended from school for three days because she "took it upon herself to get a team in the school." Her parents had to take her to the principal's office to get her reinstated "in good name" at school.

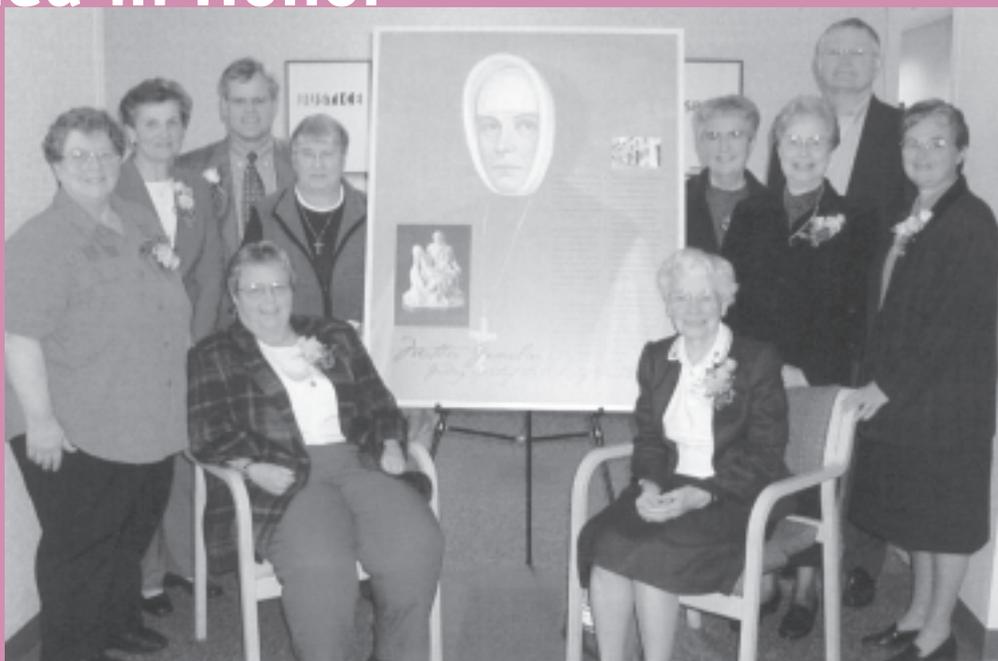
In later years, Sister Rita organized a sports program in any grade school or high school in which she taught, and she played right along with the students. In Missoula, she was instrumental in getting a gym built and the facility, the Sister Rita Mudd Activity Center, was named in her honor. ●



Sister Rita flanked by cheerleaders from Sacred Heart Academy.

Building Named in Honor of Foundress

On March 26, Providence St. Peter Hospital named "Building 2" the Emilie Gamelin Pavilion in honor of the foundress of the Sisters of Providence. The Emilie Gamelin Pavilion houses a variety of services, ranging from outpatient surgery to rehabilitation programs. ●



Eight Sisters of Providence celebrated the official naming of the Emilie Gamelin Pavilion. Pictured are (seated from left) Sr. Carolyn Koreski and Sr. Rita Ferschweiler and (standing from left) Sr. Mary Grondin, Sr. Susanne Hartung, C. Scott Bond, Providence St. Peter Hospital chief executive; Sr. Virginia Miller, Sr. Elizabeth Joyce, Sr. Mary Ann Meyer, David L. Bjornson, former Providence St. Peter Hospital administrator; and Sr. Karin Dufault.

Upper Room hosts

Sisters Elizabeth Joyce and Virginia Miller had a dream of reaching out to offer some kind of spiritual help to those who want it. They are pursuing that dream by offering others the use of the Upper Room, an apartment in the upstairs of a two-story home in Centralia, Wash.

"Many people have asked us why we ended up in Centralia. After reflecting about that we KNOW that the decision to move here was in God's plan," says Sister Virginia.

They were about to be displaced, having to move out of their home in Raymond by the end of June of 1997. "We frantically hunted in other areas for a place to live, with no success," she says. Then, suddenly, a woman from Lebam (between Raymond and Centralia) who had been watching the ads in the Centralia paper told the sisters about a house that had appeared for rent that very day. A call to the landlady led to her agreement not to show the house to anyone until the two sisters could see it the following Friday.

The move must have been "Spirit-directed," the sisters say, because they have discovered that the town of Centralia "suffers from a physical and spiritual poverty." That condition was reflected in a downtown area that was "run down, unkempt and dying" when the sisters arrived there five years ago, and also in Centralia's "dubious distinction," in some circles, as the "drug capitol of the Pacific Northwest." In the ensuing five years, much progress has been made, including a downtown restoration program, a few more businesses that mean a few more jobs, and active efforts to clean up the drug scene.

"What we saw was a beautiful two-story home with a large yard and a creek running behind the house," Sister Elizabeth recalls. A woman lived in the upstairs apartment, they were told, but that appeared to be no problem since the tenant was a very quiet non-smoker. "Even though we had not wanted to move to Centralia, we decided we had better take the home since we could find nothing else in the wider geography between

REUNION



Maggie McLaughlin of Renton (right), who had stayed in the Upper Room in Centralia a couple of times before, invited her daughter Susan Vieg, also of Renton (left), and her niece Rita Bonds of Portland, to join her there for a mini family reunion. The outside stairs shown in the photo on the right lead to the Upper Room.

Raymond and the Centralia/Chehalis area," Sister Virginia explained.

That gave them a place to live, but still no place to pursue their dream of offering spiritual help to others. Then, about six months later, the upstairs tenant became ill and had to leave the apartment. "A wonderful man (a research scientist) moved in and he became our 'St. Joseph' (jack of all trades) for about eight months," Sister Virginia recalls. "This was temporary for him since his family lived in Idaho. We were so sorry when he told us he had purchased a house so that his family could move to be with him." Then, the upstairs apartment was empty again.

"After he left, our landlady tried very hard to get another renter, but three months later, when the apartment still was vacant, we began talking about our own dream of having a place to offer others for short stays of spiritual renewal," Sister Elizabeth says. "We talked to the landlady and she was happy and

honored to offer us a reduced rent for the use of the apartment for this purpose." Thus was born the "Upper Room."

Friends from Snohomish and Monroe came to help the sisters clean, paint and remodel to make the apartment safe, attractive and comfortable for visitors.

"We have been blessed by people who have used the 'upper room' as a place of retreat, rest, relaxation, spiritual direction and renewal," Sister Virginia relates. "Some have come for a day, others for an extended period of time." In addition to a quiet, welcoming place to reflect, the sisters also offer spiritual direction and limited counseling service, if desired.

The Upper Room's location is directly across from the Centralia College entrance and in walking distance of downtown Centralia. The town's rebirth and the growing popularity of the community college

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Annie Portmann, sister of the late Sister Margaret Portmann, SP, died in late February in Oregon.

Ed Charron, brother of Sister Irene Charron, SP, died April 2 in Yakima.

Tarcicio Fernando, brother of Sister Deling Fernando, SP, died February 23 in a hospital in Kissimmee, Fla.

Manuel Sagles, brother of Sister Blanca Sagles, SP, died May 6 in the Philippines.

Jack Kistner, brother of the late Sister Rosemary Kistner, SP, died April 18 in Bremerton.

Suzanne Ellefson, mother of Sharon Ellefson, PA, died May 12 in Vancouver, Wash.

Paul Haviland, recipient of the Mother Joseph Medal in 1984, died May 25 in Medford, Ore.

"provide a base for healthy spiritual and psychological growth for those who desire help," Sister Elizabeth explains. Despite the nearby activity, the sisters say it is very quiet in the apartment, which is "fully equipped" to accommodate one or two people at a time and has a "good-sized" library of books, tapes (individual and courses), and videocassettes. The sisters provide an assortment of simple food and staples for those who need them, but they ask that people do their own cooking while there.

A sizeable yard offers a place of beauty and rest for those who enjoy outdoors. And there are many good walking areas close by for those who desire exercise. The only drawback is that access to the Upper Room apartment is not handicapped accessible, although a couple of women have braved the stairs despite their physical limitations.

The sisters distribute flyers and pass out "business cards" with information on what the Upper Room has to offer. Word of mouth also helps to bring interested parties to their door. Among the roomers have been Sisters of Providence on retreat, an elderly Catholic Worker "who travels the country putting her body on the line in protests for justice

issues," people who need counseling and/or spiritual direction, and women who need a temporary respite from their domestic and work situations.

"We believe that our contribution of a place of retreat and an offering of spiritual and emotional support to those who feel the need of it can contribute to the healthy self awareness and image that is needed to improve a person's way of life," Sister Virginia relates. "We are centrally located and easy to find and are, thus, convenient for those who still hold a bit of anxiety in their hearts when they think of reaching out to get this kind of help." ●

Rest in Peace

Born in Lansing, Mich., she was a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church. She graduated from Lewis and Clark High School and Holy Names College. Mrs. Ehrenberg was a laboratory technician at Sacred Heart Hospital, then was a laboratory technician at the blood bank for more than 20 years.

Survivors include her husband of 55 years, Gottfried Schmidt Ehrenberg; her sons and their wives, Thomas Anthony and Linda Ehrenberg of Spokane, Peter Frederick Ehrenberg Sr. and Diana Ramos of Aliso



Betty Lynn Ehrenberg, PA

Betty Lynn Ehrenberg, PA, 82, died April 6 in Spokane. A Providence Associate since 1986, she was an active member, volunteering at Miryam's House and coordinating its rummage sales. She also was a volunteer in the admitting office at Sacred Heart Medical Center.

Viejo, Calif., and Christopher John and Marilou Ehrenberg of San Leandro, Calif.; her daughter, Heidi Elizabeth Ehrenberg of Seattle; and five grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to Miryam's House of Transition, 1805 West 9th Avenue, Spokane, WA 99204. ●



CARITAS is published by The Office of Communications, Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province. Jennifer E. Roseman, Director of Communications

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 9 East Ninth Avenue
 Spokane, WA 99202-1295

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A publication for the Sisters of Providence and Friends ● SUMMER 2003

SISTER ANA DOLORES returns to El Salvador

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“When I was a little girl, my father was a catechist and celebrated the Word of God with the communities of our rural area in the west of El Salvador,” elates Sister Ana Dolores Orellana. The campesinos of the east, where the Sisters of Providence currently serve, listen to her with rapt attention. The history she relates of faithfulness and service, fear and death are an intimate part of their own history, as well. The connection her family had with Msgr. Oscar Romero, martyred Archbishop of San Salvador, and the fact that her own father is a martyr for his service to the poor and of the Word of God, create a bond between Sister Ana Dolores and the poor in her country of origin.

She arrived in El Salvador on January 6, and quickly bonded with people much like those she knew as a child. She has been touched by the miserable conditions in which Salvadorans here still live. With Sister Frances Stacey she has participated in and helped coordinate the work of animators of Christian Base Communities (CEBs) in six towns and villages in one sector of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. She has visited the sick with members of the Emergency Fund for Health, which is an integral part of the social outreach of the CEBs in the parish. She has assisted with youth groups and with catechetics. Most importantly, she has visited and loved the people, talking about modern Latino music with the youth, making tortillas with overworked moms, and singing and playing games with the children while listening deeply to the undercurrents of suffering and hope that wash through the lives of people here.

On April 10, she moved to another sector of the parish where Sisters Maria Antonieta and Alejandra received her for her last six weeks in El Salvador. With all the communities of the parish, she participated with the folks of La Papalota, San Marcos and Linares in walking the 2 kilometers of the Way of the Cross of the poor, suffering from the privatization

of health care, the effects of free trade agreements, and in solidarity with people suffering in Iraq. Her work in the “Providence” sector is similar to her time with Sister Fran, with the additional joys of celebrating Easter and the feast of San Marcos with the people. Drawn to the religious life at an early age, Sister Ana Dolores has spent the last 23 years in Italy serving as a member of the congregation Mothers of the Orphans that was founded in the midst of World War II. She has

fed the hungry, and cared for children, the elderly and the infirm. She has worked with the refugee population that arrives in Italy from a variety of countries. Memories of her own family, forced to flee El Salvador during the civil war, has increased her compassion for those she serves. Her mother, and most of her sisters and brothers, live in the Spokane area, having spent years as part of a sanctuary program at St. Ann’s Church. Her sister Louisa, a Providence Associate, encouraged Sister Ana Dolores to come and see how the Sisters of Providence are serving in El Salvador.

She has come. She has seen. More, she lived with and served her own Salvadoran people whom, with the Sisters of Providence, have been glad and grateful for her presence. ●



Sister Ana Dolores Orellana (second from left), holding Daisy, visits with the Marquez family. Other family members pictured are (from left) Mauricio, Zoila, Juventina and baby Samuel. In the background is a banner with the faces of Msgr. Oscar Romero and Rutilio Grande.