

Caritas

A publication for the Sisters of Providence and Friends • FALL 2005

Pursuing her passion

Sister Karin Dufault takes leadership of **SUPPORTIVE CARE OF THE DYING**

What do you do when you are faced with the opportunity of a lifetime – to do the thing that is your lifelong passion – but all the indications are that this is perhaps the worst possible time to take the leap? That is the challenge Sister Karin Dufault was confronted with the past few months. She chose to keep her mind focused on Providence, confident that the right decision would become clear. She was not disappointed. In October, this longtime supporter and advocate for the elderly and the dying will become executive director of Supportive Care of the Dying: A Coalition for Compassionate Care, headquartered in Portland.



Karin Dufault, SP

With the change, she is leaving her lengthy tenure in senior leadership with Providence Health System, which began with 12 years as chair of the board and continues through the last two years as vice president of mission leadership. She will be a loaned executive to the coalition from Providence Health System-Oregon.

"The recent time has been full of challenges," Sister Karin acknowledges. She took on the position of mission leadership full time in 2003, when PHS was finalizing negotiations with HMA for sale of Providence Yakima Medical Center. As an infant born in the hospital and a former administrator there, Sister Karin knew both the staff and the people of the area, so she played a major communications role. In late February of that year, she discovered that she had breast cancer and was successfully treated.

It was around Christmas in 2004 when she learned the executive director's position at the Portland-based coalition was unfilled. "We were one of the co-founders of the coalition, at a time that Oregon was discussing assisted suicide. With our position on the issue, we needed to demonstrate that end of life care can be a time when

needs are well met for patients and their families," she explains. The work of the coalition always has been close to her heart. "My passion has been assuring adequate and excellent end of life care since the beginning of my nursing days," Sister Karin declares. "It is an example of Mother Emilie Gamelin and Mother Joseph, of their work. They did not abandon those at the end of life."

After graduate school, she had returned to caring for cancer and end of life care patients and hospice patients. Her doctoral dissertation was "understanding hope and hoping processes in elderly patients with advanced cancer." This passion has been a continuous thread through her many roles – as a nurse, an assistant administrator, an administrator, and as chair of the PHS board. "I have a special connection with this ministry and with advocacy for it."

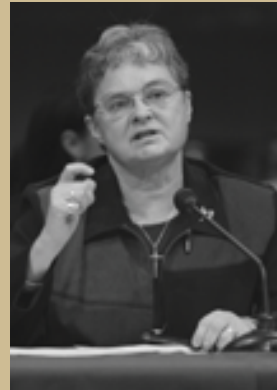
She was surprised that the coalition leadership position still was open, but recognized that "the timing was definitely not good." Providence Health System had a recently appointed president/CEO and was beginning new initiatives, including ministry leadership formation. →→

A brief excerpt from her testimony:

With over 2,000 members, CHA is the nation's largest group of not-for-profit health care sponsors, systems, facilities, health plans and related organizations. CHA's members provide care to at least one in every six Americans in the health care system, either in an acute care or long-term care setting, in communities across the country. We have been caring for the nation's most vulnerable and disenfranchised individuals for more than 275 years and remain committed to accessible and affordable health care for all.

CHA does believe the time has arrived for a serious, careful discussion about the modernization of the Medicaid program. We also believe, however, that it is important that the process not be driven by cost-savings targets, and that modernizations be developed and implemented with primary consideration of the impact on beneficiaries and a goal of ensuring coverage, access, and quality...

We urge Congress to take a broad look at the overall welfare of those in this country with the greatest needs and the least resources, and offer solutions that will address their needs. ●



Sr. Karin Dufault, SP, RN, PhD, chair of the Board of Trustees of Catholic Health Association of the United States and senior vice president for mission leadership of Providence Health System, testified before the U.S. Senate

Special Committee on Aging on June 28 to highlight the need for thoughtful debate on reforming the Medicaid program.

Sister Karin Dufault takes leadership of **SUPPORTIVE CARE OF THE DYING...**

2 ● In addition, Sister Karin was beginning a one-year term as chair of the board of the national Catholic Health Association in June, chairing its search for a new CEO, and guiding a strategic and operational planning process. "But in the back of my mind, it kept nagging at me. In February I began to ask myself, 'Would the board (of the coalition) want me? Am I the right fit?'" She decided she owed it to herself to at least inquire and contacted the former executive director, who strongly encouraged her to talk to the search committee and make a presentation on the relevance of the coalition for Catholic health care today.

"At one point, members felt the coalition would sunset, but they realized we still have a ways to go to meet needs; to see symptoms managed and spiritual needs met," Sister Karin says. Her presentation focused on the conflicting messages that caregivers, patients and families are receiving, from the left and from the right. "Some say real control is possible only with the option of physician-assisted suicide as a means to deal with the physical, emotional and spiritual distress of dying. The other side says dying patients must have everything done and be kept on life support indefinitely. They must be willing to be on advanced life support and not allowed a natural death," she explains.

Catholic hospitals, which comprise CHA's 2,000 plus members, are worried about misinformation leading to a belief that Catholic facilities are mandated to provide everything possible to sustain life, irregardless of living wills. That concern underscores the importance of the coalition, which is made up of 13 Catholic-sponsored organizations, bringing together expertise in ethics, theology, nursing and medical care, and spiritual care. The coalition's support of education, research and advocacy related to palliative care, end of life and hospice care is critical, she adds.

"In the process of talking with the search committee, I gained even more energy about the executive director's position,"

Sister Karin says. She was asked to meet with the coalition's board for a similar presentation and dialogue. There were two representatives from each sponsor, many of whom were colleagues. "What an extraordinary group of people; they are committed and they are champions for these issues," Sister Karin says.

She also visited the coalition's offices at Providence Hall in Portland, where she met the only other coalition staff member, executive assistant Carol Lieberman, who has a nursing background. "Carol is in the exact same office I had when I finished grad school and served as a clinical nurse specialist. Talk about providential!" It was a joy for her to see many with whom she had ministered before. She also met with Dan O'Brien, an ethicist and the coalition board chair. Offered the position, it was time for discernment in earnest.

"I weighed the implications of a move at this time," Sister Karin explains. "It isn't the best timing for me, as the only Sister of Providence on the senior leadership team at the system level." There also are major developments occurring in ministry leadership formation and new opportunities for collaboration with Providence Services. "But nobody is indispensable. Providence does provide the right people at the right time," she says.

She also considered the fact that it would be highly unlikely that another opportunity would emerge later to serve in a comparable role with the focus that is her passion. Another factor was her commitment to CHA as chair and its impact on leadership of the coalition. In the end, she and the coalition board determined that the two roles will complement each other. "I envision that the first year as executive director of the coalition will include CHA and coalition visits to ministries to come to understand the sponsors of the coalition's members of CHA," she says. The major coalition focus will be on developing a strategic plan inclusive of public education and applying research to improve practice as well as public advocacy for compassionate and supportive care legislation in partnership with other organizations.

"The hardest thing is leaving my colleagues and friends in ministry here," Sister Karin says. "I have had quite a journey with Providence Health System. The people are incredibly talented and committed people and they take the mission and core values very seriously, ensuring that the message and ministry will continue. Providence Health System's efforts will continue and will flourish in new dimensions." ●

Jubilee Celebration

20 Sisters of Providence mark 50 to 75 years of religious life

Twenty Sisters of Providence from Mother Joseph Province celebrated significant anniversaries of their years in religious life on August 6 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Seattle. One of the Jubilarians, Sister Kathryn "Kitsy" Rutan, a native of Great Falls, resides in Montreal, Quebec, where she is serving a five-year term as general superior of Sisters of Providence International. In addition, a Salvadoran sister who is residing in Yakima while exploring transfer from another religious community celebrated 25 years of religious life.

This year's Jubilarians reside in Olympia, Portland, Seattle, Spokane and Yakima.

The Most Reverend Alex J. Brunett, Archbishop of Seattle, presided at the liturgy, which was followed by a luncheon honoring the Jubilarians in the parish hall. The theme of the celebration was "We remember, we celebrate, we believe." ●

The Jubilarians and their current residences are:

75 years – Sisters Anne Bouffard and Louisa Hageman, Spokane (deceased);

70 years – Sisters Blanche Dufault, Mary Gleason, Florida Hinse, Ellen Elizabeth Kelly and Mildred Niehuser, Seattle; and Sisters Paul Gabriel Desilets and Agnes Rohr, Spokane;

60 years – Sisters Rose Marie Dillman, Maureen Hurley, Therese Kohles and Gilberte Parent, Seattle; and Sister Georgette Bayless, Yakima;

50 years – Sister Kathryn Rutan, Montreal; Sister Carolyn Koreski, Olympia; Sister Lenora Donovan, Portland; and Sisters Anita Butler, Judith Edwards and Mary Catherine McGuire, Seattle.

25 years – Sister Ana Dolores Orellana, OMO, Yakima.

75 YEARS

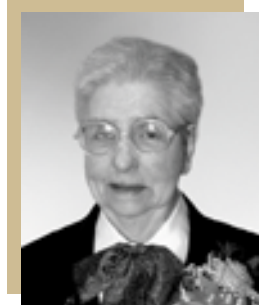
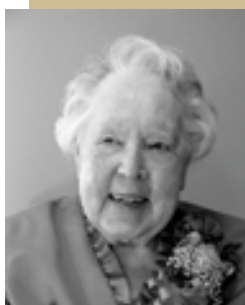
Sister Anne Bouffard (Sister Jude Thaddeus), Spokane, was born in eastern Canada and moved with her family to Butte, Mont. She entered the novitiate in Seattle and made first vows in 1930. A graduate of the nursing school at Columbus Hospital,

Great Falls, she served in ministry as a nurse in every hospital in the former St. Ignatius Province. She was a nurse at Providence Hospital, Seattle, and St. Patrick Hospital, Portland. She also was a medical records librarian and a consultant in nursing programs, dental hygiene and medical laboratories. She initiated a medical records program at Carroll College in Helena and designed a health lab that an accreditation team

Sister Louisa Hageman (Sister Barbara Clare) died August 2 in Spokane. Please see her obituary on page 11. ●

70 YEARS

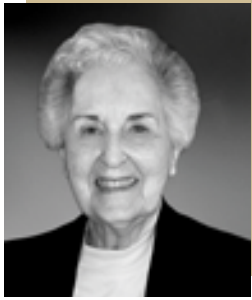
Sister Paul Gabriel Desilets (Gilberte Desilets), Spokane, was born on a maple tree farm in St. Wenceslas, County of Nicolet, Quebec, in 1914, the oldest child, followed by five brothers and two sisters. She attended public school until high school, when she was taught in French by the Assumption Sisters. In 1935 she entered the convent of the Sisters of Providence in Montreal, joining her great aunt. After two years in the novitiate she made profession in 1937 and was surprised to be ordered to go west. She began her life of ministry in the food service at Providence Hospital, Seattle, and made final vows in 1940. →→



The religious community sent her to school to learn English and to become a dietitian. Since 1941, all of her years have been spent on the east side of the mountains, beginning with Columbus Hospital, Great Falls. She spent nearly 20 years in the dietary department of St. Ignatius Hospital, Colfax, and later was a dietitian at Mount St. Joseph, Spokane, for 15 years. She retired there in 1996. ●

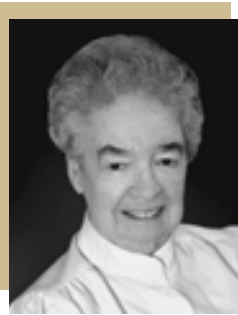
Sister Blanche Dufault

(Sister Denise of Providence), Seattle, is one of six children born to French Canadian parents on an Indian



reservation near White Swan, Wash. When she was 5 years old, the family moved to Moxee City, where she was taught by the Sisters of Providence. Her older sister Violet (Sister Dolorosa)

Sister Mary Gleason (Sister Maria Theresa), Seattle, was born at Providence Hospital, Seattle, in 1918 to a close-knit family of five boys and two girls. During her junior year at Holy Names Academy in 1935 she received permission to enter the Sisters of Providence and finished high school during the first year as a novice. Her ministries were in teaching primary and secondary grades in Moxee City, Tacoma, Vancouver and Seattle. She also held positions in administration in Yakima, Burbank and Seattle. She was co-foundress, superior, principal and teacher at the opening of Providence High School in Burbank, and later shared in the founding of John F. Kennedy Memorial High School in Seattle. An English major with a master's degree in English literature, she was teaching in Yakima when she was asked to finish *The*



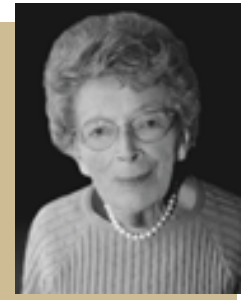
Bell and the River, a book on the life of the foundress of the Sisters of Providence in the west begun by the late Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament. Sister Mary Gleason literally fell in love with Mother Joseph and later wrote an abbreviated volume entitled *He Has Given Me A Flame*. Sister

Mary's other ministries included working in the Director of Education office, service on the Provincial Council as provincial/corporation secretary and as a member of the first Board of Directors of Providence Health System. She later was secretary to the council and the provincial superior. ●

then attended nursing school in Olympia, graduating in 1943. She served as a nurse for 33 years, including 18 as operating room supervisor. Her years as a nurse were spent in Port Townsend, Fairbanks, Yakima, Astoria, Walla Walla, Medford, Anchorage, Vancouver, Burbank and Alameda. Then she began a ministry of pastoral care in Everett for four years, followed by three years on the Formation Team. Her final ministry before retirement to St. Joseph Residence, Seattle, was as assistant manager of Emilie House in Portland. Today she is a volunteer helping to set up the new Sisters of Providence Library at the residence. ●

Sister Ellen Elizabeth Kelly

Seattle, is a teacher, world traveler and development specialist who was born Emma Kelly in 1912 in Seattle's Green Lake district to parents from Newfoundland with six children, three girls and three boys. She entered the novitiate in 1934 at Mount St. Vincent, made first profession in 1936 and final vows in 1939. Her ministries included 25 years in education, in Moxee City, Olympia, Seattle, Vancouver, Burbank, Walla Walla and Yakima, and 33 years in development. In that second career, she raised funds for operations at Providence Heights and gathered its impressive art collection, and also opened the first central development office in 1963. But teaching was her first love. She considered the relationships developed with the children and their parents as special, and continues to be in touch with many of her former students, now grandparents in their 70s. She recently moved from her First Hill apartment to St. Joseph Residence, Seattle. ●



She entered the novitiate in 1934 at Mount St. Vincent, made first profession in 1936 and final vows in 1939. Her ministries included 25 years in education, in Moxee City, Olympia, Seattle, Vancouver, Burbank, Walla Walla and Yakima, and 33 years in development. In that second career, she raised funds for operations at Providence Heights and gathered its impressive art collection, and also opened the first central development office in 1963. But teaching was her first love. She considered the relationships developed with the children and their parents as special, and continues to be in touch with many of her former students, now grandparents in their 70s. She recently moved from her First Hill apartment to St. Joseph Residence, Seattle. ●

Sister Mildred Niehuser

(Sister Paul Xavier), Seattle, had a 56-year teaching career that covered all bases. You name it; she taught it: all grades, from nursery school through college courses; all subjects in grade school, then English, world history, languages, speech, drama, journalism and typing in high school and college. Her locations were just as varied, including classrooms in Fairbanks, Seattle, Vancouver, Olympia, Portland, Burbank and Great Falls. She also served as principal at Immaculate Conception School in Fairbanks and was one of the foundresses of St. Finbar's School in Burbank. Her years of studying languages helped her teach languages to Montessori

Sister Florida Hinse (Sister Marie Rita), Seattle, was one of 14 children, nine of whom lived to adulthood, in a French Canadian farm family in the province of Quebec. She was the sixth child and the second-oldest girl. She entered the novitiate in Montreal,



then came west in 1938, right after profession. She was sent to Providence Academy in Vancouver to learn English and earn a U.S. high school diploma,

Jubilee Celebration

entered the religious community in 1931. Blanche (Sister Denise of Providence) entered in 1934 and a niece, Sister Dona Taylor, entered the community in 1958. When she entered religious life, Sister Blanche hoped to become a nurse, but sisters were needed in the schools. For more than 30 years she taught and was principal of grade schools and taught in high schools in Seattle, Yakima, Vancouver, Moxee City, Burbank, Portland and Olympia. One of the unexpected benefits of teaching that she would not want to have missed is the way some of her students have stayed in touch. Their appreciation is gratifying but humbling. "We just do our work like everybody does," Sister Blanche says. "You just do the best you can." ●