

What the Sisters Mean to Me

Sister Joachim Von Arx

CST graduate 1930; Reception Desk at Lourdes Hall at CST from 1975-87

When I think back to attending the College of St. Teresa, there are so many Sisters that come to mind, but the one who I became the closest with was Sister Joachim Von Arx. Sister Joachim was from my hometown of Hokah, Minnesota, and although I had never met her prior to attending St. Teresa's, we became great friends.

I was very homesick during my freshmen year. (Hokah is only 30 minutes from Winona but it seemed like a million miles away!) Sister Joachim heard I was homesick and took me under her wing. She would invite me to have lunch with her and the other Sisters living in Alverna Hall, and she would share stories about growing up in Bush Valley outside of Hokah. I found out that I knew many of her family members as well, so we had a lot to talk about.

Later, when I would drive home on the weekends, she would catch a ride with me so she could visit her family. I always enjoyed listening to her stories as we rode along. She shared many stories of her earlier days teaching school. I'm sure she impacted a lot of lives over her years of teaching.

During the school year, I worked at the switchboard in Lourdes Hall, as well as the reception desk at Maria Hall. Sister Joachim also worked the desk in Maria, so if she saw I was on a shift after her, she would leave a little note for me with an orange and a deck of cards so I could have a snack and play a game of solitaire while I covered the desk. I still have that deck of cards. Every time I bring them out of the drawer it reminds me of Sister Joachim.

I graduated from St. Teresa's in 1987, and Sister Joachim retired to Assisi Heights that same year. We continued to keep in touch. One thing she instilled in me was the importance of volunteering. During one of my visits to Assisi, Sister Joachim shared that she had heard there was a need for a Eucharistic Minister for patients at Gundersen Hospital in La Crosse. She told me "you can do that" and put me in touch with the coordinator. I was a little apprehensive, but I ended up volunteering there for a couple of years. It was such a neat experience to be able to distribute communion to patients and their families and see how much it meant to them and how thankful they were to receive it. I continue to volunteer in my community and parish and can still hear Sister Joachim's words "you can do it" when I'm asked to help out in some way.

Sister Joachim lived to be 101 years old and I was able to attend her 100th birthday party at Assisi Heights.

I will always treasure Sister Joachim's encouragement, sense of humor and friendship.

Geri Patschull '82