



Melodie Camp Santana: inspired by SND true grit

Melodie Camp Santana's relationship with the Sisters of Notre Dame began in 1956 when she entered the first grade at St. Rose of Lima School in Maywood. After completing the eighth grade in 1964, she continued her Notre Dame education at St. Matthias High School, where she was taught by a number of SNDs, including Sr. M. Sheila Fay (at that time known as Sr. M. La Tier). Thinking back on her elementary and high school years, Melodie recalls, "the Sisters of Notre Dame gave me a foundation for prayer, spirituality and perseverance that has carried over into my adult life. They were the epitome of 'true grit.' They would face each day with a positive attitude and with the hope that things would work out for the best. I will always be grateful and appreciative for the love, guidance, wisdom and fortitude the Sisters of Notre Dame showed me in my early years."

Melodie graduated from St. Matthias High in 1968, along with Sr. M. Rebekah Kennedy and Sr. M. Amy Hauck. Matriculating to California State University at Long Beach, Melodie earned a bachelor's degree in speech communication and a master's degree in elementary education with a specialization in reading. She later obtained a special education teaching credential from Loyola Marymount University. With this background, Melodie worked for 26 years as a teacher and teacher on special assignment. While engaged in teaching special education for children with mild to moderate disabilities, however, she realized that she could make an even greater

difference for them as an administrator, which would authorize her to place special needs students in the least restrictive learning environment suited to their personal learning styles. To this end, Melodie obtained an administrative credential from La Verne University, which opened the way for her to serve as a program specialist, assistant principal and eventually a principal for the Montebello Unified School District, a position from which she retired in 2010.

Since then, Melodie has remained active in the field of education as a consultant with the school district. In this role, she works closely with college bound students, helping them with college applications, financial aid packets and preparation for the SAT.

She also currently serves on the boards of Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Downey and St. Michael's School in Los Angeles, and as president of the Catholic Women's Guild of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. Melodie's formative relationship with the Sisters of Notre Dame continues to influence her discernment of God's plan for her. She affirms, "Whenever I am in a situation that requires deep thought before I make an important decision, my faith, my prayers and my experiences with the Sisters of Notre Dame always come into play, and the outcome is always the most appropriate outcome for that particular situation. Thank you, Sisters of Notre Dame. May God bless you in everything you do!"