Sister Beverly McEachin, OP
1928-2019

A woman of great generosity, who was a friend to everyone she met and who remained faithful to her prayer life and to daily Mass, even as she struggled more and more with memory loss in her last years: this was how Sister Beverly McEachin was remembered by her friend and fellow “crowd” member Sister Ann Romayne Fallon after her death on April 26, 2019.

“Beverly, you have been an inspiration to all who have known you over a lifetime but especially those who have witnessed your struggle with the loss of memory while never losing the ability to smile, to wave and make us realize you were our friend,” said Sister Ann Romayne as she concluded her homily at Sister Beverly’s funeral on May 3.

Sister Beverly McEachin was born on July 5, 1928, at St. Joseph’s Mercy Hospital in Detroit, the first child of Neil and Mildred (Piche) McEachin. Five more children came into the family over time: Robert, Patrick, Marilyn, Susan, and Gail.

Mildred’s parents lived nearby, and one of Sister Beverly’s earliest memories of her Grandfather Piche was seeing him kneeling in prayer at the dining room table. She greatly enjoyed being able to spend time with her maternal grandparents but never got to know her paternal grandparents very well; her grandmother Emma had died in 1917 of complications from a stillbirth and her step-grandmother, Martha, lived in Minnesota and the distance was too great for regular visits.

Neil ran his own business in Detroit creating window displays for jewelers, the McEachin Sign and Display Company, and the family lived in Grosse Pointe Farms. Beverly attended kindergarten at Kerby Elementary School and then completed her elementary and high school education at St. Paul’s School, which was staffed by the Adrian Dominican Sisters.

Her original goal when it came to high school was to enter the Congregation’s “prep” program, but her parents did not want her to leave home at such a young age. “I was disappointed, but discovered that they were right as I enjoyed so many great experiences during my high school years at St. Paul’s,” she wrote in her autobiography.

She graduated from St. Paul’s in early June 1946 and on June 23 was received as a postulant. When she became a novice in December of that year, she was given the religious name Sister Marie Neil, the name she had requested in honor of her father.

After eight months of study at Siena Heights College (University) toward her undergraduate degree in biology (which she completed in 1954), Sister Beverly was missioned in August 1948 to St. Nicholas of Tolentine School in Chicago. She remained there until 1951, followed by assignments to St. Anthony School, Casa Grande, Arizona (1951-54); St. Mary’s School, St. Clair, Michigan (1954-55); St. Mary’s School, Paw Paw, Michigan (August to December 1955); Visitation School, Elmhurst, Illinois (December 1955 to 1961); and back to St. Nicholas of Tolentine (1961-62).

At that point, having completed a master’s degree in science from Siena Heights in the summer of 1962, Sister Beverly began teaching on the high school level, first at St. Edward’s High, Elgin, Illinois
(1962-65); then at Dominican High, Detroit (1965-69); and finally at Port Huron Catholic, Port Huron, Michigan (1969-70).

By that time, she had done some graduate studies at the University of Rhode Island, thanks to a grant, in the summer of 1965 and had completed her master’s degree in guidance in 1969 from the University of Detroit. That eventually led her into a new ministry, but before that she served as assistant principal (1970-71) and then principal (1971-73) at Our Lady Gate of Heaven School, Detroit.

That new ministry came beginning in 1973, when she went to St. Rita’s School, Detroit, to serve as a guidance counselor, followed by the same role at Dominican High for five years (1975-80).

Beverly spent the years from 1980 to 1991 as a financial secretary at Samaritan Health Center in Detroit and then returned to the guidance and counseling field, first at St. Jude School in Detroit (1991-95) and finally going back to what had become known as Dominican High School and Academy, where she served from 1995 to 1999. She had the additional role of assistant principal for the academy.

Over the course of those years, she mourned the loss of her parents, Neil in 1988 and Mildred in 1994.

When Dominican closed in 1999, Sister Beverly decided it was time to retire from active ministry. She continued to serve, however, volunteering at the Congregation’s Development Office until 2003 and creating her own “morning ministry,” as she called it, of walking at a nearby supermarket and listening to the employees’ needs and concerns.

She continued to live in the area even after stepping away from her volunteer work, sharing community with Ann Kotwica, a former Adrian Dominican Sister – and their little Yorkie, Daisy – until a stroke brought her back to Adrian to live at the Dominican Life Center in 2015. As time went on, her memory issues worsened, but she still brightened the DLC lobby regularly with her smile and presence and enjoyed watching the birds at the feeders outside the window.

Sister Beverly died on April 26, 2019, at the age of ninety. She had been an Adrian Dominican Sister for seventy-two years.

“You were a valiant witness to what is possible even when our health fails, even when we lose the ability to verbalize our thoughts,” said Sister Rosemary Asaro, Holy Rosary Chapter assistant. “You were ministering to us with your smiles, your hugs, the little tunes you hummed, your presence. Thank you! Rest peacefully where all is beauty and love!”

In her homily for Sister Beverly, Sister Ann Romayne told the gathered assembly of Sister Beverly’s generosity during their shared time in the novitiate as she unhesitatingly offered to assist with tasks to ensure they were completed on time, and remembered that after Sister Beverly came back to Adrian to live she would entertain Sister Ann Romayne with a little tap dance if they were in the DLC elevator together. She also recalled Sister Beverly’s “great eagerness to be a friend to all through the genuine gift of her love of God and all God’s people.”

“We consider this friendship to be a blessing in our lives that we are honored to receive,” Sister Ann Romayne said. “… Now we wish you the fullness of peace as you enjoy eternal life with the God you served so well and so deeply.”
Center: First Holy Communion; Right: Beverly and Robert

Right: Sister Beverly poses with her family, from left, her father and mother, Sister Beverly, Robert, Patrick, Marilyn, Susan, and Gail.
From left: Sister Marie Neil (Beverly) and Robert. From left, Sisters Karen Lietz, Beverly McEachin, and Ann Nicolae Kotwica

From left, Sisters Ann Nicolae Kotwica, Joan Weitz, and Beverly McEachin. Sister Beverly with a service dog, May 5, 2016
From left: Sister Beverly focuses on a project, June 25, 2008. From left, Sister Rita Noeker, music; Mary Quigley, office; Pam Riddel, science; and Sister Beverly McEachin, academic counselor.

Members of the 2006 Diamond Jubilee Crowd are: back row, from left, Sisters Jean Fitzgerald, Laura Pesick, Ann Romayne Fallon, Joan Donovan, Edith Kathleen Zemke, Jean Librizzi, Georgina Luznicky, Beverly McEachin, Helen C. McDaniel; and Mildred Ann Huber; third row, from left, Sisters Anne Richard Baker, Mary L. Russell, Anne Bernadette Stein, Joyce Rybarczyk, Patricia Cecile Slattery, Denise Walsh, Elizabeth Francis Tekaucic, Sheila N. Flynn, Jeri Renner, and Winifred C.M. Lynch; second row, from left, Sisters Anne Patrice Remkus, Therese Groulx, and Jean Irene McAllister; and front row, from left, Sisters Barbara Wetterer, Marie Therese Guigar, Virginia Therese Conway, Jean Anthony Sporer, and Michele Gebhardt.