News



by GSR Staff

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Between Good Friday, April 10, and May 10, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Felix of Cantalice, or Felician Sisters, in Livonia, Michigan, lost 12 sisters to COVID-19 , the illness caused by the novel coronavirus, and has since lost one more to complications from COVID-19. Here, the Felician sisters remember their sisters.

Sr. Mary Clarence (Adeline) Borkoski

Sr. Mary Madeleine (Frances) Dolan

Sr. Mary Alice Ann (Fernanda) Gradowski

Sr. Victoria Marie Indyk

Sr. Celine Marie Lesinski

Sr. Mary Estelle Printz

Sr. Mary Patricia Pyszynski

Sr. Mary Martinez (Virginia) Rozek

Sr. Mary Danatha Suchyta

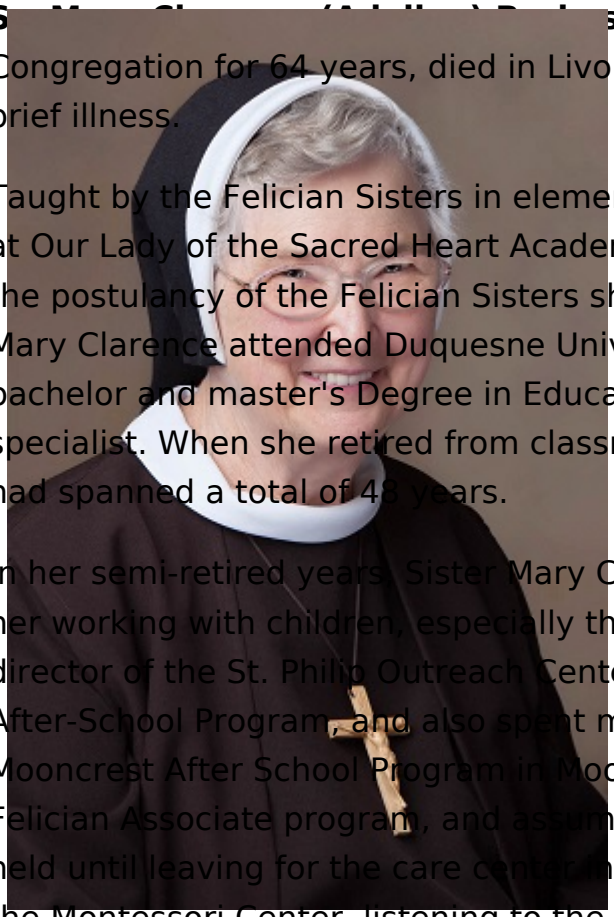
Sr. Thomas Marie Wadowski

[Sr. Mary Luiza Wawrzyniak]

[Sr. Rose Mary Wolak]

[Sr. Mary Janice (Margaret) Zolkowski]

All of the obituaries and photos are courtesy of the Felician Sisters.

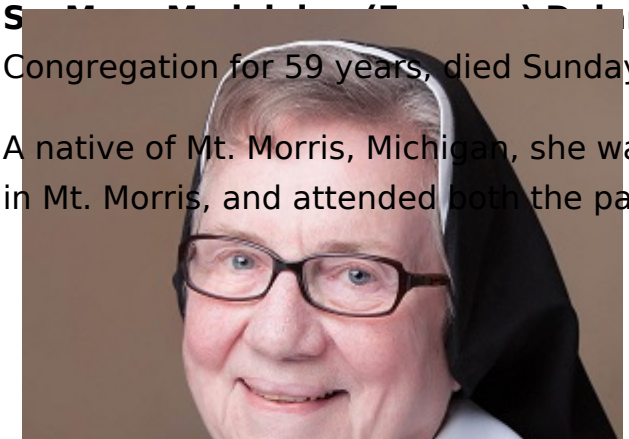


S ski, 83, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 64 years, died in Livonia, Michigan, on Monday, April 20, after a brief illness.

Taught by the Felician Sisters in elementary school, she spent her high school years at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Academy in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania, and entered the postulancy of the Felician Sisters shortly after, making final vows in 1963. Sister Mary Clarence attended Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, where she earned a bachelor and master's Degree in Education, along with certification as a reading specialist. When she retired from classroom teaching in 2008, her teaching career had spanned a total of 48 years.

In her semi-retired years, Sister Mary Clarence still sought ministries that would find her working with children, especially those in "at-risk" areas. She became the co-director of the St. Philip Outreach Center in South Carolina, taught in the Kingstree After-School Program, and also spent more than eight years as a tutor in the Mooncrest After School Program in Moon Township. She also assisted with the Felician Associate program, and assumed the role of assistant director, which she held until leaving for the care center in Michigan in 2018. There, she assisted with the Montessori Center, listening to the children read and joining in school activities and evening programs.

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S n, 82, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 59 years, died Sunday, May 10, in Livonia, Michigan.

A native of Mt. Morris, Michigan, she was baptized and confirmed at St. Mary Church in Mt. Morris, and attended both the parish grade and high schools, graduating in

1956. She had a passion for music, with a gift for playing the piano and virtually any song by ear. She served as organist at St. Mary Church and at St. Francis Church in Flint.

While taking courses at a community college in Flint, she began student teaching at St. Francis of Assisi School north of Flint, which was staffed by the Felician Sisters, including Sr. Mary Alfonsa Van Overberghe, which led to her calling as a Felician Sister.

She entered the congregation in 1960 and professed final vows in 1968. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Madonna University in Livonia in 1967 and a Master of Arts degree in special education from Eastern Michigan University in 1974. Her calling to this field evolved from a family situation in which two siblings were mentally challenged.

During 33 years of ministry in education, she taught in elementary schools in Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Jackson and Orchard Lake, Michigan, and served 16 years as principal in St. Jude School in Grand Rapids, St. Valentine School in Redford, St. Damian School in Westland and St. Florian School in Hamtramck. She also taught in and later served as administrator of the St. Joseph Day Care Center in Jackson, Michigan.

At St. Joseph Convent in Jackson, she served as administrative assistant to the local minister, local vicar and organist prior to moving to Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Convent in Livonia, where she served as local vicar and organist for Holy Family Chapel.

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S dowski, 73, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 55 years, died Saturday, April 25, in Livonia, Michigan.



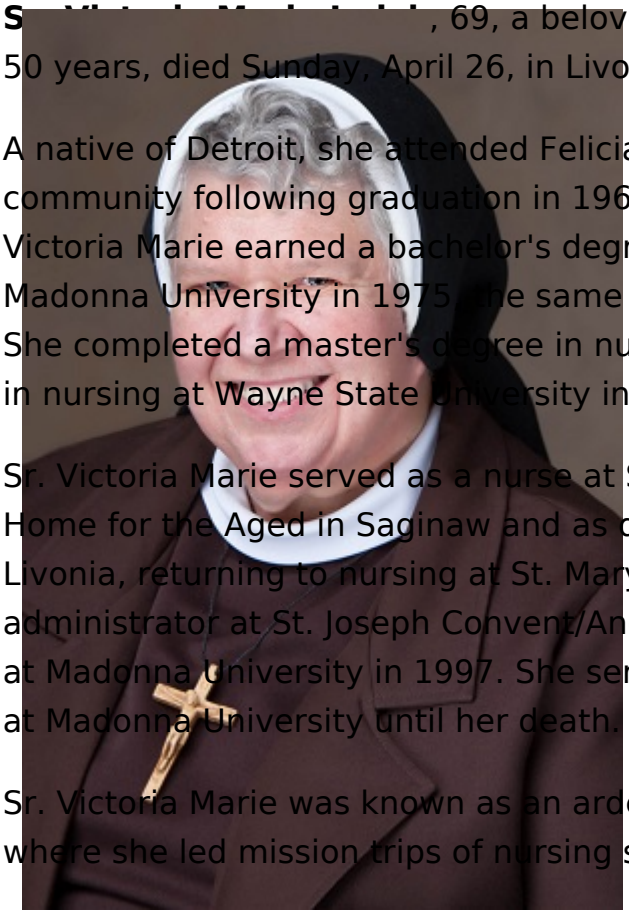
A native of Bay City, Michigan, she was taught by Felician Sisters at St. Hedwig school and then attended Felician Academy in Detroit, after which she was accepted as a postulant in 1964, professing final vows in 1973.

Sister Alice Ann earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Madonna University in Livonia and a Master of Arts from Eastern Michigan in preparation for a ministry of

education that spanned 36 years. For the first 13 years, Sister mainly taught primary grades at schools in Wyandotte, Kawkawlin and Detroit, and for the next 23 years was assigned as principal of schools in Garden City, Jackson, Bay City and Clinton Township. As principal, Sister was involved in many extracurricular activities: Eucharistic Minister, parish council, teaching in the RCIA program, conducting Share-the Word discussion groups and participating in weekend renewals. Attendance at basketball and soccer games, school dances and parish raffles were also an important part of her life as principal.

Throughout her ministry in education and pastoral ministry, Sister Alice Ann served as local ministry for 14 years. She served in provincial administration as third councilor and director of education from 2000-2006. She retired to St. Joseph Convent, Livonia, in 2008, serving as a dining room assistant and in prayer ministry.

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S[illegible], 69, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 50 years, died Sunday, April 26, in Livonia, Michigan.

A native of Detroit, she attended Felician schools. She entered the Felician community following graduation in 1969 and professed final vows in 1978. Sr. Victoria Marie earned a bachelor's degree in nursing, with a minor in theology, from Madonna University in 1975, the same year she became a licensed registered nurse. She completed a master's degree in nursing from Madonna in 1993 and a doctorate in nursing at Wayne State University in 2007.

Sr. Victoria Marie served as a nurse at St. Mary Hospital in Livonia and St. Francis Home for the Aged in Saginaw and as director of nursing at the convent infirmary in Livonia, returning to nursing at St. Mary Hospital, then serve as nursing administrator at St. Joseph Convent/Angela Hall, prior to joining the nursing faculty at Madonna University in 1997. She served as a professor in the nursing department at Madonna University until her death.

Sr. Victoria Marie was known as an ardent support of the Felician Mission in Haiti, where she led mission trips of nursing students.

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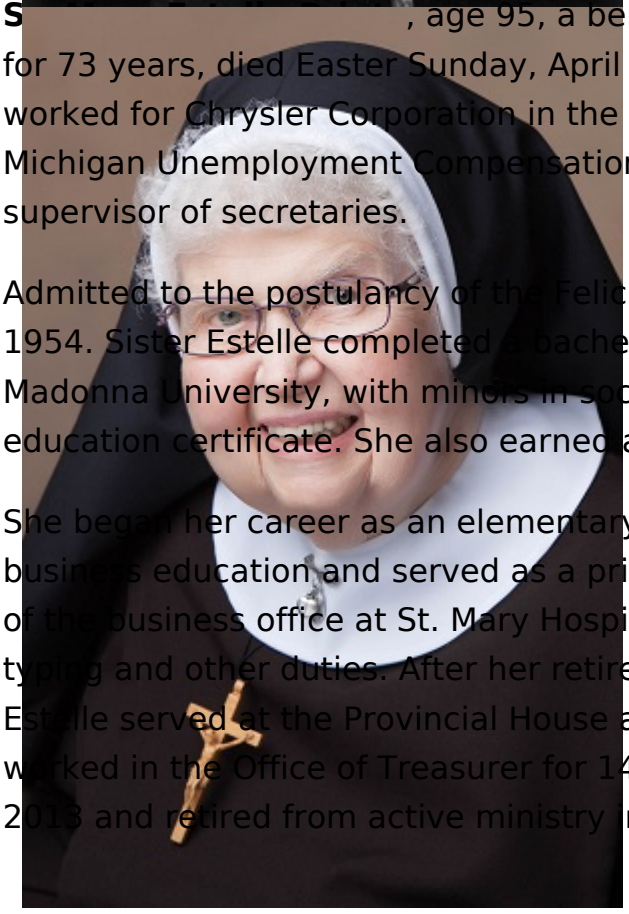


S, 92, a native of Detroit, Michigan, and a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 71 years, died early Easter Sunday, April 12, in Livonia, Michigan.

A teacher, organist, librarian and director of volunteers at Angela Hospice Home Care, Sister Celine Marie led a very active life. Teaching, however, was her predominant ministry. She earned a bachelor's degree in 1960 in English, with an elementary education certificate, from Madonna University. She also earned a master's degree from Wayne University.

Sister completed a total of 55 years in the ministry of education with 27 years as librarian. With her certification in library science, she served as an assistant librarian at Ladywood High School, Bishop Borgess High in Detroit and at Madonna University library from 1992-2000. She retired to prayer ministry in the convent and was assigned permanently to St. Joseph Convent in 2005.

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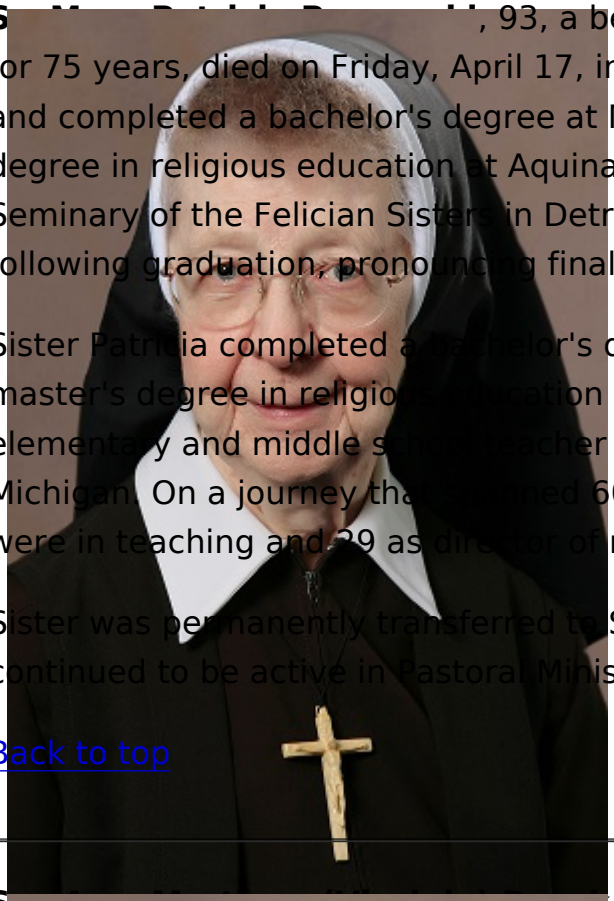


S, age 95, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 73 years, died Easter Sunday, April 12, in Livonia. Born in Detroit, Michigan, she worked for Chrysler Corporation in the contracts department and later for the Michigan Unemployment Compensation Commission as a clerk and then as supervisor of secretaries.

Admitted to the postulancy of the Felician Sisters in 1946 she professed final vows in 1954. Sister Estelle completed a bachelor's degree in general business in 1956 at Madonna University, with minors in social studies and English, and a secondary education certificate. She also earned an MBA from the University of Notre Dame.

She began her career as an elementary teacher, then moved to teaching high school business education and served as a principal for 14 years. Sister was also supervisor of the business office at St. Mary Hospital and assisted at two General Chapters with typing and other duties. After her retirement from the ministry of education, Sister Estelle served at the Provincial House as the local minister for three years and then worked in the Office of Treasurer for 14 years. Sister retired to St. Joseph Convent in 2013 and retired from active ministry in 2016.

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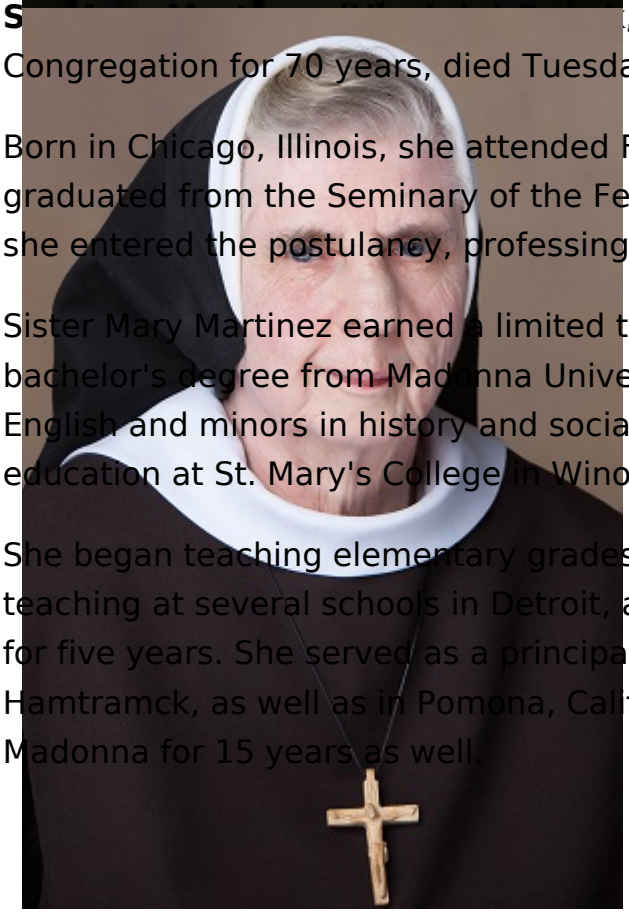


S, 93, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 75 years, died on Friday, April 17, in Livonia. She was born in Detroit, Michigan, and completed a bachelor's degree at Madonna University along with a master's degree in religious education at Aquinas College. In 1940, Sister entered the Seminary of the Felician Sisters in Detroit and was admitted to the postulancy following graduation, pronouncing final vows in 1952.

Sister Patricia completed a bachelor's degree at Madonna University along with a master's degree in religious education at Aquinas College. She served as an elementary and middle school teacher in 13 schools throughout the state of Michigan. On a journey that spanned 60 years in the ministry of education, 31 years were in teaching and 29 as director of religious education.

Sister was permanently transferred to St. Joseph Convent in 2007 where she continued to be active in Pastoral Ministry until 2011.

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S, 87, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 70 years, died Tuesday, April 28, in Livonia, Michigan.

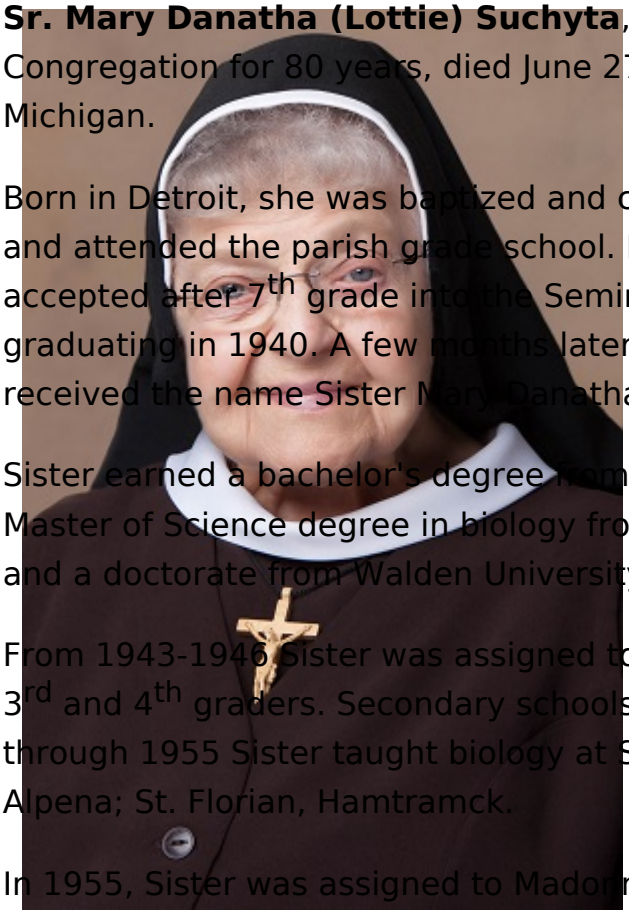
Born in Chicago, Illinois, she attended Felician schools in Bay City, Michigan, and graduated from the Seminary of the Felician Sisters in Detroit in 1949, after which she entered the postulancy, professing final vows in 1957.

Sister Mary Martinez earned a limited teaching certificate in 1953 and earned a bachelor's degree from Madonna University in 1959 with majors in French and English and minors in history and social science. She completed a master's degree in education at St. Mary's College in Winona in 1967.

She began teaching elementary grades and moved to middle and high school teaching at several schools in Detroit, also teaching French at Madonna University for five years. She served as a principal at schools in Garden City, Detroit and Hamtramck, as well as in Pomona, California, and taught foreign languages at Madonna for 15 years as well.

In her later years she taught Spanish and English as a Second Language at South Bend, Indiana, and continued with Hispanic ministry in Pontiac and Clinton Township, teaching English skills to Hispanic immigrants after returning to the convent in Livonia in 2007. She assisted with household duties until being assigned to St. Joseph Convent.

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Sr. Mary Danatha (Lottie) Suchyta, 98, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 80 years, died June 27, 2020, at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia, Michigan.

Born in Detroit, she was baptized and confirmed at St. John Cantius Church in Detroit and attended the parish grade school. Because of her scholastic abilities, she was accepted after 7th grade into the Seminary of the Felician Sisters in Detroit, graduating in 1940. A few months later she was received into the Congregation and received the name Sister Mary Danatha. Final vows were pronounced in 1948.

Sister earned a bachelor's degree from Madonna (College) University in 1950, a Master of Science degree in biology from Fordham University, graduating in 1954, and a doctorate from Walden University in 1979.

From 1943-1946 Sister was assigned to St. Louis the King School in Detroit to teach 3rd and 4th graders. Secondary schools were the next assignments where from 1946 through 1955 Sister taught biology at St. Stanislaus, Detroit; Catholic Central, Alpena; St. Florian, Hamtramck.

In 1955, Sister was assigned to Madonna University for what would become a total of 54 years. For the first ten years she was an outstanding professor of biology, especially in the areas of Human Anatomy, Physiology, Zoology and Microbiology. In 1965, she was appointed President of Madonna University and served in that capacity until 1976.

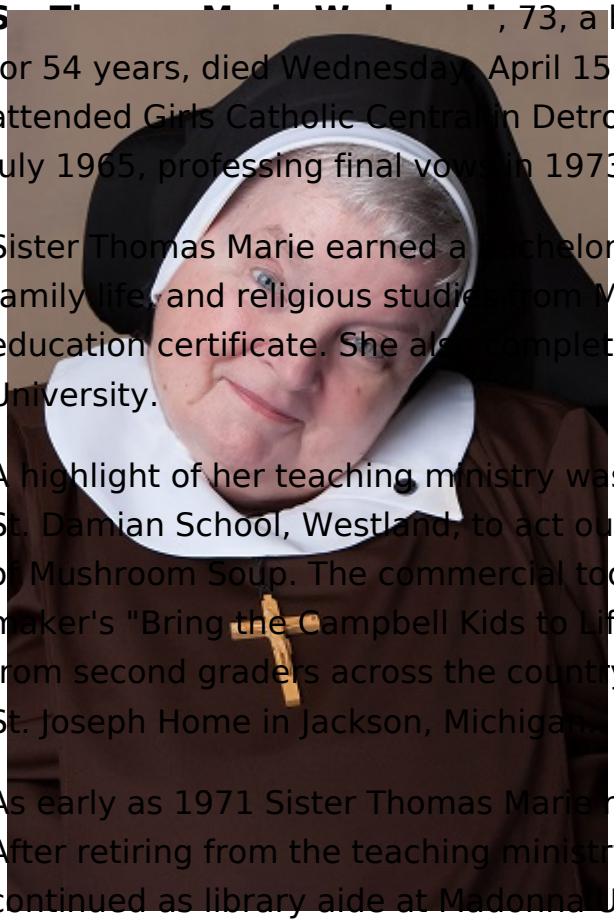
After her presidency, she implemented a cooperative education program at Madonna, and from 1977-1991 she served as director of several departments, including Director of Co-op Education and Director of Computer Information Services.

Sister Danatha was elected to the Provincial Council (1988-1994) as Vicar in charge of Formation and Spiritual Life. She was involved in obtaining grants and funds to make the east end of the provincialate accessible to the elderly sisters by installing an elevator and remodeling the large dormitories into more modern bedrooms. She also worked closely with Bishop Walter Schoenherr to develop the Clergy Center for retired senior priests of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Sister returned to Madonna in 1994 and worked diligently as Director of Advancement Research and later as Director of Planned Giving. Recognizing all these accomplishments and her tireless work for Madonna, the gathering space in the New Franciscan Building was christened: The *Sister Danatha Gathering Space.*

Sister Danatha was permanently assigned to Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Convent, St. Joseph Hall, in 2010, where, despite her failing eyesight, Sister was creative and dedicated to daily prayer.

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S, 73, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 54 years, died Wednesday, April 15, in Livonia. A native of Detroit, Michigan, she attended Girls Catholic Central in Detroit and was admitted to the Congregation in July 1965, professing final vows in 1973.

Sister Thomas Marie earned a bachelor's degree in 1980 in home economics and family life, and religious studies from Madonna University, with an elementary education certificate. She also completed a master's degree at Eastern Michigan University.

A highlight of her teaching ministry was a project with the second-grade children of St. Damian School, Westland, to act out a commercial written for Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup. The commercial took the grand prize in the Camden, N.J., soup maker's "Bring the Campbell Kids to Life" contest. The script won out over 85 entries from second graders across the country. She taught primary school and worked at St. Joseph Home in Jackson, Michigan.

As early as 1971 Sister Thomas Marie received the diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. After retiring from the teaching ministry in 1999 due to chronic health concerns, she continued as library aide at Madonna University and within the convent, served as

an advocate for other Sisters' needs and provided vigil ministry for Sisters who were approaching death.

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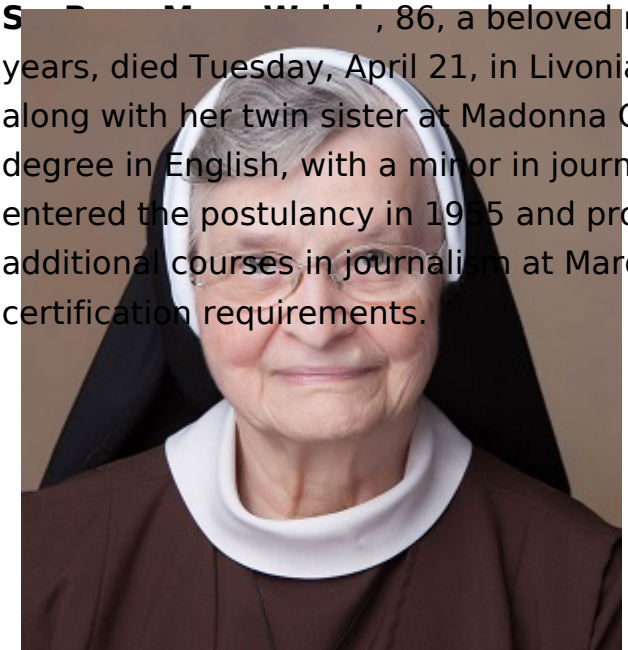


S , 99, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 80 years, died Friday, April 10, in Livonia, Michigan. She was born in South Bend, Indiana. After completing high school and joining the Sisters, she served in the convent, caring for her fellow Sisters and in prayer ministry.

She was admitted to the postulancy in 1939 and while still in novitiate, she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Sister Mary Luiza attended Presentation Junior College. She taught primary grades for six months at St. John Cantius, Detroit, Michigan, and substituted at St. Hyacinth, Bay City. In 1948, Sister became a resident at the Provincial House where she was a very conscientious helper in the laundry.

In 1967, Sister Luiza became a resident and patient at St. Joseph /Angela Hall. She continued to work in the laundry and hobby shop, packed bread for the poor and prayer minister. Confined to a wheelchair, Sister was self-sufficient for many years and daily she could be found in the main chapel saying the Stations of the Cross. The moments of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament remained the source for her valiant disposition and faithfulness. She served as the "sunshine person" for the local minister, sending feast day and birthday cards to the Sisters in the infirmary.

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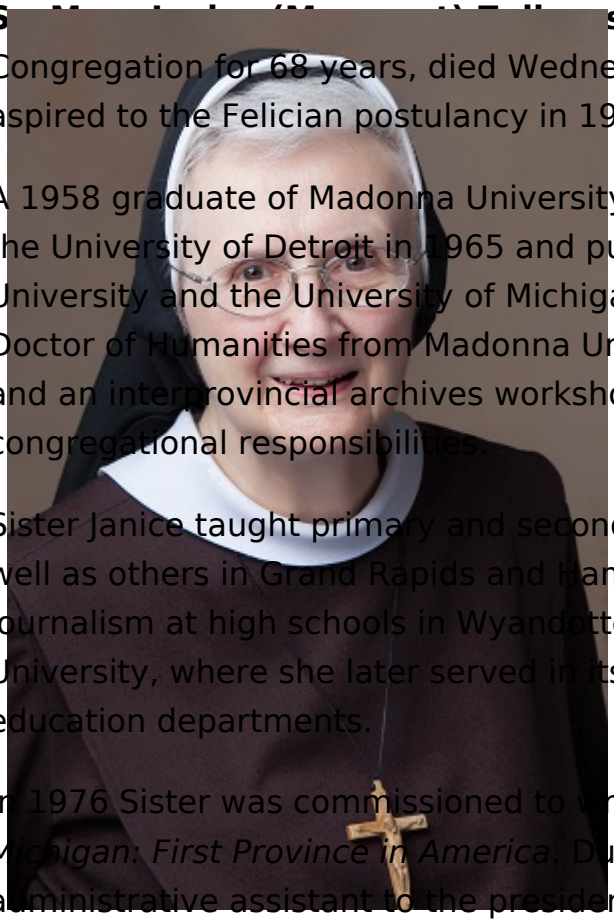
S , 86, a beloved member of the Felician Congregation for 64 years, died Tuesday, April 21, in Livonia, Michigan. A native of Detroit, she enrolled along with her twin sister at Madonna College and following completion of her degree in English, with a minor in journalism and a secondary teaching certificate, entered the postulancy in 19 5 and pronounced final vows in 1963. She took additional courses in journalism at Marquette University and completed permanent certification requirements.

She began teaching elementary school in Livonia and moved to teaching high school at five different schools in Detroit, also being responsible for several yearbooks during 19 years at Marywood High School in Livonia.

Sister Rose Mary was assigned to the Felician Generalate in Rome twice, from 1989 to 1993 and 1999 to 2003 for a total of eight years and worked as secretary in the English section of the Vatican Secretariat of State.

From 1994 -1999 Sister was assigned to Madonna University as assistant to the registrar and as archives assistant. Following the completion of her teaching ministry in 2006, Sister assisted in the patient development office in the central convent, was clerical assistant to the local communicator, and was an aide to the finance office until she retired.

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S ski, 86, a member of the Felician Congregation for 68 years, died Wednesday, April 22, in Livonia, Michigan. She aspired to the Felician postulancy in 1951, taking final vows in 1959.

A 1958 graduate of Madonna University, Sister Janice earned a master's degree from the University of Detroit in 1965 and pursued postgraduate studies at Marquette University and the University of Michigan. In 2007, Sister was granted an honorary Doctor of Humanities from Madonna University. Later workshops in archival training and an interprovincial archives workshop prepared Sister Janice for further congregational responsibilities.

Sister Janice taught primary and secondary grades at several schools in Detroit, as well as others in Grand Rapids and Hamtramck. She also taught English and journalism at high schools in Wyandotte and Livonia as well as at Madonna University, where she later served in its admissions, public relations and continuing education departments.

In 1976 Sister was commissioned to write a book: *Felician Sisters of Livonia, Michigan: First Province in America*. During this time Sister Janice also served as administrative assistant to the president of St. Mary's College, Orchard Lake from 1978 to 1982. The lengthy book of 586 pages embraced over four years of intensive research and was completed in 1984.

After returning to the Provincial Convent in 1979, while completing the Province history, Sister Mary Janice was elected as second councilor and provincial secretary, a position she held for two terms (1982–1994). During this time Sister also served as chairperson of the Government Committee.

Active in the Polish American Historical Association (PAHA), she contributed to the establishment of the Polish-American Encyclopedia with an article on the Felician Sisters in America. Founded in 1942, PACA is a national American society to promote study and research in the history and social background of Americans of Polish descent. She also published articles in the Catholic Educator, the Livonia Observer and in a special Oct. 22, 1993 edition of the Polish publication Wyanie Specjalne, sharing her impressions of Pope John Paul II's first 15 years.

Sister Mary Janice was elected Secretary General and fourth General Councilor of the Generalate in Rome from 1994-2006, coordinating the provincial archivists and secretaries, then returned to Livonia and was involved in writing the histories of the Michigan Felicians and Madonna University until 2017. She also served on the boards of Madonna University and St. Mary Hospital. In 2017 she was permanently assigned to St. Joseph Convent.

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