



Sarah Maureen Concannon SL
June 6, 1919 — December 16, 2009

Mary Margaret Concannon, a native of St. Louis, was the fifth of seven children. Her younger sister Catherine Loretto, born in 1921, and known as “Kit”, entered the Sisters of Loretto in 1946 and took the name, Sister Robert Mary.

Mary Margaret attended Visitation School, a Loretto-staffed school. She wanted to attend Nerinx Hall; however, one of her two Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet aunts prevailed, and Mary Margaret attended St. Joseph Academy. Mary graduated from Fontbonne College where she had a scholarship, and co-edited the newspaper and yearbook. During her sophomore year in college, her mother died rather suddenly of a heart attack. It was a very difficult time for the family.

During World War II, Mary began work as a proofreader of the Air Force Manual being printed by what later became McDonnell Aircraft. One day while typing at a job she liked very much, Mary decided she wanted to become a Sister of Loretto, although at the time, there was a question as to whether Loretto would accept a 32 year old.

On April 25, 1952 she received the habit of the Sisters of Loretto and her new name of Sister Sarah Maureen; later she became known as Sarah Maude. During summer school in the 1960s Sarah earned her MA in English at the University of Notre Dame. She remembered those summers as "idyllic."

Sarah was one of four sisters who opened St. Michael's in Houston, Texas in 1954. From 1955-through 1969, she taught in Kansas City, Kankakee, Denver, and Elizabethtown. Sarah said her favorite teaching locations were Kansas City at the old school at 39th and Roanoke, and Loretto High School, Louisville Kentucky.

Sarah was among those who volunteered to serve in South America, but her sister, "Kit" was chosen. Once Kit was diagnosed with cancer, Sarah spent all the time she could with her. Sarah wrote: "being with Kit during the last week of her life was a special grace."

Beginning in 1969, Sarah worked in social service and participated in many social justice activities. She worked in Louisville in a number of offices: Social Welfare for the City; Federation of Church Social Agencies; Food Stamp Office; Job Developer, Senior Community Employment; an aide at TAP (educational program for pregnant teens); teacher in Adult Education, and on the Justice and Peace Team of Sisters of Loretto.

Sarah was active with a number of social justice organizations, and in 1987 Sarah received the Peace and Justice Award presented by the Louisville Archdiocesan Commission on Peace and Justice. The awards are presented annually to those who have made significant contributions to peacemaking and have enhanced the human dignity of victims of injustice.

Her trip to Nicaragua to accompany refugees back to their home areas was she said: "a change in my life." Sarah traveled to Washington, DC for national meetings, to New York to the United Nations, and to Chicago for Women Church meetings.

Sarah Maude moved into the Motherhouse Infirmary in November 2003. During her earlier years in the infirmary, Sarah loved having violets in her room. In addition, birds that came to the feeder outside Sarah's window fascinated her. She would seek to learn the names of any unknown visitors.

Sarah was also deeply involved in ecology and care of the earth and its inhabitants. She continued to pray and take action to improve ecological conditions whenever she could until the day of her death.

There is a great description of Sarah Maude in *I Am The Way*: "As we stand with Mary at the foot of the cross, we strive to bring the healing Spirit of God into our world, and we commit ourselves to improving the conditions of those who suffer from injustice, oppression, and deprivation of dignity. In this way, we participate in the church's mission of proclaiming the transforming love of God."

God bless you Sarah Maude! We will miss you — a premier social activist!

Adapted from the obit prepared by Kate Misbauer SL, Archivist: Sources were: autobiographical information written by Sarah, her Personnel Sheet, and newspaper articles.