



Neysa Chouteau CoL

November 5, 1927 — November 29, 2009

Neysa Carol Morrel was born November 5, 1927, in Trousdale, Oklahoma. She was nicknamed Sunshine or Sunny (she says for her sunny disposition). She went to schools in rural Oklahoma.

Neysa graduated from Oklahoma A&M College in 1949. There she met and fell in love with Jim Chouteau, and they married June 4, 1949. Jim was a fire protection engineer and had a job in Topeka, Kansas, where they moved. Jim took a job in St. Louis in 1951.

Soon after coming to St. Louis, Neysa took a job at American Investment Company where she stayed for eight years. In 1959 she began working for Webster Publishing Company, which became McGraw-Hill Book Company. She was an editor in the math and special education departments, but eventually took on language arts becoming a senior editor. Martha Alderson moved to St. Louis in 1972 as a budding editor to work with Neysa, who became a valued mentor to yet one more person. Neysa took early retirement in 1987 and became a freelance writer and editor. After the St. Louis McGraw-Hill office closed in 1989, she and Martha formed a writing and editing partnership called SubScripts and worked with several publishing houses.

Neysa also had personal projects: For many years she wrote greeting cards. An example of one of her cards: "Happy anniversary, honey—will you love me when my hair has turned to silver as you did through all other colors?" She

researched, wrote, and published a genealogy of her family. Neysa was always a voracious reader

Claiming she tried several different churches in her youth, Neysa just didn't find any to her liking. An early feminist, she and Martha were attracted to the Loretto Community especially for the social stands for women's right. The ideas of creation spirituality were appealing, and gradually she found a spiritual home within Loretto thanks to the Loretto Women's Network, the Loretto Earth Network and of course many Loretto members.

Neysa became a Loretto Co-member in 1984, having been introduced to the community by Anne Spillane and having as contacts Ginny Williams and Mary Louise Denny. Ginny suggested it would be a good idea to volunteer right away. Neysa became editor of *Loretto Magazine* when Rose Mary O'Donnell retired and continued in that position for the next 20 years.

As Neysa began to wrestle with Lewy Body Dementia, visibly in the fall of 2006, she continued to cause all of us to laugh but also insisted on being comfortable. She kept a smile and never complained. She was gracious and thoughtful, often thanking her visitors for coming. Neysa died on Sunday, November 29 just 6 days short of her 25th jubilee as a Loretto Co-Member.

Thank you Neysa for sharing your love of life, your amazing sense of humor, your loyalty to friends and family, and your constancy in friendship. You were a gift to all of us in Loretto.