

IHM Sisters - Then and Now

March 2010



Sister Norma (Emerentia) Groth, IHM, grew up in a family of 10 children on Detroit's east side. They attended Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, but Sister Norma's first exposure to IHM Sisters wasn't until she went to high school.

Sister Norma graduated from Nativity High School in Detroit. Shortly before graduation, Mother Ruth Hankerd, IHM, general superior of the IHM Sisters, visited Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish.

"Mother Ruth pointed her finger at me and said, 'I want to see you in Monroe in June,'" Sister Norma recalls. "I went and never regretted my decision!"

Sister Norma was an elementary school teacher for 33 years, ministering throughout the Detroit area, including Holy Redeemer and Christ the King. She also taught in schools in Jackson, Battle Creek, Ann Arbor, Birmingham and Warren, Mich.

"I left teaching in 1974 and took a sabbatical year," she says. "Near the end of the year, Sister Margaret (Benedicta) Brennan asked me to consider going back to school to become a nurse for the IHM Sisters in our Health Care Center.

"I became an LPN and served in the IHM Infirmary for five or six years. The experience caused me to reflect on my own life. I asked to attend a clinical pastoral education (CPE) program."

Sister Norma's request was granted. She earned her CPE certification and began her ministry as a chaplain at Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, Ohio. She worked with patients in a cardiac step-down unit, as well as those on the medical/oncology unit.

"It was my third career," she notes.



Sister Norma served at Mercy for 11 years before returning to Michigan for her retirement.



"IHMs don't retire," laughs Sister Norma. "We just refuel."

She "refueled" by volunteering at Oakwood Hospital, Dearborn, visiting patients and occasionally filling in for the night chaplain. She also volunteered for the Red Cross, Gleaners Community Food Bank and as an usher for the Fox and Masonic Theatres, seeing many wonderful shows.

She returned to the IHM Motherhouse in 2003 and volunteered in the IHM Development Office and as a Ruth Companion

"My vision isn't good, but I enjoy books on tape," Sister Norma says. "I visit with the sick sisters and listen to music."

"I like my 'quiet time' too, and I love to walk. I'm looking forward to warmer weather!"