



**We remember
Sister Mary Julia McKee, RSM
1915 - 2010**

~ a Sister of Mercy for 72 years!

Eulogy by Tim McCormack

Sister Julia McKee was born in 1915 in Tampa, Florida. Her parents were John Patrick and Mary McKee. Sister Julia's mother, Mary Ellen McKee was born in County Mayo in Ireland, and her father John Patrick McKee was born in Philadelphia, Penn. Mary Ellen McKee was a homemaker and John Patrick McKee was a traveling salesman.

Due to John Patrick's job, Sister Julia's family moved several times. The McKee's lived in Florida, Alabama, and Arkansas and finally located in Denver, Colorado.

Sister Julia was five when the family arrived in Denver and it is Denver that Sister Julia remembered most. Sister described her mother as being kind, loving and helpful and her father as not only a father but as a friend.

Sister was the oldest of three children. She had a brother named John and a sister named Betty. Both John and Betty are deceased. John's wife, Catherine, is still living in Wheat Ridge, CO. Sister Julia has several nieces and nephews. The two who kept in contact with her were Sister Pat McKee from Feasterville, PA and Mary Beth Larson from Reno, NV. I can remember many a times when I would come to visit Sister Julia and found Sister Mary Catherine Kenny reading Sister Julia a letter from one or both of her nieces. Sister loved getting these letters and was so thankful that Sister Mary Catherine Kenny took the time to read them to her because her eye sight was bad.

When Sister Julia talked about her father, she always mentioned that her father was traveling salesman who seemed to always be on the road selling his wares to provide for his family. Sister mentioned that when her father returned home, he always brought home a small gift for his family and how excited everyone was to see him.

Sister Julia told me about the times when her father and mother would load all the kids into the car and drive up to the mountains for a picnic. Sister loved these Sunday afternoon drives. She continually mentioned how beautiful the mountains were and how colorful the aspen trees were.

Sister Julia loved Colorado. Sister Julia's experiences with the Sisters of Mercy began at an early age when she attended Saint Joseph grade school and Saint Joseph high school in Denver. It was at Saint Joseph's that the Sisters of Mercy made a lasting impression on her that would later influence her decision to enter the convent.

After high school, at the urging of her father, Sister Julia went on to the University of Denver. After finishing her freshman year, Sister Julia decided to leave college and to go to work in an office in Denver where she worked for two years.

While sister loved her job and the fact that she was actually out on the street making money, there was something missing. Sister Julia knew all along what it was, but her parents wanted her to make sure that she experienced college, and then the work place before she committed herself to doing Gods work.

Fully convinced and fully aware of what she was doing, Margaret Helen McKee, at 22 years of age, on February 22, 1938, entered the convent at Mt. Loretto in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

On August 16, 1940, Margaret Helen McKee, made her first profession of vows and it was the day she took the name Sister Mary Julia. On August 1943 Sister Mary Julia took her perpetual vows. Sister Mary Julie McKee celebrated her feast day each year on July 21st.

Sister Julia worked for 17 years in the office of Saint Catherine's Hospital in Omaha and then went on to work at Saint Vincents Home near 45th and Ames Street for 15 years. When Saint Vincents closed, Sister Julia moved to Denver where she worked for the next 16 years.

Not wanting to leave Denver, but following the will of her superiors, Sister Julia returned to Omaha for a year where she worked in the offices of Mercy Hospital. In 1961 Sister Julia went to work in Portland, Oregon.

Sister Julia was a dedicated individual who worked in the business office in all of her assignments.

When asked if anyone ever recognized her for her outstanding and self effacing work, she mentioned that the Family Practice Department in Denver Hospital surprised her in 1992 when they honored her for her years of service there by hanging a plaque with her name on it in their lobby.

Sister Julia relates that her most interesting humorous moment occurred while she was wearing her habit (veil) while she was working at the hospital in Denver when a young child walked up to her and asked her if she was the flying nun.

When asked about something sad that she remembered, she mentioned the closing of Saint Vincents Home in Omaha.

Sister Julia retired at age 79 in April 1995.

After retirement, Sister Julia could be seen shuffling through the halls at Mercy Villa with her hands stretched above her head on her walker and her eyes focused on the floor due to the osteoporosis that had crippled her body. One often wondered how she made it to the chapel, to the dining room and back to her room without running into the walls of tripping and falling.

Let there be no question regarding that matter. You see that from early childhood, God had set up her compass. He provided her turn by turn navigation through grade school, through high school, through her daily office job in Denver on to Mount Loretto in Council Bluffs, Iowa. When Sister Julia's working days were over God continued to guide her through the halls at the Mercy Villa.

Sister Mary Julia absolutely loved being a Sister of Mercy. She loved working for the greater honor and glory of God. She was very happy to have been called to be a Sister of Mercy and there was no doubt that when it comes to joining a religious order, Sister Julia thought there was nun better, that's spelled n-u-n better then the Sisters of Mercy.

God bless every Sister, every person called to God's work and God bless one of the best, Sister Julia and her fellow Sisters of Mercy.

If Sister Julia was standing here today she would want to tell every one of you "Thank You" for everything you did for her.

Since Sister Julia is currently busy celebrating in Heaven, I will stand in for her and say, Thank You to Sister Johnnine, Sister Pat Ward, Sister Monica and Sister Pat Guzek for providing a wonderful place for the Sisters of Mercy to retire. Sister Julia would like to thank all the Sisters here at the Villa that brought her coffee and cookies and who stopped in to say hello. Even though she could not always hear or see you, she knew you were there.

If Sister Julia was standing here today she would also want to thank Kristine Sullivan, Margo, John in the kitchen, Thelma, Katheline Johnson and Lynn Hern the book keeper.

If Sister Julia was standing here today she would want to thank the entire staff here at Mercy Villa for everything they did to care for her, in addition she would want to thank that wonderful staff for taking great care of her fellow Sisters of Mercy.

God Bless each and every one of you here for regardless of where you work here at the Mercy Villa and what you do, you do an outstanding job!

In closing, I want to thank the Sisters of Mercy here at the Villa for giving me this opportunity to talk about my good friend Sister Mary Julia McKee.

God Bless all the Sisters of Mercy... There's NUN better.

Knowing Sister Julia was special.