



Helen Grennan
September 23, 1915 — June 5, 2010

Co-member Helen Grennan of Sterling, Illinois, had many Loretto links to encourage her to become a co-member 30 years ago. Helen grew up in Sterling and attended St. Mary's Parish School and Community High School.

She married Matthew Grennan and they had 12 children and 57 grandchildren. Helen and her husband managed Grennan's Funeral Home in Sterling. Through marriage, Helen became the sister-in-law of Sisters Matthew Marie and Paul Mary Grennan. Helen was the sister of Marian McCormick, Pat McCormick's mother.

Pat McCormick remembers that the Grennan children frequently visited the McCormick cousins on their farm and, when it was time to go home, Helen would count her children to be sure they were all there. Pat's mother described Helen as the "daredevil" of the family as she seemed to have no fears.

In spite of all the activity in her life, Helen remained active in her parish as a communion minister and, with Sister Maura Regan, implemented a program to visit ill parishioners in their homes. She continued to support Catholic education by working for both St. Mary's School and Newman Catholic High School. Her interest and services also included the National Society of Foresters and an officer for the County Democrats.

Helen remained friends with many Sisters of Loretto from the Sterling and Rock Falls area, and they were pleased to write recommendations for her when she applied for co-membership. Sister Laura Jay wrote, "Helen is an outstanding Christian woman, charitable and loyal to all". Sister Matthew Marie wrote,

“Helen is a very spiritual and selfless person. She shares Loretto’s values and wants to be associated with us.”

At the time of her application for co-membership, Helen wrote, “I have always had such love and admiration for the Sisters of Loretto and always felt that I was a member—I am grateful for the returned love”. She felt that her contributions to Loretto were love, prayers, and hospitality.

The day before Helen died, her ten surviving children were with her to say the Rosary. At her memorial service this week, people came for six hours to recognize this valiant woman. We in Loretto have been honored to be connected with you, Helen, and ask that those who remember your generous spirit may imitate it for many generations to come.