



Katharine Kharas CoL
February 11, 1935 - August 20, 2011

Katharine, born in Syracuse, NY wrote in her autobiography: "I was brought up in a suburb of Syracuse, NY and lived in the same house and attended the same school system until my sophomore year - middle class America with many of its virtues...Then we moved to New York City for two years, and I attended a Manhattan public all girls school of about 3500 students who were about 1/3 black, 1/3 Puerto Rican, and 1/3 "the rest of us." After feeling very lost and disoriented for a month or so, I made friends and came to be excited by the diversity of the people and the opportunities of the city. As a consequence, I've had the confidence to live in various parts of the country, and have also enjoyed traveling."

Katharine first came into contact with Loretto at Syracuse University where she met Donna Doyle and Marielena Vidriot when all of them were working in the Mathematics Department. They were part of the Madison Project at Syracuse.

Her work there with Robert Davis led directly to her years on the faculty at Webster College.

She wrote: "Bob has been a major influence on my teaching, which has been a lifelong love and profession for me. He opened my eyes to a different way of looking not only at mathematics, but more importantly the student; he had tremendous respect for the latter.

I had never expected to love a job as much as I did at Webster — this was largely possible because of the support of the community — those Sisters of Loretto who reached out to the rest of us and made us feel an integral part of the college and part of their community."

When Katharine applied for co-membership in 1991 she stated: "The problems of racism, poverty, and health care for the poor, an endangered environment, and war that face our country and our world are difficult to affect positively as an individual, and so it becomes important to me to belong to a community that concerns itself with these issues. My continued contact with Loretto assures me that the spirit and values continue, and I should like to be a sharing member of this community."

For years she taught math at Mesa Community College which at the time was part of the San Diego Junior College District where she was also part of a workshop staff which gave in-service education to math teachers around the country.

Katharine was frequently one of the group of the Loretto Community members who demonstrated annually at SOA. She served for several years on the Co-membership Team.

Anna Koop remembers: "When Katharine retired she decided to experience a bit of Loretto mission by volunteering. Katharine came to Denver and gave the live-in workers at the Catholic Worker a break. She was a natural and related to the people warmly. For years after this Katharine would ask about different people at the Worker.

"She also went and spent time with Pearl McGiveny and Alicia Zapata in Florida. Katharine was the kind of person who fit in comfortably almost anywhere. She had a great heart for the poor and enjoyed opportunities to spend time with them."

From Mary Ann Coyle: "When I think independent, free-thinking, concerned, loving-without-show and fanfare, Katharine pops into my head. This was

Katharine through and through. Colleagues, students, Loretto Community members, SOA friends, Group 10 friends – all loved being with Katharine and experiencing the way she thought about the journey we are on together.”

Katharine died in Hospice in Syracuse in the company of two nieces and one nephew on August 20, 2011.