



Sister of Loretto was Musical Pioneer Sister Adeline Gemoets, SL



Sr. Adeline Gemoets

*Photo courtesy of Loretto Motherhouse Archives
Nerinx, Kentucky*

One of the earliest local women to enter the Sisters of Loretto was Sister Adeline Gemoets born in March 1892. She was the gifted daughter of Ferdinand Leon Gemoets and his wife Jeannet Schuyten. Ferdinand was in the French army in Mexico 1863-64 serving as a personal guard to Carlotta, wife of Maximilian. He returned to Europe after the French expulsion from Mexico and served under Napoleon III.

The Gemoets had seven children when they immigrated. Adeline their precious last living girl, was baptized Nov. 28, 1897 at Immaculate Conception Church, now engulfed by the new federal courthouse in El Paso, Texas. A stained glass window of Joan of Arc facing the courthouse memorializes Jeannet.

The Gemoets family lived in and operated the Belgian Bakery at various locations including 110 S. Oregon. The musically talented Adeline took her first vows as a sister of Loretto in 1910. A pianist with a master's degree from the American

Conservatory in Chicago Sister Adeline headed music departments of schools in Santa Fe, El Paso, and was at Webster College in St. Louis from 1926 to 1960.

Sister Adeline was grateful to return to El Paso in 1960 and in 1962 was one of the first nuns to retire the newly opened Nazareth Hall.



Selinda Gemoets Russell
St. Matthews Church
*Photo courtesy
Cindy Hoffmann, '82*

Selinda Gemoets Russell knew she had done a good job when the parishioners at St. Matthew's Saturday folk guitar mass sang along with the choir. One of her most treasured possessions is Sr. Adeline's upright baby grand piano. She is the great-great niece of Sr. Adeline Gemoets SL..

Selinda played drums in the Loretto orchestra in 1962 and then went on to win All State Vocal music awards when she graduated from Ysleta High. A band scholarship sent her to UTEP.

Selinda led the St. Matthew's Catholic Church choir.

Ana Gemoets, Loretto class of 1998, and Christina Gemoets, class of 1995 continue the family tradition of loyalty to the Sisters of Loretto.

Loretto Academy gladly celebrates each woman's contributions to El Paso as they celebrate the 200 anniversary of the order in 2012.