

CSA JUBILARIAN 2016

Name of Jubilarian: Michaela O'Brien

Name of Birthplace/Hometown: Eden, Wisconsin

Education: Schools/colleges/universities attended and degrees received:

St. Mary's Springs Academy, Fond du Lac, WI

UW La Crosse, B.S. Secondary Education, La Crosse, WI

Marquette University, M.S. Theology/Counseling, Milwaukee, WI

Please name the places where you have ministered; if possible, list years. If you were a teacher, please name the parish or school, location, dates, and grade levels taught:

August 1943 Entered CSA; Postulant formation
St. Mary's Springs Academy – Physical Education Teacher
1945-46 St. Joseph's, Fond du Lac, WI – 9th Grade Teacher, Science & Math
1946-66 St. Mary's Springs Academy, Fond du Lac, WI – Physics, Math, Physical Education Teacher;
Boarders' assistant
1966-67 Attended Marquette University – Theology and Chemistry
1967-68 St. Mary's Springs Academy, Fond du Lac, WI – Math & Science Teacher
1968-73 Beloit Catholic High; Beloit, WI – Assistant Principal; Physics/Math Teacher
1973-76 CSA Apostolic Councilor
1976-81 Functioned as Apostolic Councilor
St. Mary's Springs Academy, Fond du Lac, WI – Assistant Principal; Counselor
1981-91 St. Mary's Springs Academy, Fond du Lac, WI – Assistant Counselor for students
1990-2009 Development Office St. Mary's Springs Academy, Fond du Lac, WI
1990- 2009 St. Mary's Springs Academy, Fond du Lac, WI - Alumni Office and part-time archivist
2009- 2012 St. Mary's Springs Academy, Fond du Lac, WI – part-time Development Office Assistant
2012-2013 Due to health demands, "retired" from volunteer service, St. Mary's Springs Academy

Please provide a statement of 150 to 250 words using as your focus any or all of the following:

I was born at home in Eden on January 15, 1920. (The birth registry in the county office has a different date, but this is the date my mother celebrated.)

I began school at the age of 4 because I was so upset that Tom went without me (or something); we attended Jackson School. I graduated from there at the age of 12 and stayed home a year when my parents decided to enroll me at St. Mary's Springs as a boarder in the fall of 1933.

In 1934, I continued high school as a day student at St. Mary's Springs (because Tom was old enough to drive me there on his way to public high school). I graduated from the Academy in 1936. (I finished in 3 years because the Depression made the cost of tuition impossible for my parents).

I didn't know where I'd go to college, or what I wanted to study, so I stayed at home and helped on the farm for a year.

I enrolled at La Crosse College in the fall of 1937 to study to be a Physical Education teacher. I graduated from La Crosse in 1941 with a B.S. in Physical Education, Science, and Social Studies. I began the search for a teaching job and was hired as Phy Ed Teacher for Lake Mills High School, Lake Mills, Wisconsin, in fall of 1941.

World War II had been declared and after 1½ years at Lake Mills High School, I felt patriotic enough to resign so that I could enlist as a Civil Service Instructor of Radio for the U.S. Air Force. I was trained for this work at University of St. Louis and returned to Truax Air Field in Madison to teach enlisted Air Force men.

When the war was "winding down" and it became evident that my service time was limited, I resigned and started looking for a teaching job. I was hired by a high school in Wilmette, Illinois, BUT God had caught up with me and I finally said, "OK, God---have it your way," and I entered CSA in the fall of 1943.

The first year, as a candidate while beginning preparation for religious life, I took classes at Marian College (mostly theology) and taught physical education at the Springs and at St. Agnes High School. I entered CSA novitiate after a year and spent the time in more serious study and preparation for religious life.

As a second year novice I taught 9th grade math and science at St. Joseph's Parish School in Fond du Lac. In 1946, after profession of first vows, I was assigned to teach physics and physical education at the Springs and did a lot of the after school and dorm supervision of the boarders and was an intern, with Sister Annella Gigure teaching me the fundamentals of theater and directing plays. Each summer I attended Marquette University studying physics and math.

I filled quite a variety of teaching assignments during the next ten years and in 1956 was appointed as Directress of the Aspirancy. I lived in the motherhouse aspirancy with as many as 100 young girls. We commuted daily by bus to the Springs; the aspirants attended class and I taught a variety of courses. The girls lived quite a strict convent life because they were thinking about entering CSA after high school. In the early '60s I was given the opportunity of a sabbatical to attend Marquette University to earn a Masters Degree in Theology/Counseling and returned to the aspirancy. My new work included vocation promotion. In 1966, I was assigned to Beloit Catholic High School to be assistant principal and math/science teacher. My newest challenge was also directing the annual high school musical; the theater fundamentals learned from Sister Annella came in handy.

When the government structure of CSA changed in 1968-69, a role was introduced for a councilor/supervisor of high school teachers. After my term as teacher/principal, I accepted the responsibility as apostolic councilor. It meant several years of mostly travelling between the 5 or 6 CSA high schools from New York to Kansas and in between.

Following that experience, I returned to the Springs as the assistant principal for a couple years while living at St. Joseph's Farm. I became a counselor in the guidance department and at the same time began the alumni work that became my total concentration as the years moved on. The alumni work became a division of the development department and after several major changes it was no longer a separate position. At that time I "retired" for the first time and assumed the responsibility of organizing and archiving the valuable Springs historical materials that had

collected over the years. When I finished that role, I "retired" again and became a resource for the development department concentrating mostly on the alumni facet of the work. As assignments evolved and the government structure of the Springs changed, I became accustomed to "helping where needed."