

Sister Mary Alice Walters, CSA

Sister Mary Alice Walters, CSA, baptized Elizabeth Johanna, died peacefully November 4, 2021, at Nazareth Center, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Elizabeth was born on June 21, 1928, in Hays, Kansas, the second youngest of twelve children of Frank Walters and Monica Koerner Walters. Her mother died when she was four years old. Later her father married Rose Befort, a widow with two children. Frank and Rose had two children of their own, creating a blended family of sixteen to whom Sister Mary Alice was devoted all her life. She entered St. Agnes Convent in 1943 and graduated from St. Agnes High School. She made her profession of vows in the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes as Sister Mary Alice on August 15, 1947, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.



Sister Mary Alice wanted to be a teacher from an early age, hoping to develop better methods to help children learn than those from her own experience of rote learning amid strict discipline. She achieved her goal, becoming a lifelong learner and educator. She began teaching in Fall 1947 while pursuing undergraduate studies; she earned a B.S. in Education from Marian College of Fond du Lac in 1960. Sister Mary Alice taught in elementary schools in Wisconsin and Kansas. In 1971, she earned her MA in Education, with an emphasis on Administration, from Mary Manse College, Toledo, Ohio, qualifying her to serve as principal at SS. Peter and Paul School, Hortonville, WI; St. Joseph School, Hays, Kansas; St. Louis and St. Patrick School, Fond du Lac, WI; and St. Agnes School, Butler, WI. Both as a classroom teacher and a principal she fostered individualized learning and curriculums with a whole-child approach. Sister Mary Alice also served on several school boards, nonprofit boards, and educational committees including St. Mary's Springs High School Board of Directors, Fond du Lac; the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Review Board for Accreditation; and as chairperson of the HOPE Committee (Helping Others Promote Education) a CSA initiative that awarded grants to disadvantaged schools and religious education programs for teacher certification and educational materials.

Taking on a new role from 1991-1995, Sister Mary Alice was appointed by CSA leadership to serve as local coordinator for the elderly and infirm sisters residing at Nazareth Heights in Fond du Lac.

Sister Mary Alice spent her final years in active ministry at St. Stephen's Parish in Milwaukee from 2000-2013, beginning as a religion teacher then assuming the role of Coordinator of Religious Education. She retired from this role in 2013 and chose to continue working as a volunteer in the parish: visiting the homebound, substituting as a catechist, and being a dearly loved presence and support to the staff and parishioners. She also enjoyed gardening and offering hospitality at her home in Cudahy, located close to the parish. In May 2021, Sister Mary Alice was unexpectedly diagnosed with terminal cancer. She immediately moved to Nazareth Center where she received loving care and support until the time of her death six months later.

Sister Mary Alice was preceded in death by her parents; her stepmother; her sisters, Marcella (Ray) Dreiling, Cecelia (Clarence) Wolf, Catherine (Lex) Schmidt, Mary (Al) Pfeifer, Alice (Alfred) Windholz, Frances (Herbert) Schmidt, Rita Mae Walters, Wilma (George) Bieker, and Miriam Walters; her brothers Ralph (Anna Mae) Walters and Robert (Ernestine) Befort.

She is survived by her brother, Ronald (Pam) Walters; her sisters Rosemary (Ernest) Gerstner, Leona (George) Fross, and Janet (Jude) Gerstner; hundreds of nieces, nephews, and their families; and the Sisters of St. Agnes, with whom she lived, prayed, and ministered.

Cremation has taken place. Visitation will be held at Nazareth Court and Center, 375 Gillett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, from 9:00 -11:00 a.m. and from 12:00 -1:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 2, 2021.

A prayer service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on December 2, 2021, in the Nazareth Center Chapel. Please check in for the Visitation and Prayer Service at the 375 Gillett Street entrance only.

The Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Mary Alice will be held on December 2, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. in St. Francis Home Chapel, 33 Everett Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, with Father Kenneth Smits, Capuchin presiding. Burial will follow at St. Joseph Springs Cemetery, Fond du Lac, WI.

Memorials may be directed to the CSA Mission Advancement Office, 320 County Road K, Fond du Lac, WI 54937.

The Sisters of St. Agnes are grateful to the nurses and staff of Nazareth Court and Center and Hospice Hope for their care of Sister Mary Alice.

Zacherl Funeral Home is serving the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes.