

## **Sister Mary Agreda Touchett, CSA**

Born 4/21/1921, Died 2/27/2008

Sister Mary Agreda (Adice Julienne) Touchett CSA, 86, a resident at St. Francis Home passed away Wednesday, February 27, 2008, at her home.

She was born on April 21, 1921, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, a daughter of the late John and Ruth Lyneis Touchett. As a child Adice Julienne often played at being a nun. The step from make-believe to reality was taken at her profession on August 15, 1944, when she became Sister Mary Agreda.



Her religious profession, combined with the nursing diploma Sister Mary Agreda had received from the St. Agnes School of Nursing (SASN) in 1942, launched her on a lifetime of service in the nursing field. Her first experiences in nursing at St. Agnes Hospital in Fond du Lac and St. Thomas in Colby, Kansas, were quickly followed by appointment as a nursing instructor at SASN in 1948 when she also received her bachelor's degree in nursing education from Marian College.

Her talent for teaching and administration sent her to Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. where she earned a master's degree in Administration of Nursing Education in 1950. Upon her return to Fond du Lac and a year as Director of Nursing Services at St. Agnes Hospital, Sister Mary Agreda became the Administrator of SASN and remained in that position until Marian College inaugurated the baccalaureate program in nursing in 1964. The following year Sister became head of the Marian College nursing division. Under her leadership the program became one of the premier programs in the state. After fifteen years at Marian, Sister Mary Agreda pioneered yet one more venture, becoming one of the founders of Hospice Hope in Fond du Lac after studying various hospice programs in the U.S. and in England.

Sister Mary Agreda was active professionally. In her distinguished career, she served on the Wisconsin Board of Nursing in the late 1960's and 1970's and was its Chairperson for twelve years. She was secretary for the Wisconsin Nurses' Association for four years and served on its Board of Directors. She was named Nurse of the Year by the District Nurses Association in the late 1960's and one of the Women of the Year by the Fond du Lac Business and Professional Women's organization in 1977. Marian College recognized her contributions by awarding her Professor Emeritus status in 1981 and bestowing on her the Magnificat Award in 1993.

In her early retirement years, Sister continued to serve as Coordinator of Bereavement Services for Hospice Hope. As long as her health permitted, she continued to serve on congregational committees and those of the sponsored institutions. The achievements of this professional woman religious are even more remarkable in that they were accomplished in spite of a chronic problem with lymphedema from which she suffered all her adult life, requiring that her legs be elevated whenever she was seated.

Sister Mary Agreda's influence on students and colleagues was deep and lasting. Some of her students followed her into religious life. Many others became colleagues and lasting friends. As Sister's health declined these last few weeks, those friends were there for her. In spite of all her achievements, of accolades bestowed, of admiring friends, Sister Mary Agreda was a self-effacing person. She gave credit to others who believed in her and gave her a helping hand. She was a professional, a humanitarian, an administrator *par excellence*. But she was above all a "nun," the role she had played as a child-the title she loved most was "Sister."

Survivors include her brother John (Cathy) Touchet of Winter Haven, Florida, nieces, nephews, the members of the Congregation of Saint Agnes with whom she lived and ministered, other relatives and friends.

Preceding her in death is her sister Fritzie Jenkins and her step-father Harry Paul.

**Visitation:** Visitation will be held on Saturday, March 1, 9:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. at Nazareth Court and Center, 375 Gillett Street, where a prayer service will be held at 11:00 a.m..

**Services:** A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 2:30 p.m. Saturday at the St. Francis Home Chapel, 33 Everett Street. Burial will be in St. Joseph Springs Cemetery, Fond du Lac. Fr. Werner Wolf ,O.F.M. Cap., will officiate.

Memorials may be directed to the Sisters of St. Agnes Development Office, 320 County Road K, Fond du Lac, WI 54935 or to the Sister Mary Agreda Touchett Endowed Fund at Marian College.

The Sisters of St. Agnes are grateful to the nurses and staff at St. Francis Home and Hospice Hope for their care for Sister Mary Agreda.