

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sister Doreen Schommer, SSND
(formerly Mary Andrene)
Educator, Musician, Pastoral Minister



Waterdown, Ontario - Sister Doreen died at Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown, Ontario on February 8, 2017. She was 90 years old and in her 71st year as a School Sister of Notre Dame. Sister Doreen responded wholeheartedly to various ministries from Ontario to British Columbia to Northwest Territories to Nigeria. During her years in pastoral ministry, Sister Doreen was especially attentive to the sick, comforting them with prayer.

Doreen was born near Leipzig, Saskatchewan on January 31, 1927, the youngest of twelve children. Both her parents, Andrew and Anne Thielges, were born in Minnesota.

Doreen attended Medina School, a one room country school from the first through the tenth grade. Although it was a public school, the pupils and teacher were Catholic, and Catechetics was a regular part of the curriculum.

Doreen completed her eleventh and twelfth grade as a boarder at Notre Dame Convent School in Leipzig. During these years she was impressed by “the dedication, friendliness and happiness of the overworked nuns.” They had a great influence on her decision to enter Notre Dame.

On September 10, 1944, Doreen and one of her schoolmates received the bonnet from the provincial, Mother Pius, who was visiting Leipzig. The next day she travelled to Waterdown and joined the other candidates. She attended Hamilton Teachers’ College and in July 1945 she was received as Novice Mary Andrene. She professed her vows the following year.

She began teaching in schools in Kitchener, Cambridge and Elora. In 1954 she moved to British Columbia where she taught at Sacred Heart School, Ladner. She then returned to her home province, Saskatchewan, to teach in Leipzig and Wilkie. After a few years at St. Charles School, Mearns, Alberta, Sister Doreen attended the University of Alberta. Her last classroom teaching assignments were at St. Martin and St. Angela Schools in Edmonton. On several missions she

also taught music, gave piano lessons, directed the church choir and played the organ for church services. Following studies at Newman Theological College, Sister Doreen became involved in pastoral ministry in Edmonton, Pine Point in Northwest Territories, Owen Sound and Burlington, and, in Saskatchewan, parishes in Kerrobert, Viscount and Oxbow. From 1996- 1998 Sister Doreen was missioned to Africa to serve as assistant librarian at St. Augustine's Seminary in Jos, Nigeria. Also, she was a member of the retreat team at the Centre for Renewal. Later, she moved to Saskatchewan where she volunteered at Sacred Heart Parish, Regina and then to Saskatoon, where she was involved in prison ministry. In 2007 she retired at Notre Dame Convent, Waterdown.

Sister Doreen attained her Bachelor of Arts from University of Alberta, Alberta, and her Bachelor of Theology from Newman Theological College, Edmonton, Alberta. From St. Paul's University, Ottawa, Ontario she received a Diploma on Pastoral Counselling. In addition, she attended courses for vocal music, liturgical music and spiritual direction.

Sister Doreen was talented in music, and a gifted artist, creating many beautiful nature scenes. Playing cards was her favorite evening pastime. Days before her death, she enjoyed her "Pepper" card game. On February 8, 2017 Sister Doreen died.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Rev. Pablito Labado, chaplain, on February 16. Her nieces and nephews from western Canada sent expressions of sympathy.