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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 31, 2017

### **Sister Mary Noreen Brown, SSND**

Educator, Administrator, Community Services



BALTIMORE - Sister Mary Noreen Brown, died peacefully on Monday, May 15, 2017, at Villa Assumpta in Baltimore. A native of Baltimore, Sister Noreen, 98, was a vowed member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame for 77 years and served in the Greater Baltimore area for nearly 40 years.

The first of nine children, Mary Noreen, was born to Robert and Agnes Forestell Brown at St. Joseph Hospital, Baltimore, on September 28, 1918 and was baptized two weeks later at Blessed Sacrament Church. At age six, Noreen started classes at Blessed Sacrament School. After eighth grade graduation, Noreen attended the Institute of Notre Dame.

Though Noreen had hoped to enter the School Sisters of Notre Dame after graduation in 1936, she felt she was needed at home and took full care of the new baby in the family. In February of the following year, St. Mark's School, Catonsville, Md. was searching for a second grade teacher. On the recommendation of Noreen's teacher at IND, Noreen successfully undertook this responsibility. When the year ended, Noreen expressed her desire to enter the community and her family assured her that she was free to make that decision.

Noreen entered the congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame on the feast of St. Augustine in 1937. After two years as a student in the candidature, Noreen was received

into the novitiate on July 8, 1939, and given the name, Sister M. John Berchman. Sister John Berchman professed her first vows on July 29, 1940.

Soon Sister John Berchman was on the train headed to Rochester, N.Y. where she was appointed the teacher of the second grade. At the end of that year, Sister was transferred to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Roxbury, Mass. (1941-42). She then taught second grade at St. Mary's, Hagerstown, Md. (1942-44) and fourth grade at Holy Family, Rochester, N.Y.(1944-46). An assignment that Sister loved was at St. Mary in East Islip, N.Y.(1946-50) which included a move to junior high classes where she felt a closer relationship with the students. From 1950 to 1967, Sister taught junior high level students at St. Michael, Hollidaysburg, Pa., St. Benedict, Baltimore, St. Boniface, Philadelphia, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Camden, N.J., Most Holy Name, Pittsburgh and a return to her first teaching experience, St. Mark, Catonsville, Md.

Sister's next two missions were teaching on a secondary level at Cathedral Academy in Camden, N.J. and The Academy of Our Lady, Washington, D.C. (1967-1970). Sister Noreen accepted a position at Mt. Washington Country School for Boys in the seventh grade (1971-73). She spent the year 1973-74 at Santa Isabel School in Los Angeles, Calif. Sister Noreen returned to Maryland where she became the director of religious education at St. Joseph, Sykesville (1974-79). She was familiar with St. Joseph's from Sundays of volunteering when she lived at Catonsville.

California again beckoned Sister Noreen. She lived in the Los Angeles area holding a variety of positions, one of which was in the bookstore at Loyola-Marymount University where she remained for 18 years and called it "a great blessing in my life." A fall brought Sister Noreen to Villa Assumpta in 2006 where she made her home in Assumption Community. She soon found part time work at the Loyola University bookstore. After a time of adjustment, she began to enjoy both her work and the ability to see family members who lived nearby.

Sister Noreen's higher education included a Bachelor of Science in Education from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland (now University) in 1955 and a Master of Science in Education from Loyola College (now University) in 1968.

Sister Noreen believed that her vocation was God's plan for her and she gave "praise and gratitude for this special providence." A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated in the chapel of Villa Assumpta on May 23, 2017 with Rev. Francis Ouma of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Towson, Md. as celebrant. Interment followed at Villa Maria

Cemetery, Glen Arm Rd., Glen Arm, Md. Sister Noreen is survived by her brother, George Brown; sisters-in-law, Mildred Brown and Delores Brown; brothers-in-law, Walter Ross and Ed Warns and nieces and nephews. Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Atlantic-Midwest Province, c/o Development Office, 345 Belden Hill Road, Wilton, Conn. 06897 or online:  
[http://atlanticmidwest.org/ways\\_to\\_make\\_gifts.htm](http://atlanticmidwest.org/ways_to_make_gifts.htm)