



**School Sisters
of Notre Dame**
Central Pacific Province

Central Office
320 East Ripa Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63125-2897
314-633-7005
www.ssndcentralpacific.org

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
Communications and Community Engagement
262-787-1032
communications@ssndcp.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 15, 2017

**Sister Patricia (Mary Claude) McCusker, SSND
Educator and Administrator**

Mankato, Minn.—Sister Patricia (Mary Claude) McCusker, 80, died Thursday, April 6, 2017, in Notre Dame Health Care, Mankato, Minnesota. In her SSND ministry she served as a teacher and administrator in Catholic elementary schools.



Sister Pat was born October 8, 1936, in Red Wing, Minnesota, and given the Patricia for her one-half Irish ancestry. At her baptism, her German side was recognized with her second name, Gladys.

In 1942, Pat enrolled in St. Joseph School in Red Wing, where her teachers for eight grades were School Sisters of Notre Dame. She attended Red Wing High School and graduated in 1954. During her senior year, she made the decision to become a School Sister of Notre Dame and entered the candidature on September 1, 1954.

After a year of study and preparation in the candidature, she was received as a novice on July 16, 1955, and given the name Sister Mary Claude, with Blessed Claude de la Columbiere as her patron. (She later returned to her baptismal name.)

Another year of study followed, and then in 1957, Sister Mary Claude began her 52-year ministry as an educator. First a primary teacher at St. Peter, Canby (1957-61) and at St. Mathias, Hampton (1961-65), she then moved to junior high grades at St. Dominic, Northfield (1965-66); Immaculate Conception, Lonsdale (1966-68); and Epiphany, Coon Rapids (1968-69). In 1969, she became principal at Epiphany, a position she held until 1978. The next year she taught elementary grades at Colegio San Lucas in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala. Returning to the US in 1979, she resumed her junior high teaching ministry at St. Dominic, Northfield (1979-82); Fitzgerald Middle School, Mankato (1982-84); and New Ulm Catholic Schools (1984-89). Then followed two more experiences in elementary administration: St. Thomas the Apostle, Minneapolis (1989-92) and St. Mary, Bird Island (1992-2008). She earned a BA degree in history from Mount Mary in 1966.

Throughout her years of teaching and administration, she was known as an excellent teacher and an administrator who was able to bring the best out of both staff and students. She emphasized the faith community aspect of Catholic schools through daily prayer and service. A 2008 article in the New Ulm diocesan paper, *The Prairie Catholic*, stated: "Sister Pat is well thought of among her peers in education. She has always prided herself in working to establish good relations with the public schools in the communities where she worked. She has a tremendous love for Catholic schools and her commitment to them is evidence of that love and dedication." - *MORE* -

Notre Dame of Dallas
PO Box 227275
Dallas, TX 75222-7275
214-845-7418

Notre Dame of Elm Grove
13105 Watertown Plank Road
Elm Grove, WI 53122-2291
262-782-9850

Our Lady of Good Counsel
170 Good Counsel Drive
Mankato, MN 56001-3138
507-389-4200

Sancta Maria in Ripa
320 East Ripa Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63125-2897
314-633-7005

St. Mary of the Pines
3167 Old Highway 51 S
Osyka, MS 39657-7056
601-783-3494

In 2009, following a sabbatical year, Sister Pat moved to Waconia where she served as a parish visitor at the Church of St. Joseph. She came to Good Counsel in 2012. In her first year, she helped in various ways, and in 2013, settled into a ministry that fit her outgoing personality and channeled her organizational skills. Her official title was “Coordinator of Liturgical Ministries,” and it involved scheduling both priests and sisters for the various liturgical roles on the Hill. As an avid reader who sometimes read several books at once, she volunteered for the library committee and enjoyed giving service in this way. She also joined the chapel choir and was a cantor. In 2015, her Extended Assembly elected her as their delegate to the Provincial Assembly.

The Funeral Liturgy, with Father Eugene Stenzel as presider, was held Tuesday, April 11, in Our Lady of Good Counsel Chapel, and followed by cremation with burial in the Good Counsel Cemetery at a later date. She is survived by her sisters Colleen McCusker and Faith Minder and her brother Michael and his wife Char, nieces and nephews, and her sisters in community, the School Sisters of Notre Dame. She was preceded in death by her parents Myron and Martha (Barr) McCusker and a brother, Alvin. Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame Retirement Fund, c/o Resource Development, 170 Good Counsel Drive, Mankato, MN, 56001-3138, or online at www.ssndcentralpacific.org/Partner/Donation.

#