

September 14, 2018

Sister Leonida Speh, SSND
Teacher, administrator, community service

Bridgeton, Missouri – Sister Leonida Speh, SSND, died at Anna House at The Sarah Community in Bridgeton, Missouri, Monday, September 10, 2018. She was 95 and a former teacher, administrator and community service volunteer.

The funeral Mass was celebrated September 13 at Theresa Center, Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis. Burial was in the Sancta Maria in Ripa Cemetery.

Sister Leonida was born in St. Louis. She entered the congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1942. She professed first vows in 1944 and final vows in 1950. In 1946, she earned a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry

from St. Louis University, St. Louis. She received a M.S. degree in education: secondary administration from Immaculate Heart of Mary College, Los Angeles.

After first profession, Sister Leonida taught elementary children at St. Engelbert's, St. Louis, for one year. Starting in 1946, she taught high school science at St. Francis Borgia, Washington, Missouri; the Academy of Notre Dame, Belleville, Illinois; and St. Anthony, Effingham, Illinois. In 1954, she was missioned to the Aspiranture in Sunland, California, where she remained for 15 years. The Aspiranture closed in 1969 and Sister Leonida was missioned to Rosati-Kain High School, St. Louis, where she served as assistant principal. After seven years at Rosati-Kain, Sister Leonida served for 25 years at Notre Dame High School, St. Louis. During this time, she also volunteered as a beautician at St. Louis motherhouse, at Villa Gesu and The Sarah Community, cutting sisters' hair and giving permanents. In 1988, Sister Leonida received a Certificate of Merit from the National Association of Biology Teachers. She received an award from the National Catholic Educational Association in 2001, which recognized her commitment to Catholic education.

For many summers, Sister Leonida would join Sister Ruth Speh in her ministry with the Papago Indians in Arizona or working with the poor in Louisiana. Later in life, Sister Leonida and Sister Ruth would travel through Elderhostel tours. Sister Leonida also enjoyed the outdoors and gardening. In 2005, Sister Leonida was missioned to Veronica House and then to Anna House in 2014.

Sister Leonida is survived by one sister, Frances Lee of St. Louis.

Memorial contributions may be made to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Resource Development, 320 E. Ripa, St. Louis, MO 63125 or online at <https://www.ssndcentralpacific.org/give>.

