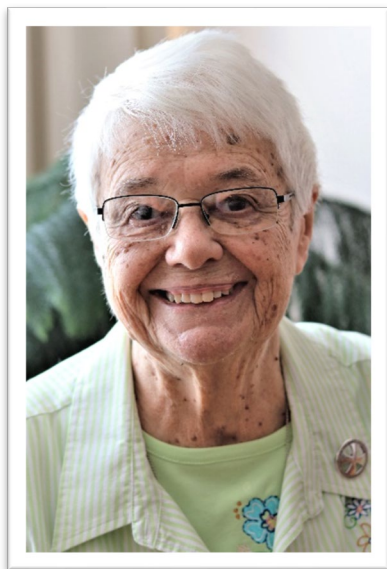


## REFLECTION ON THE LIFE OF SISTER ANITA SCHULTE

December 17, 1935 - September 6, 2023



Anita was born in 1935 to Henry and Ella Schulte, who were German immigrants who came to the United States. She grew up in Brooklyn, New York where she lived until she entered the Sisters of Charity. We entered the community together on September 8, 65 years ago. And how did Anita get from New York to Western Pennsylvania? It's a wonderful story! Anita was always interested in young children. So, when she was looking for a college, she came upon Seton Hill's catalogue which showed that Seton Hill had a child development center on the campus. That was all she needed! She enrolled at Seton Hill College and there she met the

Sisters of Charity. Her life was changed from that point onward. As Anita said, "It was during my first years at Seton Hill where I wanted the sisters and their friendliness, kindness and good example that I too decided that I would someday be a Sister of Charity." She earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Education in 1957, returned to her home in Brooklyn and taught second grade in a public school on Long Island and was affirmed in her dream of teaching young children. Never one to let the grass grow under her feet, she petitioned to enter the Sisters of Charity, and against the wishes of both of her parents, entered in 1958.

Anita and I got to know each other as postulants during the Christmas break. She was teaching 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Cathedral and I was teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in Oakmont by that time. I don't know how Sister Miriam Fidelis paired us up, perhaps by our German last names, but it was the beginning of a long friendship. During that Christmas break, we sat on sleds in the basement of Ennis, shared our stories and chipped cement off about 30 ceramic tiles that our artist Josefa Filkosky wanted to use to construct a table for the novitiate porch. Our only other claim to fame as a pair of friends is that when we were canonical novices, we were told to drink

milk between meals because we were both so skinny that we were a disgrace to the novitiate.

So to continue Anita's story, once she learned about Maria Montessori and her ideas about learning in young children, she embraced the method and there was no stopping her Anita earned her Master's in education from Xavier University and a diploma from the American Montessori Society. She established the first Montessori School in Westmoreland County in 1970 and remained as its director until 2007. It opened with three students at Doran Hall. It was not an ordinary school with desks and blackboards. It was built on the idea that the child becomes a self-directed teacher and is encouraged to be independent, competent and responsible as a learner. By 1972 the enrollment had doubled and in 1978 the school relocated to Mt. View Drive. In the 80's, 50 students were enrolled and the location again changed to its present location on Frye Farm Road. In 1995 the school celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and in 2020 its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

But lest we think that that Montessori was all that Anita did, think again. She served on the Board of Trustees of Seton Hill University, for 20 years headed the Montessori certification program at Carlow College in Pittsburgh, served on the parish council at Our Lady of Grace in Greensburg, organized numerous fundraising and social events, such as Spring Fling and a Fashion Show, did vision testing for young children for United Way and in 2009 was awarded United Way's School Readiness Children's Champion Award. When Anita retired and moved to Caritas Christi, she worked with several of our older sisters and used her knowledge of the Montessori techniques for memory and motor coordination stimulation to help the sisters to have fuller lives. She later started making hand crafted hats for children in need and began donating the hats to the Christian Layman's Corps, often 25 to 40 hats a year. So we will miss our Anita! Her creative mind and giving personality, good humor and community spirit will live on in our hearts and memories. Anita loved being a Sister of Charity and did everything in her power to live up to that name.

So, Dear Anita, continue to be with us in spirit and may you rest in eternal peace, Amen.

By Sister Vivien Linkhauer