

Teacher retirees include 23 at 25 years or more

Servant of Mary sister outpaces the field – 60 years of service

By **JOE RUFF**
Catholic Voice

For 60 years, Servant of Mary Sister Viola Miksch taught students in one Catholic school in the archdiocese or another – 46 of those years at St. Pius X/St. Leo School in Omaha.

And at age 84, she still would be assisting full-time at the school, but for health problems that started in March 2014 and required her official retirement at the end of last school year.

“We hoped she might come back,” said Joyce Gubbels, principal. “She has a love of God, a love of her faith, and she shared that with these kids.”

But Sister Miksch now shares at least one special milestone with 22 other teachers being recognized in this issue

of the Catholic Voice – before retiring last spring, they served 25 or more years in archdiocesan schools.

And with Sister Miksch serving 60 years, four teachers 40 or more, 15 teachers 30 or more and three teachers 25 or more years, their service totals 894 years of teaching, including 843 years in archdiocesan schools.

“What a commitment to Catholic education,” Patrick Slattery, superintendent of archdiocesan schools, said of the teachers. “It drives home for me that it’s not a job, it’s a vocation. It’s that call to service in the church.”

Sister Miksch, a native of Platte Center and sister of Father Joseph Miksch, pastor of St. Isidore Parish in Columbus, dates her teaching career to 1954, when she began a three-year stint teach-



SISTER VIOLA MIKSCH

ing first- and second-graders at then-St. Rose School in Omaha. She taught first grade at the former St. Benedict School in Omaha from 1957 to 1968, then began her service at St. Pius X School, which in 1978 became St. Pius X/St. Leo, teaching first, second and third graders for 33 years and working 13 years after that as a full-time resource teacher assistant.

Servant of Mary Sister Peggy Miller said Sister Miksch might still be working at the school, but a sudden headache she suffered in March last year while doing dishes in the house that the two religious sisters shared was diagnosed as a stroke that affected her cognitive skills. Now living at a skilled care facility in Omaha, Sister Miksch loves to visit with children when they come to see people in the facility, Sister Miller said.

“She just lights up,” Sister Miller said. Sister Miksch is greatly missed at the school, Gubbels said.

“She loved being here and little kids adored her,” the principal said.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE

Letters, emails and telephone calls. The Catholic Voice used them all as it sought to reach every principal in the 70 elementary and Catholic high schools in the archdiocese, asking for names and other information of certified teachers and administrators who retired last spring after serving 25 or more years in archdiocesan schools.

If the newspaper missed someone, please call the Catholic Voice at 402-558-6611, and ask for Joe Ruff, news editor. Or email the paper at tevomaha@archomaha.org. Information can be updated on the website at catholicvoiceomaha.com.

40 OR MORE YEARS

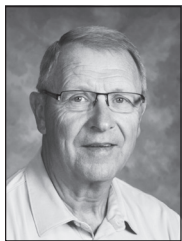
All schools in Omaha unless noted:

MIKE CULVER – 47 years, Creighton Preparatory School, social studies and counselor; Roncalli Catholic High School, social studies, counselor and football, baseball coach (1979 to 1986); then-Paul VI High School, social studies, counselor (1968 to 1979).

CONNIE CAVEL – 43 years, Marian High School, English.

SOFIA KOCK – 42 years, Holy Name, principal; St. Bernard, middle school science (1994 to 1996); then-Cathedral High, biology, anatomy and physiology (1977 to 1994); then-Paul VI High, biology, anatomy and physiology (1971 to 1975).

MARGARET SWANSON – 42 years, St. Cecilia, first and second grades; plus two years teaching in public schools in Omaha.



MIKE CULVER



CONNIE CAVEL



SOFIA KOCK



MARGARET SWANSON

MARIANNE HALL – 39 years, Holy Cross, music (1982 to 2015); Christ the King, music (1974 to 1976); St. Margaret Mary, music (1972 to 1974); then-Blessed Sacrament, music (1971 to 1972); then-St. Richard, music (1970 to 1972); plus taught three years in public school and three years at home in Omaha.

REGINA LEHNHOFF – 39 years, Marian High, English.

PATRICIA CONNELLY – 38 years, Christ the King, second grade; Holy Cross and Christ the King, long-term substitute (2003 to 2005); St. Joan of Arc, second grade and principal (1988 to 2002); St. Joan of Arc, first, third and fifth grades and middle school (1972 to 1982); St. Thomas More, second grade (1970 to 1972); plus six years as principal at a Catholic school in Grass Valley, Calif.

DAVE DOW – 38 years, Creighton Preparatory School, chemistry; plus three years teaching in public school in Ashland, Neb.

SHARON SOLSKY – 38 years, Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart, science teacher and science department chair; then-Cathedral High, science teacher, head of science department, senior moderator (1976 to 1983); also taught at College of Saint Mary (1988 to 2001) and Creighton University (1991 to 2015); plus four years at a Catholic school in Buffalo, N.Y.

MONICA BAXTER – 36 years, V.J. and Angela Skutt Catholic High School, art and character skills (1993 to 2015); Dominican High School/Father Flanagan High School, art (1971 to 1985).

JIM GROSS – 36 years, Creighton Preparatory School, math and technology; plus three years teaching at a Catholic high school in

Fairbanks, Alaska (1976 to 1979) and three years at a public university in Fairbanks (1973 to 1976).

CATHY PRUITTE – 35 years, Marian High, vocal music, plus 14 years teaching in public school in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

JANET ORTMEIER – 34 years, Guardian Angels Central Catholic, West Point, kindergarten, third and fifth grades (1983 to 2015); Mary Our Queen, second grade (1971 to 1973).

MARY JANE SMITH – 34 years, St. Patrick, Elkhorn, kindergarten; St. Mary, Bellevue, kindergarten (1981 to 2004); plus teaching three years in public school in Wilber, Neb.

LUCI CATALANO – 32 years, St. Pius X/St. Leo, third and fourth grades and coordinator of individually guided education (IGE) (1987 to 2015); first grade and coordinator of IGE (1972 to 1976).

PATTY HEMMER – 32 years, Holy Family, Lindsay, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades, librarian (1992-2015); St. Francis, Humphrey, third and sixth grades (1980 to 1988); St. Bonaventure, Columbus, fourth grade (1978 to 1979).

JEANETTE KINDSCHUH – 32 years, Guardian Angels Central Catholic, West Point, first grade.

THERESA O'NEILL – 32 years, St. Philip Neri, resource teacher, all grades; then-Blessed Sacrament, fifth grade (1996 to 1998); St. Margaret Mary, fourth grade (1981 to 1991); Ss. Peter and Paul, third and fourth grades (1978 to 1981); plus two years teaching in a Catholic school and three years in public school in Greeley County, Neb.

LAURA MAJERUS – 30 years, St. Michael, Albion, preschool, kindergarten, first, second, third and fourth grades.

30 OR MORE YEARS



MARIANNE HALL



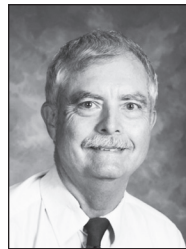
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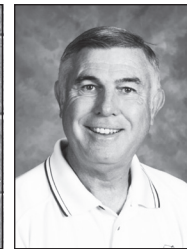
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JANET ORTMEIER



MARY JANE SMITH



LUCI CATALANO



PATTY HEMMER



JEANETTE KINDSCHUH



THERESA O'NEILL



LAURA MAJERUS

25 OR MORE YEARS

RUTH LUBISCHER – 28 years, St. Robert Bellarmine, first grade; plus five years in public schools in Fremont and Omaha.

RENEE POKORNY – 28 years, St. James/Seton, seventh- and eighth-grade religion; St. Joan of Arc, St. Gerald in Ralston, middle-school religion (1996 to 2001); St. Vincent de Paul, fourth grade (1995 to 1996); St. Joan of Arc, third and fourth grades, English in grades six, seven and eight, reading and math in sixth grade (1987 to 1995).

BETTY WALSH – 28 years, St. Robert Bellarmine, first grade; St. Bernard, first grade (1987 to 1990).



RUTH LUBISCHER



RENEE POKORNY



BETTY WALSH

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