



*Our life
is nothing other
than leaving each
day behind; what
we call dying is the
completion of dying
and the **BEGINNING** of
New Life.*



School Sisters of Notre Dame
of St. Louis

320 East Ripa Avenue
Saint Louis, MO 63125

www.ssnd-sl.org



Sister Mary Carla Koestner, SSND

Born

March 9, 1910

Professed

August 3, 1939

Ministry

*elementary educator/administrator;
musician; child care; community service -
Illinois, Iowa, Mississippi, Missouri, Texas*

Died

January 14, 2010

Sister Mary Carla Koestner, SSND



Anna Mathilda, the second oldest of seven children, was born to Ida [Schulte] and Carl Koestner on March 9, 1910, in Burlington, Iowa. One week later, she was baptized at St. John the Baptist. She grew up on a farm with one sister and five brothers. As the oldest girl, Anna assisted in the family wherever needed.



Anna attended St. John's Grade and two-year Commercial High School where she was taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. After graduation from 10th grade, she was employed as a secretary for 10 years by the Iowa Illinois Title Company. She completed her high school education at Notre Dame High in Burlington in 1936. Although she had thought of entering religious life, her mother's health and her own uncertainty delayed her decision. After witnessing a Reception ceremony at Ripa, she was convinced that God was calling her to become a School Sister of Notre Dame.



At the age of 26, Anna entered the candidature on September 2, 1936. On September 27, she was missioned to St. Peter and Paul to assist the music teacher, Sister Justina Kempf. In February 1937, she returned to the motherhouse to complete the classical subjects of high school. She entered the novitiate on August 2, 1938, and received the name, Mary Carla, in honor of her father. Profession of first vows was August 3, 1939, and final vows on August 3, 1945.

Following profession, Sister Carla was missioned to St. Aloysius Gonzaga as full-time music teacher. Although she had very little experience playing the organ, she was able to

please the pastor for the three funerals during her first week at the mission. She remained for eight years.

This was the beginning of 55 years in elementary education. She also served at Holy Ghost and St. Martin of Tours in St. Louis; St. Mary in Belleville, Ill.; Our Lady of Fatima in Galena Park, Texas, where she was principal and 8th grade teacher; and St. Mary of the Pines, Chatawa, Miss. She ministered in Catholic education for 36 years in Iowa: St. Anthony, Knoxville; Sacred Heart and Aquinas West in Fort Madison; and St. Paul and St. John the Baptist in Burlington. She was principal at Knoxville; school secretary at St. Paul and St. John in Burlington; and cared for children before and after school at St. John's Extended Day Care in Burlington. At the age of 87, she retired at St. John the Baptist, Burlington.

After 40 years in Iowa, she came to the motherhouse and performed community service for four years. She was missioned to Veronica House in 2005 and Anna House in 2007. In early January 2010, she was admitted to DePaul Health Center suffering from pneumonia and a slight heart attack. On January 13, she returned to Anna House and was placed on hospice. She died peacefully at Anna House on January 14, 2010, around 11:15 p.m. as sisters prayed at her bedside. She was a participant in The Nun Study and donated her body to St. Louis University School of Medicine.

Three generations of relatives from four states joined the sisters and other friends for the celebration of a memorial Mass in the motherhouse chapel on January 30, 2010.

Sister Carla was a person willing to risk teaching music and being principal even though she was not prepared for these positions. She was a gentle, peace-loving, humble and prayerful woman, witnessing to self-less giving wherever help was needed. A fun-loving community member, she lived simply and enjoyed cooking. Her family was especially precious to her. May she now enjoy the completeness of God's love in her new and eternal life!

Precious and blessed is the death of the faithful before God.