

DEATH NOTICE OF SISTER FAINE MCMULLEN

First and last names: Faine Moira McMullen Nationality: U.S.

Father's name: John R. McMullen, Esq.

Mother's name: Anna T. Dunne

Birth: Date January 18, 1914 Place: New York, New York

Baptism: Date: February 11, 1914 Place: Far Rockaway, New York

Parish: St. Mary Star of the Sea Diocese of Rockville Center

Confirmation: Date: October 10, 1925 Place: Far Rockaway, New York

Parish: St. Mary Star of the Sea Diocese of

First Communion: Date: Place:

Parish: Diocese of

Postulant: Date: October 15, 1944 Place: Kenwood

Novice Date: May 4, 1945 Place: Kenwood

First Vows Date: July 31, 1947 Place: Kenwood

Final Profession: Date: February 10, 1954 Place: Via Nomentana, Rome

Death: Date: December 27, 2015 Place: Teresian House

Address of parents or nearest relatives:

STAGES OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

Dates	Houses	Ministries
1947-1949	Newton Academy	Assistant treasurer
1950-1954	Eden Hall	Elementary and secondary classes
1954-1967	Newton College	Courses in Political Science
1967-1969	Roxbury, Massachusetts	Exclaustration; Dept. of Health, Boston
1969-1974	Newton College	Courses in Political Science
1974-1983	Sursum Corda, Washington	Multiple urban ministries
1883-1985	6200 Sheridan Rd. Chicago	Howard Area Community Center
1985-1988	Napoleon, New Orleans	Director, Senior Advocacy Program
1989-1990	Kenwood	Renewal and rest
1990-1993	New Orleans	Senior volunteer, parish
1993-2007	Kenwood, Pax Christi	Community Service
2007-2015	Teresian House	Prayer, community service

BIOGRAPHY

As soon as possible after the death of the RSCJ, please send to the secretariat a biographical account giving the chief facts of the person's life. One or two pages are usually sufficient.

BIOGRAPHY

Faine McMullen, RSCJ
January 18, 1914-December 27, 2015

Faine Moira McMullen, third of five children of John R. and Anna T. Dunne McMullen, was born in Far Rockaway, Queens, New York. Her father John McMullen was a New York attorney who, with his wife, raised a profoundly Christian family. The only other girl, Grail, born four years later, also entered the Society, but five years earlier. Two brothers, Anthony and Aidan, later became Jesuits and both taught in Jesuit colleges. Another, Brendan, became a Dominican and parish pastor. A fourth brother, Declan, the only one not to enter religious life, founded a publishing house.

Faine was educated in a private Catholic high school, and then attended the College of Mount Saint Vincent-on-the-Hudson, graduating in 1934 at the age of twenty with a major in History and minor in French. Following the path of her father, she went on to Fordham University School of Law, graduating and admitted to the bar in New York State in 1937. She practiced law for seven years, three of them in work with her father, the other four with the legal section of the U.S. Army during World War II, drawing up ordnance contracts. But "the love of God, of truth, of service" was calling. She entered the Society in 1944, five years after Grail, and remarked in an autobiographical document that "every transition since then has been easy in comparison!" Under the guidance first of Mother Agnes Barry, then of Marie Louise Schroen, she made first vows on July 31, 1947. The next years were spent as assistant treasurer at Newton Academy and teacher of elementary and secondary classes at Eden Hall in Philadelphia. She began probation at Via Nomentana, Rome with Reverend Mother Zurstrassen in October, 1953 and made final vows on February 10, 1954.

After probation, she went to Newton College as assistant professor of Political Science for the next thirteen years. In 1954, she earned a M.A. in History from Manhattanville College and began also teaching courses in History at Newton College. It was this experience during years of social upheaval in the world and the Society, and the call of Vatican II for the Church to be more part of the suffering world, that formed in her a conviction that Sacred Heart education was not contributing adequately to the kinds of social change that needed to happen. She determined to touch more directly and personally the lives of the poor. In 1967, she asked for two years of exclaustation "for the purpose of devoting all my time and energy and personal presence and witness in a situation which will identify me directly and absolutely with the poor." She was granted one year of exclaustation by explicit approval of Reverend Mother de Valon in 1967, with a later renewal for six months by Reverend Mother Bultó in 1968. During this time, she lived alone in Roxbury, an economically depressed area of Boston, and worked for the Boston Department of Health and Hospitals. She later recalled: "I studied the poor who surrounded me; I grew to love them and ever since their problems have been mine."

In 1967, the first year of her Roxbury pilgrimage, she began correspondence with Jacques Travers, a French professor at Brooklyn College, artist, disciple of Dorothy Day, member of the Catholic Worker, and founder of a house to welcome the homeless. Their twenty years of correspondence ended with his death in France from cancer at the age of 62, in 1987. It was a deep, personal, and apostolic friendship. She kept his letters for the rest of her life.

She returned to Newton College in 1969 “a different person,” feeling reinvigorated for the mission, and continued to teach there for the next five years. At the same time, she co-founded with Father Michael Groden the Planning Office of Urban Affairs for the Boston Archdiocese. During these years in Boston, Faine came to be accepted into a group of social activists thirty years younger than she in East Boston. She would come to share meals with them, often bringing beer or wine. She listened to them and challenged them with her own probing questions. She later participated in the wedding of one of them.

With the closure of Newton College, Faine moved in 1974 to the Sursum Corda community in Washington, DC. She was admitted to the bar in the District of Columbia and worked as a staff attorney at University Legal Services, an agency that provided free legal services to the poor. It was exhausting work, and in 1983 she moved to the 6200 Sheridan Road community in Chicago to serve as a volunteer at the Howard Area Community Center’s free legal services. In 1985, an invitation to direct a program for the empowerment of low-income seniors brought her to the Napoleon community in New Orleans for a three-year contract as director of the Senior Advocacy Program for the Archdiocese. The program addressed issues such as housing and discounts for seniors on public transportation. By 1988, she needed time off to rest and took a year away, but returned in 1990 to New Orleans as a parish volunteer in senior advocacy work, until 1993, when she moved to the Pax Christi community at Kenwood, then to Teresian House in 2007.

In her retirement, she continued to read, think, and stay informed about the issues of poverty and homelessness to which she had dedicated so much of her effort in earlier years. She died quietly on December 27, on the third anniversary of Grail’s funeral, less than a month short of her 102nd birthday.

Her funeral on January 15 was celebrated by Kenwood’s steadfast chaplain, Father Chris deGiovine. In the eulogy, her longtime friend Phil Giffey, one of the East Boston young adult group and now Executive Director of Neighborhood of Affordable Housing, East Boston, gave an inspiring portrait of a courageous woman who thought deeply and acted on her convictions, who was “curious, thoughtful and accepting, but she also had her opinions. I think she was attracted to our menagerie because we were an uncloaked embodiment of her own search for justice, community, ‘faith’ and activism on behalf of the poor.” After the funeral, her friends gathered for sharing of memories. Her ashes were taken to the Kenwood cemetery the same day, where they now rest with Grail and her other RSCJ sisters.