

GERTRUDE KEILEY PATCH, RSCJ

October 28, 1926 – August 24, 2015

Born in Brooklyn, New York, on October 28, 1926, to Roderick S. and Gertrude Keiley Patch, Trudy was the second oldest of four. Because her father was in the Coast Guard, the Patches moved often during her childhood. From Brooklyn they went to Woods Hole, Massachusetts, until 1931 when they crossed the country to Astoria, Oregon. After three years, the family moved to Oakland, California, where Trudy attended Holy Names High School. It was during her sophomore year that she realized her call to religious life. When she informed her parents of her vocation, they were not at all pleased. Trudy enrolled in the San Francisco College for Women and there was deeply impressed by the religious. She demonstrated her intellectual and leadership gifts during those years and was elected Student Body President.

In 1947, a year after her graduation, Trudy entered the novitiate at Kenwood. She made her first vows May 3, 1950, and was sent to the Academy on Sheridan Road, Chicago to teach sophomores. During summers, Trudy attended San Francisco College for Women to pursue a Master's degree in English, after which she attended Stanford University to obtain her Ph.D. After completing the course work, she went to Rome for Probation, under the careful guidance of Reverend Mother Zurstrassen. She pronounced her final vows on February 10, 1956, and returned to California to teach English at the San Francisco College for Women, while working on her dissertation.

Having completed her doctoral studies, Trudy was assigned to San Diego College for Women (soon to become the University of San Diego) and taught English for several years. In 1966, she returned to the San Francisco College for Women as a member of the English department and assistant to the President, Mother Catherine Parks. When the latter became seriously ill, Trudy was named acting President and then in 1967 President of the college.

The turbulent sixties saw a sea change in SFCW as they did in the country and in the Church. The college, situated four blocks from "Haight-Ashbury" district, absorbed some of the cultural "happenings" of those days. Enrollment in women's colleges was on the decline and SFCW had experienced a significant decrease when the University of San Francisco went coed. As a result the College's Board of Trustees voted to open its doors to men in 1970.

As President, Trudy initiated many far-reaching and innovative programs in the college. Among them were the Independent Studies program, an internship with the American Conservatory Theater and agreements with the de Young Museum and the Academy of Art. The Instructional Media Center was established as well as the new Department of Creative and Performing Arts.

After ten years, Trudy chose to resign in 1977 and was offered a year's sabbatical, which she accepted. She began traveling in Europe, staying in various hostels as well as in RSCJ communities, including the Mother House in Rome. She returned to San Francisco in 1978, and her creative gifts were employed in the early plans to convert Fort Mason into the educational and cultural center that it was to become. In 1980 she went to Washington, D. where she worked for a non-profit organization placing college juniors and seniors in work-learning positions appropriate to their majors.

After three years, she was hired by the Jesuit Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Missouri, as Vice President, an administrative position in which she oversaw the academic deans, the finance office, and the Dean of Students. After her appointment, the Chairman of the Board, John J. Sullivan, Jr. wrote to her: "Sister, having observed your administrative talents from my position as trustee, I know that Rockhurst is very fortunate to have someone with your background and experience in this position of administration,

certainly during this period...I just wanted you to know that I join with many of your supporters in saying congratulations on a recognition which is well deserved.”

After nine busy years, Trudy left Rockhurst and went to Loyola University, Chicago, where she established the Office of Faith and Culture, providing programs for students, faculty and staff to help them better understand the Jesuit charism. When she left Loyola, a newspaper article read, “Under her direction, the Center (Office of Faith and Culture) has offered a wide array of lectures, seminars, panel discussions and other events aimed at deepening Loyolans’ understanding of the university’s Jesuit, Catholic tradition and mission...She has been a wonderful professional, and we will miss her a lot.”

During the course of these challenging times and before the formation of a one-province structure, Trudy found time to serve the Society on the Provincial Team of the California Province, and attended most of the national assemblies. Her keen intelligence and interpersonal skills made her a natural choice for leadership positions.

In 1995, in response to her article in Harvest, the Christian Life Community magazine, on “Ignatian spirituality in the Daily Life of a University Administrator,” Fred Leone, Coordinating Editor, wrote to Trudy, “I wish to thank you for your very fine article...In this you take us gently from the Principle and Foundation to mission—that mission which you translate into your role at the University. I can well appreciate this, since I spent 24 years at two universities. I can say, with you, that indeed we *do* ‘find God in all things.’”

When Trudy retired from her rich academic career, she returned to San Francisco. Always an educator, she began working with a literacy program sponsored by Project Read, for ten years helping adults to improve their basic skills. At the same time she became a tutor with a newly-established program which selected middle school students who had the desire and potential for challenging academic work in private high schools. Those students accepted in the program were provided a scholarship to an independent school, as well as a tutor-mentor.

In July of 2010 Trudy joined her sisters at Oakwood. Three months later, there was a lovely ceremony at Lone Mountain honoring Trudy for her significant contribution of leadership at the college as professor of English and President. An overflowing crowd of loyal and enthusiastic alumnae attended Mass, presided over by long-time friend, Fr. John Lo Schiavo, SJ. Fifteen Religious of the Sacred Heart, including one from Seattle and one from San Diego, joined in the festivities. A lovely day and a tribute well deserved!

After five years at Oakwood, Trudy’s health began to fail. She moved towards death in the same peaceful way she undertook her years of ministry and her presence at Oakwood. On August 24, 2015, Trudy joined her sisters, the heavenly host, and her Beloved God.