

Rosemary Statt, RSCJ

October 9, 1937 – October 31, 2009

Rosemary, the youngest of five – four of them girls – was born to Elizabeth Gleason and Raymond W. Statt in Rochester, New York, on October 9, 1937. The Statts were a happy family, in which singing and dancing were always present. The humor, which so characterized the life of Rosie, was inherited from her mother.

All the Statt girls attended the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Prince Street, Rosie for thirteen years, including pre-school. After Rosie graduated in 1955, she went on to receive a bachelor's degree from Manhattanville College, Purchase, New York. In 1962 she entered the Society of the Sacred Heart at Kenwood, Albany, New York, and pronounced first vows in 1964.

Rosie taught middle school children at both Kenwood, and Bloomfield Hills in Detroit. While doing course work at New York Theological Union, she taught students from Harlem until making her final profession at Greenwich, Connecticut in 1969. Final profession was followed by two years at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where she obtained a master's degree in education, after which she taught middle school at Ninety-first Street, New York. But life was not all work, no play. Her summer days were filled with sailing at Noroton, Connecticut, until the mast on the small boat broke.

In the summer of 1975 she had four months of renewal with RSCJ at Jette, Belgium, followed by two months working with RSCJ in Egypt before flying down the Nile to Uganda, East Africa, where she taught religion in a diocesan boarding school for girls run by the Society.

As the United States was celebrating its bicentennial in July of 1976, Rosie flew out of a besieged Entebbe airport in Uganda home to Manhattan, where she spent the next three years teaching in a diocesan school in "Hell's Kitchen" on Manhattan's West Side, while living in an East Harlem RSCJ community.

With permission from the provincial and superior general, in the late summer of 1979, Rosie once again set off for East Africa and became a member of the East African Province of the Society for the next ten years.

An Irish friend, Carmel Flynn, wrote of Rosie: "Here is what I heard of Rosie's first time in Africa...she was in Kalungu, Uganda, and, when asked to teach religious education, she said, 'You know I'm not a Catholic'. Her RSCJ interviewer thought for a moment... 'She's an American, so maybe...' then she caught the twinkle in Rosie's eye and realized Rosie was pulling her leg. In Kalungu Rosie also taught typing.

Carmel Flynn continued: "When visiting the parish house in Kalungu, she used to ask for Father Paul Brehms, WF, who had an aversion to women. When letters came for Rosie Statt with the word 'probation' on them, little knowing that she was already professed, he would say: 'She is on probation; they will never accept her.'... When we attended the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, she introduced me to golf. On the links I discovered how focused she could be and also how deep."

Besides teaching in a co-ed boarding school in Kenya and being at one time a member of the provincial team for the Uganda/Kenya Province, among other things, Rosie discovered golf courses left by the British, attempted wind surfing on the Indian Ocean, and drove numerous safaris through East Africa's game parks.

Returning to the United States in 1989, Rosie attended the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California, obtaining a master's degree in theology before beginning her third career:

social work. In 2009 she received her ten-year citation from Catholic Charities in San Jose, California.

Rosie's life took a turn during her final years of ministry in San Jose, when cancer began to take its toll on her amazing energy. By February 2009, it became clear that Rosie was unable to continue her dedicated ministry with the poor. She moved to Oakwood, the retirement center of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in Atherton, California, her many friends and family continuing to surround her with affection. Then, in the early morning hours of October 31, 2009, God called her to rest in God's great eternal embrace. R.I.P.

The funeral for Sister Statt took place at Oakwood on Saturday, November 7, at 10:00 a.m. celebrated by her brother, Father Thomas Statt, retired priest of the Diocese of Rochester.