



Dolores D Powers

November 7, 1935 - February 23, 2020

Dolores D. Powers, educator and role model who made a positive impact

In the days approaching her death, Dolores Powers' daughter, Tricia, reached out to her fellow Stella Niagara Education Park classmates and former students of her mother. She asked them to post tributes to Dolores on Tricia's social media account so that she could read them aloud to her ailing mother while she could still hear. What unfolded was not just a fond remembrance of Dolores' fashion sense, but an enthusiastic account of the effect she had on their individual lives.

Members of the SNEP Classes of 1985 and 1986 recalled Mrs. Powers' signature wardrobe which featured a regular panoply of exquisitely designed scarves, jewelry and shoes. As noted by Toronto, Ont., actor and musician, Ciara Adams, Mrs. Powers was "always so well dressed and wore color which suited her bubbly personality." But as Fort Mill, S.C., writer and businesswoman Kristin Doebler Antemann stated, while she "loved her flair," it was that Dolores "made a positive impact on so many." Members of the Class of '86 Ciara Adams and Rochester, N.Y., nursing consultant Joanna Macoretta Daeschner agreed that Mrs. Powers was "a caring teacher, an amazing educator, and an excellent role model" while still other SNEP graduates such as Buffalo architect Denise Juron-Borgese and SNEP Director of Institutional Advancement Amy Whelan Reynolds concurred that Dolores "was a standout

teacher” and “an integral part of Stella Niagara.”

Powers died Feb. 23, 2020, in the hospice unit of McAuley Residence in Kenmore after a lengthy illness. She was 84.

Born Dolores Anne Dawson in Rochester, N.Y., to Daniel W. Dawson, a Monroe County Sheriff’s deputy, and Mary Van de Castle Dawson, a homemaker, Mrs. Powers spent her childhood in the Swillburg and 19th Ward neighborhoods of the Flower City. The young Dolores’ adventures centered around Benton, Bly, South Goodman and Westfield streets in the city where she was often accompanied by her cousins, Maryellen Freemesser, and twins George and Paul Freemesser, who would grow up to become well-renowned Roman Catholic priests in Toronto and Rochester, respectively. The four cousins delighted in coming round to Freemesser’s Restaurant and Bar on South Clinton Street in Swillburg where their antics delighted, and sometimes alarmed, the bar’s owner, George Freemesser, Sr., as well as Dolores’ dotting uncle, John E. Dawson, who would often stop by the saloon after a long day’s work as a linotype operator at the Times-Union newspaper to “clear the printer’s ink from his throat.”

Her youngest sister, Kathleen Dawson Jackson, a retired hospice nurse, lovingly recalled how while she and her sister were 10 years apart in age, that Dolores formed a bond with her that would persist for decades to come. Jackson said, “Dory looked out for me, almost more than our own mother did from an early age, because our dad died far too young from cancer. She included in me in playtime, even when I was so much smaller than the other kids in the family, and as we grew older, she was still there to support me during many of the most important milestones of my life. She helped me with everything from loaning me money to buy my first car to being my matron of honor at my wedding.” Fellow Our Lady of Mercy High School graduate Mary Anne (Ennis) Hill said of Dolores, “Dory had so much to contend with during

her life, but she did it with strength and fortitude. She worked hard for everything she got.”

Dolores completed the majority of her education in Rochester. She graduated from Our Lady of Good Counsel School in 1949 and Our Lady of Mercy High School – now Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women – in 1953. Upon her graduation from Our Lady of Mercy, Dolores was awarded a partial scholarship to Nazareth College of Rochester where she began her studies in history.

Dolores left Nazareth College for a brief period in 1955, so that she could enter the workforce and earn the funds that she would need to complete her college degree. Armed with the training that she acquired through the Two-Year Terminal Course in Nazareth’s Secretarial Department, Dolores worked for two years at the Eastman Kodak Company in downtown Rochester. Dolores returned to her studies at Nazareth in the fall of 1957 and went on to become the first person in her family to graduate from college in June 1959. She was awarded a Bachelor’s Degree in History with cum laude honors. About a year after graduating from Nazareth, Dolores married David W. Fay, a St. John Fisher graduate, on August 20, 1960. Just prior to her Nazareth graduation, Dolores was inducted into the New York Phi chapter of Pi Gamma Mu, the National Social Science Honor Society and received several offers from many New York state school districts to teach social studies at the junior high and high school levels. After careful consideration, Dolores chose to begin her teaching career at Hoover Drive Junior High School, which today is the site of the Rochester, N.Y. area’s only all-female public school, Young Women’s College Prep Charter School of Rochester.

Between 1961 and 1964, Dolores shared adjacent classrooms at Hoover Drive Junior High with lifelong friend, Louis Litzenberger. In his recollection of

his former colleague, two distinct memories stood out for Litzenberger: First, how he and Dolores had to comfort their students, and then each other, on Nov. 22, 1963, the day that Pres. John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Second, how skillfully Dolores handled an encounter with a troublesome student.

As recounted by Litzenberger, Dolores – then known as Mrs. Fay – was charged with supervising a few male students who were in detention. One boy had become particularly unruly and disrespectful, so she asked him to go with her into the hallway so that she could speak to him privately while metering out some discipline. Litzenberger recalled, “While the old saying goes, ‘You better shape up or ship out,’ she was so flustered by this young man’s behavior that she blurted out to his face, ‘You better ship up or shape out!’ “ Well, both Dolores and the boy were so startled by what she said, that both of them stifled the laugh that they really wanted to have.” Litzenberger continued, “The next day, Dolores came to me and said, ‘You won’t believe what I did...,’ and after she confessed what happened, we both laughed so hard. She told me at the worst possible moment, her words wouldn’t work, but she felt so strongly that she had to control herself and not burst into laughter in front of that student.” For the most part, though, Litzenberger remembered Dolores as someone who could “laugh at herself and was a lovely person to work with.”

Following the end of the 1963-64 school year, Dolores had received her permanent certification to teach Social Studies at the 7-12 level and she also decided to enter graduate school at the University of Rochester. Determined to explore other possibilities in the field of education, Dolores became the Acting Registrar of Nazareth College, a position she would hold for the next five years. Sadly, it was also about this time, that her husband, David, became gravely ill with cancer. Despite his profound discomfort, David never wavered in the support of his wife, and Dolores achieved her Master of Arts in

Education in June 1965. She was also inducted into the UR chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma later that year. Shortly after Dolores' graduation from the University of Rochester, David Fay died on Aug. 5, 1965, just shy of their fifth wedding anniversary. They were both just 29 years old.

In 1966, Dolores met Bruce R. Powers, a visiting professor assigned to Nazareth's English Department. Their first encounter occurred when Bruce came to the Registrar's Office and asked who was responsible for scheduling his Shakespeare class at 8 o'clock in the morning. Upon learning who made the decision, Bruce acquiesced to his friends in years to come that he could not stay upset for too long with such a commanding – and attractive – bearer of bad news. Bruce left Nazareth the following year to join the English faculty at Niagara University and began the groundwork for establishing NU's Communication Studies Program. Despite being separated by rigorous academic endeavors, Dolores and Bruce remained in touch. Within a year and half, Dolores joined Bruce in residing in Niagara County, but not before they were married on July 25, 1969, in her then home parish of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Rochester's 19th Ward. While taking six years off from her career to raise her two children and briefly pursue part-time doctoral studies in counseling at UR, Dolores returned to teaching in 1977 to head an 8th-grade classroom at Stella Niagara Education Park in Lewiston.

During her 10-year tenure at Stella Niagara, Dolores excelled in many capacities in the course of teaching her students. While her main focus was teaching the social studies curriculum at SNEP, Dolores proved her ability to lead instruction in other subjects, such as English, Computers, and especially Algebra, or what was then known as Course I high school mathematics.

Fellow teacher Susan Sinski, now Curriculum Consultant at SNEP, reflected on her memories of her dear friend and colleague: "Dolores and I began working together at Stella Niagara in 1981. At the time, she was a 7th-grade

teacher and I taught 6th-grade. She immediately made me feel welcome. I quickly realized why so many students loved her classes. Dolores' wealth of knowledge offered her students an education that was priceless, one that they probably could not fully appreciate until much later in life." As previously indicated, this assertion by Mrs. Sinski essentially came to pass.

Among the social media messages that were posted in honor of Mrs. Powers, two of the most common themes reflected were not only about her personal style, but her desire to create an environment for learning. SNEP Class of '85 member Emma Pobjoy, from Thorold, Ont., claimed that because of Mrs. Powers, "our years at Stella Niagara were a fantastic experience" and "character building." Class of '86 member Sharon Packman DePlato remarked that Mrs. Powers "challenged us, but was always fair, and she also taught us to have a healthy respect for learning by exploring different points of view." But of all the ways that Mrs. Powers' SNEP students remembered her, several students were most grateful for her instruction in math.

Philadelphia, Pa. physician Lalitha Trivikram said to Mrs. Powers, "Thank you for teaching all the young women in your math classes that girls can indeed be good at math." Joanna Daeschner implored of Mrs. Powers, "I will never forget your wit, style and strength. I've told my own daughter about you when she has struggled with geometry. I remember you telling me that just because something is hard, it isn't necessarily a bad thing. I have persevered through my days and eventually learned I have no limits, other than those I were to impose on myself." In 1987, Mrs. Powers left Stella Niagara, and her teaching career, to take an executive assistant position at the Niagara Falls-based metallurgical company, SKW, later CCMA.

Mrs. Powers worked as Executive Assistant to SKW's then President, Eduardo Heumann, until Jan. 2006. She retired from CCMA shortly following

the death of her mother, Mary, in Dec. 2005.

In her retirement, Dolores focused on her pursuits that she truly enjoyed, especially her Roman Catholic faith, the arts, and the opportunity to travel. She performed several roles in St. Jude the Apostle Parish of North Tonawanda including choir member, Eucharistic Adoration Committee member, and Lector. She also participated in several local Catholic social organizations such as Buffalo Cursillo and was a member of a few Bible Study groups. Dolores' appreciation of the arts included annual trips to the Shaw and Stratford Festivals as well as Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra concerts and Kavinoky Theater plays that she attended with fellow former SNEP teachers. She was also an avid member of the AAA Western and Central New York's Solo Travelers Club and she participated in day bus trips to several destinations in New York state, New England, and even Hawaii. In recent years, she had taken personal trips with her sister, Kathy, to places such as Mexico. Their 2018 trip to Mexico proved especially memorable because as Kathleen Jackson remembered, "My son, John, and his wife, Laura, were delighted to experience Dolores' company and had looked forward to another opportunity to travel with her. It wasn't necessary for John to humor his "old auntie," he was really so glad that she came along."

Unfortunately, about two weeks before Dolores and Kathleen were set to embark on a bus trip of Nova Scotia in July 2019, Dolores' illness came upon her. In the words of her daughter, Tricia, it was as if "a gear had sprung in the back of a clock, and nothing could ever put it back in place."

Dolores was preceded in death by her second husband, Bruce, on April 3, 2012. They had been married for 42 years.

In addition to her daughter, Patricia, and her sister, Kathleen, survivors include a son, Christopher D. Powers; her sister, Sr. Joan Dawson, OSF; three

nephews Daniel, John and Michael Bartels, and cousin Maryellen Freemesser Manning.

Dolores' memorial service had been postponed a year because of the pandemic. A Memorial Mass will now be offered at 10 a.m. April 24, 2021 in St. Jude the Apostle Parish, North Tonawanda.

Cemetery Details

Mount Olivet Cemetery

4000 Elmwood Avenue
Town Tonawanda, NY 14120

Previous Events

Memorial Mass

APR **24**. 10:00 AM (ET)

St Jude the Apostle Parish
800 Niagara Falls Blvd.
North Tonawanda, NY

Tribute Wall

MC

“ This is Mike and M. E. (Mary Esther) Clark, and we send our condolences to you. We have very fond memories of "Dory" in the "early" years. Mike especially remembers going to high school events with her and she to his events. We were quite good friends when we were first married and she and Dave were Godparents to our second child Eileen. Unfortunately, she also passed away in September, 2019, in hospice also. We fully intended to go to her memorial service April 25, but of course, that is out of the question. Our prayers are with you, Kathy, and the family. May your memories comfort you at this difficult time. God Bless..

Michael/Mary E. Clark - April 14, 2020 at 02:56 PM

VH

“ Vanessa Hinton lit a candle in memory of Dolores D Powers



Vanessa Hinton - February 28, 2020 at 07:36 PM

KJ

“ Kathleen M Jackson lit a candle in memory of Dolores D Powers



Kathleen M Jackson - February 28, 2020 at 07:04 PM