

SSNDs celebrate their religious community's 185th jubilee

The School Sisters of Notre Dame in the Archdiocese of Baltimore marked the 185th anniversary of the founding of their religious community with a celebration at Columbus Gardens in Perry Hall May 7.

“Maryland Celebration: SSND Education Calling Us Back Together” included more than 70 School Sisters; a roll call of nearly 30 schools where they taught, all of which had former students in attendance; and entertainment by students from Institute of Notre Dame in Baltimore and Notre Dame Preparatory School in Towson, both of which were founded by the SSNDs.

A news release from the SSNDs quoted JoAnn Spinnato Stelmack, IND Class of '72: “It was fun to reminisce with classmates and former teachers, who left an indelible mark on me during my time at IND, and to hear of the many wonderful deeds the School Sisters continue to do. I am forever grateful to them.”

The fundraiser included the School Sisters' inaugural Philanthropy Recognition Award for Outstanding Volunteer, given posthumously to Jacqueline Marie Buedel. She was taught by the School Sisters at the former parish school at St. Mary of the Assumption in Govans, and then at Notre Dame Preparatory, where she was in the class of 1973.

Buedel volunteered for the SSNDs at her alma mater and other organizations, and at the time of her death was director of Academic and Career Development at Caroline Center, a sponsored ministry of the SSND's Atlantic-Midwest Province. Her mother, Marilyn Buedel, accepted the award on her behalf.

Sister Charmaine Krohe, provincial leader, used her remarks to highlight the order's legacy, which now includes work in Haiti.

"The sisters remain dedicated to the belief that the world can be transformed through education," she said. "In addition to the classroom, SSNDs serve in parish ministry, pastoral care and spiritual direction, health care settings, job training centers and facilities for the homeless - wherever the greatest need calls them. In all cases, our sisters are women of prayer and seekers of social justice.

"We are doing work with human trafficking and slave labor, fair trade and fair food practices. Our university (Notre Dame of Maryland University in Baltimore) is engaged in teacher training in Haiti and our sisters, employees, staff and sponsored ministries throughout the province support water initiatives and model communities in Haiti."

Archbishop William E. Lori was among those who paid homage to the School Sisters, and Bishop Mark E. Brennan offered the blessing.

The timing of the event had a connection to the SSND's foundress, Blessed Mary Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger, who died May 9, 1897, when the congregation numbered approximately 2,300 sisters.

For more information about the School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic-Midwest Province, visit amssnd.org.