



IAAS Walks of Life 2011
Sr. Mary Ann Flannery, SC

Three years ago, Sister Mary Ann Flannery began what she considers her third career. She took on the challenge of becoming the first woman director of the Jesuit Retreat House in Parma, the oldest retreat center in the country.

She was born in Pittsburgh, the oldest of seven children. Her maternal grandmother, Catherine McCreanor, was brought from Ireland to America by her parents and became an early leader in the women's suffrage movement in Pittsburgh.

Sister Mary Ann was raised in East Cleveland and Oakwood, graduating from Hoban-Dominican High School in Cleveland before entering the Vincentian Sisters, which later merged with the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. She received her bachelor's degree in English Literature and Latin from Siena Heights University in Adrian, Michigan.

Early in her career, she taught English Literature at Lumen Cordium High School in Bedford and Notre Dame College in South Euclid. She also taught at Kent State University, where she earned her master's degree in literature and her Ph.D. in rhetoric and journalism. She particularly enjoyed teaching 17th Century English Literature

Between 1971 and 1983, she served on her order's leadership team, including six years as Mother Superior. She also served in social justice causes working with local organizations on the relocation of Central American refugees.

Prior to 2008, Sister Mary Ann served as chairwoman of the Communications Department at John Carroll University, where she taught for 19 years and was instrumental in setting up a digital broadcast studio.

While teaching, she also wrote numerous free-lance articles that appeared in several magazines and newspapers, including The Plain Dealer.

In 2006, the Siena Heights University Alumni Association presented Sister Mary Ann with an award in recognition for her accomplishments as an educator, a leader in her congregation and a socially concerned citizen of the world.

Her lifetime contribution, the award notes, "reflects an unwavering concern for the needs of others."

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