

CNR Spotlight - Dorothy Short, SN '89



Like hundreds of other graduates of the College of New Rochelle, Dorothy Short, SN '89, exemplifies its motto "Serviam" and was inspired by the dedication and compassion of the Ursuline nuns who served as her teachers, advisers and mentors.

But the impact of the College and its strong Ursuline heritage is more personal for her. Dorothy Short studied at two CNR schools which her aunt, Sister Dorothy Ann Kelly, established during her 25 years as President of CNR, the School of New Resources (SNR) and the School of Nursing (SN). Dorothy and her sister, Eileen Short Quigley, SAS '88, are daughters of Eileen Kelly Short, SNR '97, the younger sister of Sister Dorothy Ann, SAS '51.

Long before enrolling as students at CNR, Dorothy and Eileen Short Quigley felt the influence of Sister Dorothy Ann and other Ursulines who were members of the order's Eastern Province. The Short family frequently would visit "Aunt Dorothy" on the New Rochelle campus and she would also come to their Long Island home, sometimes with as many as six other Ursulines.

"It was so nice to be among these strong women," said Dorothy, now 64 and an RN in the Home Hospice Program of Calvary Hospital in the Bronx. The family visits to the New Rochelle campus continued through the next generation with Eileen Short Quigley's children. Dorothy recalled how her niece, Kelly, and nephew, Connor, would distinguish between the two Aunt Dorothys - her and their great aunt, Sister Dorothy Ann. "They would call her 'Aunt Dorothy with the bell' " because the Ursuline leader of CNR would allow Kelly and Connor to ring the bells during Mass in the Holy Family Chapel at CNR.

Dorothy remembers her aunt was "very open" about her work experiences and travel, telling her, her sister and their three brothers about her trip to Belfast, Ireland at the height of the "Troubles" and the later visit to the US (and the CNR campus) by Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams, who won the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts in Northern Ireland. Years later, in 1995, while still President of the College which she had expanded to include four schools, Sister Dorothy Ann was chosen to be a delegate to the United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing.

Despite her aunt's demanding responsibilities as president of the college and a nationally-recognized leader in the fields of education and social justice, Dorothy remembers Sister Dorothy Ann most for her humility. "She was a very humble person, so caring and giving. She always made time for her family."

Unlike Sister Dorothy Ann, who started as a freshman at CNR in the fall of 1947, right after graduating from St. Simon Stock, a small coed parochial high school in the Bronx, Dorothy worked

for six years after graduating from Valley Stream North High School on Long Island. Dorothy said she didn't have the confidence to start college full-time. Instead, her aunt and another Ursuline helped get her a job in passenger services for an airline at JFK Airport. While Dorothy enjoyed the travel perks, she said she and other young employees would be the first to be laid off in slowdowns.

On her aunt's advice, she took several courses at the School of New Resources' New Rochelle campus. Guided by professors including Sister Marie Celine and Joan Bailey, then-associate vice president for academic affairs, Dorothy decided she was ready to pursue a degree in nursing. "It was something I had always wanted to do," she said. After taking prerequisite courses in chemistry and physiology at Nassau Community College, she enrolled in CNR's School of Nursing and found the faculty and courses "very empowering."

Although other students knew that Dorothy was the CNR President's niece, they didn't kid her, she said. She remembers her aunt as providing "such great support and encouragement."

Dorothy graduated from SN in spring 1989, receiving the Peggy McNulty Award for her compassion and sensitivity to her patients. She returned to Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital in Manhattan, where she had done a residency as a student nurse, to work for almost a year as an RN on a ward for children with cancer. Then she moved to upstate New York, to work with children at the Anderson Center for Autism, in Staatsburg. She returned to Long Island to care for her seriously ill father. After he died, she went back to the Staatsburg facility. In 2000, Dorothy took a job at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx which soon after started its Home Hospice Program. The program provides comprehensive end-of-life care to patients and support to their families, both at home and in some nursing homes in New York City, Long Island and the northern counties of Westchester and Rockland.

Dorothy is committed to providing continuity of service to her patients. "My goal is to admit patients and always to be there with them through end- of-life," she explained. She may visit six patients a day, spending about an hour with each, or more if their pain needs are greater. Dorothy acknowledged her job is stressful, but said she finds it very rewarding. "I meet people where they are" as they approach their final days." How does she relieve the stress? "I'm lucky to have good support from family and friends."

Among the nursing homes where Calvary provides hospice care is Andrus on Hudson, on the east shore of the Hudson River in Hastings-on-Hudson. Dorothy's recent patients at Andrus on Hudson have included some Ursuline nuns, several who knew her since she was a young girl.

Reflecting on the influence of the Ursulines on her life and career, she said, "Being able to care for the Sisters at Andrus is a privilege."

- Pat Keegan Abels SAS '73
CNR Alumni Communications Committee