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Cor Unum Award

Associated Alumnae and Alumni of the Sacred Heart

Patricia Dalferes Martin

“To be a joy-bearer and a joy-giver says everything: it means one is faithfully living for God and that nothing else counts; and if one gives joy to others we are doing God’s work.”

— Janet Erskine Stewart, RSCJ

Patricia Dalferes Martin has many gifts: she is a kind and compassionate friend, a community builder, a thoughtful mentor, a respected leader in women’s ministry, a champion of justice and dignity for all people. Patsy embraces each of these roles with a deep and abiding joy. Our joy-bearer and joy-giver: “Patsy of the joyful heart.” Since her years at Grand Coteau, Patsy has always claimed two families. As a child of the Sacred Heart, her life has been shaped by her active faith, her intellectual curiosity and love of learning, and her commitment to service with meaning and purpose. The Religious who were her beloved teachers first modeled these values for her, and devotion to the Sacred Heart community and its mission have been central to her life.

While a student at Coteau, Patsy was honored to be received as a Child of Mary on December 8, 1946. Graduating the following year, Patsy studied at Maryville College before finishing the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 1950. She married Woods Martin two years later, and they soon made their home in Houston, Texas. Patsy was a founding member of the Houston Associates and joined other alumnae to establish Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart, which opened in 1960. As a Duchesne parent (her only daughter Mary Pat graduated in 1977) Patsy served as the unofficial guardian of all things Sacred Heart, teaching the girls *Coeur de Jesus* and traditional songs for Mater’s Feast, telling stories of *primes* and *gouters*, and even practicing graduation curtsies with the senior class.

Patsy’s commitment to Sacred Heart extends across the country and the world. With Woods she celebrated the canonization of Rose Phillipine Duchesne in Rome. She was a delegate to the Provincial Assembly in 2001, invited as a lay person who particularly understood and represented the charism of Sacred Heart. Patsy has visited retired Religious all over the country. RSCJ schools in Mexico and Uganda are dear to her heart, and she loves to receive letters from their students, celebrating the reach of Sacred Heart education. Patsy and Woods faithfully join the Sacred Heart community Mass every Wednesday on Duchesne’s campus, a core ritual of Patsy’s spiritual life, a weekly visit home.

In every role of her life Patricia Dalferes Martin exemplifies what it means to be a true child of the Sacred Heart, a joyful and faithful servant of its mission and values, a member of the family.

Mary Pat Martin
New Orleans April 27, 2019