

Epilogue Constancy Amid Change

As we bring this history to a close, it is important to see the whole from the perspective in which it has been written.

It involves more than the experience of not just one generation but of many. Neither can it measure in words the dedication of so very many persons unnamed, without whom this university could not have come to be and without whose personal presence and unselfish service its mission could not have been continually revitalized.

This history does not pretend to be a strict scientific analysis or a purely empirical study. Neither is it a mere summary of facts. Rather, it is an interpretation of their significance seen in the light of the governing Providence of God. It is, above all, the unfolding of our educational heritage rooted in the legacy of Mercy handed on to us by that courageous, compassionate woman, Venerable Catherine McAuley, who founded the Sisters of Mercy. It might be called, in a sense, a kind of theology of history for it is a celebration of Mercy.

The preservation of this spirit through the years has been the result of the cohesive relationship of all the components that make up the University. Whether the title be President, Trustee, or Provost; Vice President, Dean, or Registrar; whether Archivist, Librarian, Teacher, or Student; Chaplain, Doctor, Nurse, or Receptionist; whether Director, Staff Member, or Secretary; Security Guard, Gardener, or Mail Courier; whether Maintenance Man, Housekeeper, Chef, Dietitian, or Waitress, all work together. All are a powerful influence in providing an environment for the students to learn, to grow, and to share, and above all, to search for the good purpose to which they ought to dedicate their lives.

This history has also shown the progressive expansion of a campus of one building in 1947 to a campus of 23 buildings in 1991; from a faculty of 12 then to a faculty today of 218; from a student body of 58 then to a student body of 2,407 today; from a four-year curriculum leading to a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Bachelor of Science in Home Economics, and a Bachelor of Commerce to an undergraduate curriculum of 40 areas of concentration with 28 specific majors as well as an undergraduate curriculum offering 15 master's programs.

Yet the years have not been without numerous difficulties, financial and otherwise, without opposition from various sources, without disappointments and the demands of unpredictable circumstances and the variables of trial and error—all this together with the daily constant concern for the continual advancement of the College as a whole. Thus each year has brought with it its own demands for courage to keep faith with the patterns of the past and the urgency to persevere in the unfolding of a fuller revelation of an educational ideal that might well have lost its meaning.

Within the compass of these nine chapters we have covered a span of 57 years. In 1934 Salve Regina College existed only as a name on a piece of paper. Today in fulfillment of all the persevering efforts of the past and the accomplishments of the present, Salve Regina College of 1947 has become Salve Regina University of 1991.

The future lies before us with all its complexities, insecurities, and questions. Our certitude rests on one premise. What has been, what is, and what will be points to *one end* which is always *present*. It is that interpenetrative quality of Mercy which is our heritage. It is ever future-oriented, ever coming to deeper realizations of its potentialities. Yet it never sacrifices its own identity and remains forever the courageous pursuit of Truth with compassionate love wherein "Mercy tempers justice." In this lies all Salve Regina University will strive ever more truly to be as it answers the call and challenge of the future. .

July 26, 1991