

Reflecting on My Salve Experience at 50 Years

I find it amazing to be reflecting on the 50th anniversary of my graduation from Salve Regina College. How can time fly by that quickly? My memories of Salve and what it has meant to me are so vivid that it is hard to believe that it was over 50 years ago.

Why did I go to Salve? In that tumultuous time at the end of high school I looked at Salve as an easy transition from high school. It would merely be the continuation of my Sisters of Mercy education. I had had a wonderful experience in high school at St. Xavier's Academy in Providence and I saw Salve as an extension of that experience. In addition, Salve was close by without being too close. It was close enough to give me the option of coming home whenever I wanted, but far enough away for me to live away from home.

What did I find at Salve? I found compatible, friendly roommates and classmates that were to become my lifelong friends. I found a challenging curriculum that channeled me into the sciences with the tutelage and encouragement of Sister Mary Philemon and the teaching of Dr. DiPippo, Mr. Bottari (later to become Dr. Bottari) and Dr. Morris. I found a beautiful place to go to college with great physical surroundings and proximity to the water. I found my future husband through a mixer with Providence College and I enjoyed many new experiences that I would remember for a lifetime. Just before my senior year in college I took a trip to Panama to visit my close friend and roommate for a month. It was an unforgettable pleasure to live with her family and learn more about her country.

What did I take away from Salve? Salve gave me an education that prepared me for two master's degrees, one for teaching science and the other in library science. That education was the foundation for a productive career in Navy medical librarianship and a love of science that I continue to enjoy. Salve provided me with the opportunity to meet people whose friendship I treasure to this day. Salve was where I met my husband and we began our wonderful life together. The memories we made at Salve were foundational to our extraordinary life. Salve allowed me to experience a sisterhood with my roommates and classmates that has enriched my life. I am not sure that the same magical time would have happened in a co-ed college although I am sure that I would have thoroughly enjoyed Salve had it been co-ed at the time.

What endures from my days at Salve? There are so many things that endure from those days that I am not sure that I can name them all. The things that are most prominent are the friendships, the professional preparation and the love of the outdoors and the active life that started there. The years since Salve has been kind to us overall, but I cannot help being saddened that my roommate, Kathie Burt Kocon, and my husband, Tom Pellegrino, are not here to celebrate this 50-year milestone with the rest of us. We are grateful to have had them in our lives and we have wonderful memories of these extraordinary people that we met at Salve. We were so lucky to have come of age at Salve Regina College.

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