

Mary Frances Lau Hirl
22 May 2018

I had wonderful professors who influenced my life while I was at Salve. Salve was a women's liberal arts Catholic college in the 1960s. The leadership was aware of the emphasis on math, science, med tech, and nursing. In the education department there was knowledge about a new field, so they implemented a special education concentration. The faculty encouraged many of the women to be ready to take on jobs related to new opportunities in women's education. For me those professors included Sister Katherine Mary and Miss Keenan, as well as Sister Suzanne. These women instructors were preparing us for changes in American life.

Sophomore year, a new professor of psychology, Sister Suzanne began teaching at Salve and her courses to say the least were in demand. When I was a junior, Sister Suzanne took me aside and told me about a new program, a minor in Special Education and they were hand picking ladies who could do this in two years and receive certification. I told her, "I am not interested, as I plan to be a psychologist and will be going to graduate school." Sister Suzanne said, "Maybe you will need a job after you graduate, especially if you get married." I told her, "I was not going to get married until I was at least 25." Less than two weeks later, I met the man who would become my dear husband and four months after I graduated we married. It has been nearly fifty years! When we moved to Ohio, I got a job, the first in the district with a special education degree.

Sister Katherine Mary taught us well but most of all her enthusiasm was contagious and we had the perseverance to be one of the first in our nation to be educated in the needs of special students. I finally have to mention Miss Keenan, who came to the Sociology department our Junior year. She taught us theory and how to apply it and often challenged us to be the best we could be. When I was attending Miami of Ohio for my Masters this background certainly helped me as I did research which was for several of the professors.

Salve has continued to be flexible and has always been prepared for the future as exemplified by the many different areas of study the University offers their students today.