

Memorial for Sr. Shirley Shirley Boucher

Recently Srs. Nancy Crossen and Dorothy (Pat) Real represented the congregation and Sr. Shirley Boucher's family at a memorial service for the donors in the Anatomical Gifts Program at the University of Southern Alabama. Following is Nancy's account of the experience. Prior to the experience they were asked to write a short account of the donor's life and intentions that students could transfer to an index card.

As we arrived on campus, there were young men everywhere giving directions to the Laidlaw Building of Performing Arts, designated by a beautiful fountain at the entrance. Once inside we were directed to the concert hall and given an agenda card. On a wide empty stage, a pianist was playing as if preparing for a concert. Nine chairs, a lectern, and two large attractive floral arrangements were positioned on the wide stage. We waited as the theatre began to fill up with family members while the pianist continued to play. The whole atmosphere was reverent, peaceful, and very respectful. As the pianist completed her concert, the audience of perhaps 200 filled the concert hall.

Greetings were given by Dr. Glenn Wilson, head of the medical division, followed by readings and student reflections on the sacredness of meeting the relatives of the donors. Four medical students read the names of the 25-30 donors giving the College of Medicine and the reflections submitted by their families. These were beautiful mo-



ments revealing great lives of noble people, all of whom wished to contribute to the betterment of others through their gift.

Following this period of overwhelming emotion, a guitarist played softly during a quiet reflection period. Dr. Wilson then spoke again, thanking the families for their support of their loved ones and their support of better prepared medical students. The program closed quietly. Families moved toward the exit doors where they were greeted by several female medical students who presented a rose to each family and directed all toward a lovely reception with finger foods, fruit, and punch.

This was truly a most reverent and caring event which I know Shirley must have thought appropriate and dignified in fine Southern tradition. Sr. Pat and I were happy to be representing both Shirley's family and our Franciscan family at this hallowed gathering. I know Shirley was there with us and applauding every minute of it.

Nancy Crossen, OSF

Sr. Shirley Ann Boucher, OSF

Shirley Ann was born in 1947 in Whitefish, Montana, with a great enthusiasm for life. During her college years, Shirley entered the Sisters of St. Francis religious community and served in science and math education for more than 30 years throughout the western states. In 1993 Sr. Shirley entered a mission group to come to Mobile, Alabama, to revitalize Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic School. This she did with much gusto and once again established an active science department enriched by her experiences at an Astronaut Space Camp in 1974. She involved her students in the GLOBE Program sponsored by NASA for tracking atmospheric changes. Responding to the numerous chemical plants in the area, Sr. Shirley began a collaboration with the Risk Management Office and the local chemical companies to create and publicize a Risk Management Plan for Mobile County. In this endeavor Sr. Shirley acted as representative of the local Mobile community and was instrumental in developing workable emergency plans for "worst case scenarios."

In 2006 Sr. Shirley was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer and in scientific fashion entered an experimental program at M.D. Anderson Medical Center, Houston. Three years later in June 2009, she departed this life to follow her plan to pursue her love of science through the donation of her body to USA Medical Center to further benefit others. This was a proud and well-planned moment to close her earthly life.