

It is truly amazing that despite raising 14 children on a modest military salary, our Father, Col. Andy Mungenast and our Mother, Norma, were able to save funds to establish a charitable trust due to their lifelong commitment of charitable giving, Dad's astute investment capabilities and their frugal living. One of the blessings of their sacrifices and generosity is the establishment of a scholarship fund for students at Montgomery Catholic Preparatory School.



After Mom had been diagnosed with an aggressive and terminal brain tumor in 2014, we surprised Mom at her 89th birthday with our plans to establish a scholarship in her name. God blessed us with the opportunity to spend almost 11 months with Mom after her diagnosis and before her death on February 22, 2015. Mom herself selected the criteria for award of the scholarship, particularly financial need, as Mom knew full well the sacrifices she and Dad had made to send their children to Catholic school.

We, the 14 children of Andy and Norma Mungenast, are delighted to introduce you to our Mother, Norma Rose Fahey Mungenast, a remarkable lady and the person in whose memory we award one or more annual scholarships.

Norma Rose Fahey was born on November 1, 1925 and raised in East St. Louis, just across the river from St. Louis. She attended Catholic schools for her entire 12 years of schooling. Her family fell on hard times when Mom was 15 years old. Her father, an alcoholic, left the family suddenly and Mom's older sister worked to pay Mom's tuition at St. Teresa Catholic High School for her remaining two years. The economy had not fully recovered from the Great Depression so her sister's commitment to pay the tuition of \$50 a year was truly a sizable sum and a most generous gift to her younger sister. How fitting that Mom, through this scholarship in her honor, can pay forward the generosity shown to her.



Mom and Dad met on the Admiral, a popular and unique excursion boat docked on the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri, where they both worked. World War II had just ended when Dad and Mom married in December 1945. Shortly after the wedding, Dad left for the Army Air Corp and then overseas for his military assignment. Mom went through her pregnancy and the birth of their first child, Andy, Jr., without Dad being present. It became a pattern that repeated itself in years to come as Dad's military assignments or academic pursuits took him away from home for varying periods of time. Dad was already a middle-aged Major when he lived out of town and obtained his bachelor degree. He later added a Master's Degree in International Affairs from George Washington University and an MBA from Auburn University. Mom was there to support Dad in those degrees and

the doctorate degree they both earned in the school of hard knocks in figuring out how to make ends meet with one income, fourteen kids to clothe and an equal number of mouths to

feed. Suffice it to say they both valued education and sacrificed to send their children to Catholic schools for part or all of their education.

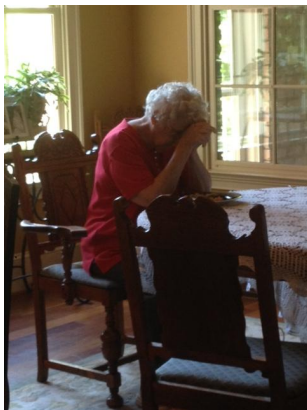
Norma Rose, age 21, may have been clueless as to parenting her first child, but she quickly went from first time parent to Mom of a small army as the children came in rapid succession (14 children in 19 years to be precise). Our brother Jim, number 3 in chronological order of siblings, has the distinction of being a “double twin” as he was born within 12 months of his older brother John and within 12 months of his younger sister Mary Sharon.



Stop and think for just a moment about the magnitude of the responsibility of raising 14 children on a modest military salary that did not even initially pay for the expenses of childbirth. In the early years of their marriage, money was extremely limited. Mom and Dad were not only struggling to pay day-to-day bills, they also had to save for the next hospital bill that would be due at the birth of the next child.

With Dad at work and out of the home for his academic pursuits and military assignments, it begs the question: Just how *did* Mom do it?

Mom was a mere 98 pounds when she and Dad married and she remained a petite lady even as she birthed 14 children. She was the ultimate multi-task-er who lived like she believed “cleanliness was next to godliness.” She was forever in motion doing all that needed to be done in a household with 16 people.



Mom was the first to get up in the morning and the last to go to bed. She was adept at making a casserole with just a shred of meat. She was our in-house hair dresser and barber. And of course she was our in-house Emergency Medical Technician. The military doctors must have known Mom on a first name basis. There was one day when Mom actually made three separate trips to the medical clinic on base to receive care for three different children.

St. Francis of Assisi is credited with the well-known quote: “Preach the Gospel. When necessary, use words.” What an appropriate description of the faith of our precious Mother, Norma Rose!

Mom lived her ordinary life in an extraordinary way. Her life was remarkable because she lived out the Gospel in the mundane, demanding and hurried life she was given. God gifted our Mother with the grace to handle the many mundane tasks that defined her day. God gifted our Mother with grace to navigate the unexpected, and there are always unexpected moments when raising 14 kids! God gave Mom grace for peace over anxiety and grace to forgive. Mom once quipped that she “couldn’t worry about *all* of the kids *all* of the time. “Besides”, she said, “*some* needed more worrying than *others*!”

At both her 80th and 89th birthdays, we held a candlelight service in which each of us 14 children spoke of those qualities we loved about our Mother. We spoke of Mom’s humor,

perseverance, energy level, work ethic, guidance, integrity, humility and ability to forgive. We spoke of how Mom's guidance and unconditional love and belief in each of us encouraged us to reach our greatest potential especially in the trials of our lives. We spoke of Mom's kindness: how there was not only room at the table but there was also room in her heart for everyone.

At those candlelight services, we spoke of Mom's faith and how her example impacted others. Mom quietly prayed for all of her family. She could often be seen with her head bowed saying a rosary or reciting the Divine Mercy. Mom prayed without ceasing for priests, seminarians and for the unborn. She prayed for this country and the military, especially the troops overseas. We know this because we witnessed her discipline in carrying with her wherever she went copies of favorite prayers for these causes. We witnessed her rosary beads on her nightstand, underneath her pillow and in her hands as she fell asleep.



We, the 14 children of Norma Rose, have come to appreciate the sacrifices Mom made for us when we were growing up and how much influence she had on who we are and what we have achieved. The oldest of the siblings, Andy Jr., wrote to Mom on her 80th birthday that her "impact on our lives speaks as you look at the degrees obtained, the professions by which we are employed, and the closeness of the family even though we are spread out geographically. Your matriarchal impact will always be with us."

Our brother Mike, the youngest of the 14, wrote to Mom on that same birthday that with her capabilities she could have been "a corporate CEO, judge, accountant, social worker, engineer, educator, salesman and a General." He went on to say "I can not imagine how with 14 kids you managed to wash clothes, give baths, clean rooms, help with homework, teach Sunday school, attend plays and ballgames, break up sibling fights, and make time for meaningful conversation with each of us ... Except that verse keeps ringing in my ear. (*Phillipians 2:3 'Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility. Consider others more important than yourself'*) Do NOTHING out of selfish ambition ... Mom- you did nothing but put your ambitions aside."

The Mungenast siblings are delighted to honor our Mother's memory with this scholarship to one or more students annually who, without the funds, might not be able to receive an education at a Catholic school.

For those who read this short biography and might be inclined to help students through this scholarship because of the life of Norma Mungenast, we welcome your contributions. Wouldn't it be remarkable if a recipient of this scholarship or someone who had benefited from the generosity of another in receiving a Catholic education, might be inclined to contribute to this fund. That would, indeed, be a fitting tribute to Norma Rose Mungenast and another example of "paying forward".