

Loretto

M A G A Z I N E

Summer 2009

Volume 51, No. 2

Early Catholic
settlers blaze the
trail to Loretto



On the road to Jubilee 2012

Silver Jubilarians celebrate 25 years in Loretto

Archives/Heritage Center: Phase I nearly complete

About this issue . . .

In this summer edition of *Loretto Magazine* we bring you the first in-depth piece in our new series, "On the Road to Jubilee 2012," in preparation for the Loretto Community's 200th anniversary. Antoinette Doyle SL, educator, expert historian, tour guide, and long-time resident of Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, Ky., writes of the earliest stirrings of Loretto. She tells the story of the first Catholics who fled religious persecution in Europe, sailed to America and disembarked on the coastline of the Maryland colony. From there the tale unfolds of their migration to Kentucky, the growing need to educate their families, and the young, devout women who responded to this need.

The Archives/Heritage Center Project, so generously funded by your donations, is really taking shape inside and out. We offer a photo spread of this beautiful facility and a vision of where the project is headed in the next few years.

Stories about our large group of 2009 Jubilarians had to be split between our spring issue and the current edition. Here you will find the personal thoughts and reflections of the Silver Jubilarians — those who joined the Loretto Community 25 years ago.

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About the Cover: A deeply rutted wagon trail and split-rail fence evoke the early pioneer years when Catholic families migrated to Kentucky to carve homesteads out of the wilderness. Antoinette Doyle SL, a lifelong student of Loretto history, writes the first contributed piece in our new series "On the road to Jubilee 2012," page 6. Her narrative starts at the beginning, in the late 18th century, before the trails were yet blazed.



LORETTO COMMUNITY

Sisters of Loretto • Co-members of Loretto

We work for justice and act for peace because the Gospel urges us.

Loretto Community members teach, nurse, care for the elderly, lobby, minister in hospitals, provide spiritual direction and counseling, resettle refugees, staff parishes, try to stop this country's nuclear weapons build-up, work with the rural poor, and minister to handicapped, alcoholic, and mentally ill adults. Our ministries are diverse.

Founded in 1812, we include 250 sisters and 200 co-members. Co-members are those who, through mutual commitment, belong to the Loretto Community through a sharing of spirit and values and who participate in activities that further our mission.

For more information about the Loretto Community, contact:

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Loretto Magazine is published three times a year by the Loretto Development Office.

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Dear Friends of Loretto,

I am often asked, “What exactly does a development director do?” So I thought I would take this opportunity to share a sampling of my activities during the past three months. As our goal statement says, “the development director makes the mission of the Loretto Community known beyond our own members . . . inviting others to participate in Loretto's mission by sharing their time, talent, and resources with us.”

Most of the time, I feel like I “live life in the fast lane.” During the past three months, I often wished I could “sprout wings” and fly directly to my destination. I spend a lot of time in airports, but I am too distracted by the all the activity to accomplish any serious work while waiting for my departing flight.

I spent a week at Loretto Motherhouse in March attending a finance meeting, touring the Archives/Heritage Center and conferring with our Archivist, Sister Kate Misbauer, regarding the next steps to complete this project, contacting local business persons to enlist their support with Phase II of the Archives Project and meeting with the newly formed Loretto Alumnae Association Board Members from Louisville, Ky.

Holy Week and Easter were spent in St. Louis with my family, and then I flew to El Paso to attend a board meeting of our Loretto-sponsored Nazareth Hall Nursing Center. My term on this board will end this year. I also serve on the Jubilee 2012 Committee, the Pakistan Committee and on the board of Newman University, Wichita, Kan.

The last week of April, Sister Donna Mattingly and I planned a photo-taking tour of historic Loretto locations in the state of Missouri — connecting with many interesting personalities along the way! In all, we covered 2,700 miles in eight days. We returned to Denver with a great respect for our pioneer sisters who traveled this same territory to found (and in many cases, build) a network of academies and schools without the convenience of interstate highways and/or the comfort of a Toyota Camry! The outcome of this tour was a PowerPoint presentation at the Loretto Assembly in St. Louis in late June.

The lovely month of May found me back at Loretto Motherhouse to celebrate my Golden Jubilee with my novitiate classmates and our community at Loretto. What a glorious celebration! There was

- **Prayer time** with the community and **personal reflective/sharing time** as part of our mini-retreat with Elaine Prevallet SL;
- Time to **renew friendships** and catch up with each others' lives;
- **A tree-planting ceremony** in honor of the Jubilarians by the group who were postulants when we were second-year novices;
- **Choir practice** to learn new music composed by another classmate, Doris Pittman, for this celebration;
- **Enjoyment and appreciation of the many “special touches”** provided by the Motherhouse community and staff to make our time together truly memorable!

Now I am back in the office facing deadlines for *Loretto Magazine* and some assignments for the Loretto Assembly in St. Louis in late June, working on the annual golf tournament, maintaining personal contact with benefactors, planning for the next fund-raising appeal, and lending a Loretto presence/support at a variety of functions beyond the Loretto Community. And to think, this exciting life of service to Loretto was offered to the entire community and I was the lucky one who “landed” in this ministry!

Sister Denise Ann SL

Sister Denise Ann Clifford SL
Development Director



"Off I go . . . into the wild blue yonder . . ."

Archives/Heritage Project: Taking shape inside and out

By Denise Ann Clifford SL

Photos by Donna Mattingly SL

Recent visitors to Loretto Motherhouse have been treated to a “Sneak Preview” of the new Loretto Archives/Heritage Center. The initial reaction of most visitors is the wonder of the space, featuring high ceilings, openness, strategically placed adjustable track lighting, and the beauty of the original wood floor. Another fascinating feature is the number of unique storage areas located on the second level. Many have asked if they could claim one of these areas as a personal “getaway” space for quiet time!

Many Loretto artifacts have been moved to the entrance/welcoming area and display rooms. Staff members are settled into their offices on the second floor and open for business. The files have been installed and most of the archival printed materials have found their new home space on the shelving, sorted and stored in special acid-free boxes. Each box is accurately labeled with the contents. “What comes from one box must be returned to the same box.”

Phase II of this project consists of developing a master plan for the internal layout and design. Some exhibits will be permanent; others will rotate or commemorate a specific period of our history or feature Loretto foundations celebrating significant milestones. The master plan will allow us to develop the interior in stages. Our challenge is to explore and secure possible funding sources for this next phase.

If you are interested, the enclosed contribution envelope may be used to support this project, or please contact the Development Office for additional information.



The Archives/Heritage Project, housed in the renovated 1886 Auditorium building at the Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, Ky., includes an elevator and a handicapped-accessible ramp. Construction is complete.



An arched doorway leads to the artifact display area split into four segments. Original hardwood floors grace level one.



Above from left: Katherine Ann Heinz SL, Janet Rabideau SL, Marcia Mohin, and Kate Misbauer SL work in the Archives/Heritage Center. Middle: Spacious workroom on second floor. Below: One of many new display rooms. Right: The new entrance as seen from inside.



1633 — 1812
***Catholics Settle in America,
Loretto Story Begins***

1812 — 1830
***Foundation and Early Days;
Moving Beyond Kentucky***

1830 — 1900
***Education Mission Expands;
Loretto Pushes Westward***

1900 — 1960
***Prime Time for Loretto as
Leading American Educators***

1960 — 1970
***Loretto Examines Governance;
Co-Membership Initiated***

1970 — 1990
***Loretto Adjusts to Change
in Post-Vatican II World***

1990 — 2000
***Social Justice Activity Grows;
International Collaboration***

2000 — 2012
***Imagine 2000 and Beyond;
Journey to Jubilee 1812-2012***

2012
***Loretto Proclaims
200th Jubilee!***



On the road to Jubilee 2012

A new beginning for Catholics seeking freedom of worship

By Antoinette Doyle SL

What motivates a person or group to leave familiar surroundings, a language and culture theirs from birth, and to move into the unknown? Are they compelled to depart, attracted by a new goal, or does the change happen by chance? As we trace the history of Loretto we shall note several forces at work.

Ancestors of early Kentucky Catholic settlers left England in November 1633 on two wooden sailing ships, the *Ark* and the *Dove*. They were going to America, seeking a new home with freedom of religion not available in their homeland.

The group of about 200 persons came equipped with supplies of food, tools, seeds, and roots for planting. Passengers included farmers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and personnel of all trades needed for a permanent settlement. After a hazardous journey they finally went ashore four months later on a small island off the coast of Maryland. They had reached their destination; it was March 25, 1634.

The colony, open to all who came seeking a new life, settled and grew. The

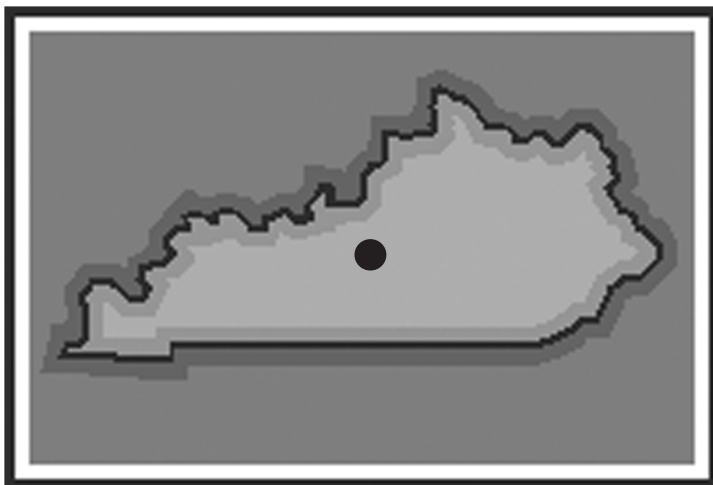
early acceptance of all religious groups, however, ultimately led to political and religious restrictions. Later settlers outnumbered the original Catholic group, and new laws treated them harshly politically, religiously, and economically. Freedom of religion was over for them, and they were ready to move again.

Moving west from Maryland

A league of 60 of these Catholic families made a pact that they would migrate westward. In 1785 Basil Hayden obtained from the government a 5,000-acre land grant in what would become the state of Kentucky. This he divided, and the settlers bought tracts of perhaps 200 acres from him. They came in groups of 10 or so families at a time and settled along creeks. Before these places had town names, they were known as Pottinger's Creek, or Hardin's Creek, or Coleman's Run.

Drawn again by the search for freedom, the people's goal was to begin anew in

Kentucky attained statehood on 1792, becoming the fifteenth state in the union. It was never a territory, and was originally part of Virginia until it became a state. The circle on the map at right indicates the five-county area known as the "Holy Land of Kentucky" shown in detail on the map below.



places close enough to protect one another and share a priest for religious services, if their petition to the bishop would be honored.

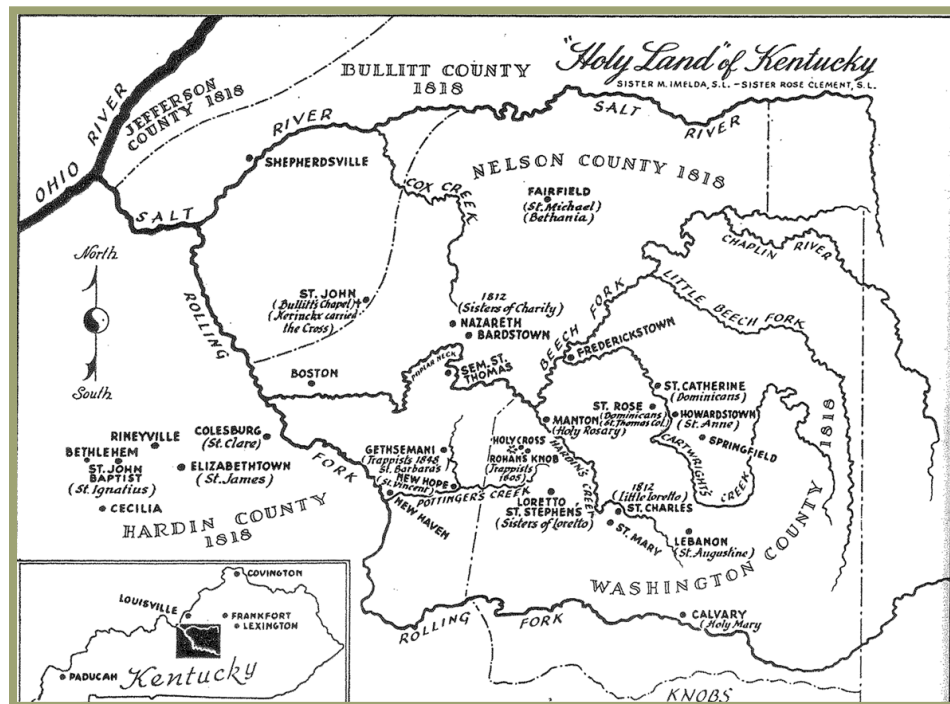
One of these settlers was Bennett Rhodes, whose land was at St. Mary's, Ky. Records show that he settled his father's will in Maryland in 1797 and was listed

as married in Kentucky in 1801. Soon afterward his sister Ann came to Kentucky for health reasons and lived first with a cousin and later with her brother Bennett. Their sister Mary soon joined them. These women are significant in Loretto history.

Missionary priests arrive

Stephen T. Badin (1768-1853) was forced to leave France after the French Revolution. The seminary he had entered was closed in 1789, and he came to America drawn by his desire to be a priest in active ministry. Finishing his studies, he was ordained by Bishop John Carroll in Baltimore in 1793, the first priest ordained in America.

He was sent as a missionary to Kentucky, which had become a state in 1792, and eventually settled on land in the area of the Catholic settlements. He named his place St. Stephen's Farm. This is now the location of Loretto Motherhouse. While other priests were in the region for short periods of time, Badin stayed for more than 20 years, returning to France in 1819. Nine years later he came back to America to continue his missionary work, but not in Kentucky.



Loretto Sisters Mary Imelda and Rose Clement created this map for the book "Giant in the Wilderness, A Biography of Father Charles Nerinckx," written by Helene Margaret and published in 1952. Catholic families were drawn to the verdant, fertile area just east of the Ohio River where five counties were founded among the Salt River, Rolling Fork, and Beech Fork tributaries. Priests and orders of monks and nuns came to build and sustain the faith as the people settled the land. The counties of Jefferson, Bullitt, Nelson, Hardin and Washington became the original homes of the Trappist monks, the Sisters of Charity, the Dominicans, and, of course, the Sisters of Loretto. The rich history and religious traditions of that early time continue today in the heart of the Kentucky "Holy Land."

A long-term helper arrived in the late 1700s in the person of Rev. Charles Nerinckx (1761-1824). He was forced to stop public ministry in his native Belgium due to restrictions placed on priests after the Revolution. Because he would not sign the oath pledging allegiance to the nation and king over the church, and to avoid imprisonment or death for his refusal to do

Civilized Europe might be restricting priestly service, but missionary work on the frontier was wide open and waiting.

this, he set out for America to continue his call to religious service. Arriving in 1804, he studied English for several months at Georgetown College and then was sent to Kentucky to assist Badin. Civilized Europe might be restricting priestly service, but missionary work on the frontier was wide open and waiting.

Nerinckx began his trip to Kentucky with a group of Trappist monks who were migrating from France to open a monastery not far from Badin's cabin. Traveling with baggage sufficient to open a new establishment, they were very slow. Nerinckx soon bought a horse and came on alone.

Daniel Boone and some earlier frontiersmen had taken the southern route in Kentucky. Nerinckx, however, traveled from Baltimore to Pittsburgh on foot,

turned south, crossed the Ohio River at Maysville, and then went on land again to Badin's area east of Bardstown. The total journey took about four months.

He arrived in 1805 to begin a ministry in that area that would last until 1824. He and Badin were circuit-riding priests, going from one settlement to another to serve and encourage the people in their faith.

Badin and Nerinckx believed that the way to secure religion in the families of the area was through the education of youth. For this they envisioned a group of religious women. A first attempt in 1805 resulted in a group of 20 interested women, but as time to start drew closer, the women and the community lost their enthusiasm. In 1807 a second attempt failed when just before seven women were to enter, fire destroyed the place that had been built for the convent.

In 1812 the pattern changed. The impetus came from women, not from the priests. Distressed because her brother's children were not being educated, Mary Rhodes had opened a log-cabin school on his property. She was joined by Christina Stuart and later by Ann (Nancy) Havern.

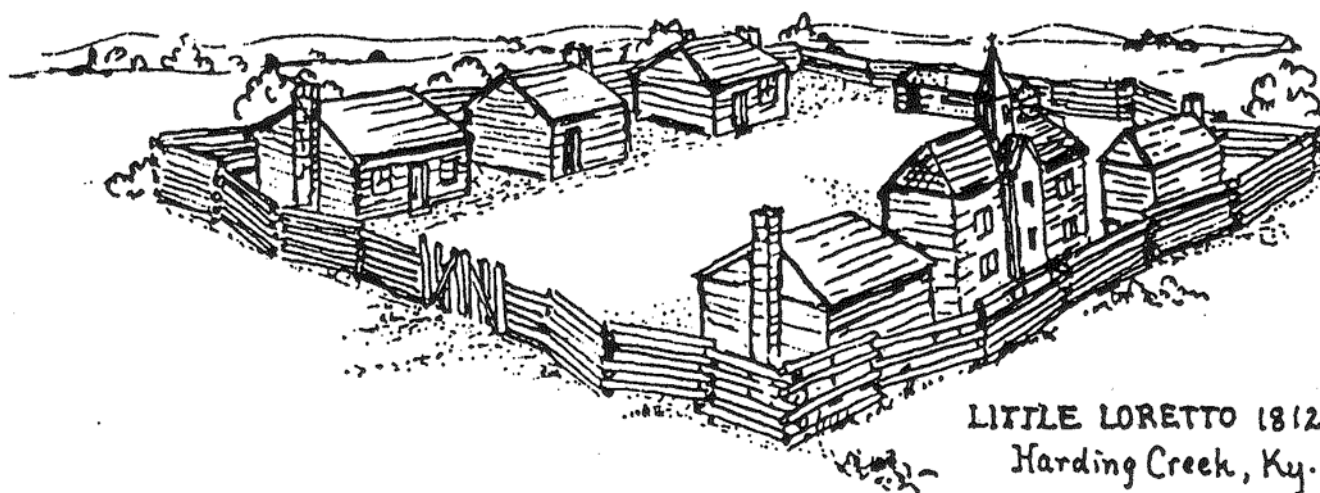
These three women wished to continue teaching but to do so as dedicated religious sisters. They asked Nerinckx to

help them begin. Because this had been the dream of the priests, he agreed. He moved from St. Stephen's Farm to St. Mary's, about 10 miles away, built himself a cabin at the cost of \$6.50 plus his own labor, and the adventure began. The spot was called "Little Loretto."

Not wanting to be trained by other religious congregations, the women asked Nerinckx to write them a rule, which he did on one sheet of paper. Thus began one of the first orders of sisters founded in the United States. Originally known as "The Little Society of the Friends of Mary Under the Cross of Jesus," the title later became the much shorter "Sisters of Loretto."

The three women were received on April 25, 1812. We can imagine that many people crowded the "church" to witness this ceremony in the wilderness. Attracted by this way of life, three more young women joined the group in June of that year. They were Ann Rhodes and Sarah Havern, blood sisters of the foundresses, and Nellie Morgan, known as Sister Clare, the first not to take her given name in religion. It is said that the community had two reactions to this new way of life. Among the young men in the area, some rejoiced that all the old maids could be taken care of by being sent to the convent; others speculated that all the good prospects for wives might enter, and they were disheartened!

Edith Ann Jaeger SL drew this depiction of "Little Loretto," the original complex of log buildings where Mary Rhodes, Christina Stuart, and Ann Havern had come to teach the children of pioneer families in Kentucky. In 1812, the women were established as The Little Society of the Friends of Mary Under the Cross of Jesus. Father Charles Nerinckx suggested the log complex be called "Little Loretto" after a shrine in Italy built to honor the Nazareth home of the Holy Family.



When there were just three sisters, Mary Rhodes was leader of the group. When there were six, it was time for them to elect the superior themselves. Their choice was Ann Rhodes, for they said she was the youngest and the holiest. Her term was short, six months, for she, who had come to Kentucky for her health, died of tuberculosis Dec. 11, 1812, having been permitted to make vows on her deathbed.

Not wanting to be trained by other religious congregations, the women asked Nerinckx to write them a rule, which he did on one sheet of paper. Thus began one of the first orders of sisters founded in the United States. Originally known as "The Little Society of the Friends of Mary Under the Cross of Jesus," the title later became the much shorter "Sisters of Loretto."

Mary Rhodes was next elected to be the superior.

The life of the young community was not easy. They began with two cabins on the Rhodes property, one for themselves and one for the school. Two more were soon added. They accepted boarders as well as day students, so there was round-the-clock care for them. There were lessons to prepare, a garden to tend, the religious exercises required of their new life, and to earn some cash, they took in spinning, sewing, and weaving. Tuition for boarders was half in cash, half in produce — potatoes, flour, sugar, coffee, meal, tallow, and lard. No one was refused if unable to pay, and orphans were taken in.

If the life was difficult, why did the first women want to take it on? They were drawn by their love of God and their desire to serve the neighbor and the church. Why did others follow them? They also were inspired to serve God and the community through a total dedication of their lives, and they saw the happiness of the women who had begun the life despite the hardships they encountered. Within four years of their foundation, the sisters, who then numbered 24, were ready to

open their first daughter house at Calvary, Ky. It, too, was a boarding school, another response to a need, another brave step in their role as religious educators on the frontier.



About the author:

Loretto history buff and retired philosophy professor Antoinette Doyle SL has been serving on the Motherhouse Tour Committee for

many years and enjoys sharing her love of Loretto history with people who visit the Nerinx, Ky., property. With a doctorate in philosophy from St. Louis University, Sister Antoinette taught for 22 years at Loretto Heights College in Denver. She then retired to the Motherhouse where she served as financial controller for 15 years. She continues to guide visitors around the beautiful Motherhouse grounds.



Photos by Donna Mattingly SL.

The log cabin built by Father Charles Nerinckx in 1812 still stands on Loretto Motherhouse grounds today. Originally, the cabin had been built several miles from what became the Motherhouse site, and was later moved to this newer location to ensure its preservation as a significant historical artifact.

Silver Jubilarians reflect on 25th year in Loretto

***Silver:** Useful. Solid yet malleable,
yielding to the silversmith's hand.
Lustrous, sterling.*

Twenty-one Loretto sisters and co-members are celebrating their Jubilees this year. Of these 21 Lorettoines, 13 are vowed sisters. Of these, four celebrate 75 years with the community (Diamonds), seven celebrate 50 years (Goldens), and two celebrate 25 years (Silvers). Eight others are celebrating 25 years as Loretto co-members (also Silvers).

The recent spring edition of *Loretto Magazine* featured in-depth coverage of our 2009 Diamond and Golden Jubilarians. In this summer edition, our Silver Jubilarians take center stage.

The “Loretto Community” is a phrase used today to include both religious sisters bound by formal canonical vows and those men and women who pledge their strong affiliation to Loretto’s spirit, vision, mission, and goals *without* taking religious vows. The former take the designation “SL” with their names, indicating they are Sisters of Loretto; the latter take the designation CoL, indicating they are Loretto co-members.

The concept of co-membership started in 1970 with a request of former vowed members to retain their close relationship with the community and to have a way to participate in the mission of the community without having canonical vows. The Chapter (now known as the General Assembly) voted to formalize such a co-member relationship with Loretto. Co-members may be men or women, may belong to a different faith tradition than the Catholic religion, and join the community by mutual commitment, renewing that commitment every five years.

Finally, we at *Loretto Magazine* thank the photographers who contributed excellent candid photos for this article.

Martha Alderson CoL, December 5

The most important facet of Loretto life for me is the connection with so many people doing so many wonderful things to promote peace and justice. In a selfish way, it gives me comfort to know others are doing what I either can’t do or don’t have the courage or energy to do. A recent Loretto Assembly where we had displays of members’ works, was especially encouraging.

2009 Silver Jubilarians

Mar 4	Suzanne Holland CoL
Mar 4	Anne Spillane CoL
Aug 11	Irene Doody CoL
Aug 11	Samuel Forsythe CoL
Aug 11	Leticia Lopez CoL
Aug 11	Helen Reid CoL
Sept 4	Angela Bianco SL
Sept 5	Betty Obal SL
Dec 5	Martha Alderson CoL
Dec 5	Neysa Chouteau CoL

My current staff work as Loretto co-membership coordinator puts me in touch with vowed members and dedicated co-members who believe in Loretto.

As a young college graduate, I taught high school English for one year in upstate New York and then moved to New York City where I worked for the McGraw-Hill Book Company. After seven years there, I moved to St. Louis to continue working for McGraw-Hill as a textbook editor. Through McGraw-Hill I became friends with Neysa Chouteau and Anne Spillane. After 23 years at that company, the office I worked in closed. Neysa and I became partners as freelance writers and editors. As part of our work, we had a long-term contract that had us commuting between St. Louis and Chicago! Through Anne, Neysa and I became involved with Loretto and asked to become co-members.

In 2001 I began working on *Interchange* doing computer layout and editing. In 2003 I became a full-time employee on the



*Loretto co-members
Neysa Chouteau, left,
and Martha Alderson
at home with their dog
MingLi.*