

## MERCY SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION\* HISTORY

\*Transition to MERCY SECONDARY EDUCATION CONFERENCE (PAGE 19-20)

*The first "history" of MSEA was written for the 1990 Proceedings of Conference IX by Sister Judith Heberle, RSM (Rochester). This history was repeated in the Proceedings of Conference X and XI, 1991 and 1992. Subsequently, each year, in the Proceedings of the annual conference, beginning with Conference XII, the history was updated to include the themes, speakers and the highlighted actions of the past year's annual conference. What follows is the original history written by Sister Judith Heberle, RSM. It is followed by the history through Conference XIX. Each MSEA Board contributed to this latter recording of the history.*

| It seems appropriate to review the history of MSEA as we approach the date of the tenth anniversary of the Mercy Secondary Education Association and the establishment of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy.

This history is simply a pulling together of the beginnings - much more could be written. In fact, much more is written because the report of the MSEA Conferences I through VIII are carefully documented and available in unit and Mercy secondary school archives around the country.

The beginnings date back to around **1977** when Sisters Carol Wheeler (Baltimore), Nancy Thompson (Detroit), and Helen Marie Burns (Provincial of the Detroit Province) talked informally about what appeared to them to be the untapped potential for collaboration among Sisters of Mercy and colleagues in the ministry of secondary education.

For the next few years informal conversation continued and at times involved a number of small groups of secondary school administrators. Then, in **June 1981**, at the 150th anniversary celebration of the Sisters of Mercy held in Pittsburgh, Sister Helen Marie Burns invited persons interested in collaboration in secondary education to meet together and 30 or 40 sisters responded and encouraged the endeavor.

Following this, Sisters Helen Marie Burns and Nancy Thompson sent out a questionnaire to congregational and provincial administrators, to schools and to some other individual sisters - and again received encouragement to pursue the endeavor, this time from a somewhat broader-based group.

A steering committee was formed, which met for the first time in **October 1981**, to start planning the first Mercy Secondary Education Conference. Members of this initial Steering Committee were: Sisters Carol Wheeler, Helen Marie Burns, Nancy Thompson, Cathleen Cahill (Chicago), Mary McCarthy (West Hartford), Joanne Mary Boellner (Cincinnati) and Joan Laboon (Pittsburgh).

The first conference was held in **October 1982 at Mercy Center, Farmington Hills, Michigan**. This laid the groundwork for the establishing of the association, which was formally accomplished at the second conference, **October 1983 at Mercy Center, Madison, Connecticut**. The elected members of the first Executive Board and officers were: Sister Carol Wheeler, President; Sister Mary McCarthy (Hartford), Vice President; Sister Cathleen Cahill, Secretary; Sister Nancy Thompson, Treasurer; Members at Large: Sister Amy Bayley (Burlingame), Sister Lourdes Sheehan (Baltimore) and Sister Mary Ann Smith (Baltimore).

At this 1983 conference, the structure and purposes for the association were discussed and unanimously accepted. The purposes as established then continued to be the focus of the Mercy Secondary Education Association:

- to further the Mercy charism in secondary schools;
- to develop a statement of common philosophy and goals;
- to enhance a sense of national identity to provide for collaboration in areas of identified need and/or interest;
- to foster dialogue among RSMs and with others involved in the ministry of secondary education.

Over the years, Executive Board members have carried the responsibility of planning for and implementing the annual conference. It became clear from the beginning that because the Executive Board members were volunteers with other full time commitments, they could not be expected to do much more than plan for the annual conference.

However, it has also become clear that there is much more to be accomplished. There is potential among the members in secondary education ministry that could lead to greater collaboration and networking. Over the years, major discussions have taken place, indicating a strong need for hiring an Executive Director and/or establishing a national office.

At the **conference in 1984, held at St. Vincent's Academy, Savannah, Georgia**, bylaws were presented and unanimously accepted. The bylaws incorporated the purposes as stated at the 1983 conference. The annual conferences were well accepted by those who attended; networking, collaboration, sharing, and reaching out were all values that were supported. In particular, collaboration with lay women and men co-ministering in Mercy secondary schools strengthened throughout the 1980's. It is to be noted in particular that Ms. Janet Bamberger (Cincinnati) was elected to the Executive Board for the years 1985-1987.

The format of the early conferences consisted of a keynote presentation followed by a number of practical workshops and swapshops. During 1985 and 1986, programs of personal sharing and personal enrichment were introduced and provided for a two- or three-year period. In time, they were dropped, primarily because there was no one or no office to assist in carrying out the implementation of them.

The **1985 conference at Mercy Center, Cincinnati, Ohio** was held in tribute to the late Emily George, RSM. The focus on critical thinking and the critical conscience (Mary Brian Costello, RSM, Chicago) as well as on our Mercy tradition in education (Helen Marie Burns, RSM, Mercy Center, Washington) were certainly indicative of Emily's spirit.

During **Conference V at Gwynedd-Mercy College, Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania in 1986**, a Mission Statement was presented and adopted unanimously:

The Mercy Secondary Education Association is an organization founded by the Sisters of Mercy to provide a national forum to enhance and further the Mercy charism in secondary education.

Rooted in the tradition of Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy, it seeks to bond together Sisters of Mercy and their colleagues in the ministry of secondary education.

This educational association fosters the development of value-centered education in the ministry of secondary education in the Roman Catholic tradition, with particular concern for young women and the poor.

The 1986 conference was significant because it focused the entire program on the future: *Mercy Secondary Education: 2001: Where Do We Want To Be?* The workshops as well as the keynote presentations provided opportunities to look toward the future.

Significant events took place at the **1987 Conference VI in Clarkson, Michigan**. Terms of members of the first Executive Board were completed. Sister Carol Wheeler and members of the Executive Board were recognized for their great and generous contribution in establishing MSEA. There was no doubt at this time that infancy years were moving toward maturity for the organization.

In her address to the assembly, Sister Carol Wheeler challenged members of MSEA to the conviction that: "We, as educators in the Mercy tradition, have something exceptional to offer in education at this time," and "that the quality of education we offer could be strengthened by greater collaboration among our schools, by thinking of our schools and the teachers in them as 'connectors,' by being mindful of what is happening in our world - of significant currents, trends, movements, realities" - and "by addressing these issues directly and/or have our awareness of them inform the way we educate." Carol also called attention to "the fact that more and more the future of the Mercy tradition in secondary education will depend on the lay colleagues of the Sisters of Mercy - most of whom are in Mercy schools because they value the tradition."

Also significant to the conference was an excellent panel of lay colleagues described "Sharing Mercy" to the assembly. There was indeed an air of enthusiasm and energy as the lay colleagues shared their convictions of Mercy's charism and traditions.

A report was given by a committee chaired by Sister Corinne Raven (Chicago) on developing a model for a national office. It was clear that this was simply a beginning, as well as a shared hope for the future. Election of officers place: Sister Amy Bayley became the second president of MSEA.

The theme of the **1988 Conference VI in Louisville, Kentucky** was *Mercy Schools In Transition*. The program varied for a change in format from the previous conferences. It provided a keynote address, followed by two different tracks: "Creating an Invitational Image (External Affairs)" and "Creating an Invitational Environment (Internal Affairs)."

During the business meeting, the Executive Board explained that a Mercy Experience Task Force had been formed. The task force was charged with "offering options for addressing the need for immediate and long range programming to assist local educational settings in the understanding and integration of the Mercy charism and tradition." (At this writing, the work of this task force continues.)

Also, at the business meeting, members were asked to identify what would be considered the "most important move, thing, action that MSEA needs to attend to right now." These issues were then addressed by the Executive Board. The two of greatest significance were the work of the Mercy Experience Task Force and the creation of a Task Force on Institute Proposal for Mercy Secondary Education. (The work of this task force is described in Part II of this history.)

At the 1988 conference, Sister Virginia Bertschi (Scranton) was chosen as President-Elect.

*Mercy Education In the Context of the Church* was the theme of the **1989 Conference VIII in Washington, DC**. The keynote address, “The American Catholic Church and Education” set the tone for discussions around implications for Catholic secondary education and the future as well as for discussion around Mercy education values and practical experiences.

The business meeting included major reports for both the Mercy Experience Task Force and the Institute Proposal for Mercy Secondary Education Task Force. An excellent slide presentation “Sharing the Mercy Charism” was presented by Sister Corinne Raven, principal of Mother McAuley High School in Chicago, as part of the Mercy Experience Task Force report.

During these formative years of MSEA, membership has consisted of administrators of Mercy secondary schools, congregational leadership, and individual membership. The number attending the conferences is usually around 110 persons. There has been a strong thrust by the members of the Executive Board to encourage all Mercy secondary schools to become an active part of the organization.

Participation in the conferences to some extent has been dependent on the time and place of the meetings. As already stated, lay presence has most certainly enhanced participation at the conferences. The support of leadership of congregations and provinces has also been encouraged and appreciated. The energies of the members of the executive Board have always been received with much gratitude by members of MSEA.

This history would not be complete without mentioning other significant accomplishments:

- 1 We have been proud that a number of Mercy secondary schools have received national recognition by being named Exemplary Private Schools by the US Department of Education and the Council for American Private Education.
2. In 1985 a monograph, “Some Lasting Efforts: Mercy Tradition and Secondary Education” by Sister Helen Marie Bums, was published. Sister Helen Marie made this presentation at the 1985 conference. It received wide publicity. Board members, faculty, and parents have read this monograph and learned much about Catherine's charism to educate the young.
3. In 1989 a video was produced: “A Message from Baggot Street – Mercy Values in Education.” The video was produced in collaboration with Mercy College of Detroit. It was financially supported through the Mercy Administrative Team, Mercy Center, Washington, and Mercy College of Detroit. The video was presented initially at the 1989 conference and has been purchased by a significant number of our secondary schools and by congregations and provinces.

From this brief history it is evident that the challenges set forth by Sister Carol Wheeler in 1987 continue to be with the membership of MSEA: “Let us indeed continue the conversation with great diligence and care.”

Sister Judith Heberle, RSM (Rochester)

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### *History 1990-1999*

**The conference of 1990 was held in Erie, PA.** *Global Education: A Call to Think and Be in New Ways* provided members an opportunity to reflect on the New Cosmology-to reflect on the 46 “signs of our times.” The keynoter, Jane Blewett, Director of Earth Community Center challenged members at the conference to understand that “there is not a future for our map of the national states unless there is a future for the earth itself.”

Workshops continued the theme of the conference: “Curriculum for the New World,” “Conflict Resolution,” “Mercy Vocational Education” and “Exploring Possibilities: International Baccalaureate and Summer Experimental Education for Kids (SEEK).”

At the business meeting two major presentations were made and unanimously accepted by the group culminating the visions and dreams which had been started as early as 1983:

1. The proposal presented by the Institute Education Task Force was unanimously accepted stating: “The Mercy Education Association proposes that the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas establish a structure designed to provide an official relationship among the Mercy secondary schools within the Institute for the purpose of the continuing development of secondary education in the Mercy tradition.”

2. Values that educators in the Mercy tradition held in common were overwhelmingly affirmed.

Mary McCarthy, RSM (Hartford) was chosen as President-Elect.

**The conference of 1991 was a celebration of 10 years of MSEA and was held at Mother McAuley High School in Chicago.** The theme *Caring, Charism and Commitment* provided for presentations given by Amy Hoey, RSM, Institute Councilor and Mary Brian Costello, RSM, a long time friend and member of MSEA.

“Charism, A Gift to be Given” - Amy Hoey's presentation was timely since the Institute had been founded in July 1991. The Mercy Secondary Education Association proposal had been passed on to the Institute Leadership Team. The Direction Statement was certainly a challenge to Mercy educators.

Mary Brian Costello, RSM, presented “A School with Soul” which addressed from the perspective of education, values, and spirituality: “What constitutes the soul of your school?”

Break out sessions addresssed “Hospitality,” “Compassion,” “Mission Effectiveness,” “Mercy Student Leadership” and “Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain.”

The business meeting included three major reports; an update on the disposition of the MSEA Institute Proposal which had been forwarded to the Institute Leadership Team; progress on the Leadership Development Program and a report of the Development Workshop which was held for 40 members of MSEA prior to the opening of Conference X.

*Some Lasting Efforts* was the theme of **Conference XI held at Mercy Center, Madison**. Sister Patricia McCarthy, CND, keynoted by addressing “Non-Violence: The Call to Go Beyond Justice to Mercy.” Patricia's clear presentation, questions, and challenges set the tone for the entire conference. Workshops were provided which assisted in getting "practical" in Mercy: “Creating Unity Amidst Diversity,” “Spirituality Called Mercy,” “Development,” “Building Self-Esteem in the School,” “Teaching Catherine McAuley.”

Mary Waskowiak, RSM, member of the Institute Leadership Team, presented an update on the MSEA Education Proposal indicating that following several meetings with members of the MSEA Board and others, the Institute Leadership Team gave a unanimous "yes" for the formation and funding of a national education office. This office will include all Mercy-sponsored elementary and secondary schools in the Americas.

Sister Corinne Raven, RSM (Chicago) was chosen as President-Elect.

*Creating and Maintaining Ministering Communities* was the theme of the **1993 conference held in Macon, Georgia at Mount de Sales Academy**, where the members of the MSEA experienced true southern hospitality.

Sister Doris Gottemoeller, President of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy, was the keynote speaker. Doris' thought-provoking presentation touched on how members of administration, faculty, and staff are called to be united to one another--to have a spirit of belonging--to search for shared identity--to have an understanding of moral authority and to mirror Catherine McAuley who created ministering communities. Her presentation not only challenged members of MSEA as educators, but also provided some practical experience.

Breakout sessions included reflections and suggestions for directions for the newly formed Institute Office of Education to Marla Yeck, RSM, Director. Marla Yeck, RSM listened and responded to the reports provided by the groups.

The accomplishments listed on pages xiv, xv were extended to include:

4. The “Values of Mercy Secondary Education Association” were developed by the entire membership over a two-year period 1989-91. They were printed and promulgated in 1991.
5. The “Mercy Leadership Development Program for Secondary Educators” prepared by the Mercy Experience Task Force chaired by Toni Ann Secrest (Mercy High School, Burlingame, CA,) dated December 1990.

(A note in 1993 recalls: “This history was compiled in 1993 by Sister Judith Heberle, RSM, Rochester one of the founding mothers of MSEA.)

The history continues...

**The 1994 Conference XIII convened at Mercy Center, St. Louis, Missouri.** *Creating a Mercy Response* called members to reflect the ways "We witness to mercy when we reverence the dignity of each person, create a spirit of hospitality and pursue integrity of word and deed in our lives." (Const. 8)

The theme was carried out through the weekend and presented by keynoter, Sister Suzanne Elliott (New York) who spoke on "The Needs of Youth--a Profile of Young People Today." Suzanne highlighted four needs emerging from United States culture: the need for peace, the need for relatedness, the need for meaning, and the need for the feminine. A panel of three members then picked up on the themes of "reverencing dignity," "creating hospitality" and "pursuing integrity." Focus groups developed these themes.

During the business meeting, Sister Margaret Dempsey (Brooklyn) was elected President-elect. The business meeting included reports from Sister Marla Yeck, Director of the Institute Office of Education, the establishment of a Mercy Leadership Academy for potential administrators, and the development of a self-assessment tool for Mercy High Schools to be ready for implementation by September 1995. Also, members voted to approach the Mercy Higher Education Colloquium for financial support for qualified graduates of Mercy secondary schools who wish to attend Mercy colleges and universities.

Sharing new ideas, practical suggestions, and networking were an integral part of the conference, which closed with a presentation by Judith Bobber from McAuley High School in Chicago entitled "Mercy Spirituality, the Educator."

**The 1995 conference was co-chaired by Mercy High School, Burlingame which housed the conference and Mercy High School, San Francisco.** The conference theme was *Mercy Secondary Education. What Does It Truly Cost?* Sister Carol Wheeler, Principal of Mercy High School, Baltimore, was the keynote speaker and her all encompassing presentation on the theme presented a mandate to Mercy educators to pass on the charism and tradition of Mercy education during this critical window of opportunity while there are still Sisters of Mercy on boards and faculties. Her presentation was printed in book form and widely distributed.

A panel presentation representing teachers, development, administration, and boards responded to the presentation and the theme. The business meeting included a presentation by Mary Waskiowiak, RSM from the Institute Leadership Team on the future of the Institute Education Office which had been discontinued by the Institute Leadership Conference pending future study. Sister Cathleen Cahill gave a report on the Leadership Academy which was held in June and was tremendously successful. Thirty potential Mercy administrators attended and were prepared to be leaders in Mercy education in the tradition of Catherine McAuley. Three tasks forces were formed to investigate the possibility of a Mercy Teachers' Institute, Joint PR efforts, and a Mercy Sponsorship Conference.

**Conference XV took place at Our Lady of Mercy Academy in Syosset, New York. It was hosted by that school, Catherine McAuley, Brooklyn, and Mercy High School, Riverhead.** The theme of the conference was *Mercy Educators, Voices That Challenge.*

The Conference was preceded by a meeting on sponsorship which was coordinated by Barbara Wheeley, RSM, from the Baltimore Regional Community Leadership Team. Over fifty representatives from 33 schools gathered to discuss what we could do to form a Mercy Education System. A task force was formed to continue the study.

The meeting opened with a tribute and presentation in honor of Sister Judith Herberle, RSM one of the founding mothers of MSEA who wrote the history and who had played a major role in the Association since its inception. Judith died in the summer of 1996. There were two keynote presentations. Dr. Judith Dorney presented the challenge of "Learning From Girls and Their Teachers: Developing Voices That Challenge." Dr. Lorraine Monroe of Bank Street College challenged us to know what constitutes "Real School." Both presentations left Mercy educators inspired and challenged. Workshops helped the over 400 participants, the largest conference ever, to experience some possible solutions to the "voices that challenge."

At the business meeting, Rosann Fraher, RSM was elected President-Elect. Cathleen Cahill, RSM reported on the Leadership Academy which had been held at St. Joseph's College in Hartford in June. Ms. Terri Hanrahan reported on the Teacher's Institute which took place at Mercyhurst College in June. A suggestion was made to amend the by-laws at the next meeting with regard to the stipulation that the MSEA Board have a majority of Sisters of Mercy.

*"STRENGTHEN MERCY HEARTS...was the theme of the 1997 Conference.* This conference was held at Catherine McAuley High School in Portland, Maine. Sister Edward Mary, Principal, welcomed the 171 participants from 17 states and Belize.

Again, a meeting on sponsorship for Mercy secondary education preceded the conference. Members of the Regional Community Leadership Teams joined with administrators from the high schools to review the process delineated by the Task Force with Susan M. Weber serving as consultant for the study. Susan W'eber was in the process of interviewing principals, presidents, and Regional Leadership presidents/delegates at this time. She gave an explanation of the instrument to be used to generate the profile of Mercy secondary education.

**Conference XVI** opened with a panel reflecting on what touches our Mercy hearts. Candace Anderson, Dotty McCrae, and Pete Cordova shared some of their personal experiences as Mercy educators. Mary Aquin O'Neill, RSM, presented a compelling keynote address: "*Strengthen Your Mercy Heart.*" Corinne Raven, RSM, provided a response to the address. This was followed by questions and comments from the membership at large.

The afternoon provided time for small group work on the "Pathways to the Future" process. Margaret Dempsey, RSM led this discussion and later prepared the written report for the Pathways Committee.

During the business meeting by a majority vote, it was agreed to modify Point 3.6 of the By-Laws (on Executive Board membership) by deleting "a majority of whom shall be Sisters of Mercy."

Since Rosann Fraher, RSM, President-Elect, and Michele Whitehead were the only remaining members for the Executive Committee and both have two years in their terms, four new members needed to be elected. The membership present at the conference also agreed that the two persons elected with the highest votes would serve a three-year term and the other two elected would serve a two-year term. Peggy Lake, RSM, and Ms. Dorothy McCrea were elected for the three-year term. Ms. Carolyn Jaworski and Mr. Michael Johnson were elected for a two-year term.

The financial statement for the 1996-97 fiscal year of the Association was reviewed and accepted.

During the liturgy on Sunday, Margaret Dempsey commissioned all the members of the Executive Board: those newly elected, Michele Whitehead as she began her second term, and Rosann Fraher, RSM, as president.

The conference concluded with Margaret Dempsey providing a report on the Institute Congress. Miss Toni Ann Secrest, MSEA's representative on the planning committee for the Institute Congress, was gratefully acknowledged. Rosann Fraher, RSM, encouraged the membership to participate in the activities of the MSEA as we direct the Association into the future.

**Conference XVII, 1998,** "*Tides of Change*" was held in **Savannah, Georgia**. The host school was St. Vincent's Academy. The conference participants were cordially welcomed by Sister Helen Marie Buttiner, Principal, Floyd Adams, Mayor, Paul Hinchy, CEO of St. Joseph's/Candler Health System, Sister Pat Coward, conference coordinator, and Sister Margaret Beatty, President of the Baltimore Regional Community.

Much of the conference was dedicated to outlining trends in Mercy education and to affirming the expressed desire of the group to provide support systems that will nurture and strengthen the Mercy charism in our schools into the future.

The international reality of MSEA was experienced. Administrators from Muffles College in Belize and from Colegio Santa Ethnea in Bella Vista, Argentina participated in the conference.

At the business meeting, Michele Whitehead, assistant principal of Mother McAuley High School in Chicago, became the president-elect of MSEA.

Administrators and members of Regional Community Leadership Teams met with the Sponsorship Committee on Friday prior to the opening of the MSEA Conference. As a result of meetings held the previous spring, a structure and timeline were shared with the participants.

**Conference XVIII, 1999,** *Exploring Mercy Excellence* was hosted by **Mount St. Mary Academy, Little Rock, Arkansas**. The conference welcomed 215 participants from eighteen states, Argentina, Belize, and Guam.

The conference participants were formally welcomed at the Arkansas Excelsior Hotel by Sister Deborah Troillet, RSM, President of Mount Saint Mary Academy, Dr. Mike Rockers, Superintendent, Catholic Schools of Arkansas, Jim Dailey, Mayor and his wife Patti '64, and Sister Richard Mary Burke, President of the St. Louis Regional Community.

In the opening prayer, Sr. Rosann Fraher, President of MSEA invited "the Spirit of Catherine" to come among the group. Sr. Patricia J. Corkery, RSM, from the Merion Regional Community, portrayed Catherine McAuley and shared wisdom and stories to set the tone for the evening. The evening closed with a reception in the Pinnacle Room of the hotel, sponsored by St. Joseph's Regional Health Center, Hot Springs, AR and St. Edward Mercy Medical Center, Fort Smith, AR.

On Saturday morning, the meeting opened with the keynote address by Sr. Lourdes Sheehan, RSM, Secretary for Education, US Catholic Conference. Sr. Lourdes challenged the group to identify the "essential, timeless, non-negotiable aspects that identify a school as Mercy." After lunch Carol Penner of the National Institute of Learning Disabilities, provided an overview of recent brain research and the implications for teaching and learning. She identified methods for stimulating the highest level of integrative learning for all students served in Mercy schools.

After the meeting on Saturday, conference participants took a shuttle from the hotel to Mount St. Mary Academy for an evening of entertainment. Guests were greeted at a reception sponsored by the St. Louis Regional Community. Mount Saint Mary students provided guided tours of the school. Participants were treated to a BBQ and catfish dinner in the McAuley Center, with music and country western dance lessons provided by a member of the faculty.

MSEA business included a financial report and a report on the 1999 Leadership Academy. MSEA afforded the newly formed Network for Mercy Education and its co-directors, Mary Lou Merida and Sister Corinne Raven, RSM, time and opportunity to address conference participants.

Carolyn Jaworski, Michael Johnson, and Sr. Nancy Merkle (Cincinnati) were elected to two-year Board terms.

Sister Johanna Burnell, RSM, President and Ms. Carolyn Jaworski, Principal, announced that Conference XIX would be hosted by Mercy High School, Omaha, Nebraska and a warm and musical invitation was extended to all.

Conference participants walked from the hotel to the Cathedral of St. Andrew for liturgy and the commissioning ceremony.

Following the liturgy and commissioning, participants attended a brunch at McDonald Hall next door to the cathedral.

**Conference XIX, 2000**, was held in **Omaha, Nebraska** and hosted by **Mercy High School**. The quote from Daniel "*Those who instruct in the way of justice will shine like stars for all eternity,*" provided the backdrop for Conference XIX, *The Way of Justice* which focused on exploring social justice issues within the Church and within Mercy institutions. The conference hosted 180 participants. It opened Friday evening with a prayer service focusing on the six points of Social Justice: Dignity of Person, Community and the Common Good, Rights and Responsibilities, Options for the Poor, Dignity of Work, and Solidarity.

Mercy High School students conducted the opening prayer service where they incorporated scripture readings, liturgical dance, sacred music, performances of modern parables and mime into the prayer. Following the prayer, formal welcomes were delivered by MSEA President, Michele Whitehead, Sr. Johanna Burnell, Mercy High School, President, Sr. Patricia Forret, President, Regional Community of Omaha. A reception sponsored by the Omaha Regional Community concluded the evening.

Saturday morning's keynote presentation was given by the Institute Justice Team: Pat Hartigan RSM, Karen Donahue RSM, Mary Schmuck RSM, Tina Geiger RSM, and Jackie Moreau RSM, who framed the issues of social justice in the context of The Institute Action Plan, and challenged conference participants to become more deeply involved with and aware of these issues within our Mercy schools.

The afternoon saw fifteen concurrent workshop sessions presented by the Justice Team members, Mercy sponsored school faculties, and by Sr. Dale Jarvis, Mercy Global Concerns, Sr. Jan Hayes, St. Louis and Sr. Adele Howard, Australia. Saturday evening was spent at Omaha's Lied Jungle where conference participants were treated to private tours and dining.

Business items were discussed both at the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning business meetings: Carolyn Jaworski was elected President for a two year term and Sr. Peggy Lake and

Dotty McCrea ran unopposed for their positions on the Board for a three year term. Michael Johnson and Kat Hodapp, Mercy Academy, Louisville, explained the initiative for the Student Prayer Book; the Financial Report was presented by Sr. Peggy Lake; Michele Whitehead explained that the summer of 2001 would be the last time that MSEA would sponsor the Leadership Academy as the Network would be sponsoring it after that time; Sr. Corinne Raven gave the 2000 Leadership Academy Report; Mary Lou Merida and Sr. Corinne Raven gave the Network report. Conference XIX closed with Mass and brunch.

Sr. Regina Marie Doelker (Detroit) issued the invitation to **Conference XX, 2001** to be held at Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, MI, October 19-21, 2001

**Conference XX, 2001 - Mercy Secondary Education Association, Twentieth Anniversary Conference - Mercy Education: To Hold in Trust for Time and Eternity, October 19-21, 2001, Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, Michigan,**

This special anniversary conference was held at the site of the first MSEA conference. It saluted the Association's past with a special program Friday evening complete with an address by Sr. Carol Wheeler. Saturday morning's program with futurist Ed Barlow envisioned the "look" of education in the future. Saturday afternoon participants inserted the "*Mercy Response*" into this picture through breakout sessions grouped by people's roles within the schools. The business meetings included several new initiatives presented to the membership as well as elections for three Board Members and a President-elect. Michael Johnson, principal of Mercy Academy, Louisville was elected President-elect and Cindi Baughman, Assumption High School, Louisville and Sister Patty Moriarty, Mercy High School, Middletown, CT were elected to the MSEA Board.

The Twentieth Anniversary Conference of MSEA was held at Mercy High School ,Farmington Hills , Michigan over the October 19-21 weekend. The location, which moves annually, was most fitting as Farmington Hills was the site of the very first MSEA Conference twenty years ago. One hundred sixty attendees represented thirty-three Mercy schools from 17 states and several offshore locations.

Marking the significance of this important milestone were three MSEA initiatives that were brought to fruition. First, all past nineteen conference keynote addresses were collected into a unified compendium, "**With Fidelity**," compiled by Corinne Raven, RSM (*Network for Mercy Education - Chicago*) and given to all schools, individual members & Regional Leadership Teams. In the "*Forward*" of the book, MSEA President Carolyn Jaworski (*Mercy High School - Omaha*), dedicates the work to all Mercy educators, past, present and future. Second, a collection of student written prayers, "**With Grateful Hearts & Hopeful Spirits**" was distributed to all members of the association. Every Mercy school is represented in the book which was edited by Kathleen Hodapp (*Mercy Academy- Louisville , KY*). Finally, a complete reference of Mercy-theme prayer services, liturgies and resources were assembled into "**A Reflection of Mercy**" by Sandy Flaherty, (*formerly at Mercy High School - Burlingame* ) and given to each Mercy school.

An opening address was presented by Carol Wheeler, RSM, (*Mercy High School - Baltimore* ) first president of MSEA. Sr. Carol found a rich topic in challenging the future *vis-à-vis* the theme of networking globally with Mercy schools around the world. During the opening session, Mercy High School 's Student Council President, Dronish Copeland, gave a moving speech about the impact of Mercy on her life. She introduced her co leaders and presented a

total of \$6000 from their walkathon to three Mercy schools affected by the terrorist attacks of September 11": Catherine McAuley High School - Brooklyn , St. Catharine Academy - Bronx , and Our Lady of Victory Academy - Dobbs Ferry.

The keynote address on Saturday was presented by futurist, Edward Barlow, Ph.D., who not only presented in rapid-fire fashion, but brought with him a "rapid-fire" message about the urgency facing education today in the need to teach our students to be life-long learners. In the afternoon, participants broke in to interest groups in an attempt to insert the Mercy response into his picture of the future.

Business sessions brought about the elections of a new president-elect, Michael Johnson. (*Mercy Academy - Louisville*) and three MSEA board members: Nancy Merkle, RSM (*Mother of Mercy- Cincinnati*), elected to a second term; Cyndi Baughman (*Assumption Academy - Louisville*) and Patty Moriarty, RSM. (*Mercy High School - Middletown , CT*). both elected to first terms. Carolyn Jaworski has one more year as president and continuing board members include Dotty McCrea, (*Mercy High School -San Francisco*) and Peggy Lake (*Catherine McAuley High School -Brooklyn*).

The Institute Leadership Team, represented by MSEA member and Vice-President of the Institute, Helen Marie Burns. RSM presented to MSEA a commemorative gift in the form of a check for \$2000. This will become scholarship seed money for a new MSEA initiative, a twenty-fifth annual conference at Mercy Center in Dublin in 2006, to which secondary educators from around the world will be invited.

Next year's conference, Conference XXI, will be hosted by Merion Mercy Academy in Philadelphia, October 18, 19, 20, 2002.

**Conference XXI, 2002 - MSEA CONFERENCE XXI, OCTOBER 18-20, 2002, MERION MERCY ACADEMY, MERION, PA,"One World, One Future: Issues and Opportunities for Mercy Education"**

Ms. Carolyn Jaworski, Principal of Mercy High School, Omaha, Nebraska and President of MSEA, addressed gathered Mercy educators and regional community leadership challenging all to fidelity to the charism and values of Mercy. Carolyn welcomed all in the name of MSEA board members, Peggy Lake, Principal, Catherine McAuley High School, Brooklyn, NY, Cindi Baughman, Assistant Principal, Assumption High School, Louisville, KY, Dotty McCrea, Principal, Mercy High School, San Francisco, CA, Michael Johnson, Principal, Mercy Academy, Louisville, Nancy Merkle, RSM, Principal, Mother of Mercy High School, Cincinnati, Patty Moriarty, RSM, Mercy High School, Middletown, CT. Gratitude was extended to Regina Ward, RSM and the community of Merion Mercy Academy for their hard work and gracious hospitality.

Marie Chin, RSM, President of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, with gentleness and with strength, challenged all gathered to fidelity to the call to see humanity as One World, sharing One Future. Knowing the depth which marks Sister Marie's calls, MSEA arranged for her talk to be videotaped. A tape will be sent by MSEA to each Mercy secondary school, making broader learning and reflection possible.

Patty Moriarty, RSM, business meeting, addressed plans for future conferences. The business meeting also included a financial report, report from the Network for Mercy Education, a by-law clarification and Student Leadership Academy announcement. Details from the business meeting

and *Proceedings* from MSEA conferences, beginning with Conference XX, will be, at the request of MSEA, posted on the website of the Network.

Ms. Cindi Baughman, MSEA Board member, introduced speaker Susan Perlis. Susan challenged all: "Honoring Ourselves, Respecting Others: The Basics of Cultural Intelligence."

Subsequent speaker Mary Frances Taymans, SND, highlighted trends and issues impacting education. Finally, with humor and a clear grasp of teaching , Marie Michele Donnelly, RSM (Merion) called all to adult faith and witness to students that there must be "Faith in a Changing World."

The logos for Conference XXI: "One World, One Future: Issues and Opportunities for Mercy Education" was designed by Mrs. Stephanie Baxter. It beautifully portrayed the conference theme and was incorporated into a lovely cover design for the conference program and prayers by Karis Yusavitz, MMA Class of 2003.

Regina Ward, RSM, Principal of Merion Mercy Academy, led the opening procession for the closing liturgy. The prayers, blessings for each speaker and Eucharistic liturgy for conference XXI were marked by beauty, sensitivity, calls to faith and hope.

Student musicians of Merion Mercy Academy and their teachers led the community in prayer—prayers which began with a Procession of Light and the Calling of Schools and concluded with joy, "Come, Live in the Light." Student choral members, the bell choir and prayer leaders also led prayer and entertainment for the opening of the conference.

Student "chefs" from Mercy Vocational High School, Philadelphia, PA., sponsored by the Regional Community of Merion prepared and served the social hosted by the Merion Regional Community Leadership Team. Beauty and graciousness marked the display and the service. Sister Rosemary Herron, RSM, serves as principal of Mercy Vocational High School and she proudly introduced her students and share the story of the high school.

From the Mercy Secondary Education Association of Australia/New Zealand, Mercy Educators received a greeting and a gift. Four educators traveled thousands of miles, from Catherine McAuley, Westmead, Australia, Mercy Catholic College, Chatswood, Australia, Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, and Our Lady of Mercy College, Paramatta, Sydney, Australia. (College=secondary school in Australia).They expressed what we share in common: our heritage, our tradition and charism, our commitment to the future...

St. Mary Academy-Bay-View, Riverside, Rhode Island, extended a warm invitation to Conference XXII, October 17-19, 2003.

**Conference XXII, 2003 "One World, One Future: "Faith in a Changing World" was held October 17-19, 2003 at St. Mary Academy - Bay View, Providence , RI.**

Mr. Michael Johnson, President of Mercy Academy, Louisville , President of MSEA, addressed gathered Mercy educators and regional community leadership challenging all to fidelity to the charism and values of Mercy. Michael welcomed all in the name of MSEA board members, Peggy Lake, Principal, Catherine McAuley High School, Brooklyn, NY, Cindi Baughman, Assistant Principal, Assumption High School, Louisville, KY, Dotty McCrea, Principal, Mercy High School, San Francisco, CA, Michael Johnson, Principal, Mercy Academy, Louisville, Nancy

Merkle, RSM, Principal, Mother of Mercy High School, Cincinnati, Patty Moriarty, RSM, Mercy High School, Middletown, CT. Gratitude was extended to the community of St. Mary Academy for their hard work and gracious hospitality. Patricia Combies, RSM, President of the Regional Community of Providence, St. Mary Academy President, Elizabeth McAuliffe, RSM and Principal Colleen Gribbon welcome all gathered.

In a beautiful presentation entitled “Catherine McAuley, A Narrative in Song in Dance”, the students of St. Mary Academy led all in prayer.

Marie Michele Donnelly, RSM, President from the Regional Community of Merion addressed the conference and with knowledge and humor spoke to “Faith in a Changing World.”

Business meeting items included President-elect speeches and updates on initiatives. Alternative time formats for MSEA conferences were presented. Patty Moriarty, RSM, addressed plans for the conference in Ireland. The business meeting also included a financial report, and a report from the Network for Mercy Education. Dotty McCrea was elected President-elect. Melissa Bullock, Our Lady of Victory, Dobbs Ferry and Regina Ward, RSM, Merion Mercy Academy were elected to the Board.

An evening celebration at “Waterfire”, a traditional Providence celebration, was enjoyed by all. Mount Mercy Academy, Buffalo, NY, extended a warm invitation to all for Conference XXIII, October 2004.

**Conference XXIII, 2004** - “Cultural Intelligence: Issues and Opportunities for Mercy Education” the 23rd annual Mercy Secondary Education Association (MSEA) conference, was held on October 22 and 23 in **Buffalo, New York**. Participants included MSEA members from the United States, Belize, Argentina, Guam and the Philippines. The conference was the third in a series of five with an overall theme of “One Future, One World.”. Mr. Michael Johnson, President of MSEA welcomed all gathered in the name of MSEA Board members Nancy Merkle, RSM, Patty Moriarty, RSM, Regina Ward, RSM, Cindi Baughman, Melissa Bullock, and Dotty McCrea. Nancy Hoff, RSM, President of the Regional Community of Buffalo extended a warm welcome in the name of the community and **Mount Mercy Academy**, both celebrating 100 years of service.

In a beautiful opening prayer the students and faculty of Mount Mercy presented music and dance from a variety of cultures. Sisters Mary Catherine Jamito, Guadalupe Lumantas, and Maria Lourdes Arcenas from the Philippines presented a prayer in dance. The sisters are members of the Regional Community of Buffalo.

Corinne Raven, RSM, presented the theme in the context of Mercy values on Friday evening and the conference theme set the stage for the main presentation by Arturo Chávez of the Mexican-American Cultural Center (MACC). He explored the concept of cultural intelligence with definitions of culture, the effects of culture on individuals and groups, and a lively activity where two groups created, demonstrated and evaluated new cultures as a way of exploring the input and principles of the session. Stories from Arturo’s own background and experiences provided many of the day’s highlights..

Afternoon breakout sessions provided participants the opportunity to reflect on the conference theme from four perspectives: Creating a Culture of Diversity, The Many Faces of Mercy, Integrating Diversity into Daily Life and Making Connections within the Circle of Mercy.

Business meeting items: Patty Moriarty, RSM, addressed plans for the conference in Ireland . The business meeting also included a financial report, a report on an adult prayer book initiative by Cindi Baughman and a report from the Network for Mercy Education. Elections were held for MSEA Executive Board members. Having completed their terms Sister Nancy Merkle and Michael Johnson will leave the board. Sister Patty Moriarty and Cindi Baughman were re-elected to second terms, and Carolyn Witte of Mercy High in Detroit was elected to her first term. Dotty McCrea, principal of Mercy High School, San Francisco now begins her term as MSEA president. (History includes portions of article written for *Vita* by Michael Johnson, President of Mercy Academy, Louisville, Kentucky.)

Assumption High School, Louisville, Kentucky and Mercy Academy, Louisville, Kentucky, will co-host Conference XXIV, October 14-16, 2005.

**Conference XXIV, 2005** – “One World, One Future: Issues and Trends Affecting Mercy Education” the 24th annual Mercy Secondary Education Association (MSEA) conference, was held on October 14 and 15 in **Louisville, KY, co-hosted by Mercy Academy and Assumption High School**. Participants included MSEA members from the United States, Belize, Argentina, Guam. The conference was the fourth in a series of five with an overall theme of “One Future, One World.” Dotty McCrea, President of MSEA welcomed all gathered in the name of MSEA Board members Patty Moriarty, RSM, Regina Ward, RSM, Cindi Baughman, Melissa Bullock, and Carolyn Witte. Marjorie Rudemiller, RSM, President of the Regional Community of Cincinnati extended a warm welcome in the name of the community the sponsored schools of the Regional Community of Cincinnati.

A beautiful opening prayer featured the students and faculty of Assumption High School and Mercy Academy was led by campus minister Gloria Thornburg.

Sister Mary Waskowiak, RSM, President of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, offered the keynote address: “Finding Our Voice”. Sister Mary’s presentation was followed by questions and answers and round table discussion.

Business items presented on October 14<sup>th</sup> included president-elect and board nominations.

The evening included a reception, tours and dinner at Assumption High School. Mary Lee McCoy, President, Assumption High School and Michael Johnson, President, Mercy Academy, welcomed all. Dinner was followed by a beautiful program featuring the arts by students of Assumption and Mercy Academy.

The business meeting of October 15<sup>th</sup> included: a financial report; a report on MSEA initiatives including the adult prayer book; the International Conference; Network for Mercy Education report; Board members nominees speeches. In the election which followed, Cindi Baughman, Cincinnati, was elected President-elect, Melissa Bullock and Regina Ward, RSM were elected to a second term and Laura Held, Burlingame, was elected to the board

“Connecting Our Voice” was then presented by Joyce Koch and Eric Cole, Directors of Technology, Assumption High School and Mercy Academy. Breakout sessions followed. The conference concluded with Liturgy and Commissioning of Board members.

Mercy High Schools, Burlingame and San Francisco extended a musical and warm invitation to all to gather for Conference XXV – the twenty-fifth anniversary conference to be held October 20-21, 2006.

**Conference XXV, 2006 – “Bridging our Future: 25 Years and Beyond”** the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Mercy Secondary Association (MSEA) conference was held on October 20-21 in San Francisco, California and co-hosted by Mercy High School, Burlingame and Mercy High School, San Francisco. Participants included MSEA members from the United States, Belize and Argentina. Dotty McCrea welcomed all to San Francisco in the name of the board of MSEA: Cindi Baughman, President-elect; Patty Moriarty, RSM, treasurer, Melissa Bullock, secretary, and Regina Ward, RSM, Carolyn Witte, Laura Held, Members-at-Large. Anne Murphy, RSM, President of the Regional Community of Burlingame and Carolyn Krohn, RSM, Councilor of the Regional Community offered a warm welcome to the group.

A beautiful opening prayer was delivered by Marielle Bautista, Class of 2008 from Mercy High School, San Francisco. The California State Senator, Jackie Speier, discussed the Value of Mercy Education in her life. Senator Speier graduated from Mercy High School, Burlingame in 1968.

Sister Anne Curtis, RSM, Councilor of the Leadership Team of the Institute of the Americas, offered a keynote address on “Reconfiguration and the National Agenda” and called for action on the Sisters of Mercy Chapter Act to support immigration.

Sister Adele Howard, RSM, Director of Fraynework Multimedia, delivered a keynote address and shared an interactive multimedia package, *Mercy and Justice Shall Meet*, that develops 8 case studies to address three areas of concern for all of us: Violence against Women and Children, Racism in all its Forms, and Displacement of Peoples.

The evening included a scenic ride through San Francisco to Mercy High School, a presentation of the history of the Sisters in Burlingame by the students from both schools and a delicious reception.

The business meeting on October 21 included the following: a financial report, Network for Mercy Education report, information on the new Mercy educators prayer book *With Great Confidence in God and Board* members nominee speeches. Carolyn Witte was reelected to the board, and Bernaldino Pech, was elected to his first term on the board.

Another moving prayer service was presented by Mercy High School, Burlingame.

Then the Reverend Sandy Curtis-Martus delivered a keynote “Rooted in Mercy, Centered in God.”

The conference concluded with a moving Liturgy and Commissioning of the Board Members.

That evening a reception was held in Harry Denton’s Starlight Room to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MSEA. Cindi Baughman, President, presented the history of MSEA and thanked the founding members including Sr. Carol Wheeler, Sr. Nancy Thompson, and Sr. Helen Marie Burns who, in 1977, talked about bringing together those engaged in the ministry of Mercy education. Of course, they didn’t just talk, they acted and after meetings, questionnaires and much discussion held the first Mercy Secondary Education Conference at Mercy Center in Farmington Hills, Michigan. At the second MSEA the first Executive Board was elected: Sr. Carole Wheeler, President; Sr. Mary McCarthy, Vice President; Sr. Cathleen Cahill, Secretary; Sr. Nancy Thompson, Treasurer; Members at Large: Sr. Amy Bayley, Sr. Lourdes Sheehan, and Sr. Mary Anne Smith

Conference XXVI will be hosted by Mount Saint Mary in Watchung, New Jersey.

**Conference XXVI, 2007 – “Mercy Millennials: Best Practices for a New Generation of Learners”** the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Mercy Secondary Association (MSEA) conference was held October 26-27 in Watchung, New Jersey and hosted by Mount Saint Mary Academy. Participants included MSEA members from the United States, Argentina, Belize, Guam, Jamaica, and the Philippines. Cindi Baughman, President of MSEA, welcomed all to the conference in the name of the board of MSEA: Melissa Bullock, secretary, and Members-at-Large: Sister Regina Ward, RSM, Carolyn Witte, Laura Held, and Bernaldino Pech. Sister Lisa Gambacorto, RSM, Directress of Mount Saint Mary Academy and Sister Pat Vetrano, RSM of the Mid-Atlantic Leadership Team offered warm welcomes to the group as well. A beautiful opening prayer was presented by the students of Mount Saint Mary Academy.

The Key Note Speakers for the conference were Lorraine A. Ozar, Ph.D who is the founding director of the Loyola University Center for Catholic School Effectiveness and Stephen Phelps, Ed.D, President of Bishop O'Dowd High School. On October 26, the presentation revolved around two topics: *The Evolving Shape of High Schools and Teaching and Learning for a Dynamic World*. In the afternoon, 4 representatives of Mercy Schools presented on the topic Mercy Millennial: Practices in Action. Genie Angelis of St. Catherine's Academy, Bronx, New York discussed *Teacher Collaboration for Increased Learning*. Christine Melone of Mother McAuley High School in Chicago, Illinois presented on *Using Data to Shape Instruction* and Teresa Sengel of Mount Saint Mary Academy in Watchung, New Jersey shared her experiences using *iPods in the World Language Classroom*. Mary Ann Steutermann of Assumption High School in Louisville, Kentucky finished the presentations with a discussion of *Professional Development Tied to Student Learning*.

The evening included a wonderful dinner and tours of Mount Saint Mary Academy. The students presented a wonderful musical overview of the diverse student body at the school.

October 27 opened with another beautiful prayer and Lorraine Ozar and Stephen Phelps continued their presentation by discussing *the Nine Essential Elements of Vibrant Twenty-first Century Schools*. In the afternoon, a panel of responders including Lisa Longo of Mount Saint Mary; Cathy Fontaine of Mercy High School in Burlingame, California; Luisa Gillett from Muffles College in Belize and Colleen Rozman of Mercy High School in Farmington Hills, Michigan reflected on the presentation and its application to Mercy schools. The Mercy Millennials presentation ended with a roundtable discussion.

The business meeting on October 27 included the following: a financial report, change in the by-laws to reflect the emerging structure of the Institute and to replace the MSEA Executive Board position of Treasurer with a Business Manager to be appointed by the Board. In addition, speeches were given by nominees to the board. Melissa Bullock was named President-elect and Jo Valente and Rita Cutarelli were elected as Members-at-Large. It was also announced that the 2009 MSEA conference will be held in Belize, October 16-17.

The conference concluded with a Liturgy celebrated by the Most Reverend Bishop Paul Gregory Bootkoski, Bishop of Metuchen, and the commissioning of the new officers of the board.

Conference XXVII will be hosted by Walsingham Academy in Williamsburg, Virginia, October 17-18, 2008.

**Conference XXVII, 2008 – “Relationship in a Time of Revolution: Building Mercy Learning Communities”** the 27<sup>th</sup> annual MSEA, Mercy Secondary Education Association, conference was held October 17- 18 in Williamsburg, Virginia and hosted by Walsingham Academy. Before the conference opened, the Campus Ministers from several schools met on October 16 to share ideas and gather information from each other; also the Presidents and Principals held a meeting on October 16 to share ideas on capital campaigns, fundraising and development issues. Participants in the conference included 241 MSEA members from the United States, Guam, Belize and Argentina. Cindi Baughman, President of MSEA welcomed all to the conference in the name of the Board of MSEA: Melissa Bullock, president-elect, and members-at-large: Jo Valente, Rita Cutarelli, Carolyn Witte, Laura Held and Bernaldino Pech. Sister Mary Jeanne Osterle, RSM, President of Walsingham Academy and Sister Margaret Taylor, RSM, representing the Mid-Atlantic Leadership Team welcomed all to Williamsburg.

The Keynote Speaker for the conference was Bill Hudson, Vice President for Mission, Totino Grace High School and author of *Living Mission: A CHS 2000 Report on Catholic High School Community*. In the first session of the Keynote address, Mr. Hudson spoke on Living the Mercy Charism: Mission and Identity and emphasized the importance of relationships and Charism in Catholic Education. In the afternoon session, Mr. Hudson continued his discussion by centering on “It’s All About Relationships: Student Life in the Mercy School.” During this second session, Mr. Hudson shared that discipline in Catholic education is wholistic with an emphasis on community. The third session of the Keynote address presented the morning of October 18 dealt with “A Call to Community: Challenge and Opportunity.” In this session, Mr. Hudson brought the members to consider the importance of the following issues: Orientation programs; Athletics may be on the perimeter of mission; Faculty seek involvement in decision making; Charism, heritage and history significantly contribute to community; and Liturgy, prayer and retreats are important to students. The afternoon session of the day consisted of rotating round table discussions.

The business meeting on October 18 included the following: a financial report, Mercy Day of Service Initiative report, Network for Mercy Education report and speeches and elections for two nominees to the board of MSEA. Laura Held was re-elected and Becky Henle was elected as Members-at-Large. It was also announced that the 2009 MSEA conference will be held in Belize, October 16-17. The 2010 MSEA conference will be held in Baltimore.

The conference closed with a beautiful liturgy at Walsingham Academy celebrated by Monsignor William Carr. After the liturgy, members of MSEA were led to a reception and dinner by the Colonial Williamsburg Fife and Drum Core. The lovely dinner was then followed by a fabulous night of entertainment by the students of Walsingham Academy.

**Conference XXVIII, 2009 – “Mercy Educational Strategies – Belize It”** the 28th annual MSEA conference, was held October 15-17 in Belize City, Belize hosted by Saint Catherine Academy and Muffles College. Over 150 participants from Belize, Guam, Argentina and the United States attended. The conference opened on Thursday evening with tours of Saint Catherine Academy, welcomes from Salome Tillett, principal of St. Catherine and Maria Johnston, principal of Muffles College in Orange Walk Town, Belize. Also welcoming the group was Sister Margaret Salisbury, RSM and representatives of the Ministry of Education. Following the welcome and prayer, a fabulous reception was held for all attendees.

Melissa Bullock, president of MSEA, welcomed all to the opening session on Friday morning. The welcome was followed by a Parade of Flags and playing of the national anthems of all countries attending. Dr. Dotty McCrea, principal of Mercy High School in San Francisco began and ended the sessions by discussing the importance of professional development in relation to the mission and charism of Mercy education. The keynote speaker, Louis Mangione, President of Innovations in Education, lead three very interactive sessions Friday and Saturday on Kinesthetic Learning and Assessment, Information Gap Activities and Engaging the Imagination. Mr. Mangione had participants “brainstreaming” as they learned through interaction and movement.

Friday evening students from St. Catherine and Muffles presented a cultural experience for all participants. The students told the story of how the Sisters of Mercy arrived in Belize and their work through the years, shared Mayan traditions of Belize and many of the dances and songs of country.

The business meeting on October 17 included a financial report, report on the Mercy Day of Service Initiative, and elections for two positions on the MSEA board. Laura Held was elected president-elect and Talita DeNegri was elected to the board. Mercy High School in Baltimore presented an invitation to the 2010 MSEA conference which will be held October 15-16, 2010. The 2011 MSEA conference will be held in Chicago, Illinois.

The conference closed with a wonderful liturgy filled with beautiful music at Holy Redeemer Cathedral. Dinner on the beach in Old Belize as well as trip on a boat topped off a truly international experience.

**Conference XXIX, 2010 – “From the City of Neighborhoods to a World of Neighbors: Fostering Global Vision and Responsibility”** the 29th annual MSEA conference, was held October 15-16 in Baltimore, MD hosted by Mercy High School, Baltimore. Over 200 participants from Belize, Guam, Argentina and the United States attended. Conference registration opened on October 14<sup>th</sup> and the conference opened October 15<sup>th</sup>. Sister Barbara Wheeley, former President of the Regional Community of Baltimore welcomed all. Additional welcoming remarks were followed by Opening Prayer led by and prepared by Mercy High School.

Speakers for the conference: Deirdre Mullan, RSM, Mercy Global Concern; Adele Howard, RSM Fraynework Multimedia and Marilyn Lacey, RSM Mercy Beyond Borders. Each was challenging and inspiring. Leading a follow-up panel the second day of the conference they helped all further consider the implications of what was heard. In small school groupings participants then continued reflection and planning for steps which could be taken to further the commitment to foster a Global Vision. Friday evening included tours of Mercy High School, dinner and a beautiful presentation by Mercy High School students in the newly built Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Auditorium. The administration of Mercy High School and its board chair also welcomed all. Participants traveled to the school by bus passing by the soon to be revealed street sign for Mercy High School’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the banners hanging in recognition of this anniversary.

The business meeting on October 16 included a formal presentation on the transitional proposal for MSEA to meet current and future needs for planning, financial holdings and implementation of the annual conference. The proposal was voted on and passed. A statement of the proposal and the follow-up letter sent to administrators in November 2010 are a part of the official archives of Conference XXIX and MSEA.

Mother McAuley High School extended an invitation to all for Mercy Secondary Education Conference XXX which will be held in Chicago, Illinois October 14-15, 2011. The conference concluded with a tour of the Basilica in Baltimore and Liturgy at the Basilica.

**Conference XXX, 2011 – “Celebrating Mercy Collaboration in the City that Works”** the 30th annual Mercy Secondary Education Conference, was held October 14-15 in Chicago, IL hosted by Mother McAuley High School. Over 200 participants from Belize, Guam, Argentina, Honduras, the Philippines and the United States attended. Conference registration opened on October 13<sup>th</sup> and the conference opened October 14<sup>th</sup>. Sister Cathleen Cahill, RSM, member of the West Midwest Education Sponsorship Council, welcomed all in the name of the Sisters of Mercy. Additional welcoming remarks were followed by Opening Prayer led by and prepared by Mother McAuley High School.

Congratulations to the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee for all the hard work, planning and execution of such a wonderful conference. Conference Coordinator, Laura Held, President, Mercy High School, Burlingame, CA, spoke for all gathered as she expressed her gratitude to the full committee, Melissa Bullock, Assistant Principal, Saint Catharine Academy, Bronx, NY; Jo Valente, Co-Principal, Catherine McAuley High School, Brooklyn, NY; Rita Cutarelli, Campus Minister, Mercy High School, San Francisco, CA; Becky Henle, Principal, Assumption High School, Louisville, KY; Talita DeNegrri, Principal, Mount St. Mary High School, Oklahoma City, OK.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Rev. Michael Gasanzini, SJ. Michael J. Garanzini, SJ focused his presentation on collaboration: the school with students, parents and families in addressing the challenges faced in learning and in the school environment. He used a format of input, presentation and dialogue around case studies and question and answer sessions. His presentation included research, concrete strategies and opportunity for dialogue with conference attendees. Respect for the dignity of each person, a strong Mercy value, was evidenced in the sessions.

Friday evening included an optional trip to Navy Pier in Chicago. On Saturday, Father Garanzini continued with two additional presentations. Conference attendees then boarded busses to Mother McAuley High School. Liturgy was celebrated in Mercy Chapel and the A Cappella Choir led the music. After liturgy a reception was held followed by dinner. Tours of the school were provided by McAuley students, faculty and staff.

The prayer services, welcome materials, hospitality at school, the liturgy, dinner and tours, were all so beautifully done. The evening presentation of Catherine’s story, musical offerings and the final dance, helped all who attended to remember that we are called to tell the story of Mercy.

Congratulations to the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee for all the hard work, planning and execution of such a wonderful conference. Conference Coordinator, Laura Held, President, Mercy High School, Burlingame, CA, spoke for all gathered as she expressed her gratitude to the full committee, Melissa Bullock, Assistant Principal, Saint Catharine Academy, Bronx, NY; Jo Valente, Co-Principal, Catherine McAuley High School, Brooklyn, NY; Rita Cutarelli, Campus Minister, Mercy High School, San Francisco, CA; Becky Henle, Principal, Assumption High School, Louisville, KY; Talita DeNegrri, Principal, Mount St. Mary High School, Oklahoma City, OK.

Mother of Mercy High School and McAuley High School, Cincinnati extended an invitation to all for Mercy Secondary Education Conference XXXI which will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio October 5-6, 2012.

**Conference XXXI – 2012 – “*Compassion and Service: Inspiring Servant Leadership in the Queen City.*”**

Mercy Secondary Education Conference XXXI was held in Cincinnati, Ohio October 5-6, 2012 planned by the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee, and co-hosted by McAuley High School and Mother of Mercy High School.

Over 225 Mercy educators gathered, representing schools in Argentina, Belize, Guam, Honduras, and the United States. The two host Mercy schools shared in the many planning details for the conference and it was blessed by their collaboration. Congratulations to the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee for all the hard work, planning and execution of such a wonderful conference.

Conference Coordinator, Rita Cutarelli, Associate Principal for Mission and Campus Life, Mercy High School, San Francisco, CA, spoke on behalf of the committee welcoming all to the conference and sharing gratitude for all who had worked tirelessly for the conference. She expressed gratitude to the full committee, Melissa Bullock, Principal, Mercy High School, Middletown, CT; Jo Valente, Co-Principal, Catherine McAuley High School, Brooklyn, NY; Becky Henle, Principal, Assumption High School, Louisville, KY; and Talita DeNegri, Principal, Mount St. Mary High School, Oklahoma City, OK.

Sister Deborah Troillet, RSM, from the Sisters of Mercy Institute Leadership Team, and Sister Pat Coward, RSM, a member of the Sisters of Mercy South Central Leadership Team, welcomed all to the conference, sharing how important their work was in the ministry of Mercy education. Cheryl Sucher, President, McAuley High School, and Kirsten McDougal, President, Mother of Mercy High School, welcomed all and acknowledged the work of the faculty and staff of both schools in helping prepare for the conference. An additional welcome was extended by Dr. Jim Riggs, Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. From each of these persons came a welcome acknowledging the importance of education in the lives of young people and gratitude for the service of all in Mercy education.

Keynote presenter Sister Mary Waskowiak, RSM, addressed “Laying the Foundation; Mercy Mission of Compassion and Service.” Sister Mary’s presentation was the groundwork for the theme of the conference, “Compassion and Service”. Mary shared, “The foundation for our Mercy mission of service and compassion is each one of us. It is our story, our heritage, our future. It gives meaning to the values we say mark our school community.” Mary called each person to consider the source of meaning for the ministry shared.

The conference included an excellent panel discussion considering the theme from three perspectives: *The Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy* by Marianne Comfort of the Institute Justice Team, the *Dead Man Walking, School Theatre Project* by Greg Callahan and *Mercy Immersion* by Sister Dale Jarvis, RSM.

Breakout Sessions were the primary format of the second day of the conference and such rich sharing and presentation occurred in each. Participants had the opportunity to participate in sessions offered twice in the day. Much gratitude to Eric Kyle, *Essential Elements of a School Service Learning Program*; Gloria Thornburg and Patricia King, *Integrating Service Learning into the Curriculum*; Sister Mary Waskowial, RSM, *Servant Leadership*; and Tom Brodnicki, *Service and Stewardship: the Path to Philanthropic Partnerships*.

Mother of Mercy and McAuley High School: thank you! The prayer services, welcome materials, hospitality at school, the liturgy, dinner and tours, virtual and onsite, all were so well done. The Saturday evening program, the beautiful choral work, individual and combined, the dancing and

messages of welcome were deeply appreciated.

All who attended give thanks for all the administration, faculty, staff, and students who assisted in the many hours of preparation and who made all feel so welcome. Congratulations, McAuley and Mother of Mercy.

As part of the formal work of the conference, Rita Cutarelli, Conference Coordinator, expressed special gratitude to Melissa Bullock who has given great service and leadership to the work of the Mercy secondary education conferences. Melissa's term concludes in December 2012. Rita invited Mercy educators to submit the interest form for consideration for conference committee membership.

**Save the Date!** Mercy secondary educators were invited by the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee and Mary Anne Hogan, Principal, St. Vincent's Academy, Savannah, GA, to gather in Savannah, October 11-12, 2013 for Conference XXXII, hosted by St. Vincent's Academy.

**Conference XXXII – 2013 - “Bridging the Gap on Women’s Issues in the Hostess City of the South”**

Mercy Secondary Education Conference XXXII was held in Savannah, GA October 11-12, 2013 planned by the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee, and hosted by St. Vincent's Academy.

Over 270 Mercy educators gathered, representing schools in Jamaica, Philippines, Argentina, Belize, Guam, Honduras, and the United States. St. Vincent's Academy worked in collaboration with the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee, considering every detail for the conference and providing wonderful hospitality for all who attended. Thank you to all who had a part in the planning for such a rich and fruitful conference.

Conference Coordinator, Rita Cutarelli, Associate Principal for Mission and Campus Life, Mercy High School, San Francisco, CA, spoke on behalf of the committee welcoming all to the conference and sharing gratitude for all who had worked tirelessly for the conference. She expressed gratitude to the full committee, Jo Valente, Brooklyn, NY; Talita DeNegri, Principal, Mount St. Mary High School, Oklahoma City, OK; Sister Lisa Griffith, Faculty, St. Vincent's Academy, Savannah, GA; Alison Kline-Kator, Teacher, Religious Studies, Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, MI; Terry Quinn, Principal, Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women, Rochester, NY; Rita Cutarelli, Mercy High School, San Francisco, CA, and Becky Henle, Principal, Assumption High School, Louisville, KY.

Sister Deborah Troillet, RSM, from the Sisters of Mercy Institute Leadership Team, and Sister Pat Coward, RSM, a member of the Sisters of Mercy South Central Leadership Team, welcomed all to the conference, sharing how important their work was in the ministry of Mercy education. Mary Anne Hogan, Principal, St. Vincent's Academy, welcomed all on behalf of the St. Vincent's Academy school community. Each situated Mercy education within the historic and ongoing commitment of Mercy education to furthering the mission of Mercy. The opening prayer which followed reflected this historic and current commitment. Special thanks to the choir students of St. Peter the Apostle School for their lovely rendition of the “Suscipe” and to St. Vincent's Academy for leading all in the “Circle of Mercy.”

Keynote presenter Sister Aine O'Connor RSM, presented “Following in Catherine’s Footsteps.” Sister Aine provided information and invited the assembled to consider important questions of this time. Among them, these questions: “How will you continue to ready your students to bring mercy to these great issues of the day?” “How we understand poverty - people have been rendered poor by the systems?” She urged all to further Root cause analysis asking of systems - who benefits? Who is

served? Who is excluded? What values are operative?

In the afternoon of the first day, Sister Anne Curtis, RSM and Sister Mary Anne Hinsdale, IHM presented “Bridging the Gap Between the Nuns and the Nones.” In a collaborative presentation they both provided information and provided issues for reflection. Catherine McAuley’s story was placed within the context of a call for imagination in dealing with the issues of those in need of care. The speakers offered insight from the experience of Vatican II, the current experiences of religious women, the generational experiences in the Church, the influence of newly elected Pope Francis, and more. They spoke to the importance of education and raised up contemplative dialogue as a means for fostering knowledge and understanding.

Following an evening in Savannah on one’s own, the conference reconvened Saturday morning for welcome and announcements and prayer. During this time the attendees from the Mercy Elementary Education Network, sharing in the conference, held their Business Meeting.

Announcement items included:

- From the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee: the committee chose to remain at six members given that they added three new members last year. Gratitude was expressed to Jo Valente who concludes her service on the committee with this conference. Rita Cutarelli will serve as Conference Coordinator for the 2014 conference and then will conclude her service to the committee.
- Judi Dennis, Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, MI presented information on a newly formed Young Mercy Associates program.
- Sister Kathleen McClelland, RSM shared a welcome from the Sisters of Mercy New Membership ministry.
- Marianne Comfort from the Institute Justice Team shared a welcome and invitation to visit the display tables.
- Information was provided on the new app that is available to access the Mercy Prayer Book online.
- Mercy High School, San Francisco will host next year’s Mercy Basketball tournament
- Save the Date! Mercy secondary educators were invited by the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee and Mrs. Vittoria Pacifico-DeBenedictis, President, on behalf of St. Mary Academy, Bay View to gather in Rhode Island, October 10-11, 2014 for Conference XXXIII.

The Saturday morning session was presented by Mary Hess, PhD and was entitled, “Social Media and Girls: Finding Hope and Supporting Faith.” Mary shared access to her presentation which was rich in information, analysis and materials and tools that Mercy educators could employ. The link: <http://meh.religioused.org/mercy2013hess.pdf>. Mary’s presentation in three parts was accompanied by opportunities for table conversation and sharing. The implications from research, the analogy of food and media and the final section on participatory learning through creative production provided much for further study and implementation.

Conference members then gathered for a round table discussion and sharing session “Moving Women’s Issues Forward in Our Schools and Ministries.”

Conference attendees gathered in the historic Cathedral of St. John the Baptist for Eucharistic Liturgy. Special thanks to the St. Vincent’s Alumnae Choir directed by Patricia Barragan Schreck, SVA ’46 for the beautiful music provided.

St. Vincent’s Academy then hosted a reception, tours, and dinner in the hall named for Sister Jude Walsh, Principal, St. Vincent’s 1967-1994 who led all in prayer. Following dinner spirited and inspiring musical selections were presented by the St. Vincent’s Academy Chorus. Special thanks to Director Bernadette Winters.

In the gymnasium also – a beautiful traditional Savannah Square, complete with benches, trees and the “Bird Girl.” All expressed their appreciation for all the hard work, generosity of time and wonderful spirit for the time at St. Vincent’s.

Following the program, Rita Cutarelli provided closing remarks thanking all who had made the conference possible. Her words reflected the gratitude of all assembled.

Save the date: October 10-11, 2014 for Conference XXXIII, St. Mary Academy, Bay View, Providence, RI

**Conference XXXIII – 2014 - “Anchored in Hope: *Spiritual Growth and Development in the Ocean State.*”**

Mercy Secondary Education Conference XXXIII was held in Providence, RI October 10-11, 2014 - planned by the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee, and hosted by **St. Mary Academy – Bay View.**

Over 300 Mercy educators gathered, representing schools in Argentina, Belize, Guam, Honduras, and the United States. St. Mary Academy worked in collaboration with the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee, considering every detail for the conference and providing wonderful hospitality for all who attended. Thank you to all who had a part in the planning for such a rich and fruitful conference.

Conference Coordinator, Rita Cutarelli, Associate Principal for Mission and Campus Life, Mercy High School, San Francisco, CA, spoke on behalf of the committee welcoming all to the conference and sharing gratitude for all who had worked tirelessly for the conference. She expressed gratitude to the full committee which includes Rita and Talita DeNegri, Principal, Mount St. Mary High School, Oklahoma City, OK; Sister Lisa Griffith, Campus Minister, St. Vincent’s Academy, Savannah, GA; Becky Henle, Network for Mercy Education Board member, Louisville, KY; Alison Kline-Kator, Teacher, Religious Studies, Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, MI; and Terry Quinn, Principal, Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women, Rochester, NY. Sister Deborah Troillet, RSM, member of the Institute Leadership Team, welcomed all on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy.

Vittoria Pacifico-DeBenedictis, President, St. Mary Academy, welcomed all in the name of Colleen Gribbin, Upper School Principal, Cynthia Lorincz, Lower School & Middle School Principal, the school conference planning committee and the entire school community. The conference thanks all from St. Mary Academy for their hard work and gracious hospitality.

The conference presentations from Sister Mary Rose Bumpus, RSM, South Central Community Leadership Team; Sister Richard Mary Burke, RSM, Sisters of Mercy Health System; Sister Deborah Troillet, Institute Leadership Team; and Dr. Gloria Thornburg, Director of Campus Ministry at Assumption High School, Louisville, KY were inspiring, challenging and presented with accompanying materials that were so generously shared with participants after the conference. Also noted was the connectedness between and among the presenters who provided links to each other’s ideas and offered connections for consideration.

Each session was followed by several breakout sessions that were focused on key areas under each session topic. The conference expresses gratitude to Gloria Thornburg, Assumption High School, Louisville; Colleen Bonar, Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women, Rochester, NY; Dave Mueller, Mercy Education Collaborative of Cincinnati; Melissa Bullock, Mercy High School, Middletown, CT; Fr. Greg McGivern, Mercy High School, San Francisco; Teena Weisler, Mercy Vocational High School, Philadelphia, PA; Sandy Flaherty, Mercy High School, Burlingame, CA; Sarah Regan, Mercy High School, Omaha, NE; and Brian Boeckman, Mount Saint Mary Catholic

High School, Oklahoma City, for their gift of time, sharing and facilitation.

The worship aid acknowledged gratitude to those who planned and implemented daily prayers and the Eucharistic Liturgy. Special thanks to the Campus Ministers, Sister Liz Hathaway and Mrs. Jeanne Nadeau for their leadership.

Conference participants were blessed to visit St. Mary Academy – Bay View for tours, dinner and a performance. Sister Jacqueline Marie Kieslich, President, Sisters of Mercy Northeast Community welcomed all. Following dinner, conference participants experienced a very special performance, “And the Story Goes On” directed by Mrs. Christine Kavanagh. This moving performance was artistically excellent, musically superb and presented by the students of St. Mary Academy with dignity and grace.

As part of the formal work of the conference, Becky Henle, Incoming Conference Coordinator, expressed special gratitude to Rita Cutarelli who has given great service and leadership to the work of the Mercy secondary education conferences. Rita’s term concludes with this conference. Becky noted Rita’s gracious and generous service and her gift of time and commitment to Mercy education and the conference. Rita invited Mercy educators to submit the interest form for consideration for conference committee membership.

In an attempt to facilitate access to the evaluation form and to express interest in MSEC Committee Membership, the committee initiated use of QR codes for QR Code readers. These codes and a link provided access.

**Save the Date!** Mercy secondary educators were invited by the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee and Terry Quinn, Principal, Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women, to gather in Rochester, NY, October 16-17, 2015 for Conference XXXIV, hosted by Our Lady of Mercy.

### **Conference XXXIV – 2015 – “Responding to the Call Through the Lens of Mercy”**

Mercy Secondary Education Conference XXXIV was held in Rochester, NY October 16-17, 2015 - planned by the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee, and hosted by **Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women, Rochester, NY.**

Nearly 300 Mercy educators gathered, representing schools in Argentina, Belize, Guam, Honduras, the Philippines and the United States. Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women worked in collaboration with the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee, considering every detail for the conference and providing wonderful hospitality for all who attended. Thank you to all who had a part in the planning for such a rich and fruitful conference.

Conference Coordinator, Becky Henle, Louisville, KY, worked with the Conference committee preparing for the gathering. Talita DeNegri, Principal, Mount St. Mary Catholic High School, Oklahoma City, OK spoke on behalf of the committee welcoming all to the conference and sharing gratitude for all who had worked tirelessly for the conference. She expressed gratitude to the additional members of the committee including (L-R), Talita, Alison Kline-Kator, Teacher, Religious Studies, Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, MI; Sister Lisa Griffith, Project Director for the Mercy Education System; Terry Quinn, Principal, Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women, Rochester, NY; and Holly McCoy, Assistant Principal, Mercy High School, Omaha, NE; Talita further welcomed the members of MEEN, sharing in the conference, warmly greeted and thanked for their presence.

Sister Deborah Troillet, RSM, member of the Institute Leadership Team, welcomed all on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy. Sister Pat Prinzing, from the NYPPAW Community Leadership Team and

Suzanne Johnston, President of Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women added additional special welcome to Rochester.

Suzanne thanked Terry Quinn specifically for his leadership and the school conference planning committee and the entire school community. The program prepared so beautifully acknowledged gratitude to those who worked so hard and also those who planned and implemented daily prayers and the Eucharistic Liturgy. Special thanks to Campus Minister, Sister Patty Beaistro, RSM for her leadership.

The keynote presentation, “Wound with Mercy Round and Round: Grounding Our Critical Concerns,” by Sister Patricia Smith, RSM set the tone and context for the conference. Sister Pat grounded the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy, the focus of the conference, in a theological context. One of Sister Pat’s key questions: “Ask yourself: if Mercy is a mode of relationship, a power, etc. *what are the implications for Our Critical Concerns, our own lives and work*” Her focus and beautiful use of poetry set a beautiful perspective for the breakout sessions which would follow.

The keynote presentation was followed by five breakout sessions that were each repeated twice on Friday and Saturday. Each focused on one of the Critical Concerns, immigration, earth, racism, non-violence and women. The conference expresses gratitude to these presenters for the wonderful preparation, sharing of resources, multiple presentations and engaging presentations: Non-Violence—Being Peacemakers in a Violent World - Marianne Comfort, Institute Justice Team, Sisters of Mercy; Immigration—The Human Face of Immigration—Sr. Rosemary Welsh, RSM, Director of Outreach Services for Mercy Ministries of Laredo/Mercy Clinic and Executive Director of Casa de Misericordia; Racism—Sr. Karen Donahue, RSM, Justice Team, Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community and Institute Justice Anti-Racism Transformation Team and Sr. Priscilla Moreno, RSM, Justice Anti-Racism Transformation Team; Women—Women, Wake Up! From Chrysalis to Butterfly -Maria Johnston, Principal, Muffles College, Belize and Maria del Mar Peydro, General Director and Legal Representative, Argentina; Earth—Care of Earth: A Kaleidoscope of Connections - Sr. Mary Pendergast, RSM, Director of Ecology for the Sisters of Mercy Northeast Community and Sr. Nancy Audette, RSM, Facilitator and Trainer for the Awakening the Dreamer/Changing the Dream Symposium.

One each day of the conference, Sister Barbara Moore, Director of the Program for Study of Women and Gender in Church Society and faculty associate at Colgate Rochester Crozier Divinity School, provided reflective remarks and led small and large group sharing on insights gathered from the keynote and breakout sessions. She further invited participants to consider and share possible concrete actions to take upon return to school.

Saturday morning, as part of the formal work of the conference, Sister Corinne Raven, RSM, Director of the Network for Mercy Education expressed special gratitude to Becky Henle who has given wonderful service to the work of the Mercy secondary education conferences. Becky’s term concludes with this conference. Sister Corinne also expressed gratitude to Terry Quinn, concluding his term with the committee, thanking him for his service and his special role in this conference as school liaison. She further thanked Talita DeNegri for her years of service, particularly in the role of hotel liaison as part of her committee work. A small gift was presented to each from the conference.

Sister Corinne further announced that ten Mercy educators had been invited and accepted an invitation to serve on an anniversary committee for Mercy Secondary Education Conference XXXV. These persons are: Karen Calta, Assistant Directress - Mount Saint Mary Academy, Watching, NJ; Amy Elstone – Principal, Mercy Academy, Louisville, KY; Whitney Faires – Assistant Principal, Mount St. Mary Catholic High School, Oklahoma City, OK; Colleen Gribbin – Principal, St. Mary Academy Bay View, Providence, RI; Lisa Griffith, RSM – Mercy Education System Project Director, Savannah, GA; Nancy Kelly, RSM - Principal, Notre Dame High School, Elmira, NY;

Alison Kline-Kator - Religious Studies teacher, Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, MI; Mary McCarthy, RSM, President - Mercy High School, Middletown, CT; Holly McCoy – Assistant Principal for Student Life/Athletic Director, Mercy High School, Omaha, NE; and Corinne Raven, RSM - Director, Network for Mercy Education. In addition to planning the conference, there was need for a group to serve as a resource for helping shape dialogue about the desired continuance of the conference into the future with the formation of the new system. The committee members agreed to serve in this role also.

Saturday afternoon, conference participants were blessed to visit Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women for Eucharistic liturgy, tours, dinner and a performance. Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women serves young women grades 6-12.

Following dinner, conference participants experienced a very special moment: Terry Quinn, Principal, welcomed all to the first gathering and performance in the newly renovated theatre/auditorium. The program by school leaders, dancer and musicians all combined for a very inspiring presentation. All gathered acknowledged the beauty of the new space and offered congratulations for its completion.

Save the Date: All were invited by representatives from host school Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, MI, to gather for Mercy Secondary Education Conference XXXV, October 14-15, 2016.

### **Conference XXXV – 2016 – “The Heart of Mercy: Peace”**

Mercy Secondary Education Conference XXXV was held in Detroit (Farmington Hills, MI) October 14-15, 2016 - planned by the Mercy Secondary Education Conference Committee, and hosted by Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, MI. This special anniversary conference was held at the site of the first MSEA conference.

Two hundred thirty-five Mercy educators gathered, representing schools and educational ministries in Argentina, Belize, Guam, Honduras, Jamaica, the Philippines and the United States. Moreover, given the special anniversary year, the founding members of MSEA and over 25 former MSEA or MSEC board members and former Mercy educators and leaders attended.

Committee members for the conference were: Karen Calta, Assistant Directress - Mount Saint Mary Academy, Watching, NJ; Amy Elstone – Principal, Mercy Academy, Louisville, KY; Whitney Faires – Assistant Principal, Mount St. Mary Catholic High School, Oklahoma City, OK; Colleen Gribbin – Principal, St. Mary Academy Bay View, Providence, RI; Lisa Griffith, RSM – Mercy Education System Project Director, Savannah, GA; Nancy Kelly, RSM – Executive Assistant to the President, Notre Dame High School, Elmira, NY; Alison Kline-Kator - Religious Studies teacher, Mercy High School, Farmington Hills, MI; Mary McCarthy, RSM, President - Mercy High School, Middletown, CT; Holly McCoy – Assistant Principal for Student Life, Mercy High School, Omaha, NE; and Corinne Raven, RSM - Director, Network for Mercy Education.

Whitney Faires spoke on behalf of the committee welcoming all to the conference and sharing gratitude for all who had worked tirelessly for the conference.

Sister Deborah Troillet, RSM, member of the Institute Leadership Team, welcomed all on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy. Sister Anne Marie Miller from the West Midwest Community Leadership Team offered words of welcome, and President Cheryl Kreger and Principal Carolyn Witte welcomed all in the name of Mercy High School.

Following Morning Prayer offered by representatives of Mercy High School, the Anniversary Celebration began with honoring the founders of the Mercy Secondary Education Association whose vision thirty-five years ago has been continued. Sisters Helen Marie Burns, Carol Wheeler, Cathleen Cahill, Mary McCarthy, Lourdes Sheehan, and Nancy Thompson were recognized.

The celebration continued as Mary McCarthy, RSM, recalled the invitation of Helen Marie Burns, RSM, to an initial gathering and the very humble beginnings of gatherings. Helen Marie offered beautiful reflective remarks concluding, “I trust our past and our present, and, thus, I have great hope for our future – my hope is always an education which ‘reawakens us to new life...instils courage...and fosters hope.’ Our legacy demands no more, and no less!””

Helen Marie further offered remarks prepared by Carol Wheeler, RSM, first MSEA president, who was unable to attend. Carol remarked that the beginnings recognized the power of Mercy education, and in her concluding comments, called on all not to fear the future, but to know that Mercy is an extraordinary blessing.

All gathered further heard the words of Margaret Dempsey, RSM, Carolyn Jaworski, and Michael Johnson, Mercy educational leaders, who responded to the questions, “What gave you joy?” and “What are your hopes for the future?” Each spoke from a perspective of the importance of Mercy education to those in need, to young women and men and to future leaders.

Mary McCarthy, RSM, again introduced Deborah Troillet, RSM, who, on behalf of the ILT, presented the Catherine McAuley medallion to Corinne Raven, RSM, for her sustained service to the Mercy education and the conference. Corinne thanked Deborah and the team.

Corinne Raven, RSM, expressed gratitude to Mary McCarthy, RSM, for her leadership as a founder and service on the current conference committee, and also invited all gathered to recognize current and past members of MSEA and MSEC boards and committees. She further acknowledged the members of the Mercy Elementary Education Network who joined in this conference five years ago and continue their annual attendance.

The anniversary celebration component concluded with a video of pictures from the past thirty-five years. Memories abounded. Gratitude to Mercy school, Mount St. Mary Catholic High School, Oklahoma City, for their creative work in compiling the video.

Following the anniversary celebration, the conference heard the first of two keynote presentations. Karen Calta introduced Sister Patricia McCarthy, CND, for “Learning Mercy, Teaching Mercy, Living Mercy.” Sister Patricia offered a beautiful address combining scripture, personal reflection, story-telling and a call to reflection on what is at the heart of Mercy. Sister Patricia continued her input in the afternoon session offering further scriptural context and reflection on the call shared by all. Her challenge that the first five minutes of every day be given to the Lord will be long remembered.

Friday concluded with Nancy Kelly, RSM, facilitating door prizes brought by Mercy schools. Gift were again shared on Saturday.

Saturday morning, Amy Elstone welcomed all and introduced representatives of Mercy High School for Morning Prayer. Following prayer, Amy introduced Holly McCoy and representatives of Mercy High School, Omaha, NE, who invited all to save the date for Conference XXXVI.

Holly further announced that the current committee agreed to serve for the 2017 conference. In addition to planning the conference, this committee will serve as a resource for helping shape dialogue about leadership for the desired continuance of the conference into the future with the formation of the new system.

Colleen Gribbin then introduced Sister Richard Mary Burke, RSM, who presented an inspiring address, “We Can Never Say It Is Enough” (from Catherine McAuley). Offering a reflection on Friday’s talks and activities, Sister Richard Mary shared the focus of her input: “To take a Long, Loving Look at our Past, to reflect together on our Present, to dialogue with one another regarding possible strategies for our Future.” In inviting all to reflect on the messages of historical key addresses, she then considered

the context for moving into the future, citing the corporal and spiritual works of Mercy and the 8<sup>th</sup> announced by Pope Francis, *Care for Our Common Home*. Facilitating an afternoon session for sharing best practices and strategies for the future, Sister Richard Mary then led all in a ritual prayer of affirmation.

Following directions from Alison Kline-Kator for travel Saturday afternoon, conference participants experienced the hospitality of Mercy High School for Eucharistic liturgy, tours, dinner and a performance. The performance by singers, dancers, mimes, and musicians all combined for a very delightful and enjoyable presentation. Sister Lisa Griffith, in the name of all gathered, expressed appreciation.

Save the Date: Mercy High School, Omaha, NE - All are invited to gather for Mercy Secondary Education Conference XXXVI, October 13-14, 2017.