

2023 Women's Leadership Luncheon

March 13, 2023

River City Casino & Hotel Event Center
St. Louis, Missouri

Learning Today



transforming tomorrow



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province



“Love is the bond that unites us with one another and with God.”

*~Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger
Letter #949, December 8, 1850*

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the School Sisters of Notre Dame’s (SSND) 2023 Women’s Leadership Luncheon. Today, you can expect to be inspired with a passion to bring change within yourself and others. It is a pleasure to spend this time with you. Thank you for joining us.

The theme of the 2023 Women’s Leadership Luncheon is, **Learning Today – Transforming Tomorrow**. The focus is mental health, a primary health concern that has far-reaching influence on all aspects of society. We know that by learning more about mental health, starting conversations, building relationships, and fostering a community approach to mental and behavioral health, we can transform lives and support each other as we each strive to reach our fullest potential.

Started in the late 1990s, the Women’s Leadership Luncheon is SSND’s annual event honoring women and recognizing their contributions in making this a better world. Guided by the SSND commitment to transforming the world through education, our goal today is to educate and empower others to learn how they also can make a difference.

Events like this take many generous individuals and businesses to be a success. We thank our supporters for their prayers, work and donations. Our individual and corporate sponsors listed in this book allow us to offer the Women’s Leadership Luncheon free to all guests.

Yours in peace,

Sister Debra Sciano, SSND

Sister Debra Marie Sciano, SSND
Provincial Leader



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2023 SSND Women's Leadership Luncheon

Saint Louis, MO



Program

Welcome and Prayer **Sister Anna Marie Reha, SSND**
Provincial Councillor

*Introduction of SSND
Ministry Video* **Sister Jan Berberich, SSND**

Ministry Video

Remarks **Jess Paddock Lepage**
Nations Network – Keller Williams Realty
Notre Dame High School, Class of 2003

Introduction of Speaker **Sister Jan Berberich, SSND**
Notre Dame High School, Class of 1967

Keynote Speaker **Michelle Russo Steeg, MA, LPC, NCC**
Owner, MCS Counseling
Notre Dame High School, Class of 2001
“Embracing the Swerve When it Comes to
Mental Health”

Q&A

Closing Remarks **Sister Patricia Gravemann, SSND**
Administrator, Sancta Maria in Ripa





**Cheers to the women dedicated to
leading and inspiring our future.
Thank you**



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Speaker

**Michelle Russo Steeg,
MA, LPC, NCC
MCS Counseling**

Notre Dame High School, Class of 2001



Michelle Russo Steeg is a licensed professional counselor who has been practicing for 15 years. She is a proud alum of the 2001 graduating class of Notre Dame High School. Michelle credits the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the exceptional teachers she had at Notre Dame for making her who she is today. The immeasurable life experiences and lessons about what it truly means to be a strong woman learned while attending Notre Dame have directly influenced the work she does today with her clients.

Michelle received her Master's Degree in Professional Counseling from Webster University in 2008. Soon after opening her practice, she received her certification in K-12 School Counseling from Lindenwood University. She spent nearly 10 years working in education serving in administrative roles pushing the limits of teaching mental health in schools. In 2018, Michelle left her tenure in education to pursue her dream of practicing full-time and has never looked back.

Michelle has an unconventional approach to the traditional world of therapy. In addition to counseling, Michelle is a public speaker and author. She is a mental health advocate who loves speaking to organizations about women in leadership and providing professional development that changes how the world sees and treats emotional health.

Michelle is a wife and mother of a wildly mischievous and loving 9-year-old boy, who will soon pass her in height. She is personally touched and speaks up for Parkinson's research and Dyslexia advocacy. Michelle's soul lies in traveling, scuba diving, dogs, and cooking.



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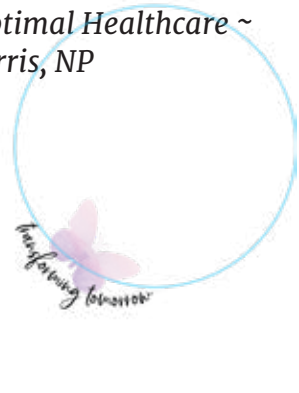
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Women Honorees



*Amy Caruano-Yzermans,
Ph.d.*

**Genome Marker Design Lead
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We honor Dr. Amy Caruano-Yzermans, Genome Marker Design lead in the Crop Science Division at Bayer and 20+ year resident of Saint Louis. An accomplished scientist, Amy consistently creates business value through technical advances that improve crop performance. In addition to her technical contributions, Amy is recognized as a strong leader in Bayer, always prioritizing and ensuring the well-being of her team, peers and colleagues. Amy ensures that those around her grow and develop as scientists and as individuals. Amy is a passionate champion of inclusion, equity and diversity and has contributed as a leader and participant for many of Bayer's Culture and Business Resource Groups that support professional development of individuals from historically underserved communities.



*Sister Janice
Fennewald, SSND*

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On behalf of Jim Butler Auto Group, we are pleased to honor Sister Janice Fennewald. To know Sister Janice is to know love, peace and God's grace. Her commitment to Christ and his children along with her undeniable sacrifices are to say the least, exemplary. She brings laughter and joy to all around her. With all our love, we thank you, Sister Janice. You are a beautiful light in our lives.



Women Honorees



***Bridget
Marzette-Bender***

**Vice President – DEIB
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Bridget currently serves as the vice president of the talent relations center of Mercy Technology Services. While at Mercy, she also served as the human resources director. Prior to joining Mercy, Bridget led diversity initiatives and aligned diversity goals to strategic plans at St. Louis Children’s Hospital. Bridget also led the employee engagement diversity and inclusion team at NurseWise, a specialty company for Centene Corporation. She holds a MBA from Fontbonne University in St. Louis.



***Sister Jan
Berberich, SSND***

Notre Dame High School



Sister Jan Berberich, SSND, began teaching at Notre Dame High School (NDHS) in the fall of 1986. After 35 years, Sister Jan retired in May of 2022. Notre Dame High School recognizes Sister Jan as a dedicated educator who fulfilled the mission of the school by educating her students to be confident, compassionate, Christian leaders. Sister Jan is known for teaching in a variety of academic departments including Spanish, Social Studies, and most recently, Theology. A course favorite for Sister Jan’s students was a senior level theology course, Social Justice. In this course, Sister Jan shared her love for the SSND mission and was a social justice role model for hundreds of alumnae. Sister Jan brought global awareness to the NDHS community through her lessons, clubs, and faith development. The Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger said, “The sun, the light of the world, shines kindly and quietly; it warms so benignly; it is so rich in blessing; my way of life, my example should do that, too.” Sister Jan Berberich was a strong ray of sunshine that filled the halls of Notre Dame High School with such great blessings. NDHS is grateful for her example.



Sister Honorees



Sister Celly Ann Amparano †

Honored by **Claudia Wright**

In memory of Sister Celly Ann Amparano who brought joy not only to the SSND community, but to the Wright, Neist, Pancella, Moeser and Marton families. We all have happy holiday memories with Celly.



Sister Rose Ann Bacak †

Honored by **Jack and Georgie Gibbs**

The Bacak family was a prominent family in St. Elizabeth's Parish in Alice, Texas, in the 1950's. I went to school with the Bacak children at St. Elizabeth's Catholic School, staffed by the School Sisters of Notre Dame at that time. Rose Ann was two years ahead of me in school, and her brothers, James and Hank, were before and after me. I remember Rose Ann was an excellent student, a very pretty girl, and active in church. Her sister, Barbara, was several years younger and the baby of the family, and also a very pretty girl, and favorite with the sisters.



Sister Mary Albert Belker †

Honored by **Mary and Leroy F. Ortmeier, M.D., K.M.**

I first knew Sister Albert when she was retired and living in the Motherhouse. We had many conversations and I was impressed with her insight to world affairs and her faith. She came to know my mother when they shared a nursing home room. In spite of increasing difficulties with health, she never lost her optimism and her desire to care for other people. I feel that because of my association with her, I was a better doctor and a better person.

**Thank you to all of our anonymous donors
who helped to make this event possible.**



Sister Honorees



Sister Richtrudis Brauhauser †

Honored by Mary and Leroy Ortmeyer, MD

Sister Richtrudis and I met on Tuesdays for many years while I was in practice to care for nuns who found it difficult to come to my office. She was always cheerful and very helpful to me when we met in the infirmary. We grew to be great friends and worked well together. I could see her great love for God and her fellow sisters and will always respect and cherish her memory. She was the perfect example of a Notre Dame sister.



Sister Janice Berberich

Honored by Michelle Russo Steeg, NDHS '01

I have chosen to honor Sister Jan because of the role she has played in my life. I met Sister Jan nearly 25 years ago and my favorite experience with her was going on a service trip to Honduras. What was so amazing about that trip was that I really got to understand who Sister Jan is as a person. That person is strong, intelligent, and compassionate with unwavering faith. Those are the qualities she then taught to me over the next three years and years after. Sister Jan is an inspiration to me, and I am delighted to be able to call her a friend now.



Sister Patricia Gravemann

Honored by Joan C. Harris

In honor of my dear cousin for her dedication and extra efforts to support the SSND retired sisters. She is always uplifting!



Sister Clarea Hotze †

Honored by Jack and Georgie Gibbs

Sister Clarea taught 7th and 8th grade at St. Elizabeth's Catholic School in Alice, Texas, in the last 1950's. I attended her classes in 1953-54 and 1954-55. She was a very inspirational teacher and expected the best from her students. She was a joyful and cheerful person, but a strict disciplinarian. She gave me the love of learning and the mastery of good study habits that carried me easily through public high school, college and later in life. Aside from my parents, Sister Clarea was the first major influence on my life.



Sister Honorees



Sister Linda Jansen

Honored Jack and Georgie Gibbs

In honor of Sister Linda Jansen and her 61 years of service with the School Sisters of Notre Dame. My wife and I traveled from Texas to attend the signature event in 2019, at the Motherhouse and Sister Linda hosted us for several days. She took us to visit the grave of Sister Clarea Hotze, who taught me in Alice, Texas. She also took us to The Sarah Community to visit Sister Mary Helen Hotze, Sister Clarea's sister. Since that visit, Sister Linda has kept us informed about SSND activity through her continued contact with us.



Sister Leonette Juengst

Honored by Tom Juengst

In honor of my dear sister, Sister Leonette.



Sister Carla Koestner †

Honored by Catherine Weide

Sister Carla had a huge impact on my life. I took private piano lessons from her from 2nd grade until college. She also taught me to play the organ in church. Through those years, she and the rest of the sisters were a place of refuge, encouragement and love. She helped me be a strong person and confident in myself. I moved on to college and found a wonderful man to marry. My husband and I lived most of our life on the East Coast and then Florida. On our summer trips to Iowa, we would often stop in Burlington and then St. Louis to see her. At first she was disappointed that my husband was not Catholic, and he was not converting. But after several trips to St. Louis, she told me that he has been, and is, a good husband and father. He cares so much about me to go out of his way to visit a convent on our vacation.



Sister Honorees



Sister Urban Maureen Molitor

Honored by The Honorable Andrew J. Gleeson

I first met Sister Urban as a grade schooler at Holy Angels in East St. Louis, Il. She was in community with an exemplary group of educators that I was blessed to have been taught by and spiritually led. These were turbulent times in the East St. Louis community and the year 1972 was a particularly traumatic time in my own life. Sister Urban was always a calming and positive presence at Holy Angels. Fast forward 30 years or so, I became reacquainted with Sister as I sought to support and affirm the SSND mission that I so greatly benefited from and appreciated. Sister Urban remains a positive presence in my life as she periodically writes words of inspiration as I grapple with the challenges of my work and life. Her message to me, “sometimes only in God’s grace will you find the answer. Pray and seek it!” Thank you, Sister Urban Maureen Molitor.



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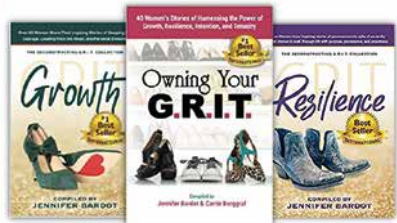


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Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the advisory committee members for their support and friendship:

Sister Janice Fennewald, SSND

Sister Joanne Hanrahan, SSND

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Jess Lepage, Nations Network – Keller Williams Realty

Katie Rayfield

Angie Schmid, Independent Consultant, Jordan Essentials

Dr. Ruth Wagner, Bayer

Amanda Willis, Willis Real Estate

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We would like to thank our volunteers from Notre Dame High School for serving as greeters today:

Nancy Abarca '24

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