

# 175 SISTER PROFILES:

## Sister Mary Ellen Loar

**Carol Evans, SC Associate**

Mary Ellen Margaret Loar was born April 8, 1940, into a wonderful family. Mae and Bob Loar had three daughters: Suzanne, Mary Ellen and Patsy. Growing up in Baldwin, NY sounded, according to Mary Ellen, like quite an adventure. Catholic grammar school and then Seton Hall High School in Patchogue provided a wonderful education. There was lots of open space on Long Island in those years. Mary Ellen often spoke of how great it was to be picked to work with her father on Saturday mornings. The anthem *Workers' Forward March* brought great joy to her, and it followed her through all her life-with wonderful memories and lots of stories of those times with him. Mary Ellen loved Seton Hall;



**Sister Mary Ellen Loar**



CELEBRATING

# 175

YEARS OF JOYFUL WITNESS

1849 - 2024



**General Administration (1980 - 1984)  
Sisters Anne Harvey, Margaret Harvey, Paule Cantin, Margaret Malloy  
and Mary Ellen Loar.**

participated fully in many activities and made lifelong friends. Seton Hall was quite a distance from her home and the travel in those days would be on the Long Island Railroad. Mary Ellen said that if she missed the train her Mom would race the train to the next station, where she could board at the further stop. Also, the fact that

Seton Hall was a co-ed high school was quite a draw.

One of her teachers, Sister Marie Tarpey, sponsored Mary Ellen's decision to enter the Sisters of Charity in Halifax, Nova Scotia right after high school. The distance to Halifax was difficult for her family but they supported her life decision





**Meeting of the Federation of the Daughters of Elizabeth Seton in Emmitsburg, 1987.**

**Front row, third from left, S. Mary Ellen Loar.**

**Sisters Sally McLaughlin, Theresa Corcoran, Anne Fleming, Louise Bray, Catherine O'Leary, Maria Gloria Garbarini and Margaret Molloy as also in the photo.**

with pride throughout their lives. (I didn't know Mary Ellen at the time, but the Sisters did mention that she drove a yellow convertible!)

Sister Mary Ellen's gifts were recognized early in the community. She went on to fulfill many roles

of service within the Congregation. From Saint Patrick's High School in Roxbury, MA she was missioned to work with Sister Francis Lillian in the formation of novices at Wellesley Hills, MA. Stories still abound about those years with the novices.

Her mother's death brought S. Mary Ellen back to New York. There she was elected to the New York Provincial Council. S. Mary Ellen found work at the Selden/Centereach Youth Center on Long Island. During those years she lived at Seton Hall and in Holbrook. As always, her ministry, now with teenagers, drew her deeply into their lives as well as the lives of their families. By the 1980s Long Island had become very populated with city kids, who brought with them some of the problems their parents had hoped to escape. Her kindness and no-nonsense approach were well received. Her staff very much appreciated her support. The work was hard, but S. Mary Ellen loved the kids, and they called her Sister Mary Elephant!

Then came the election of delegates to the 1980 Fourteenth General

Chapter in Halifax. S. Mary Ellen was chosen and so would begin some years of Congregational service at the Motherhouse in Halifax.

Sorting through the many changes and challenges that had taken place since the 1968-1969 Chapter of Renewal and the task of completing the revision and approval of the new Constitutions gave those elected at this chapter a very full agenda.

Sister Paule Cantin was elected General Superior, Sisters Anne Harvey and Mary Ellen Loar as Councilors. The chapter delegates appointed Sister Margaret Harvey Congregational Secretary and Sister Margaret Molloy Congregational Treasurer.

Quoting from the book *Steadfast Charity (Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul 1972-2002)* will give



an idea of what would be faced by this new leadership group. “We did not yet fully realize the extent of the changes—the cataclysmic changes that had taken place after the Big Bang of Vatican II—in religious life, in the Church, and in the world.”

S. Mary Ellen served as a General Councilor for two four-year terms. As usual her work ethic, clear thinking and sense of humour were great contributions to the work of her group, as was her sensitivity to the Missions in Peru and the Dominican Republic. The missionaries and those they served were always a priority for her.

S. Mary Ellen lost her father during those years in Halifax.

S. Mary Ellen returned to Boston and soon began a Master’s Degree in Social Work at Boston College; finishing her work life at what was then Boston City Hospital. She loved her ministry with babies and children and never complained about how difficult that work really was.

**Throughout her life, S. Mary Ellen was a well-loved and respected Sister of Charity. This remained true even in her last years at Elizabeth Seton Residence in Wellesley.**



**Sister Mary Ellen with Sister Mary Ann Connolly’s niece, Jackie Fiasconaro, at S. Mary Ann’s Silver Jubilee in 2014**