

Recollections of a Proutie

Prout Memorial High School for Girls opened its doors on September 8, 1966 with a student body of 95 freshman & sophomore girls and a faculty that included nine Sisters of the Cross & Passion and five lay teachers.

I arrived here in 1972 after attending Catholic elementary school for eight years. I was very familiar with nuns, or so I thought.

Sr. Dolores, the first headmistress was still in that capacity when I was a freshman. My first thought was headmistress was a strange title for school principal.

Sr. MaryJane (affectionately referred to as MJ) was the directress of discipline, a title that in and of itself was terrifying. MJ ruled with an iron fist and a warm heart. Every so often she would let her guard down and we would catch her smiling or laughing when she thought no students were around. I'm sure some of my classmates would tend to disagree with my recollections however that was because they were on the receiving end of the discipline part of her title and justifiably so.

Sr. Lillian, the directress of student affairs, was instrumental, along with John Neidl in the formation of the Prout-Hendricken musical collaboration. Her legacy lives on to this day as evidenced by the quality of the performing arts program here. In my sophomore year, administration changed and Sr. MaryJane & Sr. Lillian became co-principals and co-horts.

Sr. Elissa taught math, the abstract science of number, quantity, and space, a class I can honestly say I had no use for as a freshman, sophomore or even junior.

Sr. Rose's religion classes were second to none. To this day my friends and I reminisce about one particular class which shall go unnamed. She was also involved in the theatre arts program. I never would have

mastered stage make-up without her instruction and guidance. As great as she was with make-up, her skills in the driving arena left us shaking in our boots. Suffice it to say when Sr. Rose needed someone to drive somewhere with her, our reasons for not being able to accompany her would have garnered us a spot in the Guinness Book of Records under most outlandish excuses.

Sr. Gabriel was the sweetest and tiniest person I had ever met and at that time the oldest as well. We secretly believed she had been Jesus' babysitter.

Each of these women was talented in their own right but as a group, they were a force to reckon with. Little did we realize that throughout our four years here we were being schooled in many of life's lessons. A fact that was not evident until we set out to make our mark on the world.

Sr. Dolores was an exceptional example of what a true leader is.

Sr. Lillian taught us to look for the natural talent in folks, develop it and put it to good use.

Sr. MaryJane taught us that actions have consequences.

Sr. Elissa taught us that math **is** essential in logical thinking whether we are using it to determine simple percentage off sales at our favorite stores or more complex profit & loss business statements and yes, although I would tell you differently at the time, those lessons permeated my gray matter.

Sr. Rose taught us empathy.

Sr. Gabriel taught us that sometimes the most mundane actions yield the most significant contributions.

For this, I thank them.

But, above all, they were women with a love of God and a mission to instill in each and every one of us the basic principles of Christianity while still recognizing the fact that we were at times crazy teenagers. They admonished us for our wrongdoings, praised us when we did well, supported us in our endeavors, encouraged us to believe in ourselves and helped us transition from teenage girls to young women.

The success of so many Prout graduates clearly rests in the hands of these incredible women and it is an honor to recognize them with this dedication.

