

Good morning,

It is an honor to be here today to celebrate Mary Anne, a woman whose life was distinguished by a tremendous sense of loyalty, excellence, dignity, elegance, courage and faith.

As president of Mary Anne's alma mater, Mercy High School, it has been one of the greatest pleasures for me to come to know this extraordinary woman. We count Mary Anne as a most distinguished alumna, a dedicated trustee, and a tireless supporter of our school. But long before we knew Mary Anne in all those ways, Mercy High School knew Mary Anne as a quiet freshman, who came to Mercy by bus from St. Bernard's School in Waverly by the old Memorial Stadium. On her first day of high school, she put on the Mercy uniform—a very long and very appropriate skirt, brown and white saddle shoes, topped by a jaunty beret and traveled north from the Heckwolf home on Kimble Road. She was a trailblazer, a member of Mercy's third class of freshman. At Mercy, Mary Anne's love for language was evident. She was a straight A Spanish student, and she received a certificate for achievement in Latin. And she received the highest marks for integrity. In junior year, she began working as a clerk at the McCrory's in Eudowood Plaza, a job she continued through college. She had a love for the Beatles, but the 60s did not rock Mary Anne. She **never** had a wild phase!

Even in high school, Mary Anne's classmates did not mistake her reserve for shyness or timidity. The chair of our English Department, Kitty Yanson, who knew Mary Anne at both Mercy and at Mt. St. Agnes College described Mary Anne's influence as "measured, authoritative and profound." From Mt. St. Agnes, Mary Anne began a decade of service in the classroom, teaching Spanish at Catholic High, Notre Dame Prep, and in the Prince George's County Public Schools. From

these experiences, Mary Anne came away with three gifts—a master’s in liberal studies from Johns Hopkins, a generation of grateful students, and a circle of devoted friends, most especially Dorothea Newnam, who became family.

With the opening of opportunities in the workplace for women, Mary Anne made a career leap, entering the business world and becoming a leader in the insurance industry. She was a vice president at Phoenix Home Life and at CareFirst Blue Cross Blue Shield. From her Blue Cross days, she made another wonderful group of friends, the Blue Birdies, who shared Mary Anne’s love of golf! As a consultant, Mary Anne advised her clients on operational efficiencies and customer service. No surprise there. Her own efficiency and hospitality are somewhat legendary, and it seems to me in talking with her family that those qualities came from both the Sisters of Mercy and her parents, Anne and Leonard.

Anne Heckwolf set a beautiful table every night and she lived by Emily Post. Her husband Leonard was gracious and low-key, a personnel manager. Senator Jack Lapidés raved to me about Mary Ann as a gracious hostess, throwing wonderful parties at her home in Charles Village with Dotty and she was legendary in her family as the chef responsible for many beautiful Thanksgiving meals.

I am guessing that many of you, like me, struggled with what to wear today, knowing that we were going to honor the sophisticated and stylish Mary Anne. At Carefirst, her staff bought her a pair of jeans for “Boss’ Day.” She ironed them, wore them once, sent them to the dry cleaners, and hung them in the back of the closet. A casual day for Mary Anne meant a twin set and a pair of pressed khakis from Talbots! But her formal demeanor did not mean she was a distant boss. She was “easy to talk with, a good listener and a good problem solver.”

In fact, to everyone she met, Mary Anne was the same. She was a cheerleader for the people and causes in which she believed—foremost among them Stella Maris, Mother Seton Academy and Mercy High School. At Mercy, she established funds in honor of her parents and at Mercy, and I am so pleased that one of the recipients of the Mary Heckwolf Staylor Award, Mercy freshman Stephanie Villatoro is here today. Her mother is also present. Stephanie absolutely embodies many of the qualities that Mary Anne lived. She called our admissions office nearly every week her 8<sup>th</sup> grade year hoping to come to Mercy, and Mary Anne very much admired Stephanie's persistence.

As for the people Mary Anne drew around her, she loved and cherished her friends and her family, doting on her brother Lenny and Helen's children, Joseph, Philip and Annie and their spouses Jessica, Hilary and Patrick, and her brother Tommy and Lynne's children Ashley, Zackery and Spencer. She loved hosting her nieces and nephews for long visits, and introduced them to the joy of travel, which eventually led Mary Anne and Dotty to establish a second home in North Carolina. She was especially thrilled to be the grandest great-aunt to Joseph and Jessica's daughters River and Mary Iluminada, just arrived and named in honor of Mary Anne. She had learned how to be an excellent aunt from her beloved Aunt Mimi, her father's sister, who had made quite a career for herself at McCormick, and she cared for Mimi and her father at Charlestown. Thank you, Fr. Larrivee for representing the Our Lady of Angels parish there, which Mary Anne's father and aunt helped to establish.

I once read that the Church does not encourage eulogies, except where the person eulogized might serve as an example for others. Surely, Mary Anne is an example for all of us. She was a hero. Her years of battling illness bravely call to mind other women of our Church who have shown courage and faith. For she was certainly a

woman of enduring faith, a woman of Mercy, a member of St. Ignatius and as she told me on more than one occasion, a great lover of Jesuit homilies. (And apparently, she liked Sulpician homilies too!)

When Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, was preparing for heaven, she called her Sisters together and asked them to console themselves with companionship and a good cup of tea. Mary Anne had no such gift of time to prepare her or us for her sudden loss. But, today and always, we will console ourselves with the legacy of love and friendship that Mary Anne has left us, and in her honor, a charge to bring Mary Anne's unique kindness, grace and generosity to our own work and lives.