

In Loving Memory

Sister Elizabeth Anne Swartz



Birth
July 15, 1943

Baptism
June 15, 1946

Profession
July 25, 1964

Death
December 13, 2024

Burial
Union Cemetery, Union,
Oregon

*Precious and blessed is
the death of the faithful
before God... for
they die in union with
their dear Jesus, in the
grace of God, in peace.*

Blessed Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger
Foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame
Letter 11, September 10, 1831

Sister Elizabeth Anne Swartz, 81, died peacefully surrounded by her sisters in faith at Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas, Texas, on December 13, 2024.

She was the third child of Harriet (Potts) and Newell Major Swartz, born in Washington, D.C., on July 15, 1943. She was baptized Elizabeth Anne on June 15, 1946, at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Her father died when she was four years old. Three years later, her mother married Earl Cunningham. In this blended family, Elizabeth Anne had three brothers, one sister, two half-sisters, one half-brother and two stepbrothers.

Elizabeth Anne attended Brandywine Elementary School and Gwynn Park Junior-Senior High School in Brandywine, Maryland. She received religious instructions during the summers at St. Michael in Baden, Maryland, a mission of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND). In her junior year of high school, she transferred to the Academy of Our Lady in Washington, D.C., which was also staffed by SSND. She read "Running Waters," the biography of Mother Caroline Friess. This book and the example of her teachers made a lasting impression upon her. In her senior year, she made a rosary novena to Our Lady asking for guidance regarding her future. Conferring with her confessor and the sisters, she was certain that God was calling her to religious life.

Elizabeth Anne entered the candidature at the Baltimore motherhouse on September 8, 1962. She was received into the novitiate on July 13, 1963, two days before her 20th birthday, and given the name Maureen Henry. She professed first vows on July 25, 1964, and final vows on July 23, 1969. She later returned to her baptismal name.

She obtained a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland (now University), Baltimore, Maryland, in 1972, and a master's degree in elementary education from Trinity College (now University), Washington, D.C., in 1975. She completed postgraduate work and her principal certification at Texas Women's University in Dallas, Texas.

Sister Elizabeth Anne ministered 54 years in Catholic education. She taught elementary children for 15 years at St. Patrick, Cumberland, Maryland (1965-1971), Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Washington, D.C. (1971-1975), Coolidge Public Schools, Coolidge, Arizona (1975-1978) and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Dallas, Texas (1978-1980). She also coached girl's basketball and softball and was a school librarian. In 1977, she requested a transfer to the former Dallas Province.

Her administrative career began at Holy Rosary School, San Antonio, Texas (1980-1989), and continued at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Glendale, Arizona (1989-1995). In 1995, she began 22 years as a superintendent of elementary

continued

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*Sister Elizabeth Anne
(Maureen Henry) Swartz*

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schools in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas (1995-1996), the Diocese of El Paso, Texas (1996-2017) and the Diocese of San Angelo, Texas (1998-2017).

She was presented with the prestigious “Learn. Lead. Proclaim.” Award from the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) for her outstanding efforts, contributions and achievements in Catholic schools, and was one of the first two superintendents to earn this award. In 2017, the city of El Paso declared June as “Sister Elizabeth Swartz Month” in recognition of her years of service to education and touching the lives of countless students and their families.

After a year’s sabbatical, she was an educational consultant for two years. In her retirement years, she participated in volunteer service with the migrants and immigrants in El Paso, Texas, until her move to a retirement facility in Dallas, Texas, in 2023. She celebrated 60 years of religious profession in the summer of 2024. In early December 2024, she was admitted to Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas, and diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. She passed away peacefully on December 13, 2024, as sisters prayed at her bedside. She requested to be cremated.

Sister Elizabeth Anne believed in the equalizing power of education and working for social justice. She exemplified the values of servant leadership and lifelong learning. She traveled to Italy, Germany, Austria, Turkey, Israel, France, Portugal, Spain, Honduras and Japan as part of cultural exchanges and religious pilgrimages. She was beloved by the sisters in her religious community, her students and colleagues.

Sister Elizabeth Anne had a heart for the poor and disadvantaged and was inspired by her mother who was active in advocating for children, farmworkers, migrants and refugees. She served on numerous SSND committees, diocesan committees and professional committees.

To the world she was Sister Elizabeth Anne, but to her family she was a beloved, protective, bossy, witty, and fun sister and “Aunt Tam.” She invested time to get to know each of her dozens of nieces and nephews and was a mother figure to all.

She was preceded in death by her parents, and her brothers Newell “Sandy” (Maria), Paul, and Joseph “Joey” (Carol) Cunningham. She is survived by her brother Charles “Skip” (Ina) Swartz, her sister Nancy (Marvin) Edvalson, Eileen McCarthy, and Robin Crawford, 14 nieces and nephews, and 27 great-nieces and nephews. A memorial mass will be held on January 23, 2025, at Walnut Place, Dallas, Texas, with Monsignor Milam Joseph as celebrant. This will be followed by a memorial mass and the interment of her remains at the Union Cemetery in Union, Oregon, in her mother’s burial plot in summer 2025.

By Sherri Edvalson Erkel and Sister Mary Anne Owens, SSND