



Birth

February 7, 1917

Baptism

February 18, 1917

Profession

August 5, 1936

Death

June 29, 2017

Burial

Notre Dame of Elm Grove  
Cemetery  
Elm Grove, Wisconsin

*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

*In Loving Memory*

## Sister Marlena Janis, SSND

Sister Marlena Janis was born February 7, 1917, the youngest of the five living children of John and Amalia Janis. Her parents were immigrants who came to America in their teens, met and married in Milwaukee. She was named after her mother, Amalia and attended elementary school at St. Stephen's, a Slovak Parish school where she was taught by SSNDs. Her father died after a very short illness when she was nine years old.

After graduation from elementary school, she entered the Juniorate at the Notre Dame Convent, in Milwaukee. At 18, she entered the Novitiate, and professed first vows on August 5, 1936.

Her first mission was to St. Alphonsus in Chicago, where she taught for more than a decade. She writes of this time, "Life began with full energy as all the sisters took us under their wings. The real surprise came when we were told that the school enrollment was over 1,000 pupils. Twenty-four classrooms contained grades one through eight." Sister Marlena then went on to help start and lead three other schools: St. Helena of the Cross in Chicago, St. Frances Cabrini in West Bend and St. Peter's in Port Washington.

A gifted leader, she served as a supervisor of schools for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for three years before serving in leadership for six years at Notre Dame of the Lake in Mequon, Wisconsin. Her community service ministry began in 1982 and Sister Marlena ministered in Wisconsin for five years before serving on a leadership team at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Retirement Home in Mount Calvary, Wisconsin. She received her bachelor's in English and history from De Paul University in Chicago and a master's in administration from Marquette University in Milwaukee.

She retired in 1992, after 37 years in the classroom and many years in leadership and administrative roles which took her to South America and Rome. She reflected in her jubilee profile in 2016 in celebration of 80 years as an SSND, "One of my best memories as an SSND was the Heritage Program held in Chatawa, Mississippi. Participants were

*continued*

# *In Loving Memory*



*Sister Marlena Janis*



steeped in the Notre Dame roots and spirit. It was truly unforgettable.”  
Sister Marlena moved to Notre Dame of Elm Grove in 2005.

In February of 2017, she celebrated her 100th birthday with the SSND community and family. She is survived by nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, three sisters and two brothers.

*This remembrance is compiled from SSND archival information.*

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