

Death Notice

SISTER MARY LAURA

ND 5967

Joan Marie WINGERT



Immaculate Conception Province, USA

Date and Place of Birth:	February 12, 1942	Canton, Ohio
Date and Place of Profession:	August 16, 1965	Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Death:	February 26, 2024	Health Care Center, Chardon, Ohio
Date and Place of Burial:	March 8, 2024	Resurrection Cemetery, Chardon

“Like clay in the hands of the potter...”

Joan Marie was the first and only girl born to Wayne and Mary (Zettler) Wingert. She was the proud big sister of four younger brothers. They enjoyed a happy childhood with many adventures in the family home surrounded by acres of farmland and woods. Here she experienced the beauty of the earth's growing seasons and learned to manipulate the clay soil at an early age. At St. Joseph and St. Joan of Arc Parish Schools Joanie made lifelong friends and discovered her talent for playing the clarinet and singing in the choir. After graduation from Canton Central Catholic High School, Joanie entered Notre Dame College in South Euclid, Ohio. She planned to major in art and English and begin a career in fashion design.

At the College Joanie met the Sisters of Notre Dame, many of whom became close friends. She had never seriously considered a religious vocation but after much prayer and discernment responded to God's call. On September 8, 1962, Joanie entered as a postulant and at investment received the name Sister Mary Laura. She continued her education at Notre Dame College, earning a bachelor's degree in English and art education, then a master's degree in art education from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and an Advanced Catechetical diploma from the Middleburg Institute. She also studied Native American Arts in New Mexico.

Sister Mary Laura's ministry in secondary education spanned more than thirty years, twenty-one at the Notre Dame Academy boarding school in Middleburg, Virginia. She was gifted as both an artist and a teacher. Sister had a profound impact on her students – genuine kindness and gentleness, creative energy, a sense of humor and acceptance of everyone whatever their abilities. Her students were introduced to drawing, painting, ceramics, crafts, graphics and related arts. She directed and staged plays, initiated art and environmental activities and produced art exhibits featuring works of students and staff. “I hope to empower each student to choose the reflective approach to life that the arts engender” she stated, “and grow in appreciation and respect for the power of creative expression within.”

After moving to the Chardon SND Center in 2001, Sister Mary Laura devoted time to crafting pottery pieces and creating greeting cards with exquisite photos of nature. She enjoyed teaching the sisters and encouraging their creativity. As a volunteer at WomenSafe and a member of the Steering Committee and speaker for the Collaborative to End Human Trafficking, Sister gave voice to her conviction and love for God's presence in each person. Over the past few years Sister Mary Laura met the challenge of progressing dementia with grace and courage. She lived with simple trust, knowing that, as clay in the hands of the potter, she was held and treasured. May she rest in peace.