

SISTER VIRGINIA 'GINNY' CUMMINGS | April 30, 1926 - July 10, 2015

Put 'past life' behind to join convent

By Peter Smith

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

She raised two boys as a working, single mother, but she always harbored the thought of joining the Roman Catholic religious order women who taught at her high school.

When her sons were grown, Virginia Cummings entered the School Sisters of St. Francis of the U.S. Province and went on to teach school, work in parishes and a cemetery association and volunteer for countless small tasks.

She decided that "everything she did before, she's putting in a little paper bag," said Sister Jeanne Marie Ulica, provincial vicar for the sisters. "That's her past life. And she never talked about her other life. She fully entered into this life."

Sister Virginia "Ginny" Cummings died Friday at age 89 at the sisters' Mount Assisi Convent Motherhouse in Bellevue. She was the first member of the order to join after having been married.

"She was a very sociable person and made friends easily, whatever ministry she was in," Sister Jean Marie said. "It was a caring friendship that she had. People would confide in her. I think with her wealth of experience in the business world where she worked before she entered, as a married person, she could have an empathy with people if they were having problems."

Born April 30, 1926, Sister Virginia graduated from Mount Assisi Academy and took business courses that prepared her for office work. She entered the order in 1973 and made her final vows in 1980.

She taught business and was on staff at schools in San Antonio and in Erie and Clymer, Pa. She earned a certificate from Duquesne University and directed religious education at various parishes and later worked for the Catholic Cemetery Association.

She was also very good at selling raffle tickets at the sisters' festival.

"She just had that person-

ality. You couldn't say no to her," Sister Jean Marie said.

In later years, Sister Virginia would drive elderly sisters for medical care and other needs.

"If a sister had to go to the hospital in the middle of the night, she was there to take her," Sister Jean Marie said.

After Sister Virginia could no longer drive, she would continue to minister in prayer.

In addition to her religious sisters, she is survived by her brother Roland; her son David; and several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her son Richard Michael, and brothers Arthur and Francis.

Calling hours are from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m. today at Mount Assisi Convent, 934 Forest Ave. The funeral Mass will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday in Queen of Angels Chapel at the convent.

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