

DVUSA: New Orleans Loses a Hero

by Anthony Butler and Shirley Bodisch, OP

On Thursday, June 19, 2008, Dominican Volunteers USA was struck with deep sadness. It was on that day we received word that we had lost one of our staunchest supporters, Sister Mary Jeanne Girshefski, OP.

Sr. Mary Jeanne served on the board of the Southern Dominican Volunteer Program and became one of the founders of Dominican Volunteers USA. She served on the DVUSA board of trustees 2001-2006. We are forever indebted to her vision, her charity, and the joy with which she spoke of all the volunteers

Shannon Green, past Executive Director of DVUSA:

“What I remember most about her was her delightful sense of hospitality. She could not wait to show off her beloved New Orleans. Forever emblazoned in my memory is the image of her walking down Bourbon Street at 10 PM on a Saturday night in her habit, with 5 young volunteers in tow, awestruck. People were moved to see an old nun walking around Bourbon Street with a broad smile on her face. She waved and shook hands with everyone on the street and she hugged a few strangers too. She loved every minute of it, and so did we. She took good care of us whenever we were in town, and I pray that she is now enjoying herself at the great eternal banquet. God bless Mary Jeanne!”

Regina Botterill, past Executive Director of DVUSA: “I would add ‘a grand ole woman of the South.’ How she loved her city! I had a note from Mary Jeanne last week and she was still giving her best efforts. We have lost a formidable watch dog over the integrity of DVUSA -and a true friend,” Joan Harnett, OP, DVUSA Board of Trustees. “In the long hallway of her New Orleans [home] she had lined photos of the DV's from each year, and while we were there in February, she led our 07-08 group proudly down the hall. It was deeply touching, and a great memory of her love for DVUSA.”

Sister Mary Jeanne will be deeply missed by many. She has left a legacy that will not soon be forgotten. May she rest in the eternal peace of Christ, and may the angels rejoice that she has joined them