

AUGUST 15, 2011

### RUTH DOWD, R.S.C.J. '40 BEGINS A NEW CHAPTER

After more than six decades as a visionary, educator, and transformer of the lives of countless students, Ruth Dowd R.S.C.J., has decided to move to Albany, NY to join the community of retired Religious of the Sacred Heart. She will be leaving the campus the weekend of August 20<sup>th</sup>.

The College will hold a reception to honor her legacy on Wednesday, August 17 on the Reid Castle patio from 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. We hope to see you there as we celebrate her contributions to the Manhattanville College community and wish her well.

Sr. Ruth graduated from Manhattanville in 1940, when it was the College of the Sacred Heart located on 138<sup>th</sup> Street and Convent Avenue in the Manhattanville section of Harlem, with a B.A. in sociology and philosophy. She went on to join the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in 1949 she became a faculty member at the College. Sister Ruth taught in the Philosophy Department for 18 years. Following her calling to broaden the educational opportunities for women and minorities, and feeling the desire “to reconnect with public education,” Sr. Ruth left her position as a professor of philosophy at Manhattanville in 1967 to plan and start the Harlem Preparatory School in conjunction with the New York Urban League.

In the winter 2010 edition of *Manhattanville Magazine*, Sr. Ruth recalled, “In the 1960s there were no college prep schools in Central Harlem. Our goal was to bring in high school dropouts and prepare them for college. We promised that if they were able to complete the program, we would place them in colleges, and we succeeded in placing a great many students into colleges including the Ivy League.”

Five years later, she became the director of the School of New Resources at the College of New Rochelle. During this period Sr. Ruth also continued to maintain her Manhattanville connection, serving on the Board of Trustees. She returned to Manhattanville in 1983 as Dean of Adult and Special programs and launched the school of Graduate and Professional Studies with a flagship program in human resources. Courses in leadership, strategic management and marketing soon followed.

Sr. Ruth then turned her attention to establishing a hub for creative writing at Manhattanville, beginning with the annual Writers’ Week conference. Five years later, Writers’ Week evolved into The Master of Arts in Writing Program, which under Sr. Ruth’s stewardship, blossomed into a highly regarded full-time offering. In addition the annual Writers’ Week conference, a vibrant yearly “Meet the Writers” literary series for students and the general public which just completed its 28<sup>th</sup> year, and the literary journal *Inkwell*, have become nationally recognized.

In 2003, the Dowd/O’Gorman Writing Center was dedicated, honoring the contributions of Sr. Ruth and Sr. Eileen O’Gorman to the field of writing and literature on Manhattanville’s campus. The fall of 2009, Sr. Ruth retired from her position as Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies. And on October 1, 2009, the Manhattanville Board of Trustees conferred upon Sr. Ruth the title Dean Emeritus in recognition of her achievements and lifetime body of

work. Also on June 29, 2010, the *Inkwell literary Journal* presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Sr. Ruth in recognition of her commitment to arts and letters.

Sr. Ruth will always be warmly embraced at Manhattanville. Her accomplishments have had an extraordinary impact on generations of students, faculty, and staff.