

# Esprit de Coeur

*spirit of the heart*



**ASSOCIATED ALUMNAE AND ALUMNI  
OF THE SACRED HEART**

**SUMMER 2013**

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*Be humble, be simple and bring joy to others.*  
*-Madeleine Sophie Barat*

# AASH BOARD ANNOUNCES JOAN LUEDER COFFEY SERVICE AWARD

The 2011-2013 Board of Directors announce the inauguration of the *Joan Lueder Coffey Service Award*. The award establishes a new partnership with the Barat Education Foundation (BEF) and the Ignatian Volunteer Corps-Chicago (IVC).

The award is named in honor of a Sacred Heart alumna of Barat College, Class of 1965. Joan Coffey believed deeply in the values of education and service to the poor. She passed away in 2003.

Dr. Coffey was a life-long educator and student. She was born in Chicago, and received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Barat College and her Ph.D. in History from the University of Colorado.

She taught for many years in public and private secondary schools including Woodlands Academy of the Sacred Heart. Dr. Coffey joined the faculty at Sam Houston State University in 1990, where she was Associate Professor of History at the time of her death.

She is author of *Leon Harmel: Entrepreneur on Catholic Social Reform*, published posthumously by Notre Dame Press.

The Ignatian Volunteer Corps is a national organization that provides retired and semi-retired individuals, aged 50 and older, opportunities to volunteer in poor and marginalized communities. IVC volunteers commit two days per week, 10 months per year – generally September-June – in direct service to those in need.

Volunteers also participate in a comprehensive faith formation program in the Jesuit Catholic tradition. It is a one-year commitment with the option for renewal.

*The JLC Service Award* will support the placement of an IVC-Sacred Heart alum in the Chicago region who volunteers at a school that promotes educational opportunities for students of limited means and/or at an IVC partner agency servicing the materially poor.

Volunteers meet monthly as a Christian faith community from September to June and participate in days of reflection



and an annual retreat. Each member is matched with a spiritual reflector with whom he/she meets monthly to reflect on his/her service experience.

AASH is proud to promote the *Joan Lueder Coffey Service Award* and the Ignatian Volunteer Corps as a unique opportunity for retired Sacred Heart alums to continue living out St. Madeleine Sophie

Barat's vision of "social awareness that impels to action" and her commitment to ongoing personal faith development.

The Award was publicly announced at the IVC 'Madonna Della Strada Awards' at Loyola University-Lakeshore Campus on May 8. A number of Sacred Heart alums attended the event.

AASH, BEF, and IVC Chicago anticipate that this award will be a model for the establishment of other endowed "named" service awards in regions where AASH and IVC alums are working with the underserved.

For more information on the Ignatian Volunteer Corps, please visit the IVC website at [www.ivcusa.org](http://www.ivcusa.org) (click on 'Chicago').

The Barat Education Foundation is an independent 501(c) 3 organization, established in 2000 prior to the sale of Barat College to DePaul University. At that time, the Foundation was charged with the development and support of innovative educational programs and services that reflected the values and educational tradition of Barat College.

When DePaul University closed Barat College in June 2005, the Board of Directors voted to perpetuate and build upon the Barat legacy of education, leadership and advocacy. Today, the Barat Education Foundation is committed to continuing and adapting the heritage and legacy of Barat College to the



Left to right: Fr. Brian Paulson, SJ, MER, Sheila Smith, Chair BEF, Christine Curran, IVC, Ed Coffey, and George Sullivan.

21st-century world.

For more information about the Barat Education Foundation, visit the BEF website at <http://www.thebaratfoundation.org>.



Sister Marguerite Green, RSCJ and Joan.



Joan Lueder Coffey with her mother and husband.

## A TRIBUTE TO JOAN LUEDER COFFEY BY HER HUSBAND

*ED. NOTE: Following are remarks by Ed Coffey during the IVC reception.*

Good evening. It is wonderful to be back in Chicago, and I am honored to be sharing this event with the IVC, their dedicated volunteers, and all of you. I am also very pleased to be joining the Barat Education Foundation and the Alumni Association of the Sacred Heart in establishing the Joan Lueder Coffey Service Award to support and advance the mission of the IVC. I am inspired by the profiles that I have read of each of the recipients of the awards to be presented this evening, and the extraordinary work they have and continue to undertake in service to their communities and the good people that they support on a continuing basis. I hope that the addition of this service award memorializing Joan -- a woman who devoted her entire adult life to educating and inspiring others to learn and then serve the needs of their students, families, and the community at large -- will help to further advance the IVC to serve, educate, improve and inspire those most in need in the Chicago area.

When my beloved Joan died in the summer of 2003, the university newspaper at Sam Houston State in Huntsville, Texas, north of Houston, where she had been a member of the History Department faculty for 13 years, announced her death in an article headlined "Inspirational History Professor Dies after Eight-year Battle with Cancer." In a somewhat over the top statement characteristic of many a college student, one student was quoted in the article saying, "Dr. Coffey was a teacher who knew everything there is to know about history." Another commented, "She had high standards. She expected a lot from her students, but I'm sure they can look back and say they had the best."

Joan took her inspiration for life and her work first from her parents who sacrificed much to ensure both of their daughters had college educations that their parents had not enjoyed. On a Sunday afternoon in 1961, when Joan and her parents visited the Barat campus and had their first experience with the Society of the Sacred Heart order of nuns who ran the College, the RSCJ's as we more familiarly know them now, they were greeted and shown around by Sister Burke, then president of the College, but also the chief tour guide. Joan committed to attending immediately, and the tour that lasted perhaps an hour began Joan's relationship to the spiritual, moral, philosophical, cultural, and personal values of St. Madeline Sophie Barat and the Sacred Heart order that she founded, values that remained with her and strongly influenced her for the remainder of her life.

Joan's relationship with the Sacred Heart, first fostered at Barat, was further strengthened and enriched as she taught at Sacred Heart schools in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Woodlands in Lake Forest.

Her work and really her entire life were always a wonderful reflection of the words expressed by St. Madeline Sophie Barat, who said, "Your example, even more than your words, will be an eloquent lesson to the world."

When Joan and I established a speaker series at Barat in the late 1990's to honor Sister Marguerite Green, Joan's mentor at Barat, and address issues of social justice and concern, the first speaker was Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*, whose lifelong objective has been and continues to be abolition of capital punishment. So moved was Joan by Sr. Prejean's words that she immediately tried to get her to speak at Sam Houston State, which is located less than a mile from the execution chamber used by the State of Texas Criminal Justice system, by far the most active such facility in the country if not the world. Sr. Prejean was not able to speak there before Joan died, but the annual symposium at Sam Houston State that gathers in memory of Joan welcomed her as its first speaker where she spoke movingly not only of Joan, but the issue of capital punishment, and her mission to eradicate it, to a packed house of people on all sides of the issue.

Even after Joan was ill, she continued her work with barely a pause, assuming along with me responsibility for the eucharistic ministry to the sick and homebound in our home parish in Texas, researching and writing, in the term prior to her death, teaching along with another cancer stricken member of her department a course dealing with death and dying, and completing her book, including carefully proofreading each of its more than 1200 research footnotes.

But mostly she remained focused on her teaching, and especially those students who were like her first in their families to attend college, or were minorities, or did not have English as their first language, or were often not blessed with good study habits and did not write or test well. Let me close by recalling her relationship with one young man in particular. He struggled mightily and Joan spent a great deal of time with him reviewing and rewriting and resubmitting papers. He needed a C on a final exam, and he came in very uncertain of his prospects, but when the results of the test that she always reviewed without reference to student identities were in and he passed, he came to Joan and with tears in his eyes and folded hands, and told her that he made it because of her support, and that of Sweet Jesus. Forever after, he was SJ to us.

Thank you again for the honor of being with you tonight, and may God bless you in doing His work. I know Joan will be smiling as she sees all of us here moving forward and continuing to inspire others as she would, making a difference in the lives of God's people, especially those deeply in need.