

THE WANSBORO AWARD



Katherine S. Wansboro, RSCJ

In 1972, the Wansboro Award was initiated to honor individuals in the Sacred Heart family who by their lives and activities have demonstrated Confidence in the Heart of Jesus. The recipient of the award need not be a Sacred Heart alumna, as indeed Sister Wansboro was not, but the recipient must share with Sister Wansboro that strong commitment and dedication to the Heart of Jesus and Sacred Heart education.

After her graduation, Sister Wansboro needed a year to decide about her future. Being acquainted with the Kenwood Convent of the Sacred Heart for some time, she understood more deeply the spirit of the Society, believing it could bring to fruition all she was searching for in religious life: total consecration to the love of Christ. His love was her constant support during her more than 50 years as a Religious of the Sacred Heart.

As a religious, Sister Wansboro received an M.A. from Boston College and her undergraduate degree in Library Science from the State University of Albany. She frequently attended summer school to better prepare herself to meet the educational challenges in a changing world. As a teacher or coordinator of studies, Headmistress or Superior, she served in several houses in the Province, including Newton, Washington, D.C., Buffalo, Greenwich, Rochester and 91st Street. Her longest stay was in Michigan, where she spent 25 years, one at Grosse Pointe and 24 at Lawrence Avenue and Bloomfield Hills. She was Superior at Lawrence Avenue when the decision was made to establish a house in Bloomfield Hills. With only \$8,000 to buy land and build a new school, the task seemed impossible! It was clear to her that it could only be built on Confidence in the Heart of Jesus. It was through this Confidence that the project became a reality and Sister Wansboro became Superior of Bloomfield Hills, serving from 1958-1964.

Sister Wansboro insisted on excellence from her students. She endeavored to see that the Charity of Christ was the basis of all school activities. She worked behind the scenes by providing support and encouragement to her students and their families. She founded the Fathers' Club and the Janet Stuart Association to develop understanding between home and school. On August 2, 1990, Sister Katherine Wansboro celebrated her Diamond Jubilee as a Religious of the Sacred Heart. The Lord called Katherine Wansboro home on March 13, 1998.

This award is presented annually in the name of Katherine S. Wansboro, RSCJ, whose life exemplifies Confidence in the Heart of Jesus.

THE 2011 WANSBORO AWARD RECIPIENT



Matthew P. Colonius

Faithful to the spirit of Katherine Wansboro, RSCJ, the alumnae and alumni of the Academy of the Sacred Heart present the 2011 Wansboro award to one who has cared for this “House Built on Confidence.” Surrounded by the attitudes of the heart of Jesus, we honor Matthew P. Colonius with this award recognizing integrity, faith, service, excellence and commitment.

The Society of the Sacred Heart was founded by Madeleine Sophie Barat in a spirit of prayer, fidelity, generosity and the service of education. Sophie Barat insisted that the care of each soul should be reflected in the equal care given to the house where learning happens and the grounds that allow the Spirit of God to unfold. She wrote,

“Let the small details of the house, the love given to all things seen and touched by the children, the order and care given to each room for instruction, be given the greatest importance as the love given to these things will be the instruments of God’s presence in the lives of the pupils.”

Nothing could more perfectly describe the vocation of Matthew P. Colonius. There once was a young man of 19 who arrived for a temporary position on his way to dreams of a horticulture business and financial prosperity. God had other things in mind. Formed in the shadow of those who labor built this building and planted the saplings that now give shade to our students, Matt learned his craft from the best. Paul Roy and Mary Polizzi, RSCJ made Matt their special project and protégée. Praying that God would lead Matt back after his years of study at Michigan State University, the Religious of the Sacred Heart rejoiced when Matt and his family joined them by making this property their home, and celebrated each milestone in the life of his son, Christopher.

From renovation to restoration to renewal to rebirth, the life of the Academy of the Sacred Heart has been shaped by the life of Matthew Colonius. Like the conductor of a symphony, Matt keeps all the instruments tuned and creates music for the heart in his care for this house of faith, hope and love. From snow plows to lawn mowers to bricks, cement and thousands of rolls of paper towels, Matt has built the kingdom of God by making love visible in every season and over more than 30 years of a life given in love.

The entire Sacred Heart family salutes our colleague, friend, leader and brother for the gift of the heart that makes visible the heart of Jesus. Congratulations to Matthew Colonius on a life given in service of others, whose impact can never be measured.