

Sister Joel Read

A member of the School Sisters of St. Francis, Read served as president of Alverno College from 1968 to 2003, earning a reputation as one of the most notable educational reform advocates in the nation. Under her leadership, Alverno became a nationally recognized model of innovative curriculum and leadership training for women. It was the first college in the Milwaukee area to offer weekend courses for women not of traditional student age, and it offered a high level of interaction between students and faculty so that the women students sometimes complicated lives could be taken into account. During Read's tenure, the Alverno campus saw a lot of feminist activity and was the site for many feminist conferences and seminars. In 1966, Read attended the organizing conference of NOW and served on its first board.

She chaired the Commission on the Status of Education of Women for the American Association of Colleges, and was president of the National Forum for Women. She was also a founding member of Wisconsin Women in Higher Education Leadership. Active in Milwaukee and WI civic affairs, she advocated for the hiring and promotion of women in area businesses. She was also a presidential appointee to the U.S. Commission for the Celebration of International Women's Year (1975 –1976). Read has served as president of the American Association for Higher Education as well as on the boards of the Foundation for Independent Higher Education, the American Council for Education, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the National Catholic Education Association and other educational associations.

The recipient of many honors and awards, Read was invited to the White House by two presidents to discuss education. A Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Read holds Honorary Degrees from Lakeland College (1972), Wittenberg University (1976), Marymount Manhattan College (1981), DePaul University (1985), Northland College (1986), State University of New York (1986), Lawrence