

Remembering



Austin Doherty

March 24, 2015

4:00 p.m.

Alverno Chapel

Education

- High School Diploma, 1945 – Alvernia High School
- B.A. History – Alverno College, 1954
- M.A. History – Marquette University, 1960
- M.A. Psychology – Loyola University, 1965
- Ph.D. Psychology – Loyola University, 1968

Early Employment

- 1945-1950 Administrative Assistant to Dean of Liberal Arts, Loyola University
- 1950-1951 Administrative Assistant, Talent Inc.
- 1954-1961 History Teacher, Pius XI High School

Academic Activity at Alverno College

- 1967 Instructor, History
- 1968 Founder, Psychology Major
- 1970 Co-Founder, Research Center for Women
- 1968-1975 Chair, Psychology Department
- 1971-1976 Co-Designer, Competence-Based Learning and Assessment Program
- 1975-1978 Assistant Dean for Curriculum Development
 - Chair, Curriculum Committee
 - Co-Chair, Assessment Committee
- 1978-1991 Academic Dean
- 1982-1999 Vice President for Academic Affairs
- 1999-2005 Director, Alverno College Institute
- 2005-2013 Special Assistant to Academic Affairs, Alverno College

Sister Austin Doherty died February 8, 2015

Remembering Austin Doherty

Opening Words

Sandra Graham

Invocation

All

Let us take a moment to ask for God's blessing on us and our work and especially our responsibility for the future. Teach us, O God, to use all the circumstances of our lives – today and each day – for this is the essence of leadership and responsibility.

Teach us to use our differences to learn how to grow;
Teach us to use our disappointment to learn how to endure;
Teach us to use our success to learn how to be thankful;
Teach us to use failures to learn how to be creative;
Teach us to use responsibility to learn how to listen;
Teach us to use our confusion to learn how to laugh.

Invocation by Austin Doherty

Alverno Remembers

Speakers: Timothy Riordan No Knubben Kathleen O'Brien, Elizabeth Doherty '00

Communal Prayer

Sandra Graham

When we get others to engage in spirited conversation on new educational theories and movements

We remember her

When we review outcomes and statements of the majors

We remember her

When we need a gentle punch in the arm and someone saying "you can do this, buddy"

We remember her

When we look at the never ending copyright dates on our documents that reinforce the ever-living nature of our work that is always work in progress.

We remember her

When we talk, work, and party with colleagues from around the world

We remember her

When we encourage our students to think more deeply about something or to go into politics

We remember her

When we challenge the status quo of higher education and insist that there is another way

We remember her

When we engage each other, no matter who we are, to more effectively assess our own work

We remember her

When we think of innovative and effective ways of engaging students, whatever their preparation

We remember her

So long as we live, she too shall live,

For she is now a part of us,

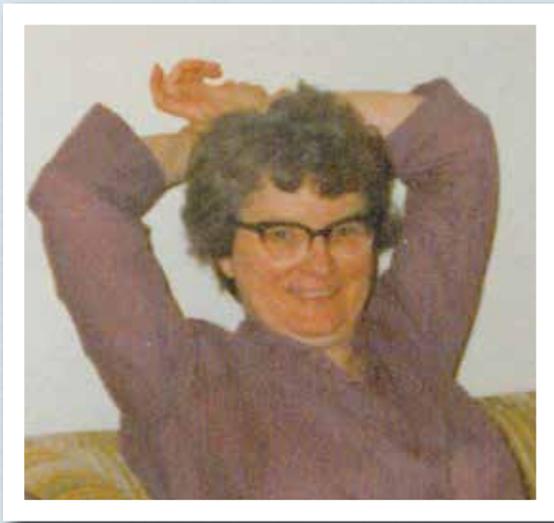
As we remember her.

Final Tribute: The Doherty Reels

All are invited to the Galleria for hospitality and a continuing celebration of the life and work of Austin Doherty.

The bookmarks in this program are from the extensive Austin Doherty collection of pithy quotations of principles she lived and worked by.

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family



Austin was an amazing woman. She was an inspiration to everyone in our family, and one of the most remarkable people any of us have ever met. She made such an impact on so many lives. Austin loved debating a subject, as do all of us in the Doherty family. She told me it was part of our Irish love for engaging in good conversation, as she would raise both of her fists in a joking gesture of fighting. I thought it was that we are all just stubborn. Everyone in the family just called her Sister. She hated that we called her Sister because she said we could be referring to anyone that was a sister. She wanted to be called Austin, Sister Austin, or Aunt Mary, but for us it was our way of showing respect by calling her Sister.

When she passed, several family members posted pictures, memories and comments about Austin that expressed the impact she had on them and what she meant to them.

Speaking for myself, as I was growing up, Austin was my Aunt that I saw twice a year at our Christmas and summer gatherings. The summer before my senior year in high school, I had a conversation with Austin that would forever change my life. We talked about Alverno and the opportunities the college would offer. Being a teenager, the idea of no grades was really appealing. When I got here I realized it was so much more.

In the years between then and Austin's passing, she and I had so many great dinners and conversations. I have grown into a more confident and assertive person, and that would not have happened without Austin's guidance in my life. Everyone in my family has their own memory of how Austin has impacted their lives, as does almost anyone who knew my aunt.

My family is lucky to call her one of ours and I particularly am grateful to have had the time I did with her. She was not only my Aunt, but also my friend. I am a better person having known her. There are very few people that I can say have had that kind of impact on my life.

Elizabeth Doherty '00

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

At the time of her retirement from the North Central Commission

Sr. Austin Doherty is Vice President for Academic Affairs at Alverno College in Milwaukee, where she was a faculty member, department chair, and Assistant Dean prior to her current appointment.

Austin has been a Consultant-Evaluator since 1977, serving on more than twenty teams as a member or chair. In 1980 she was elected a Commissioner-at-Large and in 1989 she was appointed to the Commission.

As a member of the Commission she brought with her the experience of Alverno College in assessment. Her leadership of the Assessment Advisory Committee provided strong direction for this important effort affecting all of our institutions.

In the spring of 1991 she was appointed to the Critical Issues Committee, where her insights helped to formulate strategic revisions to the documents on which institutional evaluation and accreditation decisions will be made. She has made valuable contributions to all aspects of the Commission's work and we will miss the thoughtfulness and perception that she has consistently demonstrated.

Each of us has our own impressions of her but these are the characteristics that I have come to appreciate and value in working with her in various capacities.

Austin, we thank you for your energy and persistence. No request made of you was ever too much. You have gone out of your way to participate and cooperate. You have given fully of yourself, no matter what was asked of you and how often.

We thank you for your insights, insights that are provocative and penetrating. You have given us fresh and refreshing views that caused us to think in ways we might not have if you had not brought them to our attention.

And, we thank you for your kindly spirit, a spirit that is never critical and always positive. You see others as they want to be seen, the best that each of us can be. You are a credit to your profession, your institution, your principles and values, your tradition.

Austin, on behalf of the members and staff of the Commission, we thank you for your service to the Commission and for what you have done for us. By your presence you have made us better people.



*North Central Accreditation, Distinguished Service Awards Dinner, 1992
Printed in the NCA Bulletin*

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

I first met Sister Austin Doherty in the mid-1970s as a newly minted Ph.D. in English, just beginning my academic career at an amazing place called Alverno College where courses were organized around clear, explicit learning goals and students were required to actually demonstrate their achievement of those goals. That simple but radical idea was not the genius of any one person, certainly; the notion that “it takes a village” was and always has been true at Alverno. But Austin was a force of nature within that village.

For one thing, she brought an unwavering sense of confidence that the new vision of education growing up at the college was something we — her colleagues — could figure out, shape, and make work. Of course we collected good ideas from elsewhere and drew as appropriate from other models and relevant research. But Austin helped us understand that we could do this ourselves! Her confidence was not a matter of ego or bravado but rather, as I came to understand, a reflection of her faith in Alverno’s faculty, staff, and students.



Not surprisingly given that faith, Austin was also a wonderful teacher and mentor — with an uncanny sense of when and how to intervene when things got hard (because change is hard) or shifts in direction were needed. Her job as dean was to help the Alverno community understand and implement the core principles and values of the College — and to stay the course. I know I’m not the only young faculty member she took under her wing; like many of my colleagues, I found my ideas about teaching and learning profoundly shaped by her vision and her example.

Her influence went far beyond the College as well. After a powerfully formative decade at Alverno, I went on to work at the national level, carrying what I learned there into other educational projects and initiatives I had the privilege to be part of. I can testify to the fact that the big ideas animating Alverno, the ideas that Austin kept so clearly and concretely in view every day, are now prominent on the larger higher education landscape. This has happened quietly, incrementally, and often in ways that do not make fully visible their source at Alverno. But the fact is that colleges and universities across the world have been changed by the transformations that have taken place on the south side of Milwaukee.

That could not have happened without Austin, who taught us all so well and who will be so deeply missed.

*Pat Hutchings, Consulting Scholar,
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching;
National Institute for Learning Outcomes,
Assessment Scholar in Residence, Gonzaga University*

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

Higher education has lost a great leader.

I first met Sister Austin and other Alverno colleagues at the American Association for Higher Education's 1983 National Conference on Higher Education. The following year, my second at AAHE, Alverno College hosted the AAHE Board for its spring retreat. During that meeting, I became keenly aware of the nationally ground-breaking role Alverno College was playing in the emerging student learning outcomes assessment movement and of Sister Austin's leadership of the Alverno academic team engaged in that work. It was also at that meeting that we met Pat Hutchings, an Alverno faculty member who later became the first National Director of the AAHE Assessment Forum.

At the conclusion of the 1985 AAHE Conference in Chicago, Austin cornered me, Russ Edgerton and Ted Marchese and in her usual forceful way urged us to put Assessment forward as a theme for upcoming AAHE conferences and as a possible new national initiative. We listened and as the saying goes — “the rest was history.”

So here I am, 30 years later, watching our Pima Community College faculty work on assessing student learning outcomes and smiling with pride and deep gratitude for what I learned from my “Alverno teachers” and especially from Sister Austin Doherty.

*Louis S. Albert, Ph.D.
President, Pima Community College West Campus and Vice President,
American Association for Higher Education (1982-98)*



Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family



Austin Doherty was among American higher education's most insightful, visionary and effective leaders. As one of the prime movers behind Alverno College's abilities-based curriculum — to name but one of her many contributions to the field — she helped create a program that is a model of what higher education can and should be about.

The work Austin and her colleagues did to implement and refine that curriculum soon became a “light on the hill” that drew thousands of college and university educators to Milwaukee. They wanted to learn what this far-reaching innovation was all about, and how Alverno pulled it off in a field notorious for its resistance to change. Perceptive visitors quickly saw that the program's success was due not only to well-grounded ideas about good education, but also to strong, intelligent, wise and collegial leadership of the sort Austin offered.

In the Winter 1978-79 issue of *Alverno Today*, there's an article introducing Austin as Alverno's fifth Vice President of Academic Affairs and Academic Dean. The opening paragraph reveals one of the qualities that made her such a great educator and leader: “Sister Mary Austin Doherty often comments on how a person, by facing and mastering unfamiliar tasks, can enlarge her talents and greatly enrich her life.”

That describes Austin's personal academic journey from history to psychology to academic administration. She drew on her own life experience — her own spirit of intellectual adventure and experimentation — as she helped to create an academic program that challenged and supported students in reaching beyond their self-imposed limits, and the cultural limits imposed on women and people of color.

Whenever I visit with an Alverno student or graduate, I hear some version of this testimony: “The teachers I had at Alverno saw more in me than I saw in myself — and the abilities-based curriculum allowed me to grow into that larger vision.” For this they have Austin Doherty to thank, among others.

What greater legacy could a person leave behind than this widespread, life-giving impact on the lives of thousands of students and those whose lives they touch? Whether or not they ever met her, Alverno graduates owe a huge debt of gratitude to Austin Doherty who, with her colleagues, helped them grow into the fruitful lives they are now living and the many contributions they are making to bettering their communities.

I am forever grateful for the opportunity I had to know and work with Austin Doherty. She not only contributed brilliantly to higher education, she generously supported and encouraged my work at a time when I needed it.

As one among many who owe Austin a huge debt of gratitude, I bid her farewell with deep sadness at her death and the deepest gladness for her life. She blessed my journey, as she blessed so many others. Now she has taken her own blessed journey to the heart of God.

Parker J. Palmer

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

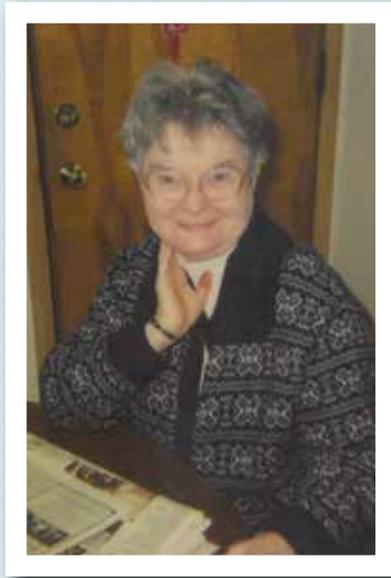


What I remember most in my first meeting with Sister Austin over 40 years ago, was the twinkle in her eyes — a serious, intent person who obviously appreciated and loved people. That first meeting, at AT&T where I was a young professional, sparked a relationship with her and Alverno that resulted in many significant changes in the way we teach and reward students for both their intellectual and behavioral accomplishments as they develop during their formative years.

I remember saying to her and to Sisters Joel and Georgine, who accompanied her on this first visit, that the likelihood of Alverno starting and managing an assessment center along the lines AT&T pioneered in business, was slim. I received, in no short order, a comprehensive plan from her for doing this at the college. I was hooked!

Sister Austin's modesty belied a strong willed individual who both knew what she wanted and was one of those rare individuals who not only identified what was needed but had the remarkable capacity to make it happen — all without losing that wonderful twinkle in her eyes!

*Joel Moses
Management Research, AT&T (Retired)*



There's a narrow, tilted head. It smiles gently. It has just said you do nice things. It has also asked a bloody tough question about the relation of data to human pulses. It pulls you back to physical memories, and your head swarms searching for language. Her eyes shine. She asks a different way. You find a response that brings a nod of acknowledgment. You have learned something at Sister Austin's table. And what you learned today you will learn many days. Years from now you will go to your yellowed notes from that day. The tilt, the quiet smile, and the learning will never fade.

*Cliff Adelman
Institute for Higher Education Policy*

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

Our appreciation for Austin Doherty's life is based on her role in two remarkable stories.

The first story began in 1973 when the faculty at Alverno College decided that all graduates should be not only knowledgeable but competent. The implications of this commitment would set Alverno on a journey that transformed it into one of most effective colleges in the country at enabling student learning.

The second story is about the birth of a global reform movement for which Alverno's transformation became an inspirational example. In 1973 the quality of a college education was defined in terms of resources and reputation. But a group of reformers began to call for a policy agenda focusing instead on how well colleges enabled student learning. The experiment at Alverno College put it in the forefront of that movement.

Alverno's transformation was supported by grants from a federal agency: the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The two of us were at FIPSE at the time and were privileged to observe the unfolding of both stories. From our vantage point we can testify that her contribution was huge and has been of an enduring nature.

Austin was a key enabler in both stories. At Alverno she understood that creating an outcome-driven education required systemic change. She brought focus, commitment, and energy to facilitating that change. And she introduced a spirit of perpetual experimentation that continued to distinguish the College for decades. In the reform movement Austin became a missionary, placing the College at the service of broader systemic change. Alverno became a Mecca, inspiring reformers in postsecondary education to make a pilgrimage to Milwaukee. Austin built infrastructure to engage an increasingly global community by creating the Alverno Institute, which hosted Visitor Days for the many people who wanted to see the College first hand. And she supported faculty in making presentations in places as distant as Africa.

We remember Sister Austin not just for her extraordinary accomplishments, but also for her distinctive personal qualities. These included a sense of modesty and humility. She was quick to give credit to others. She brought a cooperative spirit to all that she did — a sense of “we” rather than “me.” She was an exemplar of what Robert Greenleaf called “Servant Leadership.” At the same time she had a dogged persistence. She was fiercely determined to bring about institutional



Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

change at Alverno and to mobilize a world-wide movement to redefine the criteria for a high-quality undergraduate education.

Yet Austin's approach to advocacy was understated: she was a missionary but not a zealot. She was a strong advocate but also a good listener. She was task oriented but also a relationship builder. Despite her increasingly widespread visibility, Austin remained an humble and unpretentious person. Of course, like most missionaries, she was a workaholic!

We both came to view Austin not just as a colleague but as a partner and as a friend. We stayed in connection long after retiring from the roles that brought us together. And we retain our deep admiration for her enduring impact — at Alverno, across the nation, and in many countries beyond. Our personal worlds have been impoverished by her loss, but the larger world remains enriched by her contribution.

*Russell Edgerton
Former Deputy Director, FIPSE
Former Executive Director, AAHE*

*Grady McGonagill
Former Program Officer, FIPSE
Principal, McGonagill Consulting*

Austin and I go back to 1974 at the start of reinventing Alverno's core curriculum to the abilities-based one that exists today. Along with Austin, Georgine Loacker, Joel Read, Marcie Mentkowski, and I worked hand in glove to create something remarkable for the women at Alverno that we hoped would stand them well in their careers and in their lives. Austin was a constant inspiration to me in the early years of "competency-based" education. Her enthusiasm, good humor, and unbelievable work ethic was a pleasure to behold. For me, Austin was more than a colleague but a great friend and a source of joy, stimulation and encouragement for me and I know for many others. I am saddened at the news of her loss, but I am grateful for having known her and for her friendship, and she will live forever and fondly in my memory.



*George Klemp
Cambria Consulting, Inc.*

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

Austin Doherty is treasured as an educator, psychologist, and friend. She knew, better than other educators, that assessment is not an end in itself — it is an indispensable means to any worthy end. She knew, better than other psychologists, that learning goes beyond knowing to being able to do what one knows. No one has ever been better at provoking learning — her tools were a quizzical glance, an incisive question, and a ready smile. She inspired us all, educators and students, psychologists and colleagues, friends and acquaintances, to do what we know.

*Milton D. Hakel
Ohio Eminent Scholar and Professor Emeritus
Bowling Green, Ohio*



Les Weinberger, retired Director of Wisconsin Bell's Assessment Center, was the person to whom Joel Moses sent Austin and Georgine to see an Assessment Center in action. Les was very helpful in getting the Assessment Center started. On its 25th anniversary he wrote:

I can't believe that 25 years have passed since we started on this marvelous experiment of using assessment in schools. I really marvel, every time I get a publication from Alverno, with the progress you've made. It's really encouraging and I'm so proud of the confidence and enthusiasm each of you have displayed in the application of assessment. God really blessed me to be just a small part in the origin.

Thank you for the kind words about help that I was able to give you when you needed it. I enjoyed it.

Les Weinberger

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family



My collegueship with Austin began in the early 1980's when we worked together on respective NIE projects from Alverno and Case. Our project director meetings in Washington, DC were among my greatest personal learning experiences. She was such a great colleague to me! Such a straight shooter. She never hesitated to give the most direct and helpful feedback; but always with loving support. In subsequent years our friendship continued and brought many wonderful experiences including a number of visits with Alverno faculty. I last saw her at David Justice's memorial service. Her leadership and service will be missed.

*David A. Kolb, Ph.D.
Founder and Chairman
Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc.*

I first met Sr. Austin at a workshop on competency education and assessment in the late 70s at Alverno. It was a time when the college was beginning to present some of the remarkable results of their radically new approach to competency curriculum and assessment and to show how it could be done simply, effectively, and even joyously!

In spite of only sporadic contacts ever since, the initial impact of Sr. Austin's smile, radiating optimism, clarity of thought and dynamism, made for instant connection, a connection that has remained for me, and no doubt for many others, an inspiration ever since.

It was a rare and indeed a spiritual experience to see both Sr. Austin and Sr. Georgine — one cannot speak of one without evoking the other — work so harmoniously together in their presentations — one spirit in two bodies, a perfect instantaneous choreography of the intellect. What a refreshing change from the usual bickering and upmanship so common in academic faculties. What a masterful demonstration, cheerful, witty, spirited, of what could be, of what should be a matter of course and of how it could be done — the best embodiment of the Franciscan charism in action.

Their presence endures and radiates through all who came in contact with them. To have known Sr. Austin and Sr. Georgine is more than a privilege, it is truly a blessing.

*Jean Le Mée, Ph.D.
Emeritus Professor of Engineering
Director of Curriculum Development and Innovation
The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art
New York*

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family



I watched the funeral on your internal TV network. Wonderful to hear all the praise and love for Austin. My life was changed by her; a debt never to be repaid except to try to reach a contribution worthy of her inspiration.

Mary Jean Collins '63, Political Consultant

Austin was an incredible nun/woman and certainly used life as her classroom. I enjoyed hearing [while watching a live- stream video of the wake] her thought on changing your mind about things if you have the opportunity to do so and loved her opinion that there aren't many places that have great Irish food because there isn't great Irish food...she was full of wisdom, intellect and humor.

Patrice Kitzke Wessel Elacqua '75, Liturgical Musician

She was very passionate about student learning, development and success. I learned to speak in the public through her encouragements. She used to tell us that "Project your voice" and since that time my communication skills improved greatly. I feel so blessed that I got the chance to know her and live closely with Sr. Austin. Though gone, my belief is that her legacy will never die. I thank her for making a difference in my life and pray that the Almighty Father grant her a full reward in heaven. May her soul rest in peace. Amen.

*Sr. Marie Nakitende '06
John Paul II Vocational Center, Uganda*

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

President Mary Meehan announced that the Campus Center would be renamed in honor of Austin Doherty, whose service and dedication to Alverno exemplifies the spirit of the foundresses of the School Sisters of St. Francis, including Mother Alexia, whose favorite saying was “impossible is a word I do not know.”

Meehan commented that no one on campus has led a more student-centered life than Austin and it was fitting that a place where students lived, worked and studied should be named in Austin’s honor. In addition she reminded the audience of Doherty’s leadership role in devising the innovative and widely respected curriculum at Alverno.

While the banner reading “Austin Hall” was unveiled, Doherty encouraged everyone to think of the newly named residence hall, as well as the entire college, as “a place where everyone works together collaboratively to become better learners.” It was Doherty’s hope that the word “Austin” could become a verb, noun and adjective used to describe collaboration among colleagues.

Alverno Alpha, November 2005

It is her energy that strikes you first. Austin Doherty, Alverno dean and vice president for academic affairs, is a small woman. But when you talk with her, her interest and intelligence fill the room and give you the impression that you are dealing with a person of considerable size. Talking with her, you also get the impression that you are Doherty’s colleague, that you know as much and care as passionately about education as she does. Her openness, approachability and knack for drawing out other people have helped to make her an extraordinarily effective and popular academic dean at Alverno.

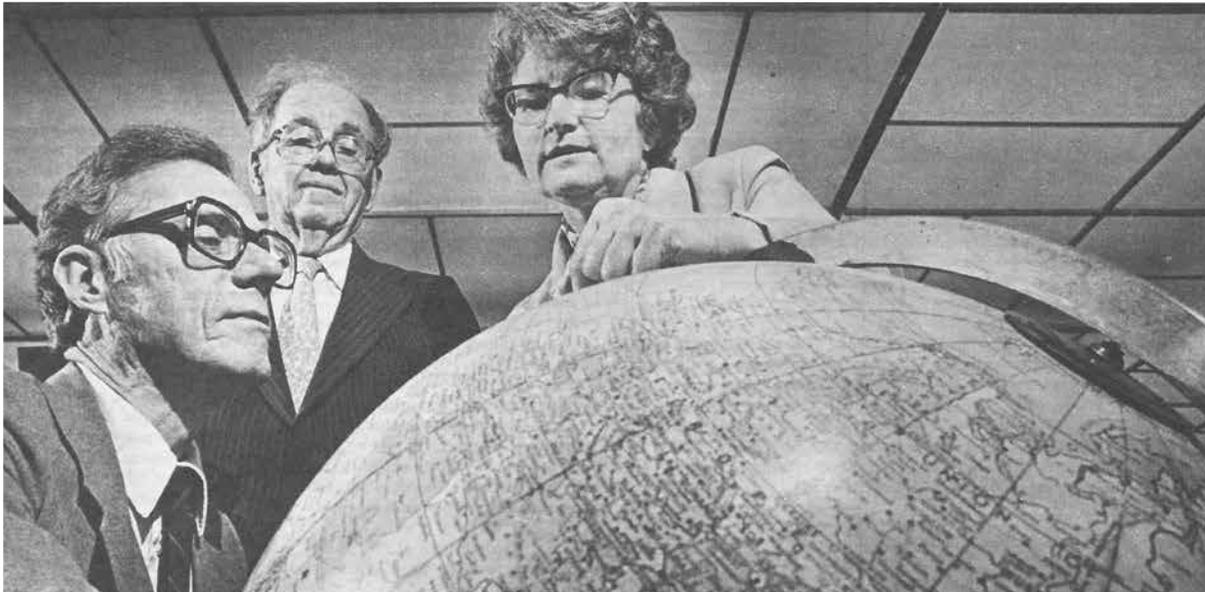
*Kathleen A. Mulvey
Editor, Alverno Magazine 1990*



Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

...*Milwaukee Magazine* named Doherty one of its “Transformers,” people “who persisted in pushing, pulling and in any way they could propelling the city forward to be even more than it was, revitalizing it from the inside out...Sister Austin Doherty... one of the chief architects of the curriculum that’s regarded as the key ingredient in Alverno’s success, casts a considerable shadow herself. In the early ’70s she and a small group of faculty members hammered out a new curriculum based on a simple but novel idea — addressing not so much what teachers taught in the classroom but what students took from it. The school’s success with this curriculum helped spawn the new ‘competence’ movement in education and earned Doherty the respect of her peers. A national survey of academic deans named Alverno as one of three places — alongside Harvard University and the University of Chicago — where general education is succeeding.”

*Kathleen A. Mulvey
Editor, Alverno Magazine 1990*



Austin with Milwaukee futurists Wilfred Kraegel, left and Harold Mayer at a meeting of the Milwaukee chapter of the World Future Society. (1982)

Milwaukee Journal

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

I met Austin before my tenure as President of CAEL, and I remember how much I enjoyed her spirited and humorous conversations with her Board colleagues. She was, in a word, feisty! She asked penetrating questions and offered insights and creative ideas, and was respected by every single person on the Board! I was so fortunate that in my first couple years as President of CAEL in the early 1990s, Austin served as Chair of the CAEL Board of Trustees. This meant that we worked hand in glove, with many heart to heart conversations and problem-solving exchanges. Leading CAEL after Morris Keeton's amazing fifteen years as the founder was not easy for me, and I struggled with the leadership challenges. Through it all, Austin was a true friend to me. She was always on my side, consistently trying to give me support and perspective, standing up for me when I made difficult decisions, being the "wind beneath my wings" when I most needed it. She believed in CAEL's mission and she believed in me, and that made all the difference in my first years as head of a growing and changing organization.

During Austin's tenure on the CAEL Board, we added the first corporate representative, Richard Fluri, who was then a Human Resources leader at Scott Paper Company and had engaged CAEL to carry out a learning and career counseling program in the timberlands of Scott paper in Mississippi, Alabama and Maine. Austin and Rich were always "going at it" because he brought the corporate perspective and she brought the liberal arts undergraduate education perspective to Board discussions. It taught me a lot about how to work successfully with people who come from entirely different political and cultural backgrounds.

David Justice (FIPSE) also worked closely with Alverno and with Austin specifically over many years, and he often talked about the unique educational experience that Alverno had designed. He believed in what Alverno was doing and told me that CAEL should always stay close to Austin Doherty and her colleagues if we wanted to be on the cutting edge of higher education.

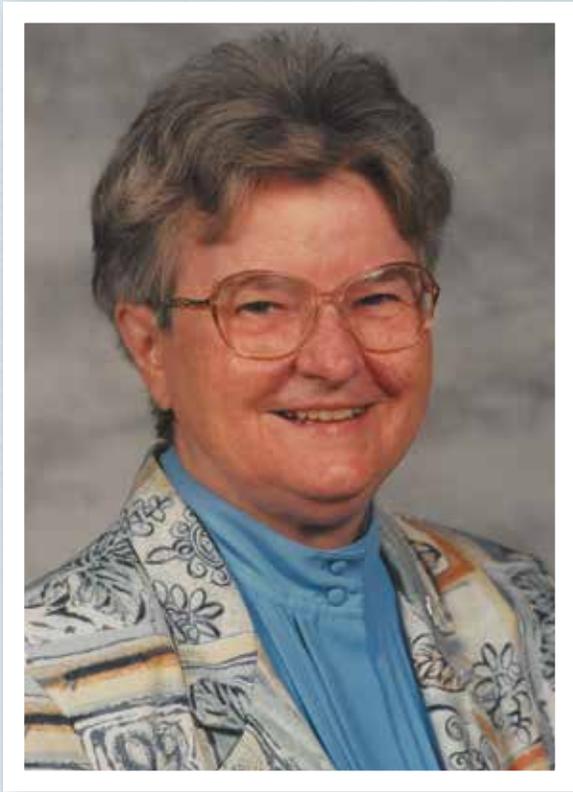
Later, Austin, David and I worked together on a voluntary task force to create the Virginia B. Smith (President of FIPSE) Award after Virginia's passing. This meant that I was on many phone calls with Austin, David and others to identify innovations in undergraduate education, to nominate people for the award, and to discuss the issues to which Virginia had devoted her life. Austin was always lively, full of ideas and energy, and a major contributor to any group she was a part of—but especially this one. She always seemed to know the latest developments and who the innovators were that we should be considering.

I admired Austin, and I listened carefully to her. She was a real force in the world of non-traditional higher education and competency-based approaches, and she cared about students and learning with such passion.

But most of all, I loved her and her warmth and engagement. I will always remember her and will miss her very much!

*Pamela Tate
President and CEO
Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)*

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family



Sr. Austin Doherty was literally a godsend and an unforgettable friend to me when we worked together on the North Central Association's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The Commission was just beginning to confront the assessment of nontraditional higher education, which had become a special interest of mine when I was an Assistant Director and was of critical concern to me as Executive Director in the nineties.

Austin, because of her achievements with evaluating new kinds of learning at Alverno, was an invaluable resource as a Consultant-Evaluator and Executive Board member as new kinds of nontraditional institutions were applying to the Commission for accreditation. One of Austin's finest achievements was her work as a consultant to the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, located in Spring Green, Wisconsin and Scottsdale, Arizona, a unique and singular institution – and probably one the most nontraditional to present itself to NCA.

Austin and the representatives of FLW became friends immediately, and her candid and supportive counsel as they worked together for months and years resulted in this institution's accreditation at the bachelor's and master's level.

Austin was brilliant and skilled, but she also loved people and cared about institutions and the many ways to learn. I valued her personal support and warm friendship on the Commission, and we kept in touch forever after that. In her relationships with students and colleagues at Alverno, members of the Commission staff, and institutions of an infinite variety, she greeted every challenge with that incandescent smile, that wonderful sense of humor, and that infinite caring and concern that she exemplified in her life's work. She brought out the best in all of us who knew her and witnessed her love of learning and her steadfast faith in the perfectibility of human beings everywhere.

I will be forever grateful for Austin's friendship and the gifts she gave unreservedly to all of us whose lives she touched.

*Patricia Thrash
Executive Director Emerita, Commission of Institutions of Higher Education
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools*

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

Austin was such a good teacher and such a kind and well balanced person that I'm sure many alumnae have fond memories of her as I do.

Barbara Skinazi '63, Paris, Translator

What a tremendous loss! Sister Austin was a remarkable woman and one of the best teachers I ever had. Her quiet strength, intelligence and good humor made her a role model for so many women.

Mary Ann Schwartz '62, Author



May Austin rest in peace with the Lord she loved and worshiped. Christ will smile...having a great Irish Lady of faith and mind return to his full Presence. Blessings and prayers for Austin this day.

Michael Carriveau, Friend

Tributes from Professional Colleagues, Friends and Family

With the death of Austin Doherty, the nation has lost another member of the amazing trio of educators who brought national prominence to Alverno College beginning in the 1970s and continuing through the present day. It was 40 years ago when the pioneering way Alverno educated and assessed its students caught the attention of the staff of the newly established Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), a federally funded foundation housed within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare created to encourage and support innovation in higher education. Not only was the College awarded one of the largest grants ever given by the Fund, but word of Alverno spread throughout the country as FIPSE urged educators everywhere to see for themselves what this small but mighty South Milwaukee women's college run by the School Sisters of St. Francis had to offer.

Quickly the higher education community fell in love with Austin and her colleagues whose hospitality, charm, wit, and humility, combined with their compelling presentations of the College's unique educational and assessment program, resulted in Alverno becoming a name known to every reform-minded educator in the country. If one couldn't make it for a campus visit, no worry; he or she could be assured of catching Austin or one of her colleagues as a featured speaker, interviewee, or panelist at the many higher education conferences to which they were invited.

Concerned that they and their colleagues might begin to take themselves too seriously and become a bit too big for their skirts given the national attention the College was receiving, the trio invited me in 1980 to create a play that would enable everyone in the College to put their achievements "into proper perspective" and be able, with humor, to look at how far the College had come and what was in store for it in the future. The title of the play was "Our Lady of the Hops." The cast included faculty, staff and lay leadership with Laura Lampe providing background music on the piano. The final scene was set in the Oval Office where the just-inaugurated first woman president of the United States welcomed family, friends, and representatives from her undergraduate college – Alverno, of course.

It is hard for me to think of Austin separately from the other members of the trio. As I picture Austin in my mind today, I am remembering a remarkable educator, an outstanding dean of the faculty, a compelling speaker, a beautiful smile, a generous soul, and a cherished friend.

*Kenneth C. Fischer, President
University Musical Society, University of Michigan*

In Her Own Words

In support of teaching

“Since student evaluations of my teaching will be a part of your documentation, I wish to state briefly my approach to teaching. My teaching is directed primarily to developing within students the cognitive tools of analysis and evaluation. In employing this teaching style I have as a goal assisting students to convert every situation into a learning experience.”



In support of faculty

“Too often teaching is limited to the activity of the teacher in face-to-face interaction with students. A broader definition of teaching involves conceptualizing a body of knowledge and designing learning experiences so that the student becomes an effective and independent learner.”

“College teaching, unlike other academic pursuits such as research, has been a highly individualized activity. The increasing sophistication required of teachers at all school levels demands collaboration. Such teamwork provides an intellectually stimulating and critical climate resulting in productive activity which the person working alone would be unlikely to achieve.”

In a 1990 interview with Kathleen Mulvey (Editor, *Alverno Magazine*)

Every day I get up and I work at this. I keep talking to people and keep them talking to each to each other. I work to create an environment, a climate, that says this is on-going, that accepts that our work is never finished. I work at coalition building.

That's a dean's job — perseverance, being willing to realize that what we're doing will take time. We can never consider that we have arrived at the best way of doing something. We always have to be careful that we don't fall back into comfortable old patterns.

... We never dreamed that what we were doing would turn into a matter of national interest. We just kept asking ourselves two questions: 1) What should a student be able to do when she leaves Alverno College? and 2) What can we do to make those 'outcomes' happen?

When we changed to calling competences abilities people scoffed at what they called 'personal skills.' Social Interaction took the most ridicule. People said: What do you mean? You're going to teach people how to *relate* to each other, how to *get along*?

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In Her Own Words



Employers are all looking for people who work well in groups, who know how to handle themselves. And we at Alverno have learned how careful we have to be in describing what it is that we do. People may think they know what a term means, but it's not at all what we mean by that term.

For most of us the motivation was wanting the students to learn. Here we all have a sense of individual responsibility for the general education

curriculum. It will only work if we cooperate and collaborate. Yes, faculty share their authority with other faculty members, and with outside professionals who act as assessors, but once you get that spirit and you see how much more interesting it is, it's gratifying.

The other thing that really helped the faculty develop the ability-based curriculum was that we built on some good traditions. We had always done peer evaluation, so faculty members were used to that interchange with each other. We had institutes at the beginning of every semester — a week set aside for faculty members to exchange ideas and plan together. And then we built into the schedule class-free Friday afternoons, so that faculty could meet regularly without having to worry about working around each others' class schedules.

All of these structures help the faculty to design and refine the curriculum. And we are always willing to modify, to entertain the idea of changing structures if it will make them work better. For example, we found that when we send faculty members out to have contact with other institutions, it helps to send two faculty from two different departments. Then not only do they bring their different perspectives to the subject at hand, but they communicate to those outside Alverno the idea of collaboration. We firmly believe that you can develop into a good teacher. You don't have to be born that way.

It's not peculiar to Alverno to be exploring questions of how to teach and learn better. There are institutions pursuing similar ideas in ways we never even dreamed of, and we can learn from their experiences. We're developing relationships with different kinds of institutions. For example, the professional schools, schools of medicine, are very interested in finding out how adults learn and how schools can help develop students' abilities. Then there are the secondary and elementary school systems.

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In Her Own Words



In the next ten years, the students who come to college are going to be much more diverse. We know precious little about how to teach adults. Studying how adults think, learn and develop will be a major endeavor of the next decade.

Then we must create and be able to apply teaching methods that are effective for adults. We have to develop the pedagogy to go along with our understanding of how adults learn.

Another area our faculty must master is understanding fields other than their own. Every discipline is becoming more and more specialized, so that nobody can possibly keep up with what's going on in his or her field, let alone how it relates to other disciplines. But what is required is not only people who know their own fields, but who can integrate their own disciplines with related fields. This is

important research for creating new knowledge.

I think this is the issue — what constitutes scholarship. We have a wonderful laboratory at Alverno for learning how to teach. We need to find the means to help us do this, develop the information, the pedagogy and the structures to make it work.

We need our own research arm, staffed by rotating faculty, to scan the literature and synthesize what is relevant to the rest of the faculty. We must develop our own research institute on teaching if we're to be a first-rate teaching institution.

In support of students

Students have to learn to act ... despite their sense of being unready. That sense of unreadiness is dissolved only by acting/doing. Their self assessment then shows both what they can do and what they need yet to learn to do.

Austin Doherty

Learning (not a change in behavior) leads to a change in the meaning of experience. Therefore, the key question is how can we help people reflect on their own experience and construct new, more powerful meanings.

Austin Doherty

Quotes Austin carried in her wallet:

NOTICE

I am a Quaker.
In case of emergency,
Please be quiet

*almost
centered*

NUCLEAR
WEAPONS
MAY THEY RUST
IN
PEACE

What are we educating women for? To raise this question is to face the whole problem of women's role in society. We are uncertain about the end of women's education precisely because the status of women in our society is fraught with contradictions and confusion.

Mirra Komarovsky

“Feminism is the radical notion that women are people.”

Words of Note

In the intellectual order, the virtue of humility is nothing more nor less than the power of attention.

Simone Weil
20th century French philosopher
From 'Gravity and Grace' (1947)