

Manhattanville Alumnae Review

Fall, 1963



Civil Rights
And Us



Of Alumnae, The Vatican Council, Racial Justice

MOTHER E. M. O'BYRNE

THE opportunity to salute you through the pages of the *Alumnae Review* makes this a "chat," rather than an article. Space will make me telegraphically brief. But one does not have to harangue loved associates. They seize things quickly.

First, I want to congratulate the Alumnae Association on a year of accomplishment of several fine objectives: the conclusion of the revision of the by-laws of our Association, which will update a fine document; the extension of the work of class chairmen and representatives which has strengthened bonds between classmates, and found many temporarily "lost" alumnae. (*Please* keep us posted about your whereabouts. There is, so they tell me, a 38% change of address in our group annually. We do not mind changing your address-stencil any number of times. But we resent losing you, for each one of you is dear to Alma Mater in general, and to this fellow-alumna, in particular.) The growth and development of Alumnae Clubs in 1963 is noteworthy. The more of these the better. Each group is a center of union and can be powerful in spreading the work of Our Lord's Love.

In the name of trustees, faculty and students, I thank you for the generosity of your annual giving. Manhattanville depends on you, as never before, for the financial assistance which will "firm it up" in its Late Twentieth Century academic development, and which will enable it to meet today's operating costs.

And now for the year. Its watch-word could be "Surge" or colloquially, "Wake up, and get moving." This is the spirit in which Catholics should have faced the exciting moment when the second session of Vatican II convened. Our prayers, I know, are offered daily for the Council Fathers. Our interest and awareness of their work will be fostered by the press of the world. Never before in our lifetime have the American press and the editors of national magazines reported so sympathetically, so accurately, so immediately the deliberations of Catholic bishops. So let us be instant in prayer, basic and realistic, concerned with the "aggiornamento" and

not with some of the minor issues which will be much voiced in the press of the world. Let us be Ecumenical, totally Catholic, in outlook. If we are, we shall find ways to inform ourselves of the practices and beliefs of our separated brethren, to meet with them in whatever ways open to us in our respective communities. Charity and insight will inspire our plan of action. Neither they nor we would be honest in overlooking some of the basic dogmatic differences which separate us. But, in and through Christ, we can be related in His Love. This of itself will create a favorable climate for conversation, friendship, and let us hope, for reunion of many of these groups within the lifetime of the graduates of '63. Our faith and love can hasten this happy day.

Our alumnae reside in some forty-six foreign countries. What I say now is addressed to the residents of the fifty states of the U.S.A. Our country is in revolution. The phrase "civil rights," so often uttered today, focuses attention on one aspect of this revolution. Let us throw all our ability and good will into the effort to secure for the nineteen million Negroes of our land their full rights as American citizens. The urgency of the moment is obvious. The magnificent elder statesmen amongst the Negro leaders have borne insult, injustice, privation with heroic patience. They have sent their sons to fight, as they themselves did before them. With loyalty, they have sent them to die in defense of our country in two World Wars. They have worked untiringly and as loyal Americans to obtain redress of the educational, economic and civic injustices which many Negroes bear. But the younger generation of Negro Americans, aroused and energized to act, will not be as patient and long-suffering as their fathers and grandfathers. An article in this issue, beginning on the next page, deals frankly with the question and the issue. Let us turn this crisis into an opportunity, not a doom.

The vastness, the complexity, the deep-seatedness of the socio-economic, educational and civic problems in-

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Alumnae, Council, Racial Justice

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involved may make some timorous souls say, "It is beyond my power to help." This would be tragic. Wherever we are we can realize that no American is free until every one is free. Freedom and justice are cherished keystones of the American way of life. Let us act now, individually and nationally, to extend these to every American citizen, whatever his race or pigmentation. Each one of us can work out her own program. Prayer and the facing of facts will prepare us to act. Different areas of the U.S.A. will require variations of any pattern of action. But the charity, sincerity and resolution of any group of alumnae can work great things for our country.

One of the really frightful things, to my way of thinking, is that it should be necessary to draw up a civil rights bill for Congress to pass, so that nineteen million Americans may be free, in the ways in which we Americans spell out our cherished freedom. Why were the members of this group not given their rights as Americans through Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and through the other implementing documents which followed it in Civil War and Reconstruction days? It is even more horrifying that there should be talk, in our newspapers, about a possible filibuster in the Senate, or a possible dilution

of the minimum rights which the Bill pending before Congress will grant to Negroes. People like us can do a great deal to secure the passage of this Bill. Alumnae in the South can, perhaps, do the most, for if they themselves, and their friends, take a strong stand, and let their Representatives and Senators know that they do, there is no doubt that the Bill will pass. Until it does, a phase of bloodshed, riot, economic loss is inevitable.

When the Bill is passed, and you see I am an optimistic American, there is a decade or two of work for all of us. We must be effective in opening to Negroes and members of other minority groups the opportunities and the responsibilities which are the glory of every American. In a moment so grave, as well as so pregnant with hope, there is no such thing as "North," "South," "East," "West." There is one U.S.A. Let us work for it. And however we feel, let us act on basic principles. Our Lord's Love will show us the way to "get going and to get going quickly." Every day counts for the weal or woe of our nation. I am not excited, I could not be calmer or less exclamatory. The words which I have used are only as strong as is the danger and the opportunity which we all face today. America will be a stronger, holier, happier country for generations, if we join our fellow Americans in obliterating the injustices and privations which have brought the Negro minority to the brink of revolution.

Catholic Higher Education

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though many alumnae, remembering the size of their own classes, may be tempted to look upon it as "large" and may regret what they take to be a corresponding loss of intimacy. If intimacy has diminished there have been compensations: more students from wider areas and more varied backgrounds with whom to exchange thoughts and form friendships; a larger faculty also drawn from wider areas and more varied backgrounds, professionally very much alive, and convinced that education is a never-ending process. Today, more than in the past, the diploma at Commencement is another step rather than a final goal; more students are going on to graduate school. In the future, it is hoped that many more will do so, and from there into the professions to help bring Christ to America.

For Manhattanville holds today, as it always has, that no education is worthy of the name which is not at once contemporary and completely Christian. The old values are not lost; they cannot be. Manhattanville would be untrue to herself and would not deserve the allegiance of its alumnae if she were ever to see her mission otherwise than within the great redemptive framework of the Church. She faces the future with exhilaration at the thought of the possibilities it holds. To meet these possibilities in the best possible way will be her concern, and for this each of her students must be taken, studied, known as a *person*. It is as a person that she must be educated and prepared for her work in that rich and challenging future. Then, as yesterday and today, it is the truth which makes us free. It must be that truth which supports authentic *liberal* education.

MOTHER E. McCORMACK

CIVIL RIGHTS
and Us



Alumnae and college are involved in the current crisis

BARBARA FINLAY DONAHUE, 1951

As the headlines swept from Birmingham to Boston, the editors of the *Alumnae Review* were curious about what part our college and its graduates were playing in the struggle for Negro equality. To find out, we queried Mother O'Byrne and others at college, and sent letters to graduates across the country.

Our report can't pretend to be comprehensive, but the gist of its findings is this: A good number of students, alumnae and husbands are concerned, and are doing something about it. For some this means self-education; for others, direct action. No one prides herself on achievement (the general feeling is one of whittling at Mount Rushmore with a pen knife) but, by teaching, working for equal job and housing rights, or simply thinking things through, the dedicated ones go on — often, sadly enough, in the face of apathy or opposition on the part of other Catholics. Beth Pettit '63 sums up this determination: "No one will give up until all Americans live as Americans."

What follows is a city-by-city roundup, then a sampling of individual cases:

Washington, D.C. The Manhattanville Club has chosen "The Need for Social Justice in the United States" as this year's theme. Speakers and panels will examine the roots of prejudice, discuss ways of working for interracial justice. Says the club bulletin, "Many of us feel a vague, almost nameless desire to do something, but it is difficult to find an effective channel that is compatible with our training, our interests, our time limitations. It is hoped that the Club might help to concretize our duty to know and to act."

Westchester County, N. Y. Under Marian Moto Shea '45 as president, the Manhattanville Club cooperated with College of New Rochelle alumnae in sponsoring a forum on housing law and justice in November, 1962.

Greensboro, N. C. Alumnae are among those backing a public resolution to support integrated businesses.

Chicago. Individual alumnae work in varied ways. Jane Fisher Chapman '34 has enlisted members for a Human Relations Council in suburban Wilmette, brought whites and Negroes together in her home, made long treks from

Wilmette to a Chicago Negro district to teach catechism. Mildred Dolan Sullivan '48 introduced new Negro neighbors to her parish groups. Emily J. Quirk McFeatters '32 is on the women's committee of the local branch of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. Last year Connie Ducey '62 did secretarial chores for her father when he served as chairman of a citizen's committee which tried, unsuccessfully, to achieve passage of an open occupancy law for Illinois.

Such activity is not universal, however.

Philadelphia: "I cannot find anyone who is directly involved," an alumna writes. "But people want to learn more . . . they are not completely close-minded."

Dallas: "You don't hear much here except the calm acceptance of desegregation and the expectation of more."

Those who are active find that the wish to "do something" can lead to consuming involvement. Take Winnie Farrell Ungemach '46, for example. In 1959 she, her husband Everett and a few friends decided to organize a Catholic Interracial Council in the Stamford-Norwalk area of Connecticut. With permission of the pastors involved, they polled Catholics in 18 local parishes and found that 90% of those polled could not recall having heard the Church's teaching on race spelled out in a Sunday sermon. This convinced their Bishop that a CIC was needed, and he gave it his approval. Since then the Ungemachs, as individuals or as members of the Council and other human relations groups, have accomplished much. They helped prevent racial gerrymandering of a Stamford high school and a Norwalk elementary school. The Norwalk task was comparatively easy; the Stamford one long and hard. They have amicably talked to real estate agents about the restricted housing problem. They have persuaded white residents of a "changing" area to stay on and make friends of their new dark-skinned neighbors, and they have successfully publicized an interracial housing development, helping it to stabilize at its desired ratio of 65% white, 35% Negro.

Mary L. Allen LaFarge '41 is another member of the Stamford-Norwalk CIC, and a member of NAACP as well. Last spring she marched with the NAACP delegation in New Canaan's Memorial Day parade ("She felt they could use a white face," says Winnie Ungemach) and this fall she will serve on the local NAACP legisla-

Winnie Farrell Ungemach '46, with her young son Mark Dammann and playmate Linda Glenn.

tive committee. "Like most of us," says Mary LaFarge, "I hadn't felt that there was much of a problem where I lived . . . but I realize that even in New Canaan there is injustice in housing and jobs — and I hope I can do something concrete about it."

Suburbia's remoteness from day-to-day contact with "the problem" amazes some, including Shelagh Heffernan O'Neill '52. "The separateness of our lives is incredible, when you really think about it," she observes. This year she is first vice president of the Hartford, Conn., League of Women Voters, and has "high hopes" of bringing women of both races together through that organization. Her husband Norris is a charter member, and president, of Hartford's Urban League.



In Cranford, New Jersey, Charlotte Murdock Hogan '46 works with her husband Frank and friends on spreading Catholic racial teaching through informal living room talks led by a priest. She telephones friends and friends-of-friends to say, "You won't have to join anything or give any money or do any work. Just come and listen!" Then ten small Hogans are shoed from

the living room while anywhere from twenty to fifty Catholic neighbors *do* come and listen. "So much is at stake," Charlotte Hogan feels. "We realize over and over how many self-faults have to be overcome, and the necessity for spiritual growth among ourselves if we hope to influence anyone."

After two years of negotiation and persuasion the Hogan influence is detectible. This spring they and their friends succeeded in establishing the Catholic Human Relations Council of Union County. (One of their most enthusiastic helpers is Mary Adelman Codella '41.) In addition to helping fellow Catholics become informed, the Hogans have worked for open housing. Frank Hogan is a board member of the Cranford Committee for Open Housing, and both husband and wife have persuaded many friends to sign a good neighbor pledge.

The housing problem, because it literally "hits home," concerns many alumnae. Janet Cooney Ryan '51, reporting on Washington, D. C., tells a happy tale of neighborhood acceptance in the Washington suburb of Chevy Chase: "A Negro family just moved in on Midge Clarke's street" (Margaret Mary Dunn Clarke '50). "Midge's husband, Matt, is on a committee — no, it's looser than that. A few neighbors got together and decided to do something or a series of somethings to make this family feel it is a part of the community; to do more than say 'welcome' and then drop it. No one is even considering leaving the neighborhood over this, and

it's a lovely section of Chevy Chase. A few real estate men came around trying to throw a scare into them. They told them to go peddle their ideas elsewhere."

Both Clarkes are "involved." Matthew Clarke is a founder, and Washington representative, of the Catholic Council on Civil Liberties, which is concerned with what its name implies. Midge Clarke has been named to Washington Action for Youth, an outgrowth of the presidential commission on juvenile delinquency. (In heavily Negro Washington, juvenile delinquency inevitably means Negro delinquency.) WAY will attempt to prevent youthful crime by bettering schools, bringing Negro and white children together in friendly situations — and whatever other techniques appear workable. Midge Clarke can attack the schooling problem first-hand. As a Washington board member of the American Montessori Society she is active in planning a special Montessori class for underprivileged children. Again, in Washington, this means Negro children.

Some alumnae have made it their vocation to teach in grimy slum schools of the blackboard jungle variety.

One New Yorker, modest to the point of anonymity, teaches English in East Harlem, where the problems of racial tension and cultural assimilation are almost hopeless. After hours she helps Negro students prepare for college boards, and lends a hand at a club for Puerto Rican girls. "There is no 'story' in me," she insists, "though there are countless stories in the lives of the children with whom I have contact." In Washington, Madeleine Steen Furth '40, has been hired by the Urban League to tutor Negro children from under-par schools. And Beth Pettit '63, who worked this summer at an interracial camp in New Jersey, hopes to teach Negro children: "I feel I have a personal and social obligation to teach in 'deprived areas' where human ignorance has left part of mankind to live at less than human levels." She goes on to state two facts which, taken together, point up the tragic paradox of inequality: "As human beings these children are like other children. Their needs, however, are very special and urgent." (If it seems ironic that people are helping Negro A move to the suburbs while, at the same time, they help Negro B achieve mere literacy, we must remember that the race problem, like any problem which has been building for a few hundred years, is fantastically complicated, and demands solutions on many levels.)

The problem of treating as equal those whom society has so long kept separate concerns Margaret Bailly Batson '37. She and her husband are, respectively, associate professor and chairman of a university medical school's department of pediatrics in the deepest south. Without fanfare they have done much to promote interracial understanding among their students, staff and

patients, both Negro and white. Says Dr. Batson, "It is our responsibility to show in our daily work . . . man's natural right to be treated with courtesy and justice at all times. Any physician worth his salt knows and does this . . . On the other hand, we have the particular duty to teach the Negro in our daily contact with him that privilege carries responsibility with it . . . The past year has been harder for my husband than for me, because these are his people, both colored and white, whom he has seen driven by strife and hatred. But we came to build a good department of pediatrics, with all that means, and God willing we shall stay. The problem is complicated here, but so it is in many other places."

Rounding out this list of concerned alumnae is one to whom crisis headlines are vivid. Joselyn Bailey Boulware '52 netted nothing worse than a bad cold as a result of her part in peaceful demonstrations in Greensboro, N. C., last spring, but this summer, when she served as a CORE task force member, she found herself in jail. Called to help demonstrate in a small North Carolina town, she and other Negroes marched, attempted a restaurant sit-in and dodged pop bottles hurled by white hecklers. The police, she says, "stood by and looked on." As fights broke out, she helped stop them.

Because of her part in the restaurant sit-in she was booked, sentenced and jailed. Though she herself avoided harm, one of her co-workers, a 16-year-old boy, was beaten and put in solitary confinement.

The demonstrations alerted town and state officials to the need for continued bi-racial negotiations, and Jo Boulware took part in these. Between her arrest and conviction she was among those who breakfasted one day with North Carolina's Governor Sanford to discuss racial tensions and their solution.

The college itself has always taken a strong stand. (See the chronology, this page.) Back in the thirties it attempted to narrow the gulf between races with interracial panels and discussion groups. One early panelist was a young ex-football star named Roy Wilkins, now director of NAACP. Students in the thirties, forties and early fifties did their "Catholic Action" in Harlem's schools and settlement houses.

In Purchase the focus changed. Mother Mary T. Clark, moderator of the Social Action Secretariat, notes, "We are no longer in the physical neighborhood but are now entering the intellectual neighborhood, where convictions are made." An example is the work of the Secretariat itself. Set up to give Catholic collegians an organized way of joining their non-Catholic counterparts in the drive for equality, it found its first need was for

INTERRACIAL JUSTICE A CAMPUS CHRONOLOGY

- 1925 First Negro student enters Pius X School of Music.
- 1933 Mothers Dammann, Green and O'Byrne lead Manhattanville students and faculty in joining Rev. John A. LaFarge and New York laymen to draft "Manhattanville Resolutions." These emphasized attitudes of justice and friendship toward Negroes and served as basic principles for the newly-formed Catholic Interracial Council.
- Spring 1938 Mother O'Byrne, as Dean, accepts a fully-qualified Negro girl for admission to Manhattanville the following fall. Students air views at a special forum and generally support the college action. A small group of alumnae object, launch an organized protest through anonymous letters sent to other alumnae. Mother Dammann, President, responds by addressing alumnae on "Principles versus Prejudices." Gradually objection subsides. Mother O'Byrne recalls, "We didn't lose a student."
- 1944-1952 Manhattanville students head the Interracial Commission of the National Federation of Catholic College Students (NFCCS) and work to promote interracial understanding at member colleges.
- Spring 1960 The first lunch counter sit-ins are received apathetically by most Catholic college students. NFCCS asks Manhattanville to re-assume its role of leadership, and a national Social Action Secretariat is set up with headquarters at Manhattanville.
- Winter 1960 Six Manhattanville girls, with the approval of their parents and college, join a successful sit-in at Baltimore restaurants.
- 1962 College representatives work on plans for the Interfaith Conference on Religion and Race, held in Chicago in January, 1963.
- Summer 1963 Mother M. T. Clark, Mother E. Cavanagh and Diane Cassens '63 represent Catholic colleges at a meeting with Martin Luther King and other Negro leaders, held to discuss ways of steering the Administration's civil rights bill through Congress. On August 28, a busload of students from Manhattanville and other Catholic colleges leaves Purchase to join the "March on Washington."
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Civil Rights and Us

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facts. Between May and July, 1960, eight Manhattanvillains sandwiched hours of research between final exams and summer jobs and produced well-documented booklets on housing, education and other facets of the conflict. There are now nine of these "Social Action Series" booklets, including a directory of

human relations organizations and a bibliography of pertinent films and booklets. The series is updated when necessary and sent automatically to NFCCS colleges, Newman Clubs, adult study groups and interested individuals may have it on request.

Annually, the Secretariat sponsors an Interracial Justice Week and sends NFCCS colleges suggestions for conducting this in their own fashion. At Manhattanville the week opens with a special Mass, and continues with speakers, films and forums. In 1963 the general theme was "The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man." Featured speakers were Frank Sheed, Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum and Manhattanville's old friend, Roy Wilkins. In addition to thinking and praying, students can contribute financially by selling their services to each other. For 20¢ one girl will shine another's shoes; for 50¢ she will wash her sweater. Money earned mounts up quickly and is donated to a Father LaFarge scholarship for a Negro girl at Manhattanville.

The college also makes campus facilities available to human relations groups, e.g., the Urban League of Westchester, which held a day-long session at Purchase early this October.

"Catholic Action" has changed since the days of handing out old clothing at Friendship House. ("The

Lady Bountiful approach," says Mother Clark, "just keeps the problem going.") Girls now work at Carver Center in Port Chester, N. Y., tutoring children, chaperoning dances for teen-agers and talking informally with them about college — where colleges are, how one can enter, where one can find scholarship aid. "In this way," Mother Clark notes, "students can act as students. If Catholic students don't find answers, who will?"

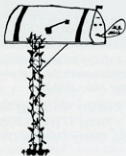
Mother O'Byrne, a longtime champion of interracial justice, has observed—and influenced—those Catholic students over the years, from the Manhattanville Resolutions of 1933 to the bitter struggles of 1963, and her heartfelt conclusions can be read in the editorial on page 1.

She believes that Manhattanville's attitude, like that of other Catholic institutions which have worked for equality, has had a constant impact.

"I can't really measure it," she says, "but I am so aware, in dealing with alumnae, that the bridge has been crossed. Although personal contact is lacking in many alumnae lives, I meet few closed minds as I go about the country." She urges involvement: "In this crisis we Catholics cannot be stronger on theory than we are on practice."

Such strength takes courage. Hopefully, more and more of us will have it.

EDITOR'S NOTE — *When we decided to feature Civil Rights in this issue we thought of it as a challenge to Manhattanville alumnae. In her research, Barbara Finlay Donahue contacted alumnae from North, South, East and West. Through telephone calls and letters, she received answers quickly and fully. Her article stands as a tribute to the great number who have already participated actively in the fight for racial equality. It should also be an inspiration to those who have yet to accept their responsibility in the long drive toward social justice in this nation.*



Mary Alice Fisher, age 9, sympathizes with the editorial board's plight—no mail!! Please write and give us your opinions, criticisms and suggestions. Address us care of the Alumnae Office, Manhattanville College, Purchase, New York.

We Joined The March On Washington

On August 28, 1963, a busload of Manhattanville students and friends left Purchase to join the impressive "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," in which over 200,000 took part. Below are the reflections of three of the college contingent.

"I WAS DOING A NORMAL THING"

"I was tired of explaining why I was going on the March, and glad to be in Washington. There I was not an odd-ball, but a person doing the normal thing, demonstrating that I believe our country must be free, that Negro and white must be brothers.

"I was happy to encounter Barbara Gannon and Connie Ducey, neither of whom I had seen since graduation in '62. Barbara and her sister Maureen '63 joined us for the March as did two husbands of alumnae. One of these men had flown from New York to take part and found us while looking for a Catholic group he might join. Connie discovered us as we were cooling our feet in the Lincoln Memorial pool. David Dilworth and Raymond Langley, Manhattanville faculty members, had tried to find us a spot in the shade, but to no avail.

"On returning home I felt a great happiness that I had gone, that I, for a day, had become part of a living symbol of the Mystical Body, part of a great truth that is at last becoming an experiential reality."

Marcia Stifle '62

"WE FELT PERSONALLY OBLIGATED"

"In one word, the demonstration was overwhelming. The most prejudiced person alive could not have found fault with it. We were all Americans from every walk of life, from thousands of towns, from every religion, but we were united in the belief that all Americans are entitled to equal rights and that each one of us, regardless of race, is bound in this fight.

"The singing and speeches were impressive, but far more impressive were the number of Americans who stood packed like sardines in the hot sun, never complaining or becoming aggravated. People laughed when in any other crowd they would have yelled or pushed. The motives of each person so transcended the discomforts that no incidents took place. Each one felt personally obligated to be beyond reproach so that he could not be the cause of his brother's suffering.

"Men who are tested to such a degree and who react with superhuman strength must certainly be convinced of the importance of the cause for which they stand. I only hope that our representatives take notice of this and pass the civil rights legislation which is sorely needed in this country."

Beth Pettit '63

"UNDERSTANDING WILL SPREAD"

"The spirit of those who stood and sat in the great quadrangle between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument was the closest thing I have ever seen to a realization of the Manhattanville spirit of familial love in a vast community.

"An assessment of the effectiveness of the March is hard to make so soon after it took place, but it has prompted thought and discussion on a very serious string of questions, and here it has great value. The pros and cons of various solutions to the numerous problems can now be voiced more clearly.

"Hopefully, a deep understanding will spread throughout our land."

Mary Wilker '63



Courtesy of alumna father Ethan M. Stifle

Marcia Stifle '62, the bus driver, Mother O'Byrne, and Mary Wilker '63, coordinator of Manhattanville's part in the "March on Washington."