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Conference gathers FCA archivists for enrichment, fellowship

by Veronica Buchanan, FCA archival consultant, board secretary



Last September, eight of the Franciscan Central Archive (FCA) partner archivists met in person during the [Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious \(ACWR\) Triennial](#)

Conference, providing an opportunity for the geographically diverse group to connect more deeply through shared meals and conversation. Throughout the conference, they also learned from other women religious archivists and representatives of archival collaboratives. Presentation topics ranged from ways to engage leadership, the planning of the Heritage and Research Center at St. Mary's and the importance of women religious archives from the perspective of researchers.

All of the participating FCA archivists attended the ACWR's first-ever pre-conference workshop that focused on the [ACWR Toolkit for](#)



Sister Mary Serbacki, a founding member of the ACWR and treasurer of the FCA, talks with table companions including Sister Marisa McDonald.

Archives in Transition.

Participants sat at tables based on their progress toward future planning or their respective transition timeline. Archivists completed reflection exercises for each of the three modules of the toolkit regarding future planning,

preparing collections and the physical move. They also shared conversation while learning from other communities' decision-making processes and collection objectives.

One conference session featured FCA executive board members Holly Fiedler, Sister Mary Serbacki, OSF, and Veronica Buchanan along with FCA Partner Director Sister Joanne Schatzlein, OSF. They offered insights into the unique approaches behind the charism-based FCA. The ACWR filmed the hour-long session and posted it to the [ACWR YouTube Page](#).



President Holly Fiedler

We look forward to more opportunities for collaboration and growth among our FCA archivists! ☪

**A sustainable, charism-based collaborative repository
for the combined archival collections of Franciscan entities across the United States.**

History of St. Francis Hospital includes ground-breaking policies, service
Redwood Sisters' hospital reveals their heart

by Melissa Martin, Archivist

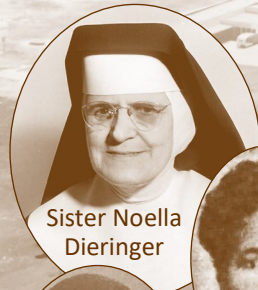
Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, St. Francis Province (Redwood City, California)

It is always exciting when a research request comes across an archivist's desk, leading to more discoveries about the congregations we serve. Recently, I was fortunate to be contacted by Wini Jackson, advocate in service, Los Angeles County, California.

Wini had viewed a TV news segment honoring obstetrician Dr. Wilburn Drousseau for his 55-year service to women, communities of color, and the underserved of Southern California. During his career, he delivered more than 10,000 babies.

Dr. Drousseau is the son of Dr. Kathleen Jones-King, also an obstetrician and one of the first African American physicians to work at St. Francis Hospital in Lynwood, California. Our [Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity](#) opened this hospital in 1945. For many years Dr. Jones-King served the community in and around the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles. She earned her medical degree at Howard University in 1931.

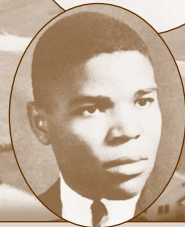
On Nov. 11, 1945, Dr. Jones-King, along with 56 other prominent physicians, met in the unfinished hospital building to begin organizing a medical staff. Monsignor



Sister Noella Dieringer



Dr. Jones-King




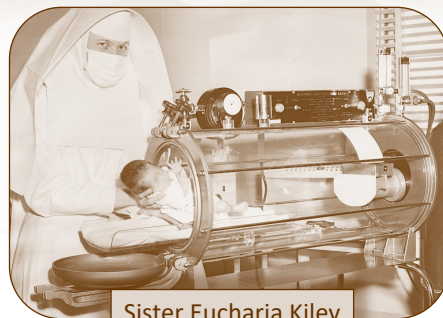
Dr. Drousseau

Thomas O'Dwyer of the Los Angeles Archdiocese recruited the Sisters of St. Francis to open the facility at the request of community leaders. St. Francis Hospital was established to address the population growth of southeast Los Angeles after World War II.

Sister Noella Dieringer was entrusted with overseeing the hospital's completion and staffing. She was dedicated to accepting all patients and hiring without regard for race or ethnicity—a heroic act during that time. Her policy became widely known when a white patient, finding herself in a room with an African American woman, asked, "Do I have to stay in a room with her?" Sister Noella replied, "Oh no. You can go to another hospital!"

In 1965 during the infamous Watts race riots, St. Francis Hospital provided round-the-clock services to the injured.

These stories offer exemplary testimony to the hard work and dedication of our Sisters to serve those in need. I'm sure that countless residents in the Los Angeles area feel gratitude to Drs. Drousseau and Jones-King, as well as the Sisters of St. Francis, for their life-giving contributions through the generations. 



Sister Eucharika Kiley



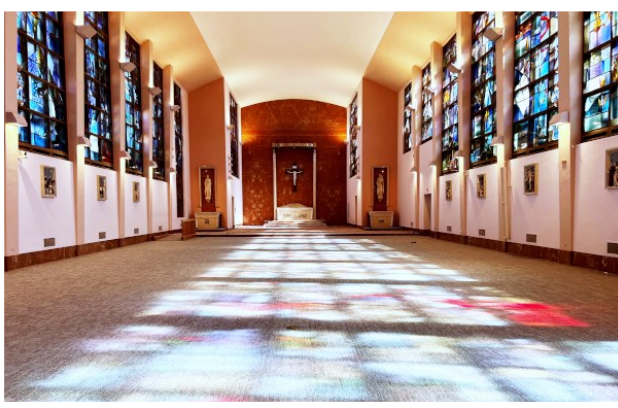
The Sisters of St. Francis
of Penance and Christian Charity

Our Lady of Angels Chapel reopens

by Kevin Korst, Archivist
*Wheaton Franciscans
 (Wheaton, Illinois)*



Chapel of Our Lady of the Angels Motherhouse, Wheaton, Illinois



Completed in 1954, the Our Lady of Angels Chapel is the jewel of the Wheaton Franciscan Motherhouse. The chapel's 18 stained-glass windows, designed by Francis Deck of Emil Frei and Associates in St. Louis, contain glass imported from Munich, Germany. Some of the themes featured in the windows include the creation story, the Holy Spirit, St. Francis' Canticle of Creatures, St. Clare and the Eucharist.

The chapel underwent significant renovation in 1991, which saw the removal of the original pews and a gentler architectural approach. This included lighter colors, rounded edges and new furniture.

The congregation again remodeled the space in 2024 with new carpeting, paint and updated technology. As part of this most recent project, the windows were cleaned and strengthened by the same studio that designed and installed them in the 1950s. Now under the fifth generation of family leadership, Emil Frei and Associates excel at the restoration, cleaning and preservation of these beautiful works of art. The chapel officially reopened in September and welcomes all to daily and Sunday Masses. ☪

Denver Sister dedicates her life to social justice causes

March with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is among the highlights of her activism and advocacy

by Holly Fiedler,
Archivist Sacred Heart
Province, Sisters of St.
Francis (Denver, Colorado)

The work from the Vatican II Council of 1962-1965 inspired new ministries and expanded outreach within the worldwide Catholic Church. In response, the [Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity](#) engaged in adult education, ministries for delinquent and abandoned youth, emergency housing, a mission to Mexico, adult Bible study, a house of prayer and more. Sister Antonia Anthony of the [Sacred Heart Province in Denver, Colorado](#), welcomed this expansion, especially into the areas of outreach and social justice.



Sister Antonia Anthony

Helen Anthony (later Sister Antonia) was born in 1928 to a Denver family who for generations embraced the Colorado mountains and an independent spirit. After earning a bachelor's degree, she returned to Denver and worked for three years for the Denver Catholic Register and the Arvada



From Denver to Montgomery

Waiting on the Catholic school grounds in the city of St. Jude to begin the last leg of the march from Selma, Ala., to the State Capitol in Montgomery are three of the Coloradans who took part in the massive demonstration. In the foreground, from left to right, are the

Rev. Daniel Flaherty, associate business manager of the "Register"; Sister Antonia Marycrest, a former "Register" staff member; and Daniel Hoffman, Denver attorney and former Manager of Safety for the city.

Enterprise newspapers before starting her Franciscan journey at Marycrest in 1953. She then taught for nine years and earned her master's degree at Notre Dame.

In 1964, the Archbishop of Denver approved a venture to help relocated and incoming Native Americans in Denver adapt to urban culture. Sisters Muriel Witte and Marion Rotherham rented a house for the Native American Tekakwitha Center. They offered classes on food buying, meal planning and preparation, sewing and religious instruction. Additional programs, initially supervised by Sister Antonia, included emergency food, clothing and lodging assistance.

In 1965, Sister Antonia felt a call to participate in the March on Montgomery, Alabama. It was the last leg of Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic March from Selma and involved thousands of people from around the country. *(See newspaper clipping above.)*

Throughout Sister Antonia's life she continued with social justice ministry through missionary work in Orizabita, Mexico; in Denver housing projects; among the Sicangu Sioux of the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota; and in Chiapas, Mexico. She also engaged in peace protests throughout her life. Until her last days in 2011, she worked tirelessly for positive changes in the world. ☪

Time capsule opened to reveal 130-year-old contents



Facilities Director Jim Guinta with Sisters Joanne Schatzlein, Charlotte Roost, Celia Struck, and Sylvia Anne Sheldon

This past spring, an 1894 time capsule emerged from its nestled spot in the cornerstone of the former St. Francis Chapel of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, the “Lake Franciscans” of Wisconsin. The public opening and reveal of the capsule’s contents perfectly coincided with the congregation’s 175th anniversary celebration. Archivist Sister Celia Struck, OSF, outfitted with white gloves and full of anticipation, pulled items one by one from the compact metal box as gathered Sisters leaned in to watch.



Sister Celia revealed the contents at a 175th anniversary gathering.

The 130-year-old time capsule contained a cornerstone blessing ornately scripted in Latin, three contractor business cards and four July 1894 newspapers, including Catholic publications from Milwaukee and Chicago along with two local newspapers, one written in German. The English and German translations of the blessing sat in the bottom of the box with nothing to insulate them. Consequently, they suffered damage over time. Both documents tore and crumbled at even the slightest touch. Weeks of drying in the climate-controlled archives storage room and careful tweezer work eventually allowed Sister Celia to unfold the fragile papers and successfully piece together some sections.



Weathered papers required special handling.

Most congregations have the honor of opening a time capsule perhaps once in a generation. But for the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, Fall 2024 brought three more unexpected capsules to open from Cardinal Stritch University, a former corporate ministry. After Stritch closed, new occupants demolished the majority of campus buildings which yielded cornerstone time capsules from 1961, 1985, and 2006. They contained well-preserved marketing materials, magazines, catalogs, newspapers, coins and handwritten messages from employees. ☪

by Sara Woelfel, Archivist Assistant
Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi (St. Francis, Wisconsin)

Franciscan family tree idea takes root during trip of a lifetime



When Veronica Buchanan, the Franciscan Central Archive (FCA) board secretary and archival consultant entered Rome's *Il Convento dei Cappuccini*, or Capuchin Museum, as a part of her cousin's 40th birthday cruise on the Mediterranean, she spied this chart of Franciscan orders. Potentially, the FCA may one day illustrate its members in a similar way.

The Capuchin Museum presents the history of the Order, including its saints and treasures compiled by the friars over nearly 500 years. The engraving for the hand-tinted chart was designed circa 1800 and includes a representative of every community formed in the Franciscan tradition at the time.

The FCA plans to apply for a grant in 2025 to research and finalize a list of all U.S.-based Franciscan communities. This visual indicates just how extensive the task may be for the researcher and what a gift the final product could be to Franciscans worldwide.

FCA family extends open invitation to potential partners

The FCA board is in ongoing conversations with several communities of women religious who are inquiring about the collaborative, the benefits of the charism-based approach and the process for making an official commitment to join. Established in 2018, the current FCA partner communities include:

Franciscan Sisters of Allegany
New York

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
La Crosse, Wisconsin

Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
Rochester, Minnesota

Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
St. Francis, Wisconsin

Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate
Joliet, Illinois

Wheaton Franciscans
Wheaton, Illinois

Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity

Holy Name Province
(Stella Niagara, New York)

Sacred Heart Province
(Denver, Colorado)

St. Francis Province
(Redwood City, California)

Chicago Collaborative Archive Center Updates

The FCA joined the Chicago Collaborative Archive Center (CCAC) in 2022. The CCAC will be a collaborative archive center in downtown Chicago that offers economy of scale, shared resources, and professional interaction, and will serve as a central repository for scholars. Within reach of multiple universities and with easy access to public transportation and airports, the facility will meet professional standards for environmental control and have an exhibition space and lecture hall.

The CCAC Board is actively working toward establishing a firm and lasting foundation as they continue discussions that will lead to the important next steps in the building and collaboration process. The following updates provide a glimpse into some of their latest efforts:

Structure and support


This fall, CCAC has been focusing on building its organizational structure and support. The board of directors strategically is seeking to grow both the board and advisory council with local experts, while also seeking planning grants and donors. The CCAC is gaining support in the Chicago area on various levels. In addition, they now are reviewing a short list of properties, with three front-runners. Ongoing meetings keep the developer, architects, engineers and legal team moving forward.

Call for support

The CCAC and FCA are growing their networks of support but need additional backing. Both require and are seeking benefactors to provide seed money to help fund executive directors, administrative support and expert services.

RCRI National Conference (October 2024)

From Oct. 1-4, the CCAC staffed a vendor table at the Resources Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) National Conference in Orlando, Florida. Board Members Chris Allison, director of the McGreal Center for Dominican Historical Studies at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois, and Malachy McCarthy, retired province archivist of the Claretian Missionaries Archives United States-Canada in Chicago and coordinator of the Archival Resources for Catholic Collections (ARCC), shared information on the center and its plans with conference attendees.

Malachy also contributed to the presentation, "Pulling Back the Curtain: A Primer on Appreciating the Importance of Catholic Religious Collections for United States History" along with Carol Coburn, Barbara Mattick and Thomas Rzeznik. This roundtable discussed why religious collections are integral to society and the future understanding of religious life. They asserted that these religious collections contain rich narratives of men and women committed to building a better world; each religious community has played a unique role in nation-building, whether through education, health care or social welfare; and community responses to local issues demonstrate Christ's presence among underserved populations. 



Mission Statement:

The Franciscan Central Archive (FCA) preserves, protects, and provides access to the records of its Franciscan entities for the purposes of research and knowledge through a collaborative repository that will carry the Franciscan charism and legacy into the future.



FranciscanCentralArchive.franciscanway.org

Executive Board

President: Holly Fiedler
 Vice President: Sister Celia Struck, OSF
 Secretary: Veronica Buchanan
 Treasurer: Sister Mary Serbacki, OSF

Connect with us!

FCArchive@franciscanway.org
 Holly Fiedler (303) 458-6270 x112

We recognize the **urgency for Franciscan congregations to find permanent repositories** for their archives that will **safeguard the community's charism and legacy** for future generations.

The Franciscan Central Archive will be a physical center, **following national archival standards, with a reading room, exhibition space, lecture hall, and robust virtual presence.**

Researchers will be able to study congregational ministries, shared vocations, and Franciscan charism across the collections. The FCA will be supported by charism-based educational programs and social engagement to ensure its members' legacies are carried into the future.

Participation is open to Franciscan communities and organizations.

FCA

PURPOSE

History & Memory
 Knowledge

GOALS

Preserve
 Inform & Connect
 Foster Collaboration
 Engage & Inspire

VALUES

Responsible Stewardship
 Integrity & Accountability
 Professional Service
 Sustainability



Services and Initiatives

- Provide guidance and resources concerning archives
- Assist leadership with hiring or contracting archivists
- Guide needs assessment and strategic planning for members and FCA
- Assist members to prepare their archives for transfer
- Seek grants and donations to assist members and reduce costs
- Enable donor development and gift campaign to support efforts
- Initiate agreements for members
- Facilitate move of members' archives to the FCA
- Promote and increase accessibility to FCA collections, bringing forth the shared Franciscan spirit

Volunteers and Funding

- Funding is dependent upon grants, donations, legacy gifts, and participating member contributions. We need your help to see FCA through next steps and into the future.
- Volunteer assistance is welcome for grant writing, development, fundraising, administrative tasks, and other projects.



Why the name Troubadour? St. Francis of Assisi was known to say,
 "What are the servants of God if not his troubadours,
 who must move people's hearts and lift them up to spiritual joy?"