

## Patricia Toolan (Sister Mary Ernest)

Sister Patricia (Mary Ernest) Toolan, RSM In Oakland on November 5, 2011, at the age of 90. Born in Lansing, MI, the oldest of the five children of Ernest Toolan and Ada Schwartz Toolan, Patricia grew up in Lansing, graduating in 1942 from Michigan State University with a degree in speech and drama. After two years in the Marine Corps Women's Reserve, Patricia joined her family in Los Angeles and earned a degree in Library Science from USC. In 1949 she entered the Sisters of Mercy in Burlingame, CA, professing vows in 1951, taking the religious name of Sister Mary Ernest, and for the next four years taught 7th grade at both St. Catherine's School in Burlingame and Holy Name School in San Francisco. Sister then moved to Mercy High School, Burlingame, as librarian, and director of speech and drama, and for the next eleven years in addition to serving as assistant principal and school librarian, Sister initiated a Creative Arts program and directed highly professional student drama productions. In 1965 Sister Patricia was on the faculty of Gerard High School, Phoenix, AZ, and two years later at Marian High School, San Diego where she continued to work with students in speech and drama. She began a sabbatical year in 1969, earning a Masters Degree in Educational Theater at New York University, returning to Mercy High School, San Francisco as Chairman of the Department of Fine Arts and director of the newly built Center for the Related Arts, having assisted in planning the new building. She continued as director of the drama department at Mercy High, Burlingame, and initiated an Extended Campus Program for both schools. In 1981 sister retired from secondary education and began a second ministry at the newly founded Mercy Center, Burlingame, inaugurating its very well-received book store. In 2001 Sister moved to the sisters' retirement home in Burlingame, then some years later declining health made it necessary for her to go to Mercy Retirement and Care Center in Oakland where she spent her final years. She will be remembered for her candor, her commitment to excellence, and concern that her students reach their full potential. Predeceased by her parents, her brother Jack, her sister Sister Mary Louise, RSM, and her nephew John Stovall, she is survived by her sisters Suzanne Stovall, and Sister Suzanne Toolan, RSM, her nieces Karen Berg, Terry Cryderman, Suzanne Martinez and their families, her sister-in-law Patricia Toolan, and her loving community of the Sisters of Mercy. A vigil service will be held on Thursday, November 10 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sisters of Mercy Chapel, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame, and a Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on November 11 at 10:30 a.m. also in the Chapel. Memorial gifts may be made to the Sisters of Mercy, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame, Ca 94010.

Published in San Francisco Chronicle on Nov. 9, 2011