

Sr. Ernestine Havlovic Celebrates 75 Years of Faithful Service as a Notre Dame Sister



For Immediate Release (May 26, 2026) Omaha, NE – The Notre Dame Sisters, Omaha Province, celebrate the 75th Jubilee of Sr. Ernestine Havlovic, ND, honoring a lifetime of faith, service, and dedication to Catholic education.

Born to Joseph and Edith Rerucha Havlovic, Sr. Ernestine grew up on a farm in Brainard, Nebraska, as the oldest of 15 children. Life in a large, hardworking family shaped her early sense of responsibility, community, and shared purpose. The rhythm of farm life, where everyone contributed and depended on one another, mirrored the communal spirit she would come to embrace as a Notre Dame Sister.

Sr. Ernestine's journey with the Notre Dame Sisters began as a student at Notre Dame Academy. She was drawn not only to their presence in the classroom but to the way they lived and worked together. That sense of community, and the desire to be part of it, led her to enter the congregation in 1944 as an aspirant. Over the next seven decades, she lived her vocation, serving wherever she was needed, often in ways she never expected.

Generations across Nebraska, Iowa, and Kansas know Sr. Ernestine Havlovic. Over the course of her ministry, she served as a beloved teacher in nine schools and a principal in five—spanning three states and totaling **51 years in education, including 31 years as a principal**.

While her early path did not initially point toward teaching, it soon became the ministry that would define her life. What began as an unexpected assignment grew into a remarkable 51-year career in Catholic education, where she taught in parish schools across Nebraska and beyond. Over the years, she served as both teacher and principal, often in rural communities where flexibility and dedication were essential. She regularly taught multiple grade levels at once, sometimes two or even three in a single classroom, while covering a full range of subjects and supporting the broader life of the parish.

"I didn't want to teach," Sr. Ernestine once shared with a smile, recalling how she was encouraged to try it "for a semester." That semester turned into a lifetime of service. She was sustained not just by the work itself, but by her desire to be a Notre Dame Sister and serve where she was needed.

Two of her longest and most impactful assignments reflect the depth of her commitment. From 1978 to 1994, she served as principal and teacher at Blessed John Neumann in Clarkson, Nebraska. She later continued her ministry at St. John Nepomucene in Weston, Nebraska, where she taught from 1994 to 2002, continuing to shape the lives of her students and their families.

Beyond the classroom, she remained an active presence in parish life and the communities she served. She found particular joy in teaching younger students, where a love of learning was just beginning to take root. "If I had first and second grade, I was the happiest," she reflected. Her ability to connect with students and remember them years later speaks to the relationships she built throughout her ministry.

Throughout her life, Sr. Ernestine has served in consistent, everyday ways, including bringing Communion to the homebound, supporting parish life, mentoring others, and simply showing up where help was needed.

Currently residing at Newport House, Sr. Ernestine continues her ministry through prayer and presence, embodying the spirit of the Notre Dame Sisters' mission.

Her 75 years of religious life stand as a powerful witness to a vocation lived not for recognition, but for love, love of God, love of community, and love of the countless individuals whose lives she touched.

As the Notre Dame Sisters celebrate this milestone, they give thanks for Sr. Ernestine's life shaped by faith, grounded in community, and devoted to serving others.

About The Notre Dame Sisters

We are a group of consecrated Catholic women dedicated to serving God, each other and our world. Through our service and ministries, we strive to meet the unmet needs of those in our community and throughout the world. As we continue to respond to the call of Christ as women of faith and prayer, we commit ourselves to building a world Christian community in joyful, loving service to others. We have served in Omaha for more than 100 years, mostly as educators, nurses, and social workers.

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