

# marjorie neville

**“a quiet, sweet presence with  
a deep compassion for others”**

We all leave footprints of our existence. In Marjorie Neville's case, her footprints are very soft and somewhat hard to follow. But her impact on others' lives is profound. By looking at what Marjorie did with every cent of her assets at her death, we have a pretty good picture of a remarkable woman.

Marjorie Neville grew up on a farm near Glasgow in west-central Missouri not far from the Missouri River. Like many Missouri girls of her generation, she learned to love nature and the world around her. She cherished the seasons. She made snow angels in the first snowfall, watched the first crocus burst through in the spring and paid lots of attention to the birds of summer around the farm. She especially liked cardinals and always had sunflower seeds ready to feed them.

Marjorie's parents taught their children right from wrong and especially to care for others—“to remember those less fortunate.” As adults, Marjorie and her sister moved to the Waldo area of Kansas City; Marjorie became a faithful member of St. Elizabeth Parish. After her sister died in 2001, Marjorie moved to John Knox Village in Lee's Summit where she was a resident until her death in 2009.

Marjorie discovered her “inner artist” at John Knox. She did pottery, ceramics, and decorations that she shared with staff and residents. Her snowmen chalk drawings graced the official John Knox Christmas card one year.

But more than anything else, Marjorie created a legacy after her life ended. Though she was single and had no children, she prepared a detailed trust in 1989, fully twenty years before she passed away. She disposed of literally all of her considerable assets to charity.

Indeed, Marjorie left specific gifts to the parishes of St. Elizabeth in Kansas City and St. Mary in Glasgow. Her trust then sprinkled the remainder of her assets in 13 equal 6% shares to various social



service agencies, including Catholic Relief Services, and Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph. The final 22% share of Marjorie's trust was designated for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph for the “Seminary Burse Fund [or] the Priest's Retirement Fund.”

We do not know how Marjorie Neville earned or accumulated her significant wealth. She may have inherited money from her family and, as the last to die, had much to share. One of her best friends summed up Marjorie's life with these words, “She gave her warmth and generosity of spirit to all of us who had the privilege of being around her. Her quiet wisdom may have been what kept her going until age 96. She just knew everything would be all right.”

*We thank Marcia Corbett for her summary of Marjorie's life and for the photos that appear in this story.*

