

**Maribel de Soleil '65**

***Where did you grow up? Current home(s)? Any personal family information you care to share (children, pets, hobbies, talents etc).***

Second oldest of ten children, I grew up in Detroit, a few miles from Our Lady of Mercy High. Currently I live in Ypsilanti, MI with the love of my life, Ken LaFleur. I raised four children, Kris, Rebecca, James and Catherine. With Ken, we also enjoy our twelve grandchildren.

My Dad and Mrs. Summerill infused in me a love for sports/recreation, which continues to this day. Although retired, I enjoy a part-time job at Washtenaw Community College Health & Fitness Center, along with sharing a business venture with my husband as B & B owners, *Airbnb.com website: A2/UM/EMU: Clean, Green & Organic*. We have hosted people from all over the world, as well as USA. It's quite satisfying!

***How/why did you decide to attend Mercy?***

Mercy enjoyed an exemplary reputation as a Catholic, private, college prep high school, exclusively educating women who would make a difference. As a Christ-follower, this made sense for me. I also liked the freedom of wearing uniforms, and not having to be distracted by boys while learning!

***What is your fondest Mercy memory?***

The extracurricular programs at Mercy were awesome. I participated in Drama, the Yearbook, Choral, Athletic Association and Student Government.

When I was a Senior, our Drama Class put on a Minstrel Show for the student body. I played a Freshman. It was great fun and I still remember the thunderous applause as I concluded my small part.

***What activities were you involved in as a Mercy student? Favorites?***

Performance Arts were my favorites – the camaraderie and creativity. These were foundations for all my future fun.

***Was there a particular teacher, coach or staff member who had a positive impact on your life? How so?***

Miss Louise Scudlo in the English Department. Not only was her teaching very interesting, she was inspiring as a person.

Many of us, including me, found ourselves skimming the assigned books and then we wrote a book report. This didn't work with Miss Scudo. She assigned chapters every night, with a pop quiz the next day, the results of which were part of our overall grade. Honestly, I think that year was the only time I actually read all the assigned books. Even to this day, *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens is one of my favorites – because I read every word, prepared for discussion! This, too, underscored a life-long desire to read, with hard-cover books still my favorite activity.

### ***Education/career path after graduating from Mercy?***

I graduated from the University of Detroit (Cum Laude) in 1969. That first career in teaching made way to full-time parenting my children and homemaking, along with home-schooling the children whenever possible, which was quite fulfilling.

Mid-life, I returned to school and earned a second Bachelors, at nearby Eastern Michigan University, Paralegal Program (Summa Cum Laude). I then served as a Mediator and Free-lance Paralegal which was also quite worthwhile.

### ***Most rewarding professional, and/or personal, experience since graduating from Mercy?***

Birthing four human beings, especially two home births, was awesome. Raising them to adulthood—challenging!

As a Mediator/Paralegal, it was rewarding to empower people with legal information and creative win-win solutions for their conflict resolution. My goal was always to keep people out of court as they made their own best decisions.

The B & B: it's fun collaborating with my husband on this business venture. And with my being on the introvert, homebody end of the spectrum, I just love having people from all cultures, religions and personalities stay with us – an education in my own home.

### ***Why do you give to Mercy?***

Monies sent to Mercy is an excellent investment in the future. Paying it forward.

### ***What advice would give to future, or current, Mercy Girls, as we celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the 2015-2016 school year?***

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us. And when we bring what is within us out into the world, miracles happen.”

*Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882) American Essayist & Poet*

Mercy values are built into the curriculum and lifestyle and are a solid foundation for your future: Love mercy, do justice, walk humbly with God, serve others recognizing the inherent human dignity of each person.

More than ever before our country, indeed our world, needs principled leaders, healthy leaders (physically, emotionally & spiritually), who inspire by leading with service and compassion. With Godly wisdom. Integrity. Courage.

Staying close to God and His unfailing love through every circumstance, every good time and every challenging time, is guaranteed to give you the purposeful, fulfilling and fruitful life you seek. You CAN make a difference in this world, no matter what career path you are preparing for! Never forget the “Power of one.”

