



Sister Marcella Marie Garus

Tribute to Sr. Marcella on Behalf of the Faculty and Staff, Delivered May 23, 2018

Sr. Marcella Marie Garus has served Villa Maria College passionately, diligently, completely, whole-heartedly, for 50 years. She started at Villa Maria in the Business Office before being selected, in 1978, as the third president in Villa Maria's history.

Sr. Marcella has touched the life of every person in this room, directly and indirectly, many times over, as well as the lives of countless other people—students, past faculty and staff members, parents, friends, donors, board members, community leaders, parishioners, fellow sisters, and family members. All of us have words we'd like to share about Sr. Marcella—a favorite memory, a funny story, a personal homage. We should all take any opportunity we can to share these stories and thoughts with her, to thank her for bringing us here to Villa, this special, unique, mission-driven college.

For the last 40 years, Sr. Marcella has been Villa Maria College, its face, its complete embodiment. She has led us through good times and bad, through lawn fetes and commencements, board dinners and basketball games, honors convocations and President's Cabinet meetings, orientations and weekly masses, building acquisitions and academic transitions, outsourcings and doing it in house, MIDNIGHT bingos—let that one sink in—and hot air balloon rides, Christmas parties and Middle States visits, and, perhaps the things dearest to her heart—general college meetings with all of us, and days away with all of our families.

She began at Villa in the Lyndon Johnson administration and has outlasted 18 head coaches for the Buffalo Bills. As a teenager, she worked in her dad's doughnut shop on Bailey Avenue, where she learned important lessons about business, bringing that same family feel here. She has many, many colorful, funny, and surprising stories to tell about the extensive traveling she has done, complete with sandstorms, meeting Pope John Paul II, driving cross country, being elbowed and shoved by Polish nuns in the Vatican, and being pulled over by the cops (ask her about any of these).

She's always enjoyed the water, spending time relaxing by it and swimming in it. In the few moments of the day

when she is not thinking about Villa, she is known to dabble in playing games on "the machine" (as she often refers to her computer). And while she shows plenty of mercy for people, she has none for technology. Some of us are very familiar with walking into her office to find her pounding away on her keyboard or clicking her mouse incessantly. I would guess she's busted many keyboards in her day out of frustration. She drinks a LOT of coffee, says a LOT of prayers, has been known to dabble in drinking some scotch occasionally, REALLY enjoys her ice cream, and, whenever she can, gets out to her favorite restaurant, the Olive Garden, for a good meal.

Sr. Marcella is pretty adept, too, at telling it like it is, for coming right out and saying something. Perhaps, oh I don't know, maybe it was just me, when she interviewed you she directly asked you a question that would've given any HR director a small heart attack. Yes, she can be blunt. When I first started growing this sorry excuse for a beard a few years ago, she walked into my office with a horrified look on her face, immediately asked "What is that?" and then told me with a straight face and no hesitation, "No, no, no, no. I don't like it. I don't like it at all." I laughed because we all know too that Sr. Marcella has a good sense of humor. She can dish it out, and she can take it.

Sr. Marcella loves people. She appreciates all of you, more than you probably realize. She can be tough. As a President, she's had no choice but to be. But we've all experienced how compassionate, engaged, and deeply caring she really is for this, her Villa family.

Sr. Marcella, you have provided incredible, unmatched service to Villa Maria College for 50 years. You have served with vision, passion, conviction, and, perhaps more than anything else, humility. You model what true servant leadership really means. You unequivocally have lived out our mission, the mission of the Felician Sisters, and the ideals and example of Blessed Mary Angela.

For all of this, for a legacy that is monumental and enduring, today, we offer our sincerest thanks, our enthusiastic congratulations, our warmest wishes, and these two items—this small gift for your retirement, and this, the first ever and only 50-year service award. Congratulations!