

Sister Catherine McNamee, First Woman President of the NCEA

Sister Catherine McNamee, a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet and long-time Catholic educational leader, died Aug. 30. She was 89.

Sister McNamee, who was born in upstate Troy and professed final vows in 1965, dedicated much of her life to education. She was the first woman president of the National Catholic Educational Association from 1986 to 1996 and was president of St. Catherine University, a women's university in St. Paul, from 1979 to 1984. Through the years, she also held other positions of leadership in Catholic education.

In 1987, she helped coordinate the meeting of St. John Paul II with U.S. Catholic educational leaders in New Orleans. At the gathering, the pope described U.S. Catholic education as "a gift to the Church and to the country" — a phrase that Sister McNamee often repeated throughout her presidency.

During her tenure, NCEA convened the National Congress on Catholic Schools for the 21st century which gave rise to the Seton Awards, honoring individuals who have made significant contributions to Catholic education. She also established NCEA's first communications office.

She also led Catholic leaders in a meeting with President George H.W. Bush to advance school choice initiatives.

In an interview last year with the NCEA publication, *Momentum*, Sister McNamee said one of the goals she had during her time at the association was to strengthen its international presence and participation, which happened in part when she led Catholic educators to meetings with administrators in Russia, Australia and Mexico.

Fred Brigham, a former NCEA executive, said Sister McNamee was both a "national and international ambassador for Catholic education."

He said she will be remembered as "one of the giants in Catholic education on whose shoulders we stand."

Kathy Mears, NCEA interim president, said



Sister Catherine McNamee

Sister McNamee is "fondly remembered for her tireless work in Catholic education and her exemplary and groundbreaking work in diversity and multiculturalism."

As part of the NCEA's annual awards, it presents the Catherine T. McNamee, CSJ Award to an individual or institution that offers exceptional leadership in promoting a vision of Catholic education that welcomes and serves cultural and economic diversity or serves students with diverse needs.

A statement from Becky Roloff, president of St. Catherine University, said that Sister McNamee raised the local and national visibility of the university while she was president and "supported initiatives to meet the evolving needs of women, thus honoring and upholding the mission of St. Kate's and its founders."

She said Sister McNamee led the university to pursue other ways to reach students such as

Alma Verrigni, 95, Mother of Priest

Alma Verrigni died July 28 at Rosary Hill in Hawthorne. She was 95.

She was the mother of Father Robert Verrigni, parochial vicar of Holy Family parish in New Rochelle.

She was executive secretary and owner of several luncheonettes in Westchester County with her husband of 53 years, Dino, who predeceased her.

Born in Brooklyn, she was a former resident of Tuckahoe who was living in New Rochelle.

Along with Father Verrigni, Mrs. Verrigni is survived by two other sons, Alexander and Dean, and three grandchildren.

Father Verrigni celebrated a Funeral Mass Aug. 5 at Immaculate Conception Church in Tuckahoe. Burial was at Gate of Heaven in Hawthorne.

weekend and evening college programs, opportunities for nontraditional adult students, recruiting Hispanic students and fostering a more diverse student body.

In 2012, the university established the Catherine T. McNamee International Student Scholarship in her honor. —CNS

Young Golfers...

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tions are underway for CYO bowling and cross country this fall on Staten Island.

"It will show CYO is still around and will be there for kids in the future."

Twenty golfers, representing 10 Catholic and public schools, registered for the tournament. Golfers were required to wear masks off the course but were not required to wear masks while playing if they practiced social distancing on the course. Trophies, medals and a boxed lunch were given to golfers when they came off the course.

"It was really nice to have this for the kids this year," said Sue Hui, Michael Hui's mom. "It was a nice event, well organized and seeing kids being kids again was nice to see."

The tournament, co-directed by Mike Sanborn and Matt Zuntag, is sponsored by the Dr. Theodore A. Atlas Foundation, named after a Staten Island doctor who founded two Staten Island hospitals and also served as the medical director of six nursing homes.

Dr. Atlas died in 1994, and his son, boxing trainer and commentator Teddy Atlas, began the foundation in 1997. Operated by volunteers, it has given more than \$3 million to individuals and families in need.

Teddy Atlas is a frequent speaker at the barbecue and awards presentation following the golf tournament. A barbecue was not held at this year's tournament due to the pandemic.

"He is one of the most impressive human beings I've met," Neely said. "He takes time to come to this event to speak to the kids and parents. You can hear a pin drop when he speaks."

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