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GALVIN, Sister Catharine Francis. November 24, 1885–December 2, 1955.

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO (PhB 1924), UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME (MS 1930), CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA (PhD 1938).

Joanna Galvin was born in Spalding, Nebraska, the daughter of Mary (Lawless) (b. 1856) and Eugene Galvin (b. 1857), Nebraska pioneers, each of whom had emigrated from Ireland several years before their marriage in about 1884. In 1900 the household consisted of her mother; her father, a farmer; her paternal grandmother; and the five surviving children of six born: Mary (b. 1884), Joanna, Thomas (b. 1887), Jeremiah (b. 1890), and John (b. 1894).

Joanna Galvin taught in public schools in Nebraska before becoming a member of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine of Siena in Kentucky. She entered the order on March 6, 1914, and was professed on August 4, 1915. All of Sister Catharine Francis Galvin's ministry was in academies and colleges sponsored by the Dominican Sisters. From August 1915 until June 1921 she was a teacher at Immaculate Conception Academy in Hastings, Nebraska. She taught at Holy Rosary Academy in Louisville, Kentucky, 1921–22 and at St. Agnes Academy and College in Memphis, Tennessee, 1922–24. During the summers 1918–21 she attended undergraduate courses at Loyola University in Chicago and, according to University of Notre Dame records, received a PhB degree from Loyola in 1924 when she was thirty-eight.

Sister Catharine Francis taught again at Immaculate Conception in Nebraska 1924–26 before returning to St. Agnes, where she remained until the fall of 1933. While at St. Agnes she was professor in the mathematics department and was, for two years, dean of the college. According to an obituary “she was quickly recognized as an excellent teacher, a capable counsellor, a just disciplinarian, and a person of strong character, and high ideals” (“Nun Who Taught 30 Years Dies”).

Sister Catharine Francis Galvin continued her studies by taking mathematics classes at Notre Dame during the summer sessions 1926–28 and in 1930. She received a master's degree from Notre Dame in August 1930, graduating magna cum laude. In 1933 she entered the Catholic University of America for further graduate work. She was in residence at Catholic University 1933–35 and 1936–37. During 1935–36 she returned to Holy Rosary Academy in Louisville as a high school teacher. Although she returned to St. Agnes College in Memphis in 1937, she also was a registered student at Catholic 1937–38. She received her PhD in 1938 with minors in chemistry and physics. She remained on the faculty at St. Agnes College (renamed Siena College in 1939) except for a year, 1945–46, at Holy Rosary Academy. Over the years her teaching assignments included chemistry, physics, and statistics, as well as mathematics. Sister Catharine Francis was bursar at both the academy and the college in Memphis and served as superior of her community for many years.

Sister Catharine Francis Galvin died at St. Joseph Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, after an illness of two weeks. After her death at age seventy in 1955, she was buried in the cemetery at the motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine of Siena in Kentucky. She was survived by a sister and two brothers.

Thesis and dissertation:

1930 The nine-point circle and the hyperbola with foci at the orthocenter and circumcenter of the triangle. MS thesis, University of Notre Dame. Typescript.

1938 Two geometrical representations of the symmetric correspondence $C_{n,n}$, with their interrelations. PhD dissertation, Catholic University of America, directed by Aubrey Edward Landry. Printed for The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, by J. H. Furst Co., Baltimore, MD. Review: *JFM* 64.0676.01 (O. H. Keller).

References to:

“Sister Catherine [*sic*], Siena Teacher Dies.” Unidentified newspaper clipping, Memphis, TN.

“Nun Who Taught 30 Years Dies in Memphis Hospital.” Unidentified newspaper clipping, Memphis, TN.

Other sources: Catholic University catalogs; communications with Office of Registration and Records of Loyola University Chicago, St. Catharine of Siena Archives, St. Michael’s Church (Spalding, NE), and University of Notre Dame Archives; US Census 1900, 1910, 1920 NE, 1930 TN.

Last modified: July 19, 2009.