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Queen of Peace Celebrates Annual Founder's Day Liturgy

Queen of Peace recognized three individuals for their commitment and dedication to the values and ideals of the Dominicans of Sinsinawa at its annual Founder's Day celebration on Sunday, Nov. 7. In their attitudes, beliefs, roles, actions and ways of life, Denise Eligan '73, Rick Guerin and Mary Pat Pearson '93 serve as models and guides for our students and all members of the Peace community, past and present.

Denise Eligan '73 - Justice and Compassion. A 1973 graduate of Queen of Peace, Denise Eligan has been a committed member of the Board of Directors for four years and currently works for the State of Illinois as a Bureau Chief in the Office of Grants and Administration in obtaining federal grants.

"Justice is a very personal value," Eligan said. "I've worked for individuals much less fortunate than myself, and many times that meant advocating on their behalf in places and systems that they were unfamiliar with in order to acquire justice and fairness."

In her career, Denise says she lives out the values of Justice and Compassion through "character, integrity, hard work and going the extra mile."

"I was taught at Peace that when you see a problem and a challenge you also see an opportunity," Eligan said. "The outcome depends how hard you work."

It wasn't until Denise joined the Board that she learned the following: "It is the hope that each and every student remembers Peace. True justice is remembering those who have helped us over the bridge. We have to remember Peace if it is to continue to be there for others."

Rick Guerin – Partnership. As a distinguished educator, Rick has served St. Bede the Venerable as principal for the past 36 years. This year marks his 42nd year in Catholic education.

“In Catholic education, we’re able to make a difference in children’s lives and show each child that God is present in their life,” said Guerin, who is repeatedly nominated by Peace frosh for the *You Make a Difference Award*. “I’ve always felt that if you don’t connect with a child, you can’t teach a child.”

Guerin says he has worked to develop relationships with St. Bede’s faculty, parents and students, as well as area high schools. Most recently, Guerin received the Distinguished Principal Award from the National Catholic Education Association in 2004 and was selected as a 2005 National Distinguished Principal.

Mary Pat Pearson ‘93 – Heart of the School. Pearson was first recognized as the 2010 Heart of the School at Peace’s all-school Fall Spirit Assembly on Oct. 4.

“I’ve loved Queen of Peace since I attended Open House in seventh grade - so much so that I was the only girl from Queen of Martyrs to come here that year,” Pearson said. “I continue to tell people that it was the best decision I ever made. I could not believe how fast Queen of Peace became my second home, and I was thrilled to come back to work at Peace after college.”

Pearson graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1997 and began working at Peace in 1998. She is currently the Assistant to the Dean of Students, Athletics Assistant, Assistant Recruiter and JV volleyball head coach.

“Being named Heart of the School is both humbling and meaningful because I was chosen by my peers,” said Pearson, who is currently working on a Master’s in School Counseling at Northeastern Illinois University. “I work with the most amazing, dedicated faculty

and staff. It is truly an honor that these people think I deserve this award, and I am proud to be a part of this inspiring, creative and talented community.”

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Founder’s Day 2010 Honorees (from left): Mary Pat Pearson ‘93, Heart of the School; Denise Eligan ‘73, Justice and Compassion; Rick Guerin, Partnership; and principal Mary Kay Nickels.