

Faine McMullen RSCJ Remembrances from Newton College '67 class through 2012 approximately
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I was a Political Science major at Newton College graduating in 1967. Sr McMullen was a Constitutional Law teacher, dear friend and mentor at Newton and afterwards. I stayed in touch in Roxbury, MA, Chicago, IL, Washington, D.C., Kenwood Sacred Heart in Albany and finally Teresian House Nursing facility in Albany where she lived her last decade. Reflecting on Faine's life it strikes me that she would have been a precursor to my favorite Supreme Court Justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, if the opportunities for women in law and the Courts had occurred 50 years earlier. Faine was a formidable legal mind, about twenty years before RBG. Even though her father was a judge in NY, she had no opportunity to practice law as a career for a brilliant woman.

In the Roxbury house where several RSCJ were living, and working in various community organizations in mid-late 70s I installed plastic interior storm windows because their flat had single pane windows with no storms and their heating bills were huge.

Faine read the biography of Malcolm X and was intrigued by his spiritual journey especially after he left Chicago's Muslim community and traveled to Mecca to discover a more authentic Islam. He was changed by his experience of authentic Islam. At some point we discussed the Loving SCOTUS decision which had occurred in 1967 when I was graduating. It became very relevant when I was engaged to Samuel H. Clemons, Lt Col US Army Special Forces whom I met as result of my VISTA work in Milwaukee's inner city housing purchase program. We became engaged and married in Sept 1978.

Faine was coming to our wedding, so several weeks before the event she warned me that the Catholic Church would at the last minute reject his application for annulment of his marriage and I should be prepared with a JP to conduct the ceremony. Sam was Episcopalian, his ex-wife was Baptist. That is exactly what happened the week before the ceremony. Fortunately, Milwaukee had a large community of ex- priests and ex- nuns with whom I was familiar as a result of civil rights activities. Fr. Tom Marlier agreed to conduct the ceremony at the location of my reception, a Chateau overlooking the lake in Mequon, WI. It worked out perfectly for my diverse guests.

My husband and his best man picked up Faine at a nearby convent and brought her to the wedding site, much to her delight and surprise.

In 1980 I got promoted from HUD Milwaukee field office to HUD HQ in DC. While I was awaiting Sam's move to D.C. I stayed for a time with the RSCJ sisters at Sursum Corda, a HUD subsidized housing complex in the center of DC just off North Capitol St.

My husband, Sam became a terrific chef after he retired and we invited the sisters for dinner as appreciation for their prayers and support. He and I were flabbergasted when the sisters sang Grace in 4-part harmony before the meal. It was very memorable.

In the late 90s several of the religious, including Faine, Sr. Kate, Mother Husson, Sr. White had retired to Kenwood Sacred Heart Novitiate where they had taken their vows and I visited several times on my way back and forth to see my mother and family in the Boston area. Subsequently, all the retirees had to move to Teresian House, a wonderful 300 bed assisted living/Nursing facility run by the Carmelite Order in Albany. Faine's sister Grail was in the secured Alzheimer's unit. Gabrielle Husson and Faine

had private rooms in accord with their care needs. I was fortunate to be able to visit and stay in the Guest unit at Teresian House several times on my way to or from my Boston family visits.

On one visit I drove Faine about 30 miles West of Albany to a Jesuit Cemetery where two of Faine's brothers are buried.

I attribute my lifelong fascination with SCOTUS and their decisions to the numerous discussions in Faine's class on Constitutional Law and for years thereafter about the Court's many decisions with Faine and my family and others.