**Br. Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB**

Dear Mother Prioress, Dear Sisters,

Greetings from Ireland.

I was very sorry to learn of the death of Sr Colman. She and I had become good friends during my sabbatical term in St Johns in 2015. She was a warm, welcoming, feisty, funny and faith filled woman. Passionately devoted to all that is good about St Ben's and the Bennies, we had some wonderful conversations and even better arguments and I thanks God for the opportunity of meeting her.

In Ireland the traditional prayer for the dead is 'May God grant her a bed in the company of the saints'. As you lay her down with her sisters I pray that she and they may find rest from their labors and rise to the glory prepared for the faithful servants of the Lord and of his people.

With my prayers and sympathy.

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S. Colman has the brightest smile out of anyone I've encountered. She'll be miss**.**

**Lois LeVasseur Liners '46**

A college classmate and a dear friend. As Dolores O'Connell, she entertained me and shared student life with me. As Sister Colman, she continued to offer her friendship and inspiration. Knowing her was one of my many Benedictine blessings.

**Judy Zimmer**

Sister Coleman will always be remembered by me as a fierce advocate for women. Her intellect and caring for students and CSB will be dearly missed.

**Connie Reding Koeck '78**

As a college recruiter for CSB/SJU for 16 years, S. Colman was a gracious and forward-thinking leader! She embodied the Benedictine spirit within both institutions and was a true reflection of that Benedictine spirit throughout her many years in connecting with students, faculty & staff members, alums, and prospective students and their families. S. Colman, you were a "warrior" in all the right ways, and I was privileged to know you and work with you as a member of the recruitment staff. Thank you, dear lady!! God's blessings!

**Christine Morris Boerner '86**

I still have vivid memories of the two sisters and close friends, Renner & O'Connell ~ especially of the place they called home -- the place in which they entertained special guests. During my junior & senior years at St. Ben's, I witnessed "up close & personal" the elite level of Benedictine hospitality these two displayed, particularly Colman. I left just as the transition of leadership was being made -- the passing of the Presidency baton. I was called upon to serve as a personal hostess for various dinner parties the two sisters threw for dignitaries and other parties of diners. To serve in this role I had to take a great deal of specific direction from Colman. I am here to tell you ~ Colman did not spare the horses when it came to SPECIFIC detail of how EVERY step of the 3-course dinner was to be carried out! (Details down to the mi-nute method of preparing & serving the Orange- Roughy -- the exact placement of each fork - to the precise words I needed to use along with the body position I was to take with guests!) One weekend I was scheduled to serve, I completely FORGOT my duty and stayed too long at a Johnnie party! Needless to say ~ Colman was NOT pleased with me when I arrived a full half hour late for her event!

**Carol Guardo**

S. Colman persuasively brought me to campus to assist her and Br. Dietrich in developing the coordinate relationship. She would not take no for an answer when I hesitated about coming. And I'm so glad she didn't. I enjoyed every minute of my collaboration with her -- her dedication and passion for CSB, her captivating wit, her convictions and values evoked such a fondness on my part for her, for CSB. When I served as interim president (again I could not say no), my admiration deepened and I believe that I was truly blessed to know her. My condolences to all her Sisters, her family and both the CSB and SJU communities.

**Maria (Borash) Lund**

Sister Coleman O'Connell made such a strong impression on me when I was a student at CSB from 1984-1988. She was fiercely honest and direct, and taught all of us a strong sense of purpose by example. I was amazed by the wonderful developments and growth that came with President O'Connell's leadership, including the Clemens Library, Institutional Advancement, and continued support of the BAC. I'll never forget Sister Coleman's conversation with me at my 15 year reunion; it's like her presence with me was just yesterday. She made that strong of an impression. Thank you Sister Coleman O'Connell, and thank you College of St. Benedict for changing my life in such a profound fashion. In my mind, I am always at the hallowed grounds of CSB.

**Denise DeVaan**

There are so many stories. This one is the latest. Nearly three weeks ago Elizabeth and I drove Colman from St. Ben's to St. John's for the unveiling of Brother Dietrich Reinhart's portrait. True to form she stood by the car with her walking stick (NOT cane!). She said, "They won't let me drive anymore." I said, "Well, maybe at age 90 that is not such a bad decision."

She handed us five pages of research about the contribution immigrants make to the US, despite the national conversation initiated by the President.

"Read this. There is such good information."

As we drove past cornfields she said, "Raising corn takes too much water. We should find another crop. Bad for the environment." She kept talking. "Let me tell you a story about Dietrich and me. We were supposed to throw the first pitch of the first Saint's game in St. Paul. I knew Dietrich had never thrown a ball in his life, so I brought one we could practice with before the game. I wore an SJU shirt and he wore a CSB shirt. When the time came, Dietrich's pitch was great and mine was lousy. Of course this is what the crowd expected. Oh, well."

I had heard this story from her many times before. Each time I laughed--hard. She used her Irish humor to laugh at herself.

I am enormously grateful to have known Colman for over 46 years. Her extraordinary impact will be experienced well into the future. It is a story of leadership, legacy and deep love. We, together, will learn more about this impact as we share our stories and experiences of her with each other.

**Mary Valvoda Lunneborg**

Her gentle nature and sweet smile will be missed at upcoming reunions.

**Twyla Meyer**

I only spent my freshman year at the College of St. Benedict but I won't forget the encouragement I received from S. Colman and her delightful, infectious spirit in dealing with people!

**Sheila Hogan Mulcahy, CSB '66**

Saddened by the death of dear Sister Colman, but so grateful for the impact she made on CSB, SJU and so many students, including me. Her achievements were myriad, but my memories are of a woman of amazing vision, energy, wit and wisdom -- a teacher and a guide who made learning FUN! RIP dear Colman. You've earned it!

**Patricia Ostrander, OSB**

Of the many aspects of Sister Colman's talents, I appreciated her verbal skills. When I spent the first three and one half years at the monastery Colman would walk every morning past my room on 2nd floor Main. She would tap on my door with her cane and we would chat for five or ten minutes. She would often say "Pray for me today I have to make an important ask for the college"! Heaven will now never be the same!

**Kathleen Dianne-Hack Nelson**

Praise God for a Warrior and a woman of such dedication to CSB/SJU. I thank you for the excellent education and memories from the four years I spent there as an undergraduate Biology/Chem

Student. I benefitted from the union of CSB and SJU as a first year female student taking physics and Calculus at SJU in 1968-1972. I also remember my first experience in a play production where the Students wrote their own lines and performance in the play: "Lorenzaccio." I will never forget these experiences!

Thank you S.Coleman O'Connell and bless you family and be so honored and thankful for God's blessing to your family and ours as alumni and students of CSB/SJU.

**Rosanne Hertel**

Sister Coleman was a great lady and achieved great things. I am sure that she is still achieving great things up in Heaven. God bless her and her family always. She will truly be missed.

**Dorothy Bain Lockhart '77**

I met this giant of a woman in 1977 when I attended St. Ben's and always admired her with her administrative skills and her great thrust to ensure that St. Ben's ranked high as a liberal arts college.

I was privileged to enjoy a personal relationship with over the years as she was a great friend to our Bahamian family.

My daughter Jean Bain '83 and granddaughter Giavana Bain Jones '02 who met S. Coleman at the age of 5 in her President's office, join me in praying that she enjoys eternal rest with our maker.

**Dell Westerbeck Zubkowski**

As a Theatre major and "student worker" for Sister Colman, I was profoundly influenced by this amazing woman. She taught me how to think. As a girl from Mississippi who felt a bit out of place at first, she took me under her wing. An angel's wing. Class of 1975.

**Judith Koll Healey**

Colman was my teacher and then my colleague and dear friend. Our relationship spans 60 years. She was my drama coach in 1957 when I came to St. Ben's as a freshman. She cast me in Arms and the Man, Shaw's great fun play. The scenery fell on my head while I was alone on stage. When I teased her later about this, she said: "Well, they taught us how to put the flats up at Catholic U, but they didn't tell us how to keep them up."

I knew her in the '80's when she had just returned from Michigan and her advanced degree. She was a finalist for president, but the appointment at that time went to her dear friend, Emmanuel, whom Colman called "Emmy". The had met when they both entered the novitiate years earlier and it was a friendship destined to last a lifetime. I sat next to Colman at an event and she shared with me not her disappointment, but her joy for Emmanuel's honor.

Of course, six years later, Colman was appointed president, a post she held for ten years. She retired at the time that I came on the board in 1996.

Several times over the next 20 years I took up residence on campus while I was writing my historical novels, and it was those times that Colman and I became even closer. I would take "Emmy" and Colman to dinner and they would have a glass of wine and we would talk of many things. Later, after Emmanuel moved to a more assisted living situation, Colman and I would visit her, and would continue our conversation at dinner afterward.

She was Irish to the core. One of my most cherished memories is when we were on the trip to Ireland in 2006. Some of us chipped in and hired a car for Colman to visit her 'rellies' in County Mayo. That night she returned late and she and Mike and I had dinner. She shared he delight in that day's visit with her Irish family and roots. I will always connect her with delight and wit and a keen intellect, but mostly with being Irish. God keep you, Colman dear.

**Carol Thelen**

I had the privilege to work side by side with Colman in CSB IA the past four years. She was trustworthy, compassionate, witty and tough. A tireless worker. I love this woman and am forever grateful for all she taught me. There will never be another. #RIP Colman

**Tony Cunningham**

Slan abhaile, Colman.

**Micah Kiel**

S. Colman was one of the leaders, with Sr. Emmanuel, of the Greco-Roman program in 1996. This changed my life, partly due to experiencing another culture, but also through many long dinners and conversations with "the nuns." Those two nuns. Relentless in their pursuit of truth, yet gentle with students who were still finding their way. Sr. Colman was always hospitable, yet always willing to say what she thought was right and true. I've met few people of her quality. My life is changed because of hers.

**Beverly Hahn Cote '74**

S. Colman was a tireless advocate for St. Ben's and women's education. She was a role model and mentor for me when I began work as an Admissions Counselor. I am grateful to have known her. May she now feast at the heavenly banquet.

**Sheralyn Anderson**

The year was 1986 and Sister Colman was new in her post as President of CSB. She cordially invited my roommates and me to her residence for lunch. She was very enthused and quite interested as we told her about our home...the Bahamas ...and our experiences at St. Bens. This memory is very dear to me.

**Mary**

When I was working down the hall from Colman at St. Ben's, one day she came in and said she forgot her jacket and needed to borrow mine for a couple of hours. I gladly lent it. When she returned several hours later, she handed it back and said that there was quite a bit of extra room in my coat and that she felt she was swimming in it. I still smile about that interaction. I loved how she never minced words, and always told you what she was thinking. You never had to guess where you stood with her.

**Tony Sjogren**

My favorite memory of Coleman was the commencement the last year she was president of CSB. As conference and event director I was responsible for coordinating commencement. Coleman and I were standing in the balcony of the fieldhouse the day before commencement reviewing the plans. She asked me what my guess was for how long commencement would last this year. This was a typical game we would play. I said I thought we could do it in 1:55 minutes. She put her hand on my shoulder and said " did I tell you the bishop was coming". I hung my head knowing we would go over 2 hours. She looked at me and said " remember he's our guest not our boss". Being the president she was the last person to leave the stage at the end of commencement. As she passed me I looked at my watch and gave her a shrug. 2:10 minutes... the bishop had spoken for 15 minutes. As only Coleman could do she gave me a wink and a nod. Typical Coleman.

**Jennifer Sainsbury, CSB '03**

Sending my deepest condolences to S. Colman family and friends. I wasn't fortunate enough to have a class with her and only got to know her the short time I worked in the admission office. But I most certainly knew her and her incredible contributions and leadership. What passion she had!

Peace and love.

**Ken Jones and Diane Veale Jones**

S. Colman’s leadership transformed the campus in many ways, but what we will miss most is her warm and often impish personality. Colman spoke her mind, sometimes enough to shock the listener, but she also radiated both a deep interest in everyone she met, and the sense that every day should be lived with joy. These gifts helped her form a deep bond with Br. Dietrich. That relationship broke through institutional barriers and paved the way for the creation of an effective coordinate relationship. Our favorite symbol of this relationship is the photo of Dietrich and Colman smiling as they held their dueling loaves of institutional bread. Separate identities, but bonded.

**Diane Calabria**

The Institutional Advancement staff was assembled for a big announcement to be made by then President Mary Lyons. President Lyons introduced S. Colman as the new interim vice president of institutional advancement. I was fairly new at the time and didn't know her. The IA staff who had been at CSB longer than me all cheered and clapped enthusiastically at the announcement. She walked in like a movie star, smiling and greeting friends as she went. As she started her tenure as interim VP, (and then later the "interim" was dropped)I could begin to understand why she was so loved.

We miss you, dear S. Colman!