

Yvonne Toucanne, SCSL (1910-2011)

Yvonne was born in Paris on September 17, 1910. When she was three years old, her family immigrated to the United States and settled in Santa Barbara, California. While there, her parents separated.

Later, her father moved to Saskatchewan, where she became acquainted with the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis. Along with her father and brother, she then returned to California.



However, her father, concerned that Yvonne might lose her French heritage, enrolled her at St. Theresa Academy, a boarding school operated by the Sisters of Charity of St. Louis in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

At the age of 16, Yvonne decided to enter the novitiate in Levis, Quebec, and pronounce her vows at the age of 21. Following teacher training in Moose Jaw, Yvonne returned to Medicine Hat where she taught for 21 years. She always placed a high priority on the needs of her students, sometimes in the face of opposition from the school board.

During her last teaching post in Melville, Yvonne became restless and cast her eye on the developing world where, between 1972 and 1977, she taught in teacher training programs in Africa and in Tanzania. While in Africa, she witnessed the injustices faced by women and began to develop an understanding of the oppression forced on women and children. At age 67, Yvonne settled in Moose Jaw, still active as part-time teacher and community leader.

At age 75, Yvonne spent a year in Oakland, California, attending the Matthew Fox Creation Centered Spirituality Centre. There she studied Gestalt psychology and feminist awakening. Yvonne left Oakland with a stronger sense of self-worth, entitlement and personhood. Regina became the first community to benefit from Yvonne's desire to foster these same attitudes in others.

Together with other women friends, she dedicated herself to organize and operate Sofia House, a home for battered women and children. Being a live-in coordinator, she was available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for those in need of assistance.

In 1990, Soroptimist International of Regina recognized that each community that Yvonne touched was enriched by her presence. Yvonne continued to live in Regina until 2002 when she moved to Calgary, first to St. Johns Convent and then to Bethany Care Centre where she died on October 9, 2011.

LINK: <http://www.soeursdelacharitestlouis.org/en>