



## Charla Ruth Couch

January 16, 1945 - May 6, 2018

Charla Ruth Couch, born January 16, 1945. Charla was the fourth of eight children born to Charles and Mary Jane Couch. She was one of seven girls. She was born in Bedford, OH and lived most of her elementary school life in Willoughby and Mentor on the Lake. When she was in seventh grade the family moved to Painesville and she attended Riverside Middle School for one year. The family lived on a farm which they rented. When the well went dry they were forced to move because, not being the property owners, they could not authorize the digging of another well. The family moved to Euclid, Ohio.

Charla was excited about this move because she had made up her mind that she wanted to become a nun. She only had a few problems to overcome: 1) the family was not Catholic; 2) they did not attend church; and 3) she was never baptized. Mom's family had been Catholic and Dad's family was Baptist. Neither attended church. However, Dad always read his bible and Mom always prayed. Neither discouraged Charla from studying about God or trying to pursue her goal. Mom purchased a set of books about the lives of the saints which Charla read cover to cover. Mom promised her that when they moved to Euclid she could be enrolled into St. William's Parish School, but as it turned out she was too old to go there. So her new goal meant that she attend Catechism Classes after school. When she was in ninth grade she was baptized. Her next goal was to go to Villa Angela High School so she could meet some nuns and discover what she needed to do to become a nun. She

transferred there as a senior and spent one year there before graduating. She had decided to become a teacher and chose the Ursuline Nuns of Cleveland in order to accomplish this goal.

Charla graduated in 1962. She entered Ursuline Convent August 13, 1962 and left the convent December 20, 1969. She taught school for 44 years, predominantly 7 and 8th grade Math. She taught first, fourth, fifth and sixth grade before teaching in Junior HS. In all, she taught 2.5 years as a Nun and 41.4 years in the East Cleveland City School System. Charla also taught at Shaw HS. She attained BSE and MA degrees and completed work beyond Master's degree level. In her career she received recognition in the form of Jennings Teacher Leadership Grants and was one of ten teachers to receive Learning Magazine's Professional Best Awards in 1989.

Charla was very active in her school trying to make it better for her students. She always said, "I did everything I wanted to do." Each year she tried new projects: she had 4 math carnivals which involved the whole school; one year she held a school wide "World Affairs Bazaar ". One Halloween she and her sister, Connie, created a Haunted House out of black paper, an old trunk, the skeleton from the science room, and spooky lights. This was set up in the art rooms at the old Kirk Middle School. She had teachers play the roles of the ghosts in the room. It operated in conjunction with the October school dance that was being held in the cafeteria. The students were charged \$.25 to walk through the "House". Everything was ready and the line to go into the room had about 200 students ready to take a turn. However, after the first 15 students went in, all of a sudden the teacher chaperones began to cry out, "Couch, Couch turn on the lights, they are killing us .... " The students were so frightened they took off their platform shoes and began batting at the spooky figures. One teacher lost her contact lens in the process. So for the rest of the night she could only let the students walk through the experience with the lights on. Any profits from the dance went not to student activities, but to

replacing the contact lens.

Charla used her Christmas break one year to meet with a group of students to paint the school cafeteria. The school was very old and all of the walls were two toned green. It had not been painted or modernized in years and there were no plans to do so. Charla obtained scaffolding, paint, brushes and rollers and was given the key and security code for the school so that she and her students could paint the large room with the 22 foot high walls over the two week break. They painted it a light blue. It looked good. This was just one of the painting projects she undertook. When she was assigned a classroom that had graffiti on the walls she made it her business to paint the wall and decorate the classroom to make it "nicer" for her class. She held monthly dances for the students and used her students to decorate them to celebrate the seasons and holidays that were occurring. Her students used to ask her: "Are you an art teacher or a math teacher?" She would always say math is art and art is math!

After retiring in 2003, she became a consultant for the State of Ohio and spent three years advising staff members in mathematics education. She was asked to come out of retirement and to work an additional six years as an instructor for the Middle School in East Cleveland. She also presented workshops for other school systems in the area of mathematics education. These workshops were well received. She helped to decorate the new Middle School (Kirk became Heritage) which was rebuilt. Since the school mascot for the new school became the Buffalo Soldiers, Charla and her sister made wooden signs which they hung around the school labeling each hallway and major room after a quality which the students could emulate to honor their heritage. For example the library became Fort Knowledge; one hall was called "Perseverance". The Office was labeled: "Headquarters".

Charla is survived by her brother, David of Cleveland; sisters, Mary Reitzel and Donna Hartford of Southgate, Michigan, Shirley (Victor) Bando of Eastlake, Clarilynn (Dennis) Pusch of Apache Junction, Arizona, and Nancy Deppiesse of Saukville, Wisconsin and nephew John (Christine) of Lake Wales, Florida.

She was preceded in death by her sister, Connie Auten.

Through the years, Charla was devoted to her faith. Her greatest joy and source of great pride were her students. She was a vivacious and exuberant woman with a big heart. A tremendous loss is felt by all of those who were blessed and honored to know her.

Visitation will be on Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 2 to 4pm at the Monreal Funeral Home, 35400 Curtis Blvd., Eastlake. A Memorial Service will follow at 4pm also at the Funeral Home.

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

MAY **19**. 4:00 PM (ET)

Monreal Funeral Home  
35400 Curtis Blvd.  
Eastlake, OH 44095

# Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Memory Video*



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**Monreal Srnick Funerals & Cremations** - May 31, 2018 at 09:35 AM



“ *The Tucker Family - purchased the Your Light Shines for the family of Charla Ruth Couch.*



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**The Tucker Family** -- May 18, 2018 at 03:36 PM