

## Faith and Light Legend, Dolores Wilson Turns 90!

Our beloved Dolores “Dee” Wilson turned 90 in May. Though she is small in stature, she is a mighty advocate for the differently abled. Enthusiastically, she has brought the joy of Faith and Light to many in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area for 37 years and has diligently served Faith and Light in varied capacities during those years. In 1986, she founded the first Faith and Light community in Washington D.C. The St. Anne and later the Our Lady of Peace Faith and Light Communities were both founded by Dolores whose core members largely consisted of individuals who lived in two group homes for the disabled run by Bethlehem House, Inc. a non-profit organization that was also founded by Dolores. Devotedly, she served as the live-in director for Bethlehem House for 32 years. She has dedicated most of her life to improving and enriching the lives of countless individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. She embodies the Faith and Light tenet of doing “with” and not “for” in friendship with people who have disabilities, some of with whom she has lived with for over 30 years.



\*Picture from Bethlehem House brochure



\*Dolores and Tom, resident at Bethlehem House

Dolores has served people with disabilities and their loved ones through several different vocations and positions. She was a founding staff member at the Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute, a school for children and young adults with disabilities that opened in 1959. She worked at the school for 25 years, serving in

the roles of educator, administrator, and eventually principal for 12 years. She left the school when she was asked by Cardinal James Hickey to open an Office for Persons with Disabilities for the Archdiocese of Washington, where she served as the director for 22 years. She opened Bethlehem House during her tenure as the Archdiocesan Director of the Special Needs Ministry.



\*Photo Credit-Macel Raymundo

Dolores is especially zealous for Faith and Light. She founded the first Faith and Light communities (St. Anne and Our Lady of Peace communities) in the Washington DC area starting in 1986. Many of the core members in these two communities were Bethlehem House residents. Additionally, Dolores served as Vice Provincial Coordinator from 1998 through 2021 and USA East Provincial Coordinator with Fred Seagren from 2006-2010. She has hosted a multitude of provincial and area wide meetings and assemblies. Members of her communities attended the International Pilgrimage in Lourdes in 2001. Additionally, many Washington area Faith and Light community members looked forward to the regional gatherings hosted by Dolores and her communities including the annual Advent and Palm Sunday celebrations. These celebrations always included re-enactments of the Christmas Story and The Stations of the Cross, followed by a lunch, and fun activities.



\* Dolores providing formation to the St. Patrick's community in Rockville, Maryland

Many USA East Faith and Light Communities have been formed, nurtured and discerned by Dee. Her legacy in Faith and Light continues to thrive. Dee is well known in the Washington DC disability and spiritual communities and has been a charismatic leader in both of those worlds. Her spunky enthusiasm and warm, welcoming smile are her trademark. Her personal faith and light continue to radiate and shine and are contagious to anyone who has the privilege to know her.

Paula Kearney

Secretary USA East Province

Sources:

\*Bethlehem House Brochure, date unknown.

\*Bipeds of Brookland: Bethlehem House, *Posted by [Abbott Klar Real Estate](#) on Saturday, August 19th, 2017.*

\*Bromley, Kirt, Chaplain USA West, (2021). [The History of Faith and Light USA East, from 1971 to 2021.](#)

\*Little Sisters of the Poor, Jeanne Jugan Residence "A Life Well Lived; In Step with Dolores Wilson." May 2019, Vol. 12, Issue 1.

