

A Graduate's Testimonial: **St. Ignatius of Loyola School**

By Angelita M. Sims

When I was five years old, my mother dropped me off for my first day of school at St. Ignatius of Loyola. There waiting to receive me was Sister Janet (as she did with the other first grade students). I was a shy, quiet but observant little girl and remembered taking Sr. Janet's hand and looking at her warm eyes and friendly smile. I knew that I was in good hands. It would be a school year later that my younger brother, Donald would follow.

When my mother drove Donald for his first day of school at St. Ignatius of Loyola, I rode with them. As he got out the car, he noticed that I didn't get out with him. He looked back at me with a worried expression on his face and asked, "Lita, are you coming?" I told him, "No, I won't be with you today because today is for the first graders. I'm in second grade now. You don't have to worry because Sr. Janet will be your teacher and she's very nice and you're going to meet a lot of friends."

My brother showed a worried expression as if he was saying, "I can't believe you're going to stay in that car and not come with me!" Sr. Janet was there to receive him but he kept looking back at me. I then turned to my mom and said, "Maybe I should go with him until he's comfortable." Sr. Janet told my mom to go on and that Donald was going to be okay. As my mom drove off, she said to me, "Your brother is in good hands." When we went to pick up my brother from school that afternoon, he was playing on the playground with a friend he had met also named Donald. My mother had the hardest time getting him in the car because he didn't want to leave. When she finally got him in the car, he said, "Lita, you were right, Sr. Janet is nice. I like Loyola." I knew that he would because I did too.

My name is Angelita Sims and I'm an alumna of St. Ignatius of Loyola School. I enjoyed the six years that I attended Loyola because I felt that I received a quality academic and religious education. If there was something that I didn't understand or needed help with, the sisters and the staff took the time to make sure that I did. Some of them would utilize creative styles of teaching so that I could understand. I liked the way that they challenged me academically.

I made many friends and we would play kick ball, basketball, hopscotch, jacks and jump rope on the playground; I'm still close to some of them to this day. I not only attended the school but St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish, also. I was blessed because I had the best of both.

An African proverb states that it takes a village to raise a child. St. Ignatius of Loyola School and Parish was that village for me. The village consisted of the sisters, lay teachers, priests and volunteers. I observed on a daily basis their dedication, hard work, patience and love for their students. They looked out for all of us as if we were their own. We were a family, a community.

Loyola prepared me with the necessary tools that I needed when I left there to attend junior high school at St. James and then to the college preparatory high school, Machebeuf Catholic (which is currently Bishop Machebeuf). I would then go on to eventually obtain multiple degrees in

higher education. I believe this is why I am a strong advocate of education. Besides what I learned from my parents, it was St. Ignatius of Loyola School that set the foundation for my academics and Christian life. It is why I have such a strong affiliation for this Jesuit community at St. Ignatius of Loyola. It is why I have given back in the past years by teaching the Children's Liturgy Instructional Program and continue to give back through volunteering as a lector, Eucharistic Minister, usher and pastoral council secretary. Just as the staff at Loyola School has served (and some continue to serve to this day), I serve. I would like to thank the faculty of St. Ignatius of Loyola who made such a strong impact in my life and who added to my life that has made me part of the woman that I am today:

Sr. Janet, Sr. Mary Ellen, Sr. Stephen, Sr. Adele, Sr. Theresa, Sr. Jean, Mrs. King, Mr. Darden, Ms. Delaney, Mrs. Noel, Ms. Merrithew, Ms. McClain, Mrs. Funk, Mrs. Annie Daniels, the late Mrs. Henderson and the many priests.

I have on occasion seen many alumni from Loyola throughout my years and we have reminisced about our Loyola School days. There are alumni in St. Ignatius of Loyola parish that attend the Saturday Anticipated mass at 5:00 p.m. and at the Sunday, 7:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. masses. Each one has a story to share. They are a doctor, an attorney, a real-estate agent, airline personnel, graphic artist, high school student, media-marketing specialist, director, administrative professional, researcher, Human Resources Specialist, a chemist, a housewife, principal, engineer, teachers, supervisors and managers, to only name a few.

I am, we are, Loyola!

If anyone has school aged children and you're thinking about placing them at an elementary school, I would highly consider St. Ignatius of Loyola School. The sisters, teachers and volunteers will make sure that they receive the best academic and religious education. Loyola is small but very mighty!

Angelita Sims is a member of St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic Parish. She works as Assistant of the Diabetes & Heart Disease and Stroke Programs for the Colorado Department. of Public Health & Environment.