“alone doesn’t matter if you’re standing up for others”
SOCIAL INJUSTICE,
ACTIVISM &
ALVERNO COLLEGE
Warning: The language and photos used in this display are representative of the era from which they are taken and should be viewed within the context of that period.
The 1950s and 1960s marked a time of great civil unrest in this nation. The affects of racism had exacted a grave toll on the African American population of the United States, individually and collectively. U.S. citizens were taking sides. With a nation divided, brave men and women stepped forward to lead us through a turbulent and violent period in our history.
The city of Milwaukee was beginning to awaken to the murmurings of dissatisfaction with the status quo. Local activists were embracing the words, actions, and deeds of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., President John F. Kennedy, Rosa Parks, Rev. Jesse Jackson, The Little Rock Nine, Thurgood Marshall, Medgar Evers, James Meredith, The Freedom Riders, and Malcolm X. There was a call to action.

The plight of Milwaukeeans who faced discrimination as a way of life would no longer be ignored. Father James Groppi, Vel Phillips, Lloyd Barbee, Sister Claire Marie, O.S.F. and others would bring attention to the need for change and equality for all residents of Milwaukee. There were open housing marches, rallies, speeches about educational segregation, demonstrations for equality and civil disobedience. There was fear, violence and there were arrests.
A small liberal arts college for women was also responding to the call for social justice and equality for all. For decades, Milwaukee’s Alverno College had taken a strong position on equal rights through service and education. The Alverno administration attacked the issues of social injustice and inequality on several fronts; engaging various means to communicate the issues and invoke change. From the late 1930s through the turbulent 1960s, the college, the School Sisters of Saint Francis, faculty, and students participated in numerous activities to bring about change and to educate the public about race and gender discrimination.
The mission of the School Sisters of Saint Francis has always been one of serving the poor and those in need. Those same tenets were essential to the founding of Alverno College in 1887 by the S.S.S.F. The belief that “in serving, we are served” is as true today as it was in 1873 when the Franciscan religious order was established in America.

“Our Commitment to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

Our charism calls us to be attentive to the signs of the times and contemporary needs, and to respond to the cry of those who are poor. As a congregation, we are committed to working for reconciliation and justice, promoting just social structures and upholding the rights and human dignity of people who are poor and oppressed. In the spirit of St. Francis, we struggle for reconciliation and peace among nations and individuals. We walk humbly on the earth and cherish the goodness of every aspect of creation.”

Excerpt from the School Sisters of Saint Francis website  http://www.sssf.org/english/intl-aboutJustice.shtml
1930s - 1950s

Sister Aquinette’s kindergartners “step it up” during their dancing period.
The School Sisters’ efforts to assist the poor children of Chicago’s south side began in the summer of 1936 when they went to Harrison Park to feed hungry children. The program continued and outreach grew to include additional parks in Chicago and Buffalo Grove.

This article appeared in the Fall 1963 issue of *Light on the School Sisters of St. Francis*. The article highlights the work of the sisters that first summer in 1936 at Harrison Park on Chicago’s south side.

Mother M. Hyacinth and Sister M. Edelwalda tell of working with the poor children of Chicago. They distributed milk and taught the children crafts in an effort to “show the children that they were wanted and important”.

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**Work in Chicago Parks**

by SISTER M. de ALVERNO

“GOOD NIGHT, my son. God is happy tonight. He has won a wonderful helper.” A mother spoke these words. She spoke them from her heart when she had heard of her son’s decision to be a priest. The “wonderful helper” son was Bishop Bernard Sheil, who influenced a generation of Americans with his Catholic Youth Organization.

Another Mother might have spoken those same words last May as she sealed the envelopes with the summer appointments for the Sisters. Only the “wonderful helper” was pluralized. Mother M. Clemens had found in her Sisters thirty-seven wonderful helpers to continue the CYO park work during the summer months.

Not only was “God happy” and Mother happy, but so were the thirty-seven Sisters receiving their appointments to work in the Chicago parks. For some this was to be a new experience; for others, a return to the fresh sunny air of the Chicago parks. For Sister Ligouri it was a “first” after having completed her graduate studies during the previous summers.

“I volunteered for everything” was Sister’s happy remark on the morning the Light photographers had arrived at Ellis Park. She, like the other seven Sisters at the park, was in love with her appointment to continue the work Bishop Sheil had begun when, as a young priest he had promised: “We will build a great organization in our city, in other cities, all over America. We will bring you a sense of security that comes from belonging to a group and being wanted.” Like Bishop Sheil, these Sisters were happy to bring about the realization of that sense of security to the many children associated with the CYO.

The picture of the Sisters working in the parks today is indeed a bit different from that of the pioneers of the School Sisters of St. Francis in this particular type of summer work. It doesn’t take much prompting to get Mother M. Hyacinth and Sister M. Edelwalda to narrate stories of their first experiences in 1936 at Harrison Park on Chicago’s south side. These had been memorable experiences working with God’s poor. The Sisters recount how with Sister Loretline they distributed milk in paper cups to the children and how the children took the cups home so they had something to drink from; and how later during the day, the Sisters heard the clinking of milk bottles (no cartons in those days) and saw children “squeezing out” the possible drops left in the bottles to take home for the baby.

This was indeed the beginning of a new apostolate as the Sisters gathered craft materials to help keep these children happy and teach them how to make things. These children, too, would have that sense of security and know they were wanted and important and had an important life to live and give to others. Perhaps these were the beginnings of lives now influential, but then not aware of the need of meeting people dedicated to imaging Christ to the modern world. And it was all so simple as to be found in a park.

Ernie Giovangelo voiced this same
Photos from the article, “Work In Chicago Parks”, Fall 1963 issue of *Light on the School Sisters of St. Francis*.

**COLLAGE**? It takes pieces of cork, disks, scissors, Elmer’s glue, a sense of design, and Sister M. Ligouri’s inspiration.

**IT’S SCISSORS** Sister M. Roynelle distributes in “Dutch Master” style.
Today in Mississippi

CARDINAL STRITCH, in asking our Sisters to take Holy Angel’s in 1946, was continuing a conversation begun earlier with Mother Stanislaus. Mother had been thinking of opening a small hospital in the South. Then His Eminence had said, “No, Mother, not a hospital but a school. We must educate them. A school way down south in Mississippi would be the ideal thing.”

The Community’s response was to send Sisters to open, at Bishop Gerow’s request, St. Francis Mission School, Yazoo, in 1940. With the priests of the Society of the Divine Word, the Sisters found that the cry “We must educate them” was preceded by another: “We must feed and clothe them.” Books and clothing came from Alvernia and Madonna. Help for furnishings came from the Seraphic Mission Auxiliary. The Sisters’ first concern for the eighty school children was not the primer and multiplication tables but shoes and hot lunches.

The Sisters’ presence was felt in rural Mississippi in 1940 when Mother Stanislaus sent Sisters to feed, clothe and educate poor black children in spite of the color barriers that the south imposed.

So gaunt was the face of poverty into which they looked.

Our Sisters have been looking into faces, though, as buildings have gone up in Yazoo, Holly Springs, and Jackson. Each plank and stone and brick has been, is an almost sacramental sign that the Church, through the Sisters, means to share, to help. The Sisters at Yazoo will soon celebrate a silver anniversary. Between the original eighty and the present 400 (300 in the grades, 100 in high school) there have been many bricks and planks.

At St. Mary’s School, Holly Springs, the priests of the Sacred Heart and our Sisters have erected a grade and high school in fourteen years, beginning with an all-Protestant enrollment. Now Sister Limana (who has also worked in the Indian missions) is principal, with 425 students in school.

This article highlights the work of the sisters during the 1940s and 1950s in rural Mississippi. The article first appeared in the December 1962 issue of Light on the School Sisters of St. Francis.
There's nothing quite like it! Classrooms in Holly Springs must remain clean. So these pupils find their own mudscrapers on rainy days.

Reaction to “flu” injection!
The color barriers of the south were unlike anything the Sisters had seen in the northern states. Discrimination and racial hatred ran rampant in Mississippi but the Sisters pushed on trying to create educational opportunities for their young charges. This excerpt is taken from the article “Today in Mississippi” printed in the December 1962 issue of Light on the School Sisters of St. Francis.

At Christ the King, Jackson, the Church and brick school preceded our Sister Gratian, who came in 1954. Nearby Jackson College, where James Meredith studied before his momentous transfer, uses Christ the King as one of the few Catholic observation schools for its student teachers.

“We must educate them” becomes a more far-reaching cry when our Sisters in the South take coveys of their children to a theater and, in spite of reservations, must crowd them into the balcony while four white ladies occupy the main floor.

Once they gathered the children into buses to take them to a museum. They rode. They arrived. They left. Suddenly it had become “White Day” at the museum.
The Alverno College chapter of the NFCCS (National Federation of Catholic College Students) was very active during the 1950s and 1960s promoting justice, brotherhood and world peace. Alverno’s NFCCS and the IRC (International Relations Club, formerly Interracial Club) hosted numerous activities focused on world issues related to poverty, education, violence and discrimination based on culture, religion and racial inequality.

This photo, circa 1950-1952, was taken at the old Alverno College at the St. Joseph Convent during a club activity day. Pictured from left to right are: Arletta Hartman (1952), Margaret Pink (1952) and Pat Haas (1953).
Visiting foreign students and speakers came to Alverno’s campus in 1956 for a Crossroads Seminar that was hosted by the Alverno College IRC. Attendees from Viet Nam, Peru, India, Japan, Hungary, Belgium, and African and South American countries came together to discuss the challenges and impact of bringing western culture and education back to their home countries.

Photo right: C.J. Matthew, from India leads a discussion. Matthew was a student at Marquette University in 1956.

Photo left: The International Relations Club "Crossroads Seminar" was held at Alverno College, April 6-8, 1956. Speaker Bernard Binder from Canada leads a discussion period.
1962

- On a 1962 visit to Peru, Sister M. Gerard (Sister Elizabeth Engel, Professor and Director of Alverno College School of Education) would assess and help with the educational needs of native Peruvians. Special attention was given to concerns facing women and children and how to prepare educators and health care professionals to best meet the needs of the Peruvians.
This article on Sister Mary Gerard Engel’s trip to Peru appeared in the Catholic Herald Citizen on August 11, 1962.

The article below was published in The Milwaukee Journal on Friday, September 28, 1962.
Six Alverno College students initiated an experimental program to aid migrant workers and their families. The program, first started in March of 1963, was developed to help migrant families in southeastern Wisconsin with basic needs such as food, clothing, health check-ups and literacy skills. Through the cooperative efforts of several Alverno student groups (NFCCS, YCS, Alpha Sigma Tau and the Nursing Club) and several government officials the project met with great success and became a model for other colleges and universities to initiate similar programs.

Above is a February 1964 agenda from the student group, Alpha Sigma Tau. The Sigma Taus were working on the educational aspects of the Migrant Worker Project.
6 Study Migrants’ Problems

By Margaret Hennen

“We wanted to hide the kids in our car and bring them home with us.”

“At first it was very depressing. It hits you that your room at Alverno is bigger than the houses these people are living in.”

“Even the little bit we were able to do made us feel that we really could help and were giving something. You don’t know until you go yourself and then you can’t stop going.”

These are the reactions of Janice Odehnal, Patricia Coon, and Sandra Kelsey who worked with migrant workers this summer. These three girls with Kathleen Debbins, Patricia Niggeman, and Kathleen Purpora formed an experimental group studying the migrant worker situation. This program was accepted by Student Council last spring.

Janice Odehnal, who worked with Patricia Niggeman at the Belgium, Wisconsin, camp described the migrant homes as tiny one room shacks with from eight to thirteen people living in each. Across the road was a ranch where 18 families lived in a barn. The children, Janice said, would beg for cookie crumbs and had popcorn for the first time in their lives.

Patricia Coon, Kathleen Debbins, and Kathleen Purpora working at Random Lake cooperated with a YCW group which has been involved there for about three years. The girls taught the rosary to children ranging in age from 2 to 15 years. Patricia Coon commented that the parents tried to help the children, keeping them clean and their clothes well patched.

After working at Sturtivant Wisconsin, Sandra Kelsey described filthy yards, paper shacks and dairies for walls. The pre-teen children worked in the fields, living on one meal a day. They were paid 75¢ an hour. (In Texas they would be paid 17¢ an hour.)

When asked what kind of girl could profit most from such an experience, the answers came: “There’s not a girl at Alverno who couldn’t help.” “You’re not going out there to profit yourself.” “The kind that is very much unaware of other people or any girl who is interested in things around her and in helping people.”

Kathleen Purpora added that the experience made her personally aware of the extent of the migrant problem and of her potential for helping. Personal contact is such a great help to these people who have so little.

The President of Alverno College, Sister M. Augustine Scheele, OSF was invited to a meeting of top U.S. educators in 1963. The meeting, by special invitation, was to convene in Washington D.C. on June 19, 1963 in the East Room of the White House.

Sister Augustine was notified via telegram by President John F. Kennedy requesting her presence. She was the only educator from Wisconsin among the 200 educators invited to attend and one of six female attendees. The President and the educators would address growing concerns for equal rights and the educational disparities among minorities.

The President asked that white colleges establish liaisons with Negro colleges in creating cooperative programs to improve the quality of Negro college education. President Kennedy also called for wider use of counselors to guide students and to prevent drop-out rates as well as the establishment of improved vocational training programs. The educators were sympathetic to the President’s pleas for action and indicated that they would participate in this new initiative and enhance programs their colleges were already utilizing.
President John F. Kennedy, 35th U.S. President 1961-1963.

Local Nun Attends JFK’s Conference on Civil Rights

By Sister Marilyn, St.

When Sister Augustine, O.S.F., president of Alverno College, received a telegram on June 14 signed “John F. Kennedy,” she thought it was a joke. But it wasn’t. It was a bona fide White House invitation to the June 18 meeting of “a group of leaders in the field of education to discuss those aspects of the nation’s civil rights problems that relate to our schools at all levels.”

Three Sisters were invited to the meeting of some 200 educators. Sister Augustine estimates that there were 13 to 20 Negroes in the group which included representatives from Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

Among Catholic educational leaders present were the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., president of Notre Dame University, and the Reverend Paul C. Reinert, S.J., president of St. Louis University.

The President stated that the area of major concern in the racial question is large-scale Negro unemployment. He analyzed educational inadequacies of unemployed Negroes, many of whom are drop-outs, and he recommended action on all levels of education.

The President urged wider use of counselors in grade schools and high schools to guide students into the right courses and to prevent drop-outs. He said there is a special need for improved vocational training for which funds must be appropriated.

He also asked that educators contribute to adult education for Negro parents “to help them help their children to raise the level of their aspirations.”

To improve the quality of Negro college education, President Kennedy asked that while colleges establish liaison with Negro colleges for cooperative programs.

Within the next three months, the President said commissions will be set up locally and nationally. Members will be representatives of business, industry, labor and education.

“Many of you,” he said to the educators, “will be called on to help with this.”

Sister Augustine said the group was in sympathy with the President’s plan. The educators discussed types of action already initiated in different parts of the country.

After the meeting, the President met everyone individually in the Rose Garden.

Sister Augustine, who was for seven years a member of the evaluating commission of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, is also active in the educational work of Sister Formation. In the latter program at Alverno College, Sister students make scheduled home visits with Negroes on Chicago’s South Side.

Sister Augustine hopes to interest many Alverno students in similar programs next year.

Sister M. Augustine Scheele
Alverno College President
1948-1968
A page from President John F. Kennedy’s daily White House Diary reveals the time and place for the Educators conference on civil rights matters. This on-line resource can be found at www.jfklibrary.org.
The sounds of cheers and the sight of sisters waving American flags signaled the return of Alverno’s president, Sister Augustine Scheele to the college campus.

Her trip to Washington D.C. to meet with President Kennedy and fellow educators provided Sister Augustine with valuable feedback and information. Educators would play an important role in shaping the way the nation would respond to the Civil Rights movement and subsequent change.
Alverno College was at the forefront of institutions that were actively answering the question posed by President Kennedy in his Civil Rights Address of June 11, 1963, “The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities; whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated.” Alverno answered with service that was focused locally, nationally and internationally. The college’s activities and events highlighted the need for change.

The years following President Kennedy’s 1963 call to action would prove to be a challenging, tumultuous and painful time for the city of Milwaukee.
The Alverno students pictured above were invited to participate in a Student Leadership Conference on Race and Religion. The conference, which was held in Washington D.C. on November 17-20, 1963, included 250 students from sixty U.S. campuses. These students would later help in the planning of a campus wide institute on racism.
A special college institute was held on March 11, 1964 entitled “Racism- Reason- Response”. The one day institute was dedicated to the memory of President John F. Kennedy and the program on civil rights that he urged educators to initiate during the special Educators Conference he held at the White House on June 19, 1963. The Alverno Racism- Reason- Response institute would provide a venue for objective discussion of the basic issues in civil rights. Sister Augustine would also call for a renewed commitment to “right, justice and charity.”
These pages are part of the program booklet for the college institute “Racism-Reason-Response”. The Alverno Student Council’s introduction and a welcome letter from Alverno’s President, Sister Augustine appear on the first pages of the program.

In sponsoring this day we hope to present to all who participate a more thorough and accurate understanding of the problem of racism within our nation. We hope that through this understanding we will be more capable of committing ourselves to a definite stand in regard to the racial issue. It is our responsibility as Catholic college students to face the issues of today, to educate ourselves in regard to them and to take that stand which is most in accord with the principles of human justice.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to all those who have made this day possible - the administration, faculty, and students who have given much in organizing this institute and to those who are responsible for the financing of the day. We are most grateful to each of our speakers for the time and effort which previously given. It has been only through the cooperation of all that we have hoped to attain our goal.

Sincerely,
Alverno Student Council

In June, 1963, President Kennedy addressed a group of educators when he had summoned Washington for a special Conference on Race. We were given a resume of his program on civil rights and were urged to provide leadership and service in our communities in the task of seeing every American citizen his natural and civic rights. The Institute you are attending today is one of the outgrowths of the thinking and planning that has been underway at Alverno since that significant White House meeting.

We are all aware of the high value our late president himself set on the application of a non-passionate reason to both the small and large problems of life. It is in the inspiration provided by this notable American that we invited you here today to sit with us and we with you, to discuss with clarity and objectivity, and perhaps with urgency, a number of the basic issues in civil rights, and then to commit ourselves anew to right and justice and charity.

Any program is as strong as its leaders. Therefore, to ensure that the seminars will be conducted by competent, knowledgeable people, Alverno has engaged the services of experienced citizens drawn both from within and without the community. We most warmly welcome our distinguished program participants, and bid them be at home in our midst. We also welcome all who have come today to listen, to think, to learn, to catch fire from these dedicated civic leaders. Hopefully, all of us will end the day with clearer insights, stronger convictions, and with the renewed determination to implement our Christian beliefs in the irreplaceable dignity and rights, under God and under law, of every human being.

Sincerely,
Sister M. Augustine, O.S.F.
President
Here we see the agenda and speaker listing for the college institute “Racism- Reason- Response”. The institute was held on the Alverno College campus March 11, 1964.
Author, journalist, musicologist and social scientist John Howard Griffin was a guest speaker at Alverno College on March 11, 1964. The following excerpt from the program’s introduction of Mr. Griffin was used during the Racism-Reason-Response institute at Alverno.

“His interest in the problems of the Negro in the south culminated in his best seller, Black Like Me. As a journalist and social scientist, Griffin was interested in investigating the rising suicide rate among young Negroes in the south. The inability to ‘get at’ the motivation for such behavior caused him to realize that he, as a white man, could not really know the Negro as he lives in the South today—could not feel as the Negro feels in the South today. Aided by a dermatologist in New Orleans, he underwent a series of treatments and use of medication that resulted in his pigmentation and his appearance as a Negro. His unusual experience and background fit him for the perceptive role that one feels so keenly in his books.”
In 1965 Milwaukee’s Social Development Commission (SDC) and the NDEA (National Defense Education Administration) approved and granted funds to Alverno College for a summer institute program that would be part of the U.S. anti-poverty campaign. The funds would allow Alverno to host workshops for educators who taught at schools with disadvantaged youths. Students were bussed to Alverno from inner city schools allowing teachers to experience practical application of the teaching techniques learned during the institute.
Here is the program cover and insert from the Alverno College institute on poverty. The institute, “Poverty: American Paradox” was held on the Alverno College campus April 6, 1965.
Alverno College received a grant in 1965 from the NDEA to create a series of summer programs to address the issues of poverty and how it relates to the education of American youth. The photo below was taken at the Alverno Elementary Laboratory School during one of the sessions between 1965 and 1968.
A brochure cover and more photos that were taken at the Alverno Elementary Laboratory School during the NDEA summer institutes for teachers and principals of disadvantaged youths, circa 1965-1968.
The Reverend Jesse L. Jackson was invited to speak during the 1968 NDEA Summer Institute at Alverno College. Reverend Jackson was the National Director of the Southern Christian Leadership’s Operation Breadbasket. He would address the issues of poverty and open housing.
The Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s Operation Breadbasket, was a guest speaker on the Alverno College campus, July 20, 1968. Reverend Jackson came to Milwaukee to speak to the teachers and principals attending the NDEA Summer Institute though his session was also open to the public. Rev. Jackson is in the center of both photos wearing a blue shirt.
“... we extend our gratitude in appreciation for your efforts in our struggle for human dignity. Only through the cooperation of the minds, bodies, and resources of persons from all corners of our nation can we cure the malady of racism in American life.”

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Excerpt from a September 30, 1965 letter to Sister M. Augustine O.S.F., Alverno College President.
Here is the letter dated September 30, 1965 that Sister M. Augustine O.S.F., Alverno College President received from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A roster of Alverno students that participated in SCOPE was included with the letter. Two students from Alverno helped with the community organization program: Margaret Rozga (1967) and Sharon Quintenz. (1965)
Alverno College student Margaret Rozga traveled to Alabama to take part in the SCOPE program during the summer of 1965. The Summer Community Organization and Political Education unit from Milwaukee traveled to Bullock County Alabama to assist in voter registration, political education and community organization as part of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference lead by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
The article to the left appeared in *The Milwaukee Journal*, June 9, 1966. Milwaukee activist, Father James Groppi was instrumental in organizing local students to participate in civil rights activities.

The article to the right appeared in *The Alverno Campus News*, Vol. XII, No. 1, October 5, 1965, pg. 4. The article contained information on student involvement with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference which was led by Martin Luther King Jr.

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**SCOPE Work in Alabama Amazes, Teaches Students**

“Are you registered to vote?”

“Would you like to register?”

Members of the Milwaukee SCOPE (Summer Community Organization and Political Education) Unit, including Margaret Rozga of Alverno, used these questions daily in their work in Bullock County, Alabama, this summer. These five students from Milwaukee area colleges were among almost 800 volunteers working in 60 Black Belt counties for Dr. Martin Luther King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

The SCOPE project in which they participated had three objectives: voter registration, political education and community organization. Through their work, the students hoped to help the people with whom they were working gain a sense of control over their future and eliminate racism from American politics.

On a daily basis, voter registration involved door-to-door canvassing and meeting people at churches, places of employment and cafes. Political education “classes” were incorporated into mass meetings.

“Since our return, the question people most frequently pose concerns the white community’s reaction to our presence,” Margaret said. “This was similar to what they had anticipated.”

The reaction of the Negro community, however, was somewhat different from what the workers expected. “News of our presence in the county spread quickly,” Margaret recalled. “Negroes, generally, knew we were there to help them and welcomed us. If we were hungry, we just knocked on someone’s door.”

It was another thing when the workers spoke of voter registration. “Here they met an attitude for which they were not prepared. Margaret told of her amazement when one man said that ‘voting is white folks’ business.’ She concluded that ‘He had been indoctrinated by the system that he really believed he was inferior.’”

“We found the same attitude in more subtle form, Margaret said. “Some people answered, ‘That’s right,’ or ‘Yes, ma’am,’ to everything we said.’”

Nevertheless, between 600 and 700 Negroes registered while the SCOPE workers were in Bullock County.
This photo, from Margaret Rozga’s book *200 Nights and One Day*, shows Father James E. Groppi (photo center in sunglasses) speaking with a group of Milwaukee’s north side citizens. Groppi was instrumental in assembling citizens for the purpose of peaceful demonstrations against segregation and to promote open housing.

The photo was reproduced with permission from the Wisconsin Historical Society.

To view more images showing Father Groppi and the demonstrations for equal rights and open housing visit the Wisconsin Historical Society at [http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/results.asp?keyword1=groppi](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/results.asp?keyword1=groppi) keyword Groppi.
The photo above is from Margaret Rozga’s book *200 Nights and One Day*. The photo was reproduced with permission from the Wisconsin Historical Society.

The photo below is of the Father James E. Groppi Unity Bridge, Milwaukee’s 16th street viaduct. The bridge was symbolic of the wide expanse in racial segregation between the north and south sides of the city of Milwaukee. Father Groppi led the first of many open housing marches across the bridge in August of 1967. The marches, which began as peaceful protests, resulted in angry and violent confrontations between citizens and the police.
Jeannie’s Birthday Gift

It was Jeannie’s birthday. We had a big family dinner before going to St. Boniface to march.

She put on her new tee shirt, just a plain White shirt, but what she wanted. Mom said no, better not, but she begged and begged ‘til Mom gave in. She never could wash out the egg that splattered all over Jeannie’s back.

Excerpt from Margaret Rozga’s book, 200 Nights and One Day.
My mother didn't want me to march. She didn’t think it was ladylike. When I was arrested, She didn’t go to church that Sunday. She was too embarrassed.

Dale didn’t want me to march either. But sometimes there are things you just have to do. Sometimes you have to stand up for yourself. Sometimes you stand alone but alone doesn’t matter if you’re standing up for others.

Author, poet, English Professor and 1967 Alverno Alumnae Margaret Rozga has written extensively about Milwaukee’s civil rights movement. Her recollections and collected writings were the basis for her book *200 Nights and One Day* and her play *March on Milwaukee: A Memoir of the Open Housing Protests*. 

A copy of Margaret Rozga’s book and play can be found in the Alverno College Library collection.

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"This book will make you feel the hunger, strength, sweat and victory of the marchers’ fight and commitment for equality."
—Dick Gregory

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The power of the poems in Two Hundred Nights and One Day derives from their ability to capture history and release it in exacting and unforgettable moments.
—Francine Rimgold, Editor-in-Chief, Nimrod International Journal

For my students, the turbulence of the sixties has reduced to songs and slogans, an occasional movie. The African-American quest for equality is pushed so far behind as to seem the product of a scriptwriter rather than an insistent force which guns and hoses will not stop. As Margaret Rozga says in her opening poem, “History remembers the dream, forgets the nightmare.” These poems speak of Milwaukee activists, including her, who marched for months to bring about fair housing. Each voice speaks with immediacy impossible to ignore. I have my memories of the sixties—the meetings, the marches, the demonstrations—Chicago, Washington, D.C. These poems unearth Milwaukee’s story, the story of so many cities in turmoil during that time. Thanks to the poet-as-witness, the reader knows that these stories will not disappear.
—Professor Martha VertFACE-DOOYD, A National Endowment for the Arts Fellow and Poet-in-Residence at Kennedy-king College

These poems bring to life an important, but often overlooked, chapter in civil rights history—the fight for local and national open housing laws... This significant and accessible book provides an excellent way to introduce the study of the American Civil Rights Movement to students in literature and history classes.
—Dr. Howard Fuller, Founder and Director, The Institute for the Transformation of Learning, Marquette University

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March on Milwaukee:
A Memoir of the Open Housing Protests

by Margaret Rozga

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First Performed at the University of Wisconsin Waukesha
Mark Lass, Director, April 2007

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http://depts.alverno.edu/archives/archome/contactus.html

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- Alverno College Vice-President for Academic Affairs & Academic Dean, Sr. J. Dolores Brunner (Sr. M. Providencia) [1959-1970] Series A3.2:
  Box 19/File 10; Box 22/File 15; Box 23/File 3

- Alverno College Marketing Communications Office Series A11 (Day By Day Books) :
  Box 8/File 5; Box 9/File 5; Box 10, Files 1 & 4; Box 11/File 3; Box 12/File 3; Box 13/File 2; Box 14/File 2

- Alverno College Publications Series P2, P7 and P11

- Alverno College Archives Photofile Series Pf
Additional sources used for this display are from the following resources and collections:

- **200 Nights and One Day**, Margaret Rozga, c. 2009, Benu Press, Hopkins, MN.
- Archdiocese of Milwaukee Cemeteries
- The Milwaukee Journal
- The Wisconsin Historical Society
- The Catholic Herald Citizen
- School Sisters of Saint Francis  
- The Milwaukee Times
- The Milwaukee Public Library