



Dacia Van Antwerp

August 22, 1930 - August 24, 2024

Obituary for Dacia Van Antwerp

Rita Dacia Van Antwerp, RCSJ, PhD, age 94, passed away on August 24, 2024. She led an amazing life full of faith, service, and helping others. She was born in Detroit, Michigan on August 22, 1930 to Eugene Ignatius Van Antwerp and Mary Frances Van Antwerp (nee McDevitt). She was the tenth child of eleven kids and always said she was named Dacia since that was the tenth province in ancient Rome.

As a young girl, she attended Gesu School in Detroit and later the Academy of the Sacred Heart (the fifth consecutive generation to attend). She was a very athletic child and competed in field hockey and tennis. After high school, she received her Bachelor degree from Manhattanville College in New York before entering the Religious of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ) where she served God for 17 years. As a nun, she had the opportunity to study in Rome for six months. She later got a Master degree in Educational Communications from the State University of New York in Albany and a PhD from Michigan State University in Computer Science.

As a nun, she taught and worked in the business office at multiple convents - Albany (NY), Rochester (NY), New York City, and Greenwich (CT). After leaving the convent and getting her additional degrees, she went to work for

Chrysler Corporation and led their Upward Mobility of Women effort. She spent 13 years at Chrysler before leaving to be the Director of Human Resources at Boylston where she had been on the Board of Directors. She later lived in Alpena, MI where she became the Business Manager for St. Bernard and St. Anne parishes and schools. She was also elected to the Public School Board and was active in the Lion's Club. Additionally, she served on the USAID Evaluation Team for the Nouvelle Program in Benin, West Africa, sat on the Boards for Gilreath Corporation and the Academy of the Sacred Heart school, and taught in the MBA program at the University of Detroit Mercy.

With all her youthful energy in her 70s, she moved by herself to Alaska and was the Executive Director of the Holy Spirit Center in Anchorage before going to Chicago to study at the Catholic Theological Union. At age 80, she made a retreat to Joigny, France to walk the Camino, a pilgrimage to Santiago Compostela in Spain. She also wrote two books: *You Go Girl! Life and Adventures of a Former Nun* about her life and *Amazing Sophie* which is a children's story about Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat, foundress of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Dacia loved spending time with her family and serving God. She was married and widowed three times. Her first husband was Reginald James McLaren. She later married Robert William Denton and embraced his eight children and numerous grandkids. Then, late in life she married Patrick John Pollard. Until her final years, she was active wanting to go sailing, play golf, or play bridge at any family outing.

Her parents and most of her siblings have all departed this world although she will be excited to reunite with them in Heaven. She is survived by her little brother Daniel Janse (Cecelia) Van Antwerp and numerous nieces and nephews.

Friends and family are invited to celebrate Dacia's remarkable life at Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan on Friday, August 30, 2024. There will be a visitation at 11:30 followed by a mass at 12:00. Dacia's memory will forever be cherished by those who knew her and loved her. You are encouraged to share your memories at www.sullivanfunderaldirectors.com <http://www.sullivanfunderaldirectors.com>.

The family kindly requests no flowers. For memorial contributions, please consider donating to the Society of the Sacred Heart at <<https://rscj.org/donate>> or via PO Box 958047, St. Louis, MO 63195-8047.

Cemetery Details

Holy Sepulchre Cemetery

25800 W. 10 Mile Road
10 Mile Road @ Beech Road
Southfield, MI 48033

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 30. 11:30 AM (ET)

National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica
2100 W. 12 Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48073

Funeral Mass

AUG 30. 12:00 PM (ET)

National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica
2100 W. 12 Mile Road
Royal Oak, MI 48073

Tribute Wall

LC

“ I am sorry to hear of Dacia’s passing. She was my mother’s classmate and my teacher at 91st Street. She was a remarkable, inspirational woman who acted as a mentor and friend to many. I am sure she and my mom are up there having a gay old time again.

Louise Conway - August 07, 2025 at 04:46 AM

FB

“ Dan and family--we are so sorry for your loss. She was a sassy gem! What a joy it was to be around her. She and my sister (Sister Madeleine Sophie Weber, IHM) were classmates . Madeleine is now in the Monroe motherhouse--she's 93 years old. We were all blessed to have known Dacia. Fran Weber Benz

Fran Weber Benz - September 11, 2024 at 11:05 AM

WG

“ A lovely and accomplished lady. Condolences to my colleague Dan and the rest of the family.

William Giovan

William J. Giovan - August 30, 2024 at 02:34 AM

ZK

“ Dacia was my inspiration, my mentor, my role model, and a dear friend! May her memory be a blessing!



Zieva Konvisser - August 29, 2024 at 08:44 AM

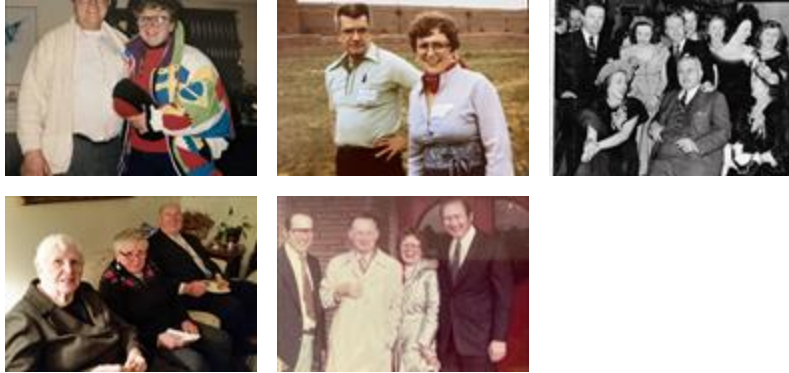
ZK

*Dacia was my inspiration, my mentor, my role model, and a dear friend!
May her memory be a blessing!*

Zieva Konvisser - August 29, 2024 at 08:45 AM

CA

“ 6 files added to the album memories of Aunt Dacia



Cathy - August 28, 2024 at 07:21 AM

CA

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Cathy - August 28, 2024 at 07:12 AM

GA

“ Aunt Dacia was always such a positive person. She loved being part of the big family. She was always there for all the cousins and nieces and nephews. And, at the same time, she was a great example of always looking to learn more, try new things, and find ways to share her gifts with the community. She will be missed.

George Van Antwerp - August 28, 2024 at 03:17 AM

CA

“ 21 files added to the album memories of Aunt Dacia



Cathy - August 27, 2024 at 08:18 PM

KA

“ Aunt Dacia was a huge part of our lives growing up. She always encouraged my sisters and I to go to college. When I was little she helped me with my reading by tutoring me each Saturday. She visited us in England after her pilgrimage. She was an amazing aunt to all of us nieces, nephews and cousins.

karen van antwerp - August 27, 2024 at 04:46 PM