

## Living Stones: Stories of People Who Helped Build Up Our Church

The following stories are part of a series that appear during our Jubilee 150 Year to help us appreciate how richly the grace of God has been working in our midst. The restoration of the Order of Deacon brought new life to the church. Its impact has been felt for many years at Saint John's. True to the biblical word diakonia, these men have been dedicated servants of Christ and our church. Here are three who stand out among those who have served us.

### *Creating a Thrift Store and Much More*

Two faith filled women with an imagination and a desire to make space useful and serve many human needs.



**Pauline Brennan** could tell you about a handsome young priest named Fr. Frank O'Sullivan who arrived at Saint John's in 1947 and began a club for young adults that attracted her and many others and led her to find her place in the church as a true servant. Pauline became one of the most familiar faces here for the rest of that century and well into the

next. When St. John's convent was vacated it in 2002 it was left in shambles. But Pauline had imagination. She approached Fr. John with an idea which seemed almost impossible. Yet with amazing resourcefulness she and a group of volunteers completely transformed the space and created the St. John's thrift store. Ever since it opened it has been a place where people have brought used and even new items of clothing and household goods which others have purchased at a great savings. This is recycling at its best. Nothing is wasted. For many years now the store has generated an income of around \$30,000 for the parish, accounting for the largest source of steady annual income outside of parish collections and campaigns.

Not content to do one thing for her parish, Pauline was one of the most faithful of the "645ers" at morning Mass. She began a monthly period of adoration in the chapel and began the archives in the office of St. John's rectory. She would knit for the Sodality table at the annual bazaar. Her collection of Christmas creches was legendary.

**Jane Harris** became one of Pauline's helpers and then eventually took over the leadership of the thrift store. She added many personal touches to the thrift store and brought her youthful, sparkling personality to both customers and a very dedicated cadre of workers. She took great pride in the shop, planting flowers or doing whatever was needed to make it an attractive and welcoming place. Jane, who was taken from us very unexpectedly in March of 2018, was the quintessential "hostess with the mostest" when it came to social events including her summer party at her home for her volunteers. She wanted those who serve to know they were valued and appreciated.



Jane had a special love for children in need. She developed an outreach to children who needed surgery to correct cleft lips and palates and did fundraising for the program known as the Smile Train. There was a jar at the thrift store where people could leave a contribution. She even went to Haiti to see how the lives of these children could be so changed. An avid traveler, Jane was one of the first group of parishioners to visit our sister parish of San Pablo Apostol in the Dominican Republic. Jane and her husband Don were faithful worshippers at Saint John's and always supported its programs and campaigns. Jane made baptismal robes and assisted at funerals as well as serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

*"As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (I Peter 2:4-5)*