

**Viterbo University**  
**Todd Wehr Memorial Library**  
**Francis Clare Library Endowment**

The Francis Clare Library Endowment, named for Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, was established in 1998 in honor of the Franciscan Sisters who guided the library for its first century of service. Sister Frances Claire Mezera, who has continued to inspire the service ethic of the library since 1955, inspired the name. However, the name also honors all of the Franciscan Sisters who put their faith into practice in daily library service at Viterbo College libraries. The names of these sisters may be found below and also on a plaque in the library.

As the names of sisters changed, library changes can also be followed. The library was founded in 1890, but it was not until 1926 that books were first cataloged by Sister DeSales Maloney. In 1932 the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) System was first used to classify books by Sister Lucretia Bernard. She also invented the machinery used in binding the books and nearly 6,000 volumes of periodicals at Viterbo College, and the medical periodicals for the staff libraries of St. Francis Hospital, La Crosse, and St. Anthony's Hospital, Carroll, Iowa. In 1941 the St. Rose Library was conveyed by a human chain to the new building called Viterbo College. In 1970 the Fine Arts Library opened, headed by Sister Rosella Namer, using the Library of Congress (LC) Classification System.

One hundred years after the library was founded, in 1990, directorship of the library passed to a non-sister, John Hempstead, for the first time. When the new Todd Wehr Memorial Library opened in 1991, the Viterbo College library collection merged with the Fine Arts Library collection into the new facility on the first floor of the Murphy Center. Two additional changes soon followed. Conversion of the entire collection to LC began shortly after the merger, and the affiliated museum coordinated by library staff closed in 1992. Conversion to LC was completed in 2002 with the exception of the children's collection, which continues to use DDC so students learn to use the system commonly used by school libraries. In 2003 library endowment funds played an important role in expanding the library to the second floor. Gifts to the endowment fund helped plan and furnish the expanded facility. The Francis Clare Endowment continues to play a vital role in funding special projects for the library. Contact the Library Director or the Advancement Office for further information about the endowment fund.

## **Franciscan Sisters Who Have Worked in the Library Honored by the Francis Clare Library Endowment**

### **St. Rose Library (1890-1941)**

1890-1912	Sister Cyrilla Kennedy
1893-1899	Sister Eustace Kuhlman
1912-1918	Sister Verena Dauser
1918-1926	Sister Olive Lepine
1926-1932	Sister DeSales Maloney ( <i>Began cataloging books</i> )
1932-1941	Sister Lucretia Bernard ( <i>Began using the Dewey Decimal System and bound the library's periodicals</i> )

### **Viterbo College Library, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of Murphy Center (1941-1991)**

1941-1949	Sister Mary Catherine Walljasper
1942-1945	Sister Mary John Menke
1942-1945	Sister Engratis Tacke
1942-1945	Sister Cunisse Bernard
1948-1955	Sister Oresta Koenig
1948-1956	Sister George Ann Miles
1950-1979	Sister Natalie Foffel
1955-2003	Sister Francis Claire Mezera ( <i>Also Todd Wehr Memorial Library</i> )
1970-1979	Sister Eudora Navarre
1970-1983	Sister Rosella Namer ( <i>Fine Arts Center music library; began using Library of Congress Classification system</i> )
1971-1974	Sister Roberta Gilles
1971-1976	Sister Sibylla Kreibich