



FOREST RIDGE
SCHOOL OF THE SACRED HEART

February 14, 2024

Dear Community of Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart,

With a heavy, yet thankful heart, I am announcing my retirement from almost 50 years of teaching—and learning—in the educational community of Forest Ridge School. I will move to California in June; specifically, I am going to live in a community with four rscj in the wonderful Gatehouse Community on the Atherton Sacred Heart School campus.

This move, I feel, is timely because I am not getting younger! Also, I have family—my sister and nephew—in the bay area, so visiting with them and attending Sacred Heart Board meetings in San Francisco will require fewer coastal flights. Additionally, living near the Sacred Heart Schools in Atherton will provide me with opportunities to contribute to those schools.

I know I will always treasure the gift I have known in my mission as a rscj educator at Forest Ridge. How blessed I have been to “lift my eyes to the mountain. . .” each morning! It was my joy for so many years—about 44—to teach English literature and writing and to work with a faculty intent upon educating the “whole student.” I relished each class with its delightful moments of discussion about the treasures of meaning in literature, especially in the British tradition. I also saw that students exemplified—as they currently do—amazing critical thinking as they authored essays about their literary insights. In 2005, working as a team, the Senior Seminar teachers received a Microsoft U.S. Innovative Teachers Forum Award; it noted our “exemplary collaborative work,” which is a hallmark of the interactions I have experienced or witnessed with colleagues, administration and staff, both rscj and lay, through the years. I have been blessed, too, because Forest Ridge connections have led to my forming wonderful, enduring friendships.

Considering the present, I know the school community has an invaluable gift in the leadership of Mary Rose Guerin, Head of School; she offers Forest Ridge a vision of Sacred Heart education focused on each student and lived out in a spirit of trust in each member of the school community. Her leadership bespeaks the mission of St. Madeleine Sophie: to communicate the love of the Heart of Jesus, especially by educating young students to faith, academic distinction, creativity, compassion, and hope. Mrs. Guerin’s administrative team and the faculty and staff of Forest Ridge live out the Sacred Heart mission in life-giving ways I will never fully realize. Their dedication finds an extension in the service of Forest Ridge’s parent body and that of our auxiliary communities, the Associates and the Children of Mary.

For the past five years, in addition to tutoring students in the Upper School and enjoying Associates and Children of Mary meetings, I have participated in Forest Ridge’s alumnae activities. My loving gratitude extends especially to those who have encouraged my taking part in alumnae retreats, book discussions, and reunions. In tutoring students, I continue to marvel at the energy and enthusiasm with which they hone their own writing!

As I leave Forest Ridge, I know precious memories will accompany me to the Bay Area where they will nourish my vocation and its charism, my respect for teaching and learning, and my gratitude for the relationships I have known and will continue to know in my own family and in the incredible family of the Sacred Heart.

With thankfulness and love in Christ’s Heart,



Marcia O’Dea rscj.