

Sister June Favata, SC

Entered eternal life on September 8, 2025

Good morning. My name is Joan Tyburczy and I have the privilege of serving as Saint Vincent Academy's President. I am absolutely humbled to stand before you today to reflect on the life of Sister June Favata. Sister June was my boss, my mentor and most importantly, my friend. She stood by me through the most difficult and most joyous times of my life. During those times I felt truly that my pain was her pain, and my joy was her joy. She delighted in celebrating the joy and success of others. She beamed with pride upon hearing your accomplishments all while never allowing the well-deserved spotlight to shine on herself.

In 2001, when I secured a position at SVA, my goal was to go through the alternate route for my certification and then move on to the public school system. Sister June promised that IF I was asked to return for a 2nd year, she would sponsor me through the alternate route process, which she did. But by the time I had completed my 2nd year at SVA, I knew, and perhaps Sister June knew all along, that I was not going anywhere. As with so many of us, the mission and work that I began to be a part of was inspiring and meaningful and Sister June's leadership was at the helm.



Sister June's faculty meetings were something to behold! The only thing more grand than her ideas was the enthusiasm with which they were presented. Logically, you could not fathom how some very abstract idea would work but before you knew it, it *was happening* and the room was buzzing with the sharing of ideas. Sister June would be giddy with excitement, bouncing in her chair, when thinking about how this would impact our students. It is always about our students and their growth, not just academically but even more importantly their personal and spiritual growth. Her question was always, "How will we touch their hearts?" In my first year at SVA, I often left faculty meetings wishing that I could have been a student in one of her English classes. That time came soon enough...

Early in my career, there was a time during Students-in-Community, our service program that was inspired in part by Sister June's vision, that I was tasked with putting together a timeline of the SIC program and overview of the history of service at SVA. I asked Sister June if she could help me. I thought we could have a conversation, and I would take notes, write something up and the task would easily be accomplished. DONE. When I asked Sister June at lunchtime if we could meet she told me to come back at the end of the day. When I returned to her office I noticed a stack, a very large stack of assorted documents, photographs, old programs and a variety of other resources that chronicled the years of selfless service of the Sisters of Charity, the structure of the SIC program and projects that had taken place. She told me to read through them and write the history and hand it in to her on Monday. I was stunned...I thought, "Is she serious? It's the weekend. As if I don't have enough to do; teaching 5 different subjects on the freshman team?!" But I did what all of us would do, I followed Sister June's directions. I dove into those papers that weekend and I was mesmerized. I wrote pages and pages and proudly and *somewhat arrogantly* submitted my paper to her. Later that day, the draft was in my mailbox with her handwritten edits and anecdotes and a note at the end that said, "very good FIRST draft, let's talk about it." When I went to her office to discuss her edits, I'm sure she could read the look of defeat on my face. But she sat with me and we discussed every word, every bit of punctuation and every story, including people and places that contributed to the structure of that program. She took the time; she *always* took the time for you. Not only did I experience what it would have been like to be one of her English students, I learned that Sister June is a teacher first and always and that her knowledge, spirit and love could NEVER be contained to a classroom. She taught me that day that collaboration IS leadership and that we serve our students best when we work together. It was in that exchange that Sister June invited me into this legacy, and it has been an honor to participate in it ever since.

At SVA, Sister June never asked us to do anything that she would not do. She NEVER sat on the pedestal where we all put her! She rolled up her sleeves and she did the hard work. Not only did she do the work, but she found joy in it...she embodied the word service. You could never keep up with Sister. She walked with purpose and *speed* through the halls filling them with an energy that no word could describe. If you walked in the door at SVA and saw Sister June in sneakers, you better watch out...you knew it was going to be a day!

When Sister June and our Board of Trustees began preparing a succession plan for Sister June's eventual retirement, I was asked if I would be willing to serve in the role of President. During that time, Sister June called me into her office, and we had a very long conversation about the succession plan, the future of the school, our students and other related topics. In this conversation Sister June said to me, "Joan, sometimes being a leader is a very lonely place to be." That statement took on a very different meaning for me the moment I learned of Sister June's passing. She asked me to reflect on the role and my life, acknowledging that I have a young daughter, and then decide if I was willing to move forward with the plan. I did just that and I obviously said yes. I said yes for two reasons:

#1. You don't say no to Sister June. The request may have been posed as a question, but we all know when Sister June asks, you say yes.

And #2. When Sister June is rooting for you, failure is not an option. It's not an option because you know that she will walk with you, she will pray for you, and she will challenge you. Sister June never shied away from the difficult conversations. In fact, I've learned over the years, that is where true growth takes place.

The greatest privilege of Sister June's life was to be a Sister of Charity. She loved being a part of her community. She was fiercely committed to its ministry and embodied its charism. She often tried to drum up vocations among us by saying with her magnificent smile, "It's a great life-you don't know what you are missing."

Sister June loved her family and when you met her, you were immediately part of it. I remember when her sister Dee would come and volunteer at SVA. We all greeted her with a hug and a kiss because it felt as if our own sister or aunt were visiting. She spoke about her family with great pride and would share her excitement when she had a family function to attend.

To The Sisters of Charity and the Favata family, we mourn Sister June's passing with you, and we thank you for sharing her with all of us. I solemnly promise that the community of Saint Vincent Academy past, present and future will never forget her love and dedication. We will find comfort in her peace, we will lean into our faith as she has taught us and we will find joy in the gift that we knew her.

Today, I have the privilege of serving as Saint Vincent Academy's President. The truth is that I am only able to introduce myself in this way because 25 years ago, Sister June took a chance on me, a naive and inexperienced young woman excitedly embarking on her teaching career. Sister June saw something in me that I did not even know existed and her hiring me changed the trajectory of my life but more importantly *experiencing* Sister June changed the way in which I live my life and the way in which I participate in the relationships in my life. Sister June mentored me, counseled me, encouraged me and taught me so much. At this moment, I am acutely aware of the fact that EVERY person here probably has a similar story when recounting their relationship with Sr June.

It goes without saying that her tenacious spirit, wonderful sense of humor, work ethic and leadership are unmatched. But perhaps even more importantly is Sister June's ability to make everyone she spoke to feel like they were the most important person in her life...to me, that is the true magic of Sister June. Sister June had the innate ability to recognize a spark within you and then *she invested herself* into fanning that flame until it exploded *deep in your heart* and *deep in your soul* and you would never, ever be the same. That magic, the unique essence of Sister June, is imprinted on each of our hearts and I feel it is our responsibility moving forward to share it with every person we encounter. To take the time to listen and truly know all of the people in our lives, to recognize their gifts and foster those gifts in ways that serve others - this is Sister June's legacy, and this will be the way that she continues to live in each of us. I count myself among the many who loved and were loved by Sister June and for this gift I will forever be grateful.

~ Joan Tyburczy