

BRO. DON GEIGER

Celebrating 60 years of profession

I began my biology teaching career in 1955 at Cathedral Latin School in Cleveland. In 1964, I began a 42-year career in the Department of Biology at the University of Dayton. I was supported in my teaching ministry by my Marianist community, fellow teachers, research partners and students. Plant physiology research provided a means to serve society while teaching gave me a means to pass on this message to students.

The social changes of the late 60s led to formation of intentional Marianist communities, a blessing and a challenge. The charismatic leadership of Bro. Stan Mathews, who directed Communication for Renewal, helped promote the renewal of Marianist community life in the spirit of Vatican II. The resulting 100-plus propositions that were submitted to the Cincinnati Provincial Chapter of 1969, the first that I participated in, played a key role in this renewal. They also contributed to "Response," a publication of the 1971 General Chapter.

My assignment to the novitiate community at Mount St. John in 1985 gave me an opportunity to share my life with the novices. The assignment also gave me an opportunity to help in the establishment of the Mount St. John tall grass prairie. This project, along with my growing interest in environmental biology led me to environmental plant physiology research and ecological restoration projects. Fr. Jim Fitz's vision of Mount St. John as a place to meet God in the world of nature contributed to founding of the Marianist Environmental Education Center. Working with nature helped inspired MEEC's mission of "restoring communities of land and people."

My 1993 sabbatical introduced me to the works of Thomas Barry, a leader in the theology of the Earth. By word and example he convinced me that "we are a part of the Earth not apart from it."