

Dear Mercy community,

This letter is intended as a post-Valentine's Day love letter. Most of you know who I am, but for those of you who are newer members of what I call "the Mercy family," an introduction is in order. My name is Carolyn Witte and I am the former principal of Mercy High School, a position I held from 2001 through June, 2017. So why this letter and why now?

You are likely familiar with the phrase "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" and it is that sentiment which describes recent months for me since my retirement last summer. Lest you misunderstand, my decision to retire was made at the right time and without regret. But since I left, what has increased for me, rather than diminished, is my deep love for this school.

My feet first crossed the threshold of what was then called Our Lady of Mercy High School, in Detroit, when I was just thirteen. I was a freshman. Thus began the first of many positions I would have here - that of student. Fast forward just twelve years (high school, college, and entry into the work force) and I made my return to Mercy, now an alumna. In the years to come I added the roles of teacher, department chairperson, Mercy parent, and finally principal. With each role, I gained a wider perspective. My appreciation for this place and its people deepened.

Ultimately, I came to feel an emotional connection to Mercy that goes far beyond it being just "a good school" or a "great place to work." Certainly it is both, but there is something far more profound: **Mercy changes lives.** It is a place where the unique talents and quirks of each young student can be uncovered and explored. It is a place where each girl's internal voice gains volume and intensity, where ideas other than her own can be weighed and measured. It is a place where differences can be voiced, opinions challenged, and minds changed and where eyes are opened to the needs of others. A four year evolution occurs for each girl, quite remarkably, right before our eyes. I know. I had a front row seat for more than four decades. I was an eye witness to this evolution. The conclusion is undeniable: Mercy indeed changes lives, and the world is a better place because of Mercy graduates.

Upon my retirement it was, therefore, quite natural for me and my husband to do something which could further the work of this wonderful place I have called home. We initiated, with a lead gift, an endowed scholarship fund, one intended to provide a portion of financial assistance for future Mercy students.

The scholarship was created as an act of love. Although my status has changed to retiree, my love has not faltered. I love this school. I love its students, past and present. I know that Mercy positively impacts every one of them and I want this opportunity for every young girl. I hope you share the same sentiments and respectfully invite you to make a contribution to the Carolyn and Robert Witte Endowed Scholarship.

I wish you and your family every blessing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn R. Witte". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Carolyn Witte
Mercy High School Principal (2001-2017)