

LA ROCHE UNIVERSITY
2021 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI CIRCLE AWARD RECIPIENT



Suzanne (Postava) Gilch '72, M.S. '84

Lay Minister (Retired)

Diocese of Pittsburgh

Suzanne Postava Gilch was born and raised in Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania. She is a retired Lay Minister of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. She graduated from La Roche College in 1972 with Department Honors in Sociology. Five years later she entered the Sisters of Divine Providence. She served as the Director of Financial Aid at La Roche from 1979 to 1985. During this period she petitioned then President Margaret Huber for a grant. She used the grant to create a successful seminar for high school guidance counselors and principals, providing information for students and parents seeking financial aid. Additionally, she compiled the first Financial Aid Resource Booklet for traditional and non-traditional students. Her passionate dedication empowered many students to realize their dream of an affordable college education.

While serving at La Roche, Suzanne attended night classes at La Roche and became a member of the first graduating class to earn a Master of Science in Human Resource Management in 1984. Following her time at La Roche, she turned her attention to parish work. She enrolled in the Diocese's first Lay Ministry class and graduated in 1985. She proceeded to earn diocesan certifications as a Youth Minister, Director of Religious Education and Parish Business Manager. In addition, she obtained a Master of Science in Education from Duquesne University in 1988. She applied her education in a variety of roles at parishes throughout the Diocese of Pittsburgh, to include St. Barbara, Bridgeville, North American Martyrs, Monroeville, St. Anthony, Bridgeville, and Nativity, South Hills, as a Youth Minister, Director of Religious Education, or Pastoral Associate.

In 1990 Suzanne left religious community, and continued her ministry as an administrator at the Unitarian Universalist church in Shadyside. She returned to the Diocese of Pittsburgh in 1996 as the business manager at Our Lady of the Angels, Lawrenceville. Her last full time position was as Pastoral Associate and Head of Staff at St. Joseph in O'Hara Township. While there, she was part of the leadership team that guided the build of a nearly eight million dollar new church and community hall. She retired from St. Joseph in 2015, leaving the parish debt free and with a robust savings. A gifted administrator with a pastoral heart, Suzanne spent over 40 years in service to the Catholic Church of Pittsburgh, as she created or enhanced programs to benefit children and adults, oversaw building maintenance and construction, and masterfully budgeted financial and human resources, while empowering the people she served.

Suzanne is a woman of strong abiding faith and trust in God. This faith continues to guide her life. She is spending her retirement enjoying her family and doing volunteer work at her local parish and food bank. She lives in Harwick, Pennsylvania with Raymond Gilch, her husband of 29 years.