

In Memory of Mary Silberzahn, M.A., O.T.R.

by Vivian Holder

Mary, an occupational therapist who lived in South Pasadena since the mid-1990s, passed away on Christmas Day at age 81 after a long illness.

She was born in Pontiac, Illinois, of German parents. When Mary's father first came to the United States, he was a blacksmith and later became justice of the peace, and Mary's mother was a teacher in a one-room school house during World War II.

Mary graduated from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee in 1952 with a B.S. in occupational therapy. After college, Mary traveled overseas with the USO, serving the troops as a recreation director in Okinawa, Japan, and Germany.

Upon returning to the States, Mary earned a M.A. in occupational therapy from the University of Southern California (USC) in 1967. She was also an assistant professor of occupational therapy at USC in the late 1960s. In the early 1970s, she worked at Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital and then taught at Pasadena-based Sensory Integration International from 1973 to 1983. Since that time, she worked in private practice. She was especially interested in helping children with sensory integration disorders and autism to improve their quality of life and her work was published in *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy* and two textbooks.

Mary's interest in healing brought her to the Healing Light Center Church in Sierra Madre, where she studied energy healing with Rosalyn Bruyere, one of the country's leading energy healers, and graduated from that program. In pursuit of her interest in healing, Mary studied in the Healing Touch Program in the early 1990's. She became a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner and had a Healing Touch practice in her home along with her Occupational Therapy practice. She felt that occupational therapy was missing the energetic component, and she blended them together in her own unique practice. Mary always intended to write about this. She was an innovator. Mary organized Healing Touch workshops in the South Pasadena area for many years, conducted practice groups at her home, and mentored many.



Mary performed energy healing in hospitals and wherever anyone called her. She was selfless

in helping others. Mary represented Healing Touch at local health fairs, and organized and participated in weekly healing days at HIV/AIDS and Cancer organizations. Mary was selfless in practicing Healing Touch wherever asked, often traveling to other cities where she helped those in hospitals and hospices.

Mary once said that part of her life's mission was to bring people together. Mary brought many people together through her work in Healing Touch. Mary hosted Saturday evening dinners for her friends. Her door was always open. She was well known for her 4th of July parties and neighborhood Christmas parties at her home. Christmas was her favorite time of year. Not an inch of her home went without a decoration! With the help of friends, she hosted her final annual Christmas party just three days before she passed.

Mary dedicated her life to loving, healing, and helping others. She was a person who truly walked her talk, giving freely of herself up until her last days.

All who knew Mary were truly blessed! She touched all our hearts with her caring and compassion! Mary Silberzahn will be long remembered in all our hearts!