

# The Sisters, Their Habits, and Their Hollywood Connection

By Woody Goulart (posted on December 21, 2017)



They influenced our lives in so many ways when we were young. We may be unable to put this into perspective even half a century later.

But, I will attempt in this blog post to provide some context. They were women who belonged to a religious order known as the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Pictured here from 1965 is one of their members who taught at Mission Central Catholic High School in San Luis Obispo, CA.

I knew one of the Immaculate Heart sisters as a friend thanks to my mother. This photograph taken by my father, Edward Francis Goulart, shows my mother, Evelyn Souza Goulart, on the right, who graduated in the late 1940s from Mission High School in San Luis Obispo. My mother is seated next to Rosemary Perry, who joined the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary after high school. I will never forget the day during the 1970s when Sister Rosemary welcomed my mother and me to a visit to the campus of Immaculate Heart College, 2021 North Western Avenue, in the Los Feliz neighborhood of Los Angeles.



The venue ultimately became connected to the Hollywood motion picture industry. Many of the buildings at that location were severely damaged in the early 1970s during a major Los Angeles earthquake and had to be torn down. This photograph from *The Hollywood Reporter* shows what became the American Film Institute facility at that location after restorations were completed.



While our high school years were drawing to a close in the late 1960s, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary tangled politically with the powerful Roman Catholic Church Cardinal, James McIntyre of Los Angeles. Outward changes with the sisters hinted at a significant self-expression of freedom as religious women. What had once been a highly conservative religious order that obeyed a male religious leader changed very quickly in the 1960s. We were there, and we watched it happening. The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart previously had been attired in very restrictive clothing (black and white habits) and were known by names chosen to honor Roman Catholic saints. Once the political upheaval within that religious order started, however, the sisters kicked the habits and from then on used their real names.