



Anneta Duveen, SFO
Former National Minister

Anneta Duveen, SFO Memorial **1924 – 2007**

By Bill Wicks, SFO

We forget the past. We want to move on. But, when a member of our family, no matter how distant the relationship, passes on, we stop, and return to the past, and remember. This memorial, hopefully, presents a living picture of a very gifted Franciscan.

Her Life History: Anneta Duveen, was born in 1924, in Brooklyn, New York into a Jewish family. She married Charles Duveen, Jr. at the age of eighteen; they were blessed with three children: Charles III, Wendy and Peter. A significant event in her early life came as a student of the famous sculptor, Columbia University professor, Oronzio Madarelli. There, she discovered she had a gift of shaping images.

In 1954, after she and Charles divorced, Annetta returned to Colombia, but, instead of getting a degree, she co-authored, and illustrated, with astrophysicist Lloyd Motz, a text entitled Essentials of Astronomy.

During the six years that she worked on the book, she took a course, “Problems of Medieval Thought” taught by Columbia University Professor Daniel Walsh. While attending these lectures, Anneta received another gift, the gift of the Catholic faith. She was baptized into the Catholic Church in 1958, with St. Pius X the patron of her conversion. It is noted that Daniel Walsh was also instrumental in the conversion of another famous person: Thomas Merton.

In 1976, Anneta married for the second time, to Ben Duveen, whom Anneta describes as “a wonderful father to all the children.” Ben, who, after the marriage, became a Secular Franciscan, passed on in 2003, at age ninety-one.

Her Franciscan History: Anneta became a Tertiary as a member of Immaculate Conception OFM Province. She was elected president of the North American Federation of the Third Order in 1975. This was the first time a Tertiary was elected leader of the national Third Order organization; prior to her election, there was always a friar at the top of the organizational chart. Those times of transition were challenging; one can imagine the difficulties faced by a Tertiary woman as leader of an organization that had previously been “run” by friars. But, Anneta was a strong advocate of Tertiary leadership, and, for the most part, carried the banner with toughness and grace; she, consequently, was elected to a second term.

Personal Side: Anneta was a warm welcoming person who understood the challenges that faced leaders. I developed a friendship with her, visiting her and Ben’s home in Port Chester a number of times. Past National Minister, Richard Morton was another close friend of Anneta. She easily connected with, and very much encouraged, people in leadership. I, personally, was a benefactor of this grace. I recall her comment, while attending the 2002 Quinquennial Congress in New Orleans, “I am so pleased and delighted with the progress that the Order has made over the years.” Another close friend of hers was our first Minister General, Manuela Mattioli, OFS. On one occasion, Anneta traveled to Egypt with Manuela to present the Peace Award to Jahan Sadat who received it posthumously for her husband, Anwar Sadat. Another highlight in Anneta’s Franciscan life was the appointment, by Manuela, to be the English-Speaking representative in Assisi during the final days of the writing of the Pauline Rule.

The Sculptor: But what will endure, longer than her life as a young Jewish girl growing up in Brooklyn, who received the gift of the Catholic faith, who raised a family that included three children, who was the first president of Third Order of St. Francis, who participated in the final writings of our present Rule - what will endure is her work to memorialize, in clay, then bronze, those who inspired her throughout her life: Saint Francis of Assisi, Pope John Paul II, St. Maximilian Kolbe, Manuela Mattioli, Robert Kennedy, and others.

Anneta lived fully, giving of her talent, and her being. We are all blessed by this bountiful life. Here are pictures of some of her sculptures.



Top Row (L – R):

- “Cimabue” St. Francis, presented in commemoration of the Human Rights 50th anniversary at the United Nations University in Costa Rica on December 10, 1998.
- His Holiness John Paul II, from the collection of the Protomonastery of St. Clare, Assisi.
- St. Francis in the Stream of Life

Bottom Row (L –R):

- Saint Maximilian Kolbe, from the collection of the Kolbe Museum, Rome.
- Manuela Mattioli, first Minister General of the Secular Franciscan Order. Commissioned by the Franciscans of the United States to the Franciscans of Italy – presented by James Lynch, SFO, then Minister of the Secular Franciscan Order, to, then, Minister General Emanuela de Numzio.
- Anneta working on a sculpture of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, that was placed on a pedestal with his quotes, as a memorial, in Civic Center Park, Brooklyn, New York.

Anneta’s works were exhibited in the Cloister of the Basilica of Santa Croce in Florence, Italy, during the month of September 1985. The works included her sculptures as well as her drawings. The exhibit was organized by *Citta di Vita*, bimonthly journal of religion, art and science. James Lynch, SFO, then national minister, helped coordinate the event.

Note: The Spring, 2005 issue of the TAU-USA includes an article *Classic Franciscan: an interview with Anneta Duveen, SFO*, by Julia Pearson, SFO.