

# A philosopher and teacher, still

I joined the Marymount College faculty in 1976, when Sister Jean Sweat was Academic Dean and Sister Mary Buser was President. I was teaching half time in the Philosophy Department with Dr. Bob Schimoler and half time in the Religion Department with Sister Catherine Michaud, who came to Marymount a little later.

I had been living and teaching secondary education in Brussels, Belgium, and finishing my doctoral degree in Philosophy of Religion in the Theology Department of Oxford University, England. I had my licentiate (master's) degrees in Philosophy and in Theology from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium.

Salina and Marymount became home for Kristina and me for nine years. We came with our son Nicolas, who was almost 1 year old. Our daughter Natalie was born in 1977. Nicolas is now a classical guitarist who teaches at his studio in Denver, while Natalie is manager of a mental health clinic in San Francisco.

At Marymount I have the fondest memories of Sisters Jeanne McKenna and Marilyn Stahl in History, Sisters Frances Ellen Riordan and Regina Ann Brummel in French (Sister Frances Ellen danced a good Charleston), Sisters Redempta Eilert and Therese Blecha in Chemistry, Sister Mary Mark Whitehair in English, Sister Catherine Michaud in Religion and Sister Bernadine Pacht in the library. Sister Mary Julia Stegeman looked after everything, especially in the flower gardens.

I came to Marymount pretty much out of graduate school and I was still a student of philosophy and theology myself. At Marymount I learned to become a good teacher and a practicing philosopher. I came to love opening up students' minds and helping them become critical thinkers.

I began to realize that my goal as an instructor was not just to teach students about philosophy

and religion, but to help them become philosophers themselves.

One of my good memories from those days is when the Czechoslovak basketball team came to Salina to play the great Marymount team. Kristina is from Slovakia, and she helped out as interpreter for the team while they were in town. We invited a group of them over to our house for dinner and we had a good time with them.

## FACULTY UPDATE

DR. JOHN PALAN

PHILOSOPHY/RELIGION  
1976-1985

My best memories from Marymount are from my experiences as sponsor of the Alpha Chi Honor Society, which I reactivated. We inducted our new members each year in a formal induction ceremony in the chapel. We financed ourselves by selling coffee in the faculty lounge for 25 cents a cup.

The best experience was the annual conference in places like Nashville and San Antonio; I took a car load of students every year. A requirement to go was for a student to have a scholarly class paper to present at the conference. I was always very proud of our Marymount students and their presentations.

Over the years I have maintained the best and closest friendship with Dr. Rod Peters, Chair of Psychology, because he married Melanie, my sister-in-law. Dr. Peters left Marymount to teach and then chair the Psychology Department at Doane College in Crete, Neb. He has recently retired and they have moved close to us in Colorado Springs.

I left Marymount in 1985 to live close to the mountains in Colorado, which reminded Kristina of her homeland in eastern Slovakia.

Since then I have taught philosophy and religion at several universities and colleges in the area, mostly in the adult program at Regis University. I became involved with teaching college classes to inmates in the Colorado State Prisons and I was



AT LEFT: Kristina and John Palan, at the Salina Airport in 1982.

ABOVE: Dr. Palan spent a recent week visiting historical and natural sites near Ruidoso, N.M.



director of the Regis Prison Program for six years. We offered classes in the prisons for inmates to earn associate and bachelor's degrees.

After that I worked in the administration of Correctional Education for the state of Colorado until I retired. I continue to teach occasional classes in Philosophy and World Religions for Regis University, because I still enjoy engaging with students.

I have started to have informal dialogue and discussion with some of my past students who want to continue exploring issues in philosophy and religion.

This spring Kristina and I are traveling to Asia for 3½ weeks. We are doing a Road Scholar program to visit Beijing, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangkok. Road Scholar is the new name for Elderhostel, which is an organization supporting lifelong learning for people 55 and older.

Marymount was a program provider for Elderhostel, and I remember having Elderhostel students in my philosophy classes in the Marymount evening program for adult students.