

Sister Giswalda Given Woman of Year Tribute

By CHARLES GALLUS

Sister Mary Giswalda Kramer, principal of St. Paul's Mission High School at Hays, was the guest of honor at the 1973 Woman of the Year Award Dinner sponsored by the Havre Business and Professional Women's Club at the NMC Student Union food center Thursday night.

Highlight of the evening was the pinning of a corsage on Sister Giswalda by the 1972 Woman of the Year, Mrs. Toni Hagener. The ceremony symbolized recognition of the Franciscan nun's 33 years of work in education and vocational training among the Indian people of Hays, a Ft. Belknap Indian Reservation community situated in the foothills of the Little Rocky Mountains, south of Harlem.

Mrs. Ramona McAuley, president of the BPWC, opened the award ceremony by asking all assembled for the occasion to read, as a group, a prayer entitled "Collect" by Mary Stewart. All present then recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Rev. Fr. Tony Jahner, S.J., gave the invocation.

Seated at the head table with Sister Giswalda were Mrs. Arlene Campbell, BPWC vice-president; Mrs. Elva Larson, club treasurer; Mrs. Tamayo Harada, chairwoman of the club's Woman of the Year award committee; Mrs. Eva Bartlett, club corresponding secretary; Mrs. Marlea Schneider, club recording secretary; Father Jahner; and Mrs. McAuley.

Acknowledged in the audience were past winners of the Havre BPWC's Woman of the Year award: Mrs. Paul Nalivka (1969), Mrs. Eleanor Clack (1970), Mrs. Pauline Welch (1971), and Mrs. Hagener, last year's recipient.

Also recognized in the audi-

enced the following: Mrs. Serina Benson Riebe.

The following teachers at St. Paul's Mission in Hays were acknowledged in the audience: Pat Heraty, Miss Joanne McInnis, Miss Ann Bellanti, Miss Patricia Baribeau, Miss Jeannie Labozetta, and Brian Callahan.

Long-time residents of Hays acknowledged in the audience included the following: Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Main, Mrs. Matilda Cuts-the-Rope, Miss Cecilia DeCelles, and Mrs. May Main.

Co-hostesses for the occasion were Mrs. Campbell and Mrs. Freda McCumber. Assisting Mrs. Harada on the BPWC's Woman of the Year award committee were Mrs. Welch and Mrs. Campbell.

Miss Debbie Verploegen provided musical entertainment with a guitar during the dinner. Fred Eggert, now of Havre, was recognized in the audience as a native of Sister Giswalda's home town, Slinger, Wis.

Mrs. Harada presented details of the history of Hays Mission at the foot of the Little Rockies and of Sister Giswalda's work there. She noted that the Franciscan nun's educational achievements include a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Creighton University, a master of education degree from Montana University, and postgraduate work at Marquette, DePaul, and Montana State universities, as well as at Northern Montana College and Eastern Montana College.

Mrs. Harada quoted excerpts from Sister Giswalda's published book of poems, "Toward a Better World." She commended the 1973 Woman of the Year for educational service to St. Paul's Mission and community service to the town of Hays. She offered "the highest accolade" to Sister Giswalda as "our choice of the year."

Following Mrs. Harada's de-

scribed back tears as she stepped to the podium, then charmed the audience with humorous anecdotes of days at Hays that were sometimes trying and often triumphant. She shared some of her life-long philosophy with the audience, declaring that the work of the School Sisters of St. Francis among the Indians at Hays will go undone "unless we are there to do it."

Sister Giswalda told her listeners that the Indian people have a culture worth keeping, and that Indian children should be taught to "accept with pride the fact that they are Indian." She emphasized that she has long tried to instill in the Indians at Hays the idea that if they merge the best that is Indian and the best that is white, they will become a "superior people."

Sister Giswalda concluded her remarks by terming her honor "an overwhelming surprise." She said, "Words cannot adequately express the gratitude that is in my heart."

Mrs. Harada introduced Main, education specialist at St. Paul's Mission and a graduate of the first high school class at Hays in 1941. "She inspired all of us to get our back-bones straightened out," he said.

Main told the audience that Indians must get away from self-pity and self-indulgence. Using Sister Giswalda's adopted Gros Ventre name, he concluded, "Pipe Woman, we salute you."

Mrs. Harada then introduced Sister Clare, who explained the symbolism of the pipe in Indian custom, especially religious ceremonies. She said that it was fitting that the Gros Ventre Indians gave Sister Giswalda the name of Pipe Woman, for "he who draws on the sacred pipe sacrifices his own ego,

Also recognized in the audience were the following Franciscan nuns teaching at Hays and colleagues of Sister Giswalda: Sister Mary Clare, Sister Mary Germaine, Sister Mary Rosella, and Sister Mary Benno; choice of the year." Following Mrs. Harada's detailed explanation of the Hays principal's work and achievements, Mrs. Hagener pinned the corsage on Sister Giswalda. The Franciscan nun, fighting

pipe sacrifices his own ego, and acknowledges the presence of the Great Spirit."

Sister Clare stated that, according to the Indians, smoke from the pipe "rose as a visible prayer." She compared Sister Giswalda to the Indian concept of a good person -- one who gives good advice, has knowledge, is a natural leader, and who is good and kind inside.

Sister Clare said of her colleague, "Her ego has been sacrificed to the Great Spirit," and commended the BPWC for "excellent judgment in your selection."

Heraty, in another testimonial to Sister Giswalda, said that working with her is to work with the "type of person who demands more of you than she did the day before."

Mrs. Harada read three messages of congratulation to the Franciscan nun by interested parties unable to attend the award dinner. Mentioned were Mrs. Lollette Hanson, Mrs. Chester Lawson, and Ben and Margaret McKinney.

Mrs. Harada called for presentation of a second corsage to Sister Giswalda, noting that it was a gift from the Havre Business and Professional Women's Club. She said the first corsage was from the Hays principal's co-workers at St. Paul's Mission.

Mrs. McAuley offered her praise of Sister Giswalda, saying, "I wish I were worthy just to touch the hem of her skirt."

The Franciscan nun related more humorous anecdotes of her experiences at Hays, and expressed thanks to all who came to honor her.