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ELEANOR McCLATCHY

Catholic Laywoman, Chair of the Board,
McClatchy Newspaper, Sacramento, California

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Photo courtesy of JJ McClatchy

Eleanor McClatchy followed the philosophy she learned from her father that “newspaper people should never push themselves forward, but should stand on the sidelines and report the doings of others.” That is why she was so little known to the community of Sacramento during the 42 years she headed the publishing and broadcasting company that carries her name.

A Generous but Secret Giver

Her contributions to charitable institutions are equally unknown. The causes to which she gave generously were apparently numerous but she insisted all her life that they be kept secret. Investigating the list of this woman’s charities would have been a sizeable task, even for the staff of her own prize-winning newspaper.

Her Favorite Charity – Saint Patrick’s Home

One of her favorite charities that we know of was Saint Patrick’s Home in Sacramento. She helped with the building of that institution in 1932, and requested that the orphanage chapel be called after Saint Rose. She wanted to keep alive the memory of the first church ever built in Sacramento which carried that name.

Her Generosity Helped Hundreds of Children

Over the years she “helped hundreds of kids at the home,” Monsignor Edward Kavanagh said in a sermon at her funeral. Monsignor Kavanagh became a personal friend of Miss McClatchy through his work at the home, and brought her the last sacraments at her home during the final weeks of her illness.

Helped with the Renovation of the Cathedral

Other Catholic causes to which she was committed included the renovation of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, the building in which she was baptized and to which her remains were brought this week for the Mass of Christian Burial. She and the family also contributed a large sum to the Mercy Hospitals Foundation when it began its current building program – one of the largest donations the foundation received, we are told.

Great Love of the Arts

Her interest in art and the theater led to her involvement in establishing the Sacramento Civic Theater, the Eaglet Theater and the Sacramento Music Circus. Countless thousands of Sacramento residents have benefited from her legacy.

Great Concern for the Young, the Poor and the Neglected

Every facet of human living was touched by this woman, as Monsignor Kavanagh stated in his homily. “Being the great woman that she was, she was concerned for the young and their best interests, the poor and their needs, the neglected that they not be forgotten.

She Demanded High Standards for the *Sacramento Bee*

Not the least of her legacies to the community is the Sacramento Bee, now under the direction of the fourth generation of her family. We admire the editorial policy and journalistic standards of that paper, despite our misgivings about a strike that continues unresolved at the paper. Eleanor McClatchy has handed on an ideal of humanitarian concern for others that is reflected in the Bee and makes it an instrument for good in the Sacramento community.