

Roberts speaks at opening of Mercyhurst Chittister archive

Thomas C. Fox | May. 2, 2014 NCR Today

My long-time friend and colleague, Tom Roberts, delivered the inaugural lecture April 30 in the Joan D. Chittister Lecture Series at Mercyhurst University in Erie, Pa.

The lecture was held in conjunction with the opening of the Helen Boyle Memorial Archive in honor of Chittister, a member of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie and a prolific author and NCR columnist, who has written extensively on spirituality and religious life. Through her writing and international lecturing, she has also become an untiring advocate for the rights of women within the church and in the greater society.

The archive space at Mercyhurst and the lecture series have been endowed by the Boyle Family in honor of Helen Loebelenz Boyle, a 1934 graduate of Mercyhurst and a longtime friend of Chittister, who graduated from the university in 1962.

Mercyhurst is partnering with Penn State University and the Erie Benedictine Community to preserve Chittister's literary archives.

The Boyle Memorial Archive, on the fourth floor of Mercyhurst's Hammermill Library, features a 70 inch interactive touch screen that visitors can use to learn about Chittister. The display features her life in pictures, her vita, her blogs, links to associated websites, videos and summaries of a selection of her books. The space also includes a computers researchers can use to access her complete collections of more than 50 books, and countless, articles videos of persentations and more.

Chittister earned a master's degree from Notre Dame and a doctorate from Penn State. She was prioress of of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie from 1978 ? 1990 and current is executive director of Benetvision, a research and resource center for contemporary spirituality.

Roberts, editor at large for *National Catholic Reporter* is working on a biography of Chittister. His lecture was titled, "Sacred Uncertainties: A Journey with Sr. Joan Chittister."

[These were Roberts' comments.](#) [1]

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