

FORMER SHAKOPEE RESIDENT, WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT

By Editha K. Webster

“Suffer little children to come unto me” is a new Testament sentence Mrs. Walter H. Halloran of St. Wenceslaus parish, Jackson, Minn., adapts literally. She modifies it somewhat, making it “sick children.”

And in turn she interprets the passage to mean youngsters for whom a normal life in a family setting is either difficult or impossible.

Mrs. Halloran is heroically devoting her life to the affectionate care of boys and girls who are mongoloids, hydrocephalics and spastics.

Their afflictions, for the most part, are obviously distressful, setting them apart for an adult love of a superhuman and special kind, for in their affliction, they oppose the easy affection all children inspire.

Mrs. Halloran possesses such a special love, and gives it so generously that the SIOUX CITY JOURNAL – TRIBUNE PUBLICATIONS named her a “Woman of Achievement” in recognition of her unusual work.

A trip through the Julie Billiard Home at Jackson, which she founded in 1950, tells the story.

The Julie Billiard Home derives its name and its inspiration from another house and another woman. A young French nun in 1804, like Mrs. Halloran, acted upon Scriptural inspiration.

They both listened to St. Paul when he listed faith, hope, and charity, and taught that “the greatest of these is charity.”

Charity, meaning love is an important word when one dedicates her entire life to it. Like Julie Billiard, Mrs. Halloran has so found it to be.

The care of these is the task Mrs. Halloran assumed four years ago. Her reason was a personal one, which she no longer classifies as a problem.

Mrs. Halloran’s ninth child, Margaret, was born a mongoloid.

Her husband, a doctor, and she, a registered nurse, realized this at once, she tells, leaving to the listener’s imagination 12 years of family life, with active boys and girls coming and going and the invalid sister always at home.

The 12th year was that of the founding of the Julie Billiard home, opened in March 1950.

“My daughter was my first patient,” Mrs. Halloran volunteers and the son of some friends, the second.”

“My own sorrow had baffled me for years,” she analyzes, her eyes reflecting the memory as she speaks, “but as soon as I opened the home, all of it was gone.”