



# Alumni Spotlight

## Sister Constance Touey '77M

### January 2019

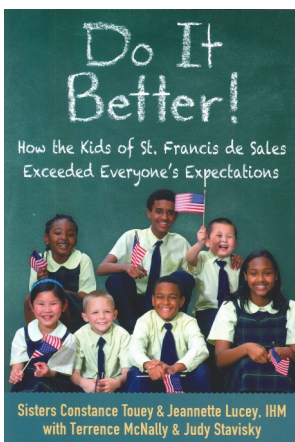
“We believe in kids, all kids, and what can happen when you view a situation as a ‘Challenge’ and not a ‘Problem.’”

Sister Constance Touey '77M uses these words to describe the devotion she feels toward her students. Touey, who became a Catholic nun in 1956 after graduating high school, was appointed as principal of St. Francis de Sales School in 1984 and served there until 2015. The school is located in a rapidly changing part of West Philadelphia where many refugee and immigrant families have settled in recent decades. Sister Touey made it her mission as principal to welcome and accept the children of these families at St. Francis de Sales. Last year she collaborated with Sister Jeannette Lucey to publish a book about her 31 years at the school. The two women began at St. Francis de Sales at the same time and have worked together ever since. Their book, “Do It Better! How the Kids of St. Francis de Sales Exceeded Everyone’s Expectations,” highlights the stories and experiences of several of Touey’s students and expounds upon their successes and their hardships.

Touey, who recently turned 80 years old, wanted to become a nun when she was in seventh grade. She saw in the sisters a sense of “joyful, loving service” that she wanted for herself. Touey chose Millersville for her master’s degree because she knew other sisters who had attended MU and loved their ‘Ville experience. Touey was also attracted to the quality of Millersville’s Spanish program, specifically a summer immersion program where the language was spoken all day between students and professors. She fondly recalls that all of her professors were excellent and learning Spanish from native speakers enhanced her experience tremendously. Touey cherished the chance to learn about the values held by people from other parts of the world and the need to appreciate and respect them.



Sister Constance Touey



When asked, Touey emphasized the importance of friends and alumni in supporting the growing needs of institutions like St. Francis de Sales and Millersville. “I graduated from MU in 1977. Many advances have been made since then because alums believe in the education that they received.” She hopes her book will be an inspiration to others who care about young people and a source of optimism for the future. “Dream dreams for kids,” she says, “then work to make those dreams a reality!”

“Do It Better!” recounts the lives of eight of her former students from St. Francis de Sales and includes present-day interviews examining the monumental impact that caring educators had on them. Touey asserts the need for quality education, as well as compassion and patience. “Children can do anything when you believe in them, encourage them, and provide them with a safe place,” she writes. More information, photos and reviews about “Do It Better!” can be found at [www.thewelcomeschool.com](http://www.thewelcomeschool.com).