

## WOMEN TO WATCH

## A Nun's Story

**name:** Sister Carol Quigley

**who she is:** A member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters (IHM) and vice president of development at Marygrove College, which is 85% African-American and 85% female

**born:** 1940

**what she does:** She oversees fund-raising for various departments within the college and supervises the directors. She also recently contributed a chapter on mental illness within the congregation to the book "Building Sisterhood: A Feminist History of the Sisters."

**worldly experience:** Has served as president of a coalition of leaders of sisters' congregations called Leadership Conference of Women Religious. She had "persuasive influence without jurisdiction." In the late '60s and early '70s, Quigley also worked in Brazil for eight years helping Brazilians acquire the necessary leadership skills to address issues of social



justice, including housing, running water and public lighting.

**why she became a sister:** It wasn't in the picture until she saw role models -- women in service -- while a student at a local Catholic high school. "I was haunted by the question, 'Should I enter this adventure of religious life?' Not being able to get rid of the question made me enter. [I wanted to] have a life that was service-oriented and God-centered."

**parents' reaction to her sisterhood:** "Dismay, concern, and eventually, pride."

**on the state of sisters today:** "We have our feet on the ground; this is not ethereal stuff anymore. If you don't go in a businesswoman, you certainly come out one." She thinks it may be a healthy sign that the number of nuns are dwindling, because "[there's] a burgeoning of other service opportunities for women."

**out of habit:** Hasn't owned a habit in 30 years: "They establish a distance."

**greatest obstacle:** "The isms -- countering the classism in Brazil, racism in this country, sexism everywhere, including within the Catholic church."

**on sisterhood and feminism:** "Most sisters have been feminists unconsciously until recently, and now that's why we're such a threat to the powers that be."

*by Cindy Frenkel Kanter*

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