

Nun goes biking for a cause — fighting cancer

By Sandi Horne
special writer

Sister Maria Theresa Magrie always has enjoyed riding a bike — it gives her a chance to meditate and collect her thoughts. So when Magrie discovered she could enjoy her favorite physical activity plus make money for the American Cancer Society, she jumped at the chance.

Magrie bicycled eight miles and collected almost \$350 Saturday in the Metro Detroit Achievement Ride at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus.

"I've always biked for a hobby," Magrie said. "I usually go six miles. When I heard about the ride, a sister at the convent was dying of cancer, so I thought I could bike for a cause."

Dollars raised in the Achievement Ride will be used to support programs designed to help people protect themselves against cancer, provide services for cancer victims, and research the causes of cancer.

In last year's ride, Magrie rode six miles, earning \$348, the second-largest amount turned in at the OCC site. Riders participating in the OCC bike-a-thon and rides held simultaneously at the General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Rouge Park in Detroit, and Parklane Towers in Dearborn, rode as many miles as they chose between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Riders solicited pledges for each mile they intended to complete.

Magrie, music director for Marian and Brother Rice high schools in Birmingham, heads up six choral groups,

teaches voice at Marygrove College and sings at weddings.

"Sister Elizabeth Girardot died of cancer this year and I know so many other sisters who've died of cancer," Magrie said. "I thought this was a good chance to do something for them."

"Many of my students made pledges for the ride. The different classes made pledges, and individual students made donations, too," Magrie added.

Dave Varella, an All-American quarterback from Brother Rice who graduated this spring, rode with Magrie.

"Dave rode with me last year, too," Magrie said. "He's going to MSU on a football scholarship and is a real great

guy. I told him when he gets married to come back and bring his kids to ride."

"I'll be out there when I'm 80 and riding a three-wheeler."

Magrie lives at the Marian Convent and has been a sister for 27 years.

"I was 45 on Tuesday. Most people think I look and sound like I'm in my 20s or 30s. My students keep me young, and I love being a sister."

Magrie said she hopes the ride grows every year and attracts a larger turnout.

"I want to thank everyone who pledged me," she said. "It's for a wonderful cause."



LORI KOHN

Riding together in last Saturday's Metro Detroit Achievement Ride at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus, Sister Maria Theresa Magrie and Dave Varella, All-American quarterback from Brother Rice raised money to fight cancer.

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