

M. Lillian FMM
(First Principal)

Original Name: Sarah Bridget McCann
Nationality: American
Education: M.A. English Literature
Active years as Principal: 8th January 1948- 24 June 1955



M.Lillian came to India in 1947 at the age of sixty-four to be the principal of the College. A heroic example of taking risks and facing hardships, she was a pioneer in tracing out new paths for the higher education of women. She made the College an instrument of social change since its foundation. Sr. Edith wrote with conviction about M. Lillian in the college magazine of 1978:

On her arrival M. Lillian noted that besides the usual courses of study Stella Maris College has to adopt to suit the needs of the country. Therefore new courses were introduced in Social Work, Fine Arts and Music. Her ability, sincerity and devotedness were soon recognized by Dr. A.L.



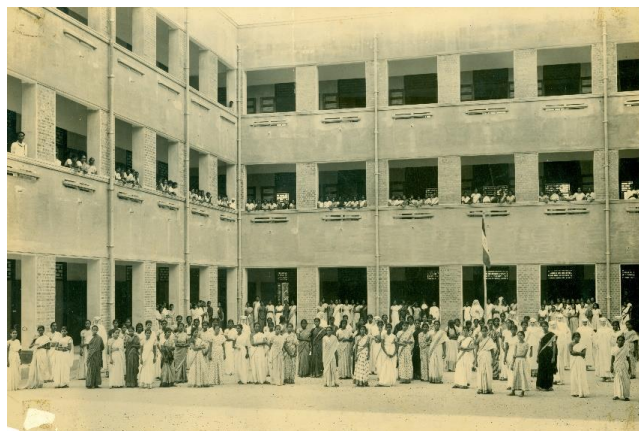
Mudaliar, who was the Vice Chancellor of Madras University at that time, had great respect for her and supported the new trends she proposed. A tremendous drive, dogged perseverance and a remarkable sense of duty accompanied her clear perception. She visited the poor villages and slums around SMC.

A social service league was organised and twice a week the staff and the students visited the slums taking medical relief and instructing them in nutrition and hygiene. With the aim of preparing social workers who would work with the people for their own development, she appointed a lecturer qualified in social work, in the hope that the subject would be introduced in the college. The starting of the course at a later date, and the growth and expansion of the social work department, is the direct result of her resolute efforts to place the College at the service of the

country and the people. She always gave her best. She encouraged and elicited initiative, and her co-workers could always rely on her whole hearted support. Sincerity was her outstanding characteristic. Although she remained only seven years at SMC, those were the most important years of its existence when solid foundations were laid and fine traditions established.

Notable work in SMC:

On arrival in Madras M. Lillian said that the St. Thomas Training School building was totally inadequate. Therefore she shared with M. Klemens the task of finding a suitable piece of land to construct a new building for the college.



Three Storey Building- Palace Road - 1949

M. Klemens had shifted the classes of the College to a new three storey building on Palace Road, which was originally intended for a Matriculation High School in June 1949. When the Vice Chancellor visited on 6 February 1950, the classrooms, the science laboratories, the music and art rooms, he expressed great satisfaction and appreciation. He wrote in the visitor's book:

"It was a great pleasure to visit the college that has made such magnificent progress in the short space of a couple of years. The buildings are spacious, well designed. I was particularly struck by the care taken to provide necessary amenities to the students which are about the best I have seen in this university area. I am sure this Institution will play a notable role in the promotion of women's education in this part of India and I wish this Institution every success."

Stella Maris was a secondary grade college at the time of its foundation, temporary recognition had been given for the two- year Intermediate course. In June 1948 affiliation was given as a first grade (degree) college and permission was granted to open additional courses and subjects. For the second language there was a choice between Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi, French and German. Other courses offered were Ancient and Modern History, Mathematics, Logic, Economics, Music, Drawing and painting. There was free access to the library, and an abundance of literature had been arriving from different parts of the world: Spectator from England, Australia, India and the Geographical Magazine from U.S.A, and other magazines: The Listener, Punch. Times Literary, Review of world Affairs, Round Table, New Statesman, The Economists, Tablet, Everybody's and Mathematical Magazines from India.



- M. Lillian spent two hours daily apart from the working hours to help the teachers gain proficiency in English.
- 1948-49 College logo was created
- 1950-51 Affiliation granted for Western Music.
- 1951-52 Permanent recognition for the College was granted by the University of Madras and B.A. Courses in Mathematics, Indian Music, Drawing and Painting were introduced.
- 1952-53 Affiliation was granted for Natural Science in the Intermediate Course.
- 1953-54 A Post-graduate Diploma Course in Social Service was started.
- 1954-1955 –Construction of Open Air Theatre in Santhome
- 1955- The students who numbered 30 in 1947 increased to 700 in 1955 by the untiring personal visit of the FMM Sisters to the neighbour houses and the nearby places to promote Women's Education.

Extract from:

The Journey Continues by Dr. Sr. Sheila O'Neil fmm, Former Principal of Stella Maris College
Pgs 265 - 270