

Sister Claver: She Will Be Missed

By MILANNE REHOR

Staff Writer

PATCHOGUE — She's a small woman, maybe 5'2". She walks with a limp, due to a "weakness in the left side" which demands occasional therapy.

But she seems to tower over everyone around her.

Her name is Sister Peter Claver, retiring principal of Seton Hall High School and Superior of Seton Hall Convent.

A special assembly at the school honored her Tuesday afternoon. A testimonial dinner, the annual Seton Award Dinner, was



restaurant in Patchogue Wednesday night.

The honors came for two reasons. The first includes the many material improvements Sister Claver has brought to the school including:

The addition of the John F. Kennedy Science Memorial Wing to the school:

Installation of a closed circuit TV system used for announcements and student productions;

Installation of a closed circuit TV system used for student productions;

A new track to replace the well-worn path around the campus lake;

Founding of a Parents Club to bring closer relations between parents and teachers.

The other reason for the honors is Sister Claver herself. She's firm, but there's a glint of humor in her green eyes.

She's spontaneous: "When I was still a teacher," she said, "one of my students started to complain about something. I told him 'If you don't like it you know exactly what you can do.' I had in mind the campus lake, but naturally all the rest of the students jumped on double meanings and thought it was the funniest thing they ever heard. They even mentioned it again during the student assembly. But

the complaint never came up again.

"Actually," Sister Claver went on, "My glare is one of my outstanding characteristics. It really gets results."

"But," she added, "on a more serious level, I find that just being myself and being sincere is best. Teens size you up more quickly than other people."

Sister Claver's students returned the compliment. Random comments from several seniors described her as:

"So completely sincere" . . . "She always has time for everyone, even with two jobs (running the school and heading the convent) . . . "She loves the students, and she's really progressive in the right sense of the word."

Sister Claver chuckled when told she was called progressive. "You can bet I've had some opposition over some of the changes I'd like to institute. But I won't go into that here. I simply believe that to have growth you have to have change."

"Of course the students think this is great," she went on, "I keep getting requests to do more liberal and 'progressive' things with the student newspaper. I tell them it's not freedom they're looking for, it's license."

Sister Claver has been at Seton Hall for 13 years. The length of tenure in the principalship is six years, and she will be going to a new assignment in September.

Born in Boston, Mass., she attended public schools there and joined the Sisters of Charity order in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

After making her first vows she was assigned to Our Lady of Help Christian School in Flatbush, N.Y. She has taught English, biology and social sciences.

Sister Claver has a B.A. from Mt. St. Vincent University at Halifax and an M.A. in art from N.Y.U.

Two years ago the Patchogue Rotary club awarded her with a plaque signifying the services she had given the community, but the dinner at Felice's was a complete surprise.

"I helped plan the dinner for last year's recipient," said Sister Claver, "I never dreamed I would receive it."

The contributions from the dinner will be presented to the school building fund in Sister Claver's honor.

But perhaps the best tribute that could be paid to her is that Sister Peter Claver will be missed.