

SISTER MARY VIRGINIA ORNA



Sister Dr. Mary Virginia Orna was born and raised in New Jersey. She received a B.S. in Chemistry in 1955 from Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She pursued graduate education in Analytical Chemistry at Fordham University in New York and received her Ph.D. in 1962. She completed her preparation for her professional life at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and received an M.A. in Religious Education in 1967.

Devoted to a life of service to the Church and the broader community, Sister Mary Virginia Orna, a member of the Ursuline Order, has made significant contributions through education and service. Her commitment to these values was exemplified during her tenure as a professor at the College of New Rochelle from 1966 to 1997.

She became Director of Educational Services at the Chemical Heritage Foundation (now Science History Institute) in Philadelphia from 1997-2000. She was also the Editor of Chemical Heritage Magazine. Dr. Orna was instrumental in founding the Edelstein Center for the Analysis of Middle Eastern Textiles and Artifacts. During her Fulbright Fellowship in Israel (1994-95), she lectured at Hebrew University, the Weizmann Institute of Science and the Shenkar College of Textile Technology. During her posting to Rome, she partnered with Marco Fontani and Mariagrazia Costa to produce *The Lost Elements: The Periodic Table's Shadow Side* (2015).

Since 1976, Sister Mary Virginia has actively contributed to the American Chemical Society (ACS) as a member of the Division of the History of Chemistry. Her involvement includes serving as the chair of the ACS Division of the History of Chemistry, leading the executive committee in 1984, and holding the position of Treasurer from 1989 to 1990. Additionally, she has chaired the Division of Chemical Education and participated on various ACS committees.

More recently, Sr Mary Virginia has served in 2023 as the Chair of the 3400-member New York Local Section of the American Chemical Society, an organization that brings science education to thousands of students in New York City and its surrounding counties, many of whom are underrepresented in the sciences. She has been an active supporter of Project SEED, a summer research experience for the economically disadvantaged.

As a hobby, Sister Mary Virginia has contributed dozens of crossword puzzles to the New York Times and hundreds of others to various scientific publications.

Sr. Mary Virginia has touched the lives of countless individuals through her vocation and has received numerous awards and accolades for her critically acclaimed work.