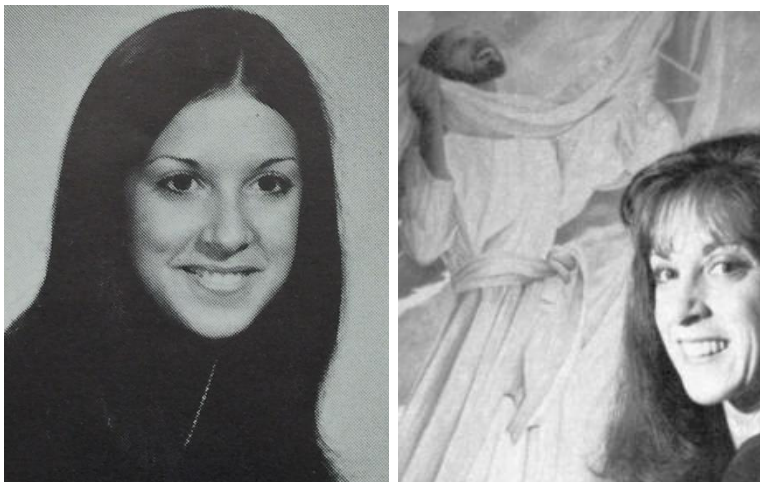

DEBORAH BELMONT ZELLER (1955-2015)
LdM Class of 1973



Chicago Tribune (IL) – July 6, 2015

Zeller, 60, died of complications from brain cancer June 16th, at Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care in Naperville, said her husband, Joseph. She was a longtime resident of Wheaton.

Born Deborah Belmont, Zeller was raised in the northern suburbs, attending St. Catherine Laboure School in Glenview for grade school and then graduating from the now-shuttered Marillac High School in Northfield. She then earned a bachelor's degree in art from Barat College in Lake Forest. After college, Zeller worked for four years as an art teacher at Resurrection High School on the Northwest Side before becoming a stay-at-home mom.

While her sons were growing up, Zeller occasionally worked as a substitute teacher and aide in schools in Glen Ellyn, and also began teaching private art lessons in her home's basement. She earned a master's degree in art education from Northern Illinois University in 1991. Around 2004, Zeller began teaching art full-time at St. James the Apostle Catholic School in Glen Ellyn. She taught there for three years, then taught art from 2011 to 2014 at Holy Trinity Catholic School in Westmont.

Zeller's paintings covered secular and religious subjects. She made many paintings of Jesus, and she labored to show a joy-filled savior. "The images of Jesus we've seen painted throughout history have all had a somber look," she told the Tribune in 1997. "His joy and humanity are missing in these. You begin to wonder if he had any teeth, if he ever smiled. We know he was sorrowful, but we also know that being compassionate means being happy and laughing and joking with people. And look at the guys he hung out with. He had to laugh with them." After Bernardin's death in 1996, Zeller created "Welcome Home, Joseph." "No wonder the cardinal wasn't afraid to die. Look who's there to meet him," she told the Tribune in 1997, referring to Jesus.

In addition to her husband, Joseph, Zeller is also survived by sons Joseph and Patrick; her mother, Kathleen Belmont Junkunc; brothers James Belmont and Thomas Belmont; and two grandsons.