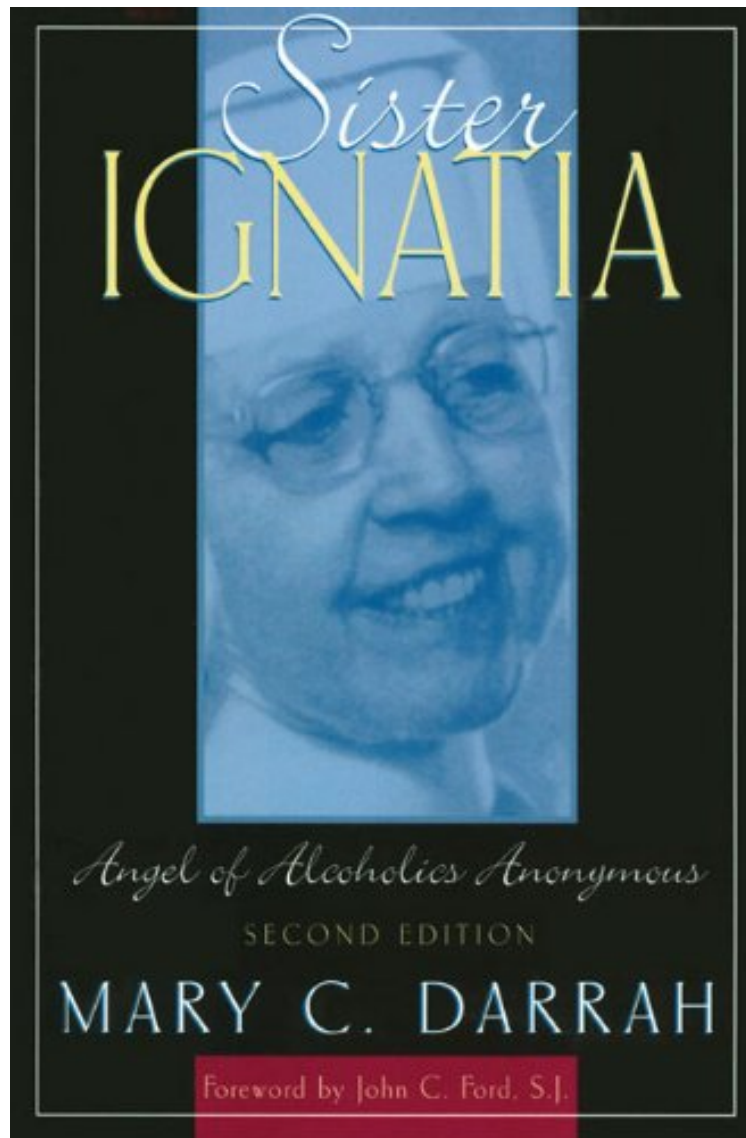


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Sister Ignatia: Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous

Mary C Darrah

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Mary C Darrah : Sister Ignatia: Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sister Ignatia: Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Down the memory holeBy Mary WetherI have read a number of articles on the history of AA over the years, since I work with some recovering alcoholics. Sister Ignatia who?? I had no idea that without her help and support, which included violating and circumventing hospital regulations for years, there would never have been a place for AA to get started. She was the admissions clerk for the hospital; and at that

time, hospitals wanted nothing to do with treating drunks. And that was the least of what she did, and of the guidance and support she offered. Sister Ignatia was not even a nurse, she was an artist who had been reassigned to hospital duties. You would think that at least AA feminists would have celebrated her memory, but she has gone down the memory hole. I'm glad this book was written to remember all she gave. It's well written, too, in a vivid and clear way. My copy was grabbed by a recovering woman in AA. definitely worth reading if you are interested in great women or in AA history and origins. Also, to my shock, AA used to be vastly more effective than it is today. The book explains why. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A true American hero By Donald N. Powell A very inspiring book about an incredibly disciplined woman. It would not surprise me if she were eventually sainted by her church. This was a well documented biography that could have been much more had not a lot of data been lost by an alcoholic in relapse. It was written in a spirit obviously touched by the love, tenderness and yet rigid discipline of the subject. This is also a good perspective on the history and grace of the Alcoholic's Anonymous program. Sister Ignatia's impact on the treatment of addiction has been proven as very insightful and enduring. Her prediction of the "age of sedation" is so accurate it is awesome (in that word's traditional rather than current use). Simplicity, humility, love, kindness and generosity in spirit and action are this woman's legacy. We should all aspire to live a life half the value of hers. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The Most Anonymous AA Co-Founder By Carol DeChant Sister Ignatia is the AA co-founder you've never heard of: the only one who was not an alcoholic. In 1939, "Dr. Bob" who was working with "Bill" on a new treatment for alcoholics, approached Sister Ignatia because his own hospital would not admit them. She was then head of admissions at a Catholic hospital in Akron. She said yes, because she too had been thinking of new ways to help them in hospital (at a time when the only place you put drunks was in jail). She became the first hospital administrator in America to combine "drying out" physical treatment with AA mentoring. She was soon asked to advise hospitals all over the world. She was so far ahead of her time, (treating alcoholic nuns, for instance) she was silenced by her bishop, and transferred to another city. But the bishop couldn't silence AA members, who built an AA ward at her new hospital in Cleveland. Decades later, President Kennedy thanked Ignatia for her contributions to America, and a subsequent bishop asked her religious order to gather her papers in anticipation of her beatification. "Dr. Bob" predeceased her, and their co-founder "Bill" wrote a moving tribute to her at her death. Her own humility inspired the "Anonymous" aspect of AA, but sadly it has kept most people, even Catholics and those familiar with AA, from knowing about this important woman in American history.

This is the story of Sister Mary Ignatia Gavin, a hospital admissions officer who courageously arranged for the hospitalization of alcoholics when alcoholism was viewed as a weakness rather than a disease. Sister Mary Ignatia Gavin epitomized the spirit of love, service, and honesty that today are the hallmarks of Alcoholics Anonymous. As a hospital admissions officer in the 1930s in Akron, Ohio, Sr. Ignatia befriended Dr. Bob Smith, co-founder of AA, and courageously arranged for the hospitalization of alcoholics at a time when alcoholism was viewed as a character weakness rather than a disease.

About the Author Mary Darrah is a former addictions counselor and treatment program administrator who now specializes in national public policy issues related to alcohol or drugs.