

Commissioner Marilyn D. Francis
Territorial President of Women’s Ministries – Canada and Bermuda

Marilyn (née Burroughs) is a first-generation Salvationist. She attended Houghton College where, during her senior year, was one of ten finalists in the Metropolitan Opera tryouts and was also guest soloist for an East Coast evangelistic crusade, conducted by Dr. Clyde Narramore. She graduated in 1965 with a Bachelor of Music degree and became a junior high school music teacher in Dansville, New York. From 1966 to 1967 she was a voice instructor at Asbury College. In 2003 she graduated from Greenville College with a Master of Arts in Leadership and Ministry.

While attending Houghton College she met William Francis, a second-generation Salvationist, and they were married there in December 1965.

During the years 1969-71, Marilyn taught music in the Pompton Plains public schools.

In September of 1971, she and William entered the School for Officer Training in New York City as part of the “Blood and Fire” session of cadets. For their second year of training, they were given an advanced appointment as cadet-lieutenants in charge of the Danbury, Connecticut Corps. In 1973, they were ordained and commissioned as lieutenants and remained at the Danbury appointment where they ministered to a growing congregation and oversaw the construction of a new corps facility that was dedicated in May of 1977.

In 1975, Marilyn received the honour of being listed in Outstanding Young Women in America.

In August of 1977, Marilyn was appointed as the Divisional Corps Cadet Counsellor for the Massachusetts Division. For four years she served in this capacity until July of 1981 when she was appointed as Director of the Corps Cadet and Junior Soldier Bureau. She was responsible for the promotion of work among young people between the ages of 7 and 18 who are junior members of The Salvation Army, as well as those who are enrolled in the Bible, doctrine and leadership course known as Corps Cadets. This appointment afforded Marilyn the opportunity to lead a select group of ten young people to the Inter-Territorial Corps Cadet Congress in Scotland.

In November of 1986, Marilyn was appointed the Divisional Home League Secretary for Western Pennsylvania, with headquarters in Pittsburgh, where she gave direction and support to the 43 Home Leagues associated with corps in the division.

In May of 1989, she was appointed as Divisional Director of Women’s Organizations for Northern New England, with headquarters in Portland, Maine. There, she gave direction to programs for women in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

In July of 1992, Marilyn served as the Director of Special Services at the School for Officer Training in Suffern, New York, until February of 1997 when she was appointed as Territorial League of Mercy Secretary for the USA Eastern Territory.

In September of 2000, Marilyn was appointed as Territorial Secretary for Women’s Ministries for the USA Eastern Territory and gave oversight to the Army’s work and programs in 11 divisions from Kentucky to Maine, as well as the Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands Division. On April 1, 2003, she was appointed to International Headquarters in London, England, as Zonal Secretary for Women’s Ministries for the Americas and Caribbean.

On July 1, 2007, Commissioner Marilyn Francis assumed her current appointments as Territorial President of Women’s Ministries for Canada and Bermuda.

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Marilyn is an accomplished vocalist and pianist. She has produced an audio recording of vocal and keyboard improvisation of hymns and gospel songs titled “Just a Closer Walk”. Proceeds from the sale of this acclaimed recording underwrite vocal scholarships to a summer music institute.

She has also been a zealous advocate for Christian higher education. The Houghton College Alumni Association named Commissioner Marilyn Francis, along with her husband Commissioner William Francis, as Alumni of the Year for 1996.

William and Marilyn have two adult children, Captain William Marshall and Susan Marjorie, plus six grandchildren.