



Carlita's Closet

The Story of St. Dominic Catholic School's Uniform Closet
By Carlita Wimberly, Class of '65



I am an Alumni of St. Dominic Catholic School and after traveling from Army Post to Army Post with four children, one Catholic School to another, the most welcomed words were those of the principal at St. Mary's Star of the Sea Catholic School in Virginia: "Uniform Closet." As she showed me around the school, we came upon this Uniform Closet. She explained to me they wanted children to feel welcomed from the first day at their new school. Fitting in was always a concern for my children when you consider how quickly we moved around. Plus, for a family with four children and one on the way, the cost of uniforms, school fees, and tuition can be a little overwhelming - especially when starting in the middle of a school year. But we eventually left our military life behind, and my family and I returned to our roots in Mobile. By this time, we had five children to educate in Catholic Schools and I was soon missing my "old friend," the Uniform Closet.

The idea of instituting a Uniform Closet at my alma mater and children's elementary school seemed like a good idea. I explained the concept to the principal at the time and she was very supportive. As the years passed the reason for the Uniform Closet became even more evident as our area faced hurricanes, families grew in number, and some faced hardships.

Teachers came to appreciate the closet when a child needed a change of clothes for accidents. With all the rain, even the big kids had to use the closet once or twice to change out of muddy and wet uniforms. The children are sent back to class a little less muddy and they did not have to be sent home to change; which makes parents happy too.

Word spread about St. Dominic Catholic School's Uniform Closet. Many schools would call to ask how it worked and wanted to see how it was set up. I am proud of what I brought home to my former school. I have felt a bit humbled by the name but happy I was able to continue what my parents taught me to do: give back.

Funny story: a few years after the Uniform Closet was named after me, I was working with Mrs. Beverly Franklin one day in the library. She introduced me to a young man as the Carlita of "The Carlita's Closet." The young man looked at me in awe and said, "You are Carlita?" When I replied that I was, he then said, "I thought you had to be dead to have something named after you!" Needless to say I am here and still volunteering as my parents did at St. Dominic Catholic School.



All are welcome to use the closet either by purchasing items out right for \$2.00 an item or by swapping uniforms; as long as they are clean and in good order.