



## Donna Reuss '80, M.A.

*National Security Supervisory  
Program Specialist (Retired)*

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Alternating between the Department of Defense and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Donna Reuss '80 enjoyed a 32-year career working primarily in the field of national security emergency preparedness, ensuring readiness for a major man-made or natural disaster affecting continuity of the federal government.

Ms. Reuss started at La Roche as a liberal arts major. When she realized that her French language skills were above the level taught at the University, Sister Celeste Rudolph, a German language instructor at La Roche, offered to teach her German via independent study. After one year at La Roche, Ms. Reuss entered the U.S. Army, where she coincidentally received German language training. She then served two years in Germany as a German linguist-interrogator.

At the end of her enlistment, Ms. Reuss returned to La Roche to complete her degree. With near-native German language proficiency, Ms. Reuss approached Sister Celeste, who once again provided an individualized program for her.

"Sister Celeste developed a bilingual business administration degree program for me. She was willing to teach me in regularly scheduled classes, even though I often was the only student," Ms. Reuss said.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in bilingual business administration in 1980. Later she attended California University of Pennsylvania, receiving a master's degree in geography and regional planning in 1986.

Ms. Reuss joined the U.S. Army Reserve in 1979, reclassifying into the electronic warfare field while still applying her German language skills. Promoted to the rank of sergeant first class, she then received a direct commission to second lieutenant. Ms. Reuss retired after 27 total years of military service at the rank of major.

Ms. Reuss volunteers many hours, serving as a senior ambassador for Senior Services of Alexandria and delivering Meals-on-Wheels, pet food and groceries to seniors. She participates in charitable activities with the Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary, and serves in the choir and numerous ministries at her church. Ms. Reuss also is a lay cooperater with the Daughter of St. Paul, working in its bookstore.

Additionally she participates in various programs with Catholic Charities of the Arlington Diocese; cantors Mass and teaches yoga at the Alexandria Jail; and is the executive board member of her civic association and American Legion Post 24. She is a certified yoga instructor, and enjoys traveling, and taking art and ballet classes.

