

# Siena College Celebrates Sister Thea, April 15-16, 2010

Returned Friday night from three Thea events April 15-16, 2010, at Siena College, Albany, N.Y. Students, faculty and public were happy to hear about her! One professor assigned his Catholic Traditions class (30 students) to read *Thea's Song*. They liked it. Told them they were historic because they were the first class so assigned! Posed for picture with them on Siena's gorgeous 174 acre, park-like campus. This summer, Institute of Black Catholic Studies, New Orleans, LA, will assign the biography for class.

Hosts Shannon O'Neill, Ph.D., Director, Sr. Thea Bowman Center for Women, and Tom Dickens, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Religious Studies, made my visit unforgettable. Toured the "lived-in" Center for Women with its superbly attractive Thea display. Was honored to visit in his office with Siena president, Kevin Mullen, OFM. Signed his copy of *Thea's Song*.



Students in the Catholic Traditions class pose with Sister Charlene Smith on the Siena College campus.

Photos courtesy of Dr. Tom Dickens, Siena College



From left, Dr. Tom Dickens, Sister Charlene Smith, and Dr. Shannon O'Neill

Enjoyed delicious meals and lively conversation in Serra Hall, the President's dining room (salmon and conversation both memorable), and the new library with faculty. Though Siena ([www.sienacollege.edu](http://www.sienacollege.edu)) has a largely Caucasian student body, administration, and faculty, they are surprisingly Thea-aware.

Appreciated professional prep for the public lecture—advance publicity at Siena and the diocese, slides, gospel music, students gently distributing Thea materials to audience, video-taping for library DVD, Tom's lovely introduction, the gift of a Siena mug, Siena print and pens wrapped in sparkly cellophane, taking pictures with some Friends of Thea, welcoming my nephew Steve Smith from NJ.

Enjoyed book discussion with very perceptive, interested, and interesting administration and faculty people. Charmed by gift of *Bowman's Blend* (named after Thea) Guatemalan organic French Roast coffee. April 15-16 were graced days with the fine, Francis-like, smart Siena College community.

Charlene Smith FSPA  
April 18, 2010  
La Crosse, WI