

St. Cecilia School – Detroit



In 1925, St. Cecilia School in Detroit opened its doors to 530 students in grades one through eight taught by eight IHM Sisters.

The school added a ninth grade the following year, and had to use a room in the church hall as a classroom to accommodate all the students. The parish planned to add one high school grade per year and built an addition to the school building in 1927. By 1929, with all 12 grades in place, enrollment stood at nearly 1,000.

In spite of the Great Depression, St. Cecilia School was vibrant and active. It published its first yearbook; started the Glee Club; won baseball and basketball championships; and collected toys, clothes and food for the St. Vincent de Paul Society to distribute to “many



needy people of the parish,” according to the convent chronicler, who also noted that schools throughout Detroit closed several weeks early “on account of financial conditions.”

The beginning of World War II saw changes at St. Cecilia. The chronicler reports that “many of the usual [school] activities had to be curtailed in order to take care of the many calls made upon the school to take part in patriotic projects.” She also notes that in 1944, the senior prom was held in February because “so many of our boys were liable to be

called or were waiting to enlist in the armed forces.”



Enrollment stood at around 900 students through the 1940s and '50s. The school established the Senior Scholarship Play to raise money for a one-year scholarship to several students per year, based on class standing and financial need. The athletic teams began recruiting and training players. The chronicler noted the effort when she reports that “Football, basketball and baseball showed a gratifying upgrade.” By the late 1950s and early 1960s, St. Cecilia had earned championships in both basketball and football.

In 1964, our **Featured Class Year**, the football team went undefeated. “After each game, the cheerleaders and team came to the convent to shout out our winning score,” the chronicler says. “Their cheers could be heard for blocks!”

The 78 members of the senior class chose St. Maria Goretti as their patron; red and white as their class colors; and “Victory is a thing of the will” as their class motto. They boasted nine students who achieved national academic honors, and they graduated June 14.



St. Cecilia High School closed in 1967, and the parish converted the building to a neighborhood recreation center. Dubbed "Ceciliaville," the center offered neighborhood youth a place to participate in sports and music programs and was instituted as a way to keep Detroit's youngsters away from gangs and violence. (Chris Webber, Jalen Rose "Magic" Johnson and George "Ice Man" Gervin were part of the Ceciliaville programs in their youth.)

St. Cecilia Elementary School closed at the end of the 2009-2010 school year. The Ceciliaville athletic center remains open.

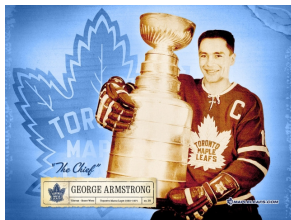
In 1964

Lyndon B. Johnson was president of the United States. The U.S. population was 191,888,791. Life expectancy was 70.2 years, and a first-class stamp cost a nickel.



In the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev was deposed; Alexei Kosygin became premier and Leonid Brezhnev became the first secretary of the Communist Party.

Three civil rights workers – James Cheney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner – were murdered in Mississippi.



The St. Louis Cardinals won the World Series in seven games against the New York Yankees. The Boston Celtics were crowned NBA Champions after defeating the San Francisco Warriors four games to one. It took the Toronto Maple Leafs seven games against the Detroit Red Wings for the Stanley Cup. The first Super Bowl was still three years off.



U.S. Surgeon General Luther Terry affirmed that cigarette smoking causes cancer.



The Dick Van Dyke Show won an Emmy Award for "Outstanding Program Achievement in the Field of Comedy." Its stars, Dick Van Dyke and Mary Tyler Moore, won "Outstanding Continued Performance" Emmys for their lead roles. A Best Performance by a Vocal Group Grammy Award went to Peter, Paul and Mary for "Blowin' in the Wind."