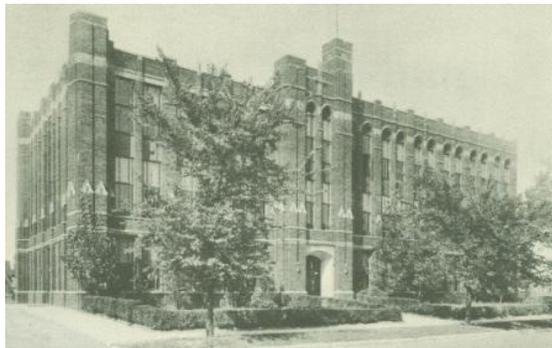


## St. Francis de Sales School – Detroit



St. Francis de Sales School in Detroit opened in February 1928 with three IHM Sisters and 83 students in grades one through eight.

By the end of that first year, enrollment had grown to 124, "...with 112 in actual attendance when school closed on June 15," the convent chronicler reports.

When the school added a ninth grade the following year, enrollment increased to 258, and "no more pupils were received as the four class rooms were already

overcrowded." Construction of five additional rooms began in May. By adding one additional high school grade each year, St. Francis had more than 400 students in grades one through 12 by 1932.



In spite of the Great Depression, St. Francis de Sales School offered a variety of extra-curricular activities to its students. The music program was active, as was the athletic program: football for boys; basketball for girls. The school community worked hard to raise money during those difficult times. Paper sales, candy sales, Bunco parties, variety shows and raffles all brought in much needed funds.

The school, and its enrollment, continued to grow. More than 900 children attended St. Francis by 1941–97 of them were in the second grade and had half-day sessions so they could be accommodated. The

chronicler mentions that, "One new room was opened for a section of the fourth grade but on account of defense priorities...it was without doors, blackboards, wardrobe hooks, etc..."

St. Francis de Sales School felt the effects of World War II. Air raid drills were common, and "War time regulations made a course of aeronautics necessary in high school." Six senior boys were drafted.



Throughout the '50s and '60s, St. Francis School grew and prospered. Sports teams (the "DeSalers" until 1954, then called the Monarchs) brought home championships; student activities such as the student newspaper (*The Monarch*), glee club, Latin club, library club and the National Honor society were popular; and students demonstrated a strong sense of community, frequently holding food, clothing and money drives to help those in need.

By 1968, our **Featured Class Year**, 84 seniors were part of an overall student body of 1,003. **Michael Teichman** won the Voice of Democracy contest. Mardi Gras activities raised money for the missions; and the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium took place in the gym. On June 9, senior class teachers, Sister Margaret (Rottach), Mr. Hickey and Sister Marianna (Glaser) wished the new graduates all the best after they received their diplomas.

As was the case with so many schools in Michigan, financial constraints resulted in St. Francis de Sales School closing in 1971. Several IHM Sisters continued to live in the convent. They worked in the parish or at nearby schools until 1976, when the parish rented the convent to Wayne County Social Services.

### In 1968



North Korea seized the United States Navy ship *Pueblo* and held the 83 on board as spies.

American soldiers massacred 347 civilians at My Lai.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated.

Median household income was \$7,743.



The Detroit Tigers defeated the St. Louis Cardinals in seven games in the World Series.



*2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Funny Girl*, *The Lion in Winter* and *Oliver!* were playing in movie theaters.

*60 Minutes* began airing on CBS. *Mission: Impossible* received an Emmy award for Outstanding Dramatic Series. *Get Smart* was the Outstanding Comedy. The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was named Album of the Year at the Grammy Awards.