

## St. Monica School – Mobile, Ala.



When two IHM Sisters arrived at St. Monica School in Mobile, Ala., they discovered that a labor strike had stalled construction; only the foundation for the new school was completed.

As a result, the 105 children in grades one and two had classes in the parish hall until the building was finished in January. The Halloween and Christmas parties no

doubt were morale-boosters for students and teachers alike!

Enrollment began to climb as the school added additional grades, resulting in a degree of chaos in those early days. In 1957, with 319 students in grades one through five, the convent chronicler reports on the first day of school: "The organization of books, the placement of children in desks and a trial at a schedule took up most of the time, but the year is young." Later that same year, the school "...announced that there would be no new enrollment...since each grade is already filled to capacity."



The Class of 1961 was the first to graduate from the eighth grade at St. Monica. By then, the band had been formed, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts were active, the Civics Club, safety patrol and Booster Club were up and running, and the sports program – especially soccer – was in full swing.

Enrollment leveled off to 325-350 students during the early 1960s. Children enjoyed their annual two-day holiday for Mardi Gras, as well as the yearly "Toy Bowl" and "Field Day" competitions, May Crowning and Christ the King procession. Enrollment began to fall in 1965; tuition that year for the 276 students was \$96 per family.

By 1977, our **Featured Class Year**, St. Monica School had 244 students. Organized sports were available to students in grades two through eight, and they enjoyed football, three volleyball teams, four soccer teams and nine basketball teams; three of those teams (girls' basketball, girls' volleyball and boys' soccer) came in first in league play. The school placed first in the diocesan Field Day. **Rita Bascot** and **Tony**

**Hanson** received Sportsmanship Awards during the spring Sports Supper. At the Honors Assembly on May 26, **Kenneth Sheffield** and **Vickie Tipp** received good citizenship awards and **Maria Daugherty and Joseph Imsand** won history awards. Graduation was held at Mass on May 27, followed by breakfast for the 34 graduates and their parents at the Ramada Inn.

St. Monica added a kindergarten in the fall of 1977, but enrollment continued to decline. By 1983, with just 164 students, rumors of closure began circulating. The rumors were premature, however; the school remained open until 1989.

### **In 1977**

James Earl Carter, Jr., was president of the United States. His vice president was Walter F. Mondale.

The first Apple II computers went on sale. An optical fiber carried live telephone traffic for the first time. Perrier water was introduced in the United States.

The last natural case of smallpox was discovered in Somalia.

The most popular books of fiction were *The Silmarillion*, by J.R.R. Tolkien, and *The Thorn Birds*, by Colleen McCullough. Nonfiction favorites were *Roots*, by Alex Haley, and *Looking Out for #1*, by Robert Ringer.

The most popular television shows were *Laverne & Shirley* and *Happy Days*.

At the Grammy Awards, "Record of the Year" went to *Hotel California*, by The Eagles. Debby Boone won a "Best Song" Grammy for *You Light Up My Life*, and "Best Album" was *Rumours*, by Fleetwood Mac.