

Featuring St. Mary of Redford School



From a modest beginning of 117 students and two IHM Sisters in 1919, St. Mary of Redford became one of the largest schools in the Archdiocese of Detroit, growing to 2,400 students and 44 IHMs in 1963.

The convent chronicler notes that St. Mary was originally an elementary school, with additional grades added gradually. The high school began in September 1922. Growth was rapid and, within 10 years, more than 1,000 students were enrolled in grades one-12.

By the 1939-40 school year, St. Mary had so many students enrolled that grades one-three and the high school had half-day sessions. "Many pupils had to be refused admittance due to the crowded conditions," says the chronicler. A new high school in 1940 relieved the congestion.

The parish continued to grow and had nearly 4,500 families registered in the early 1950s. To ease overcrowding, the pastor, Msgr. Edward Hickey, built "satellite churches." Mother of Our Savior and Our Lady Queen of Hope had adjacent schools for students in grades one through four.

A larger high school was built to accommodate the parish's burgeoning population. The chronicler reports that in 1964, "The new senior high school was in readiness for its full capacity of 10th, 11th and 12th grades." The Drama Club was organized that same year, and the first parish picnic at Boblo Island was held.



The 1960s saw innovation and growth for St. Mary of Redford. It became a pilot school for the Archdiocesan Uniform Accounting System, and the elementary school began an experimental reading program.

A gym and all-purpose room were added. In November 1968, the Class of 1969, our featured class year, was there to celebrate the dedication of the new additions, along with their principal, Sister Philip Neri, IHM.

That year, the choral presented *The Sound of Music*. Students conducted a house-to-house canned food drive for the residents of the Burtha Fisher Home for the Aged and were able to donate 9,000 cans of food. And "for the first time in many a year," the football team had a winning season.



The chronicler notes that on June 6, 1969, 237 seniors "received their graduating diplomas on Friday evening...in a total departure from tradition for St. Mary's." This was also the first graduating class to have both a valedictorian and a salutatorian. Former Michigan Governor G. Mennen Williams, was the guest speaker.

Although many schools closed when voters defeated a 1970 proposal to fund private schools, St. Mary of Redford remained open. In response to the funding issue, parents, alumni and friends of the school established the "School and Scholarship Memorial" during the 1970-71 year to benefit needy students.

Enrollment began to dwindle in the late 1970s, as did the number of available teachers. The chronicler remarks in 1981 that "the harvest is great, but the laborers are few." The high school closed in the early 90s; however, the grade school (K-8) remained open through the 2008 school year. Sister Loretta Schroeder, IHM, is the school's last principal, one of hundreds of IHM Sisters who served faithfully since the school opened.

In 1969



Golda Meir became the first female prime minister of Israel.

A coup in Libya ousted King Idris, and brought Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi to power.



Millions of Americans participated in a Vietnam Moratorium Day, with candlelight vigils and prayers for peace. President Nixon ignored the event, but Vice President Spiro Agnew called the participants "an effete corps of impudent snobs."

The world watched in awe as Neil Armstrong took his historic steps on the moon.



The first automatic teller machine in the United States was installed in Rockville Centre, N.Y.

The New York Jets defeated the heavily favored Baltimore Colts 16-7 in Super Bowl III. The New York Mets won the World Series in five games, defeating the Baltimore Orioles.



The Beatles gave their last public performance, on the roof of Apple Records. The impromptu concert was broken up by the police.

"Sugar Sugar," by the Archies, topped the charts.



Marcus Welby and *Monty Python's Flying Circus* debuted on television.

The Academy Award for Best Picture went to *Midnight Cowboy*. John Wayne won for Best Actor in *True Grit*. Paul Newman and Robert Redford starred in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*.