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St. John's Catholic School - Weston

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ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC
SCHOOL, WESTON

The construction of St. John's School in Weston was begun in 1954 with the approval of Bishop Louis B. Kucera of Lincoln. Rev. Otto M. Ekhaml was the pastor of St. John's Church at that time. The building consists of a one-story concrete, brick veneer structure having five classrooms, library, office, gymnasium and a convent. The additional rooms in the basement are used as meeting rooms.

The ground breaking ceremonies were assisted by Rev. George Livanec and Rev. Walter Potocki. This took place on the plot north of the present church. The laying of the cornerstone was conducted by the Most Rev. Bishop Louis Kucera, assisted by Rev. Otto Ekhaml. Many priests and over one thousand people attended the day long activities.

Much generosity, self-sacrifice and untiring effort made this project possible. Rev. Otto Ekhaml took the greatest part of the work upon himself by assuming the roles of pastor, organizer, contractor, electrician, mechanic, carpenter and common laborer.

On August 12, 1956 three Notre Dame Sisters arrived to staff St. John's School. These were Sisters Bernarda, Xavier and Germaine. Sister Grace was music director and organist.

A total of 38 Notre Dame Sisters and lay teachers have staffed St. John's School to date. The total enrollment over the years (1956 - 76) was 1747 students, and of those 230 were graduated. Within the past few years partial departmentalization has been introduced in grades 5 - 8.

Many school activities were held over the course of the years. Some of these were: Christmas and Spring Programs, Parents' Day Programs; Open House; School Carnivals; Jubilee Programs for the Pastor; and Parties of various types. The school also was entertained by the High School students of Notre Dame Academy from Omaha, and students from Neumann High School of Wahoo. These students presented plays and musicals for the children.

Some of the school projects held over the years were: Magazine Drives, Sales of Garden Seeds; Christmas Card Sales; Lenten Self-Denial contributions for the aged and poor; Indian Mission Projects; Spelling Contests; K. C. Spelling Bees; Shrine Contests; Written Essay Contests; Conservation Day Participation; Art Exhibits at the County and State Fairs;

and picture taking of various activities for the newspapers.

In the spring of 1963 in response to the President's Physical Education Programs, the school purchased Physical Education Equipment. It was set up on the school grounds.

St. John's School benefitted from the Summer School Program through Title I, which was held in the Weston Public School. Ms. Mildred Ostry, Mrs. Gladys Cejka and Mrs. Maxine Masek from St. John's School were among the faculty members.

St. John's gymnasium was used by the Weston Public School until this school was closed in 1973. Basketball for St. John's boys was first coached by Mike Rouch, coach of Neumann High School. At present, Mr. Curtis Havelka is the coach for St. John's boys. Basketball Tournaments for Elementary grades originated in 1969. St. John's boys were undefeated the last three years.

In spite of financial stress, the parishioners have been active in alleviating the debts by generous contributions and by sponsoring the annual parish dinners.

After twenty nine years of pastorship, Rev. Otto Ekhaml was transferred. His replacement was Rev. Paul York. He is continuing the interest in the school. Since his arrival the interior of the school has been repainted and improvements are in progress.