

## Educational

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two diocesan priests constituted the faculty. To Sister Teresa Marie O'Connor, the dean, fell the task of devising and regulating the scholastic program. Fifteen young women made up the pioneer graduating class, receiving their bachelor of arts degrees at the initial commencement of June, 1928.

This commencement was both the first and the last held in the Glass House. Because of the increase in registration, the college moved that same summer into the building on Augustine Street, vacated by the removal of the community headquarters and the normal school to the new motherhouse just opened on East Avenue in Pittsford. In 1942, Nazareth College would move a second and final time to its present campus adjacent to this motherhouse. By 1989 Nazareth College of Rochester had not only justified its existence but had also become an acknowledged Rochester cultural asset, especially because of its focus on fine arts.

If Nazareth College grew out of a private academy for girls, Aquinas high school was the outgrowth of the parochial school of St. Patrick's Cathedral. St. Patrick's Parish was the first Catholic congregation organized in western New York (1820). It occupied three churches in succession, all of them built on the same corner of Platt Street and Plymouth Avenue North (then called Frank Street). The first was opened in 1823; the second in 1831; and the third, which would serve as the diocesan cathedral church until 1937, in 1870.

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The parish school entered operation in 1839. In 1886 the Sisters of St. Joseph assumed charge, teaching both the boys and the girls. In keeping with Bishop McQuaid's policy, St. Patrick's School secured Regents accreditation in the mid-1890s and when the state approved its curriculum, was authorized to conduct state regents' examinations.

Father Thomas F. Hickey was named rector of the cathedral parish in 1898. Actively interested in his parish school, he determined to give it a post-graduate program. In 1902 he inaugurated a business course, and in 1904 a full academic high school curriculum, accredited by a state regents' charter. "Cathedral High" asked no tuition of graduates of the cathedral school. The parents of children who had attended other elementary schools were asked to pay \$25 yearly per student. Father Hickey held the principalship and also taught religion at the outset. Cathedral High School had its first commencement in 1908. Bishop McQuaid, who had followed Father Hickey's project with encouragement, was too ill to preside. Therefore, the founder, now coadjutor bishop of Rochester, did the honors himself, presenting diplomas to the 23 pioneer graduates. That fall, enrollment rose to 175. From the start, Cathedral High was coeducational.

By the mid-1910s, so many of the student population came from elementary schools other than the cathedral school that the high school's name was changed to Rochester Catholic High. After Nazareth Academy moved to its uptown address, Rochester Catholic High School was

changed to a boys' school, apparently so as not to compete with the all-girls' academy. By the early 1920s registration at RCH had so increased that three "annexes" had to be opened on the east side of the Genesee River, in the parish halls of St. Ambrose, St. George and Holy Redeemer.

Clearly, the school needed larger quarters. In 1923, therefore, Bishop Hickey bought from the Sisters of St. Joseph the eastern acreage of their Dewey-Augustine property, and commissioned the Rochester architect J. Foster Warner to draw plans for a new high school building. Cardinal Patrick J. Hayes of New York was invited to dedicate it on Sept. 29, 1925. This plant bore the name "Aquinas Institute." It had been incorporated under that title by a state law of March 18, 1922, the new name being intended, it seems, to honor Bishop Hickey by honoring St. Thomas Aquinas, his patron saint. A significant clause in this 1922 charter authorized the Aquinas corporation to develop a college if it chose.

Almost from the start, this evolving secondary school had been staffed not only by Sisters of St. Joseph but by others. There were diocesan priests, Rochester Sisters of Mercy and lay persons. One of the earliest lay teachers was Al Sigl, locally prominent later on as a radio broadcaster and philanthropist. From 1927 on, the faculty included several Basilian priests from Toronto and, in 1930-31, the staff also comprised 13 Franciscans of the Holy Name Province. The presidents, however, were always diocesan priests. Longest in term of service was Rev. Dr. Joseph E. Grady (1928-1931). He further elevated the scholastic standards and introduced varsity

football, for which Aquinas Institute would become famous.

However, on Sept. 1, 1937, Archbishop Edward Mooney, then bishop of Rochester, signed a contract with the Basilian Fathers to hand over to them the school and its management. One of the contractual stipulations was that the Congregation of St. Basil should have the right of first refusal if a college for men were ever projected at Rochester or within a 40-mile radius. The new regime entered upon its duties in 1937, and has continued the work with distinction ever since. When the Basilians decided to make the school coeducational in 1982, many Rochesterians considered it an innovation. Actually it was a reversion, as has been indicated, to the school's original practice.

Only after World War II did the Basilians take up their college option. St. John Fisher College for men, incorporated in 1948; opened on its new Fairport Road campus on Oct. 17, 1951, with Father John M. Murphy, CSB, as president.

In 1964, Nazareth College, for practical considerations, changed its status from church-related to independent, with authority vested in its board of trustees. St. John Fisher took the same step in 1968. Independence was probably one reason why Fisher decided to admit women students in 1971 and Nazareth to admit men in 1973. Since these two Catholic-oriented schools were in the same township, there was naturally a sense of rivalry for a while. The development of divergent curricula, however, has since then tended to make the two institutions more complementary than competitive.

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