

John F. Kennedy Memorial High School (Seattle, Washington) records

Collection Finding Aid

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OVERVIEW OF RECORDS

Repository: Providence Archives, Mother Joseph Province, Seattle, Washington

Creator: Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province; John F. Kennedy Memorial High School students and staff

Record Group Name: John F. Kennedy Memorial High School, Seattle, Washington

Record Group Number: 204

Dates: 1964-1995

Scope and Content: This collection comprises primarily chronicles, administrative correspondence, financial records, and yearbooks, with a small amount of supporting materials. Records date from 1964 to 1995, with the bulk from 1966 to 1973. Many traditional record series are missing from the collection; this can be partly explained by the fact that some of the reports and records required by the religious community were being phased out or had already been eliminated by the time the school opened in the mid-1960s.

Extent: Approximately 1 linear foot (2 document boxes)

HISTORICAL NOTE

Abstract: John F. Kennedy Memorial High School opened in the fall of 1966, only a few months after the Sisters of Providence found it necessary to close their oldest school in the northwest, the 110-year-old Providence Academy, in Vancouver, Washington. To the sisters, the opportunity to help develop the new diocesan high school was surely a welcome sign that the work of Providence would continue. Although the sisters did not own or administer Kennedy High School, they were an important part of the faculty for more than thirty years.

Planning for a coeducational Catholic high school in south Seattle began in 1962, under the direction of the Most Reverend Thomas Connolly, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Seattle. After the assassination of John F. Kennedy in November 1963, Archbishop Connolly announced that the proposed school would be named in memory of the late President. Fundraising and construction began in 1964, with the goal of opening in the fall of 1966.

The Reverend John P. Doogan, who had founded Seattle's first coeducational Catholic high school--Blanchet High--a decade earlier, was named as principal, so staffing and curriculum development were under his direction. The Sisters of Providence and two lay women were originally engaged to teach the classes for girls, with Monsignor Doogan and four lay men staffing the separate boys' classes. Six sisters were assigned for the first year: Sisters Maria Theresa, Vice Principal; Armella, Local Superior; Dorothy of Providence, Michaeleen, Margaret Bischoff, and Sheila Ingoldsby.

With the new building experiencing construction delays, John F. Kennedy Memorial High School opened September 6, 1966, in temporary quarters at St. Thomas Parish, Riverton, Washington. Despite classes spread throughout the parish center and several portable buildings, the library in an electrical closet, and faculty lounge in the parish kitchen, the sisters were optimistic and noted in their chronicles that "the 181 freshman boys and girls present seemed a promising student body." The sisters themselves were experiencing a major change in religious life as they entered the classroom for the first time in their modified habits.

These tenuous beginnings were forgotten on April 6, 1967, when the first wing of the new building was opened to students. In the fall, enrollment grew to 380 (freshman and sophomore classes), and the number of sisters on the staff increased to ten. Given the relatively small size of the student body, separate classes for boys and girls were not practical, so the original co-instructional plan for the school was never implemented.

The school's remaining two wings, chapel, and multipurpose building were soon completed, resulting in a modern academic and athletic complex on fifteen acres. The school was formally dedicated on May 25, 1968. John F. Kennedy's sister, Jean Kennedy Smith, represented the family at the ceremony and unveiled a bust of the late president, which had been created by noted sculptor Felix de Weldon.

At first, all the Sisters of Providence teaching at Kennedy High School lived together as a local community at Saint Joseph Residence, Seattle. On December 27, 1967, they moved to the large convent constructed on the school campus, at 204 South 140 Street. Named simply "Sisters Residence," their new home was dedicated to St. John. Only thirteen of the thirty bedrooms in the house were finished at this time, but there was ample room in the residence for faculty meetings and other school or community events. Living on campus made it easy for the sisters to become involved in extracurricular activities; several became ardent fans of the school's various athletic teams, dubbed the Kennedy Lancers.

A core group of sisters remained on the faculty for several years, with others coming and going as assigned by the religious community. But as the number of sisters in the province available for teaching declined, so too did the number assigned to Kennedy High School. As sisters were given permission to live alone or in small groups, it became impractical for the campus residence to be kept for the exclusive use of the religious community. When the Archdiocese of Seattle proposed using the residence for high-school seminarians from St. Edward Seminary, Kenmore, Washington, the last four sisters willingly moved to apartments. After they left on July 1, 1976, the remainder of the bedrooms were finished, and the residence was renamed St. Edward Hall.

The Sisters of Providence remained committed to Kennedy High School, with a small number continuing on the faculty well into the 1980s. In April 1979, Sister Rose Marie Dillman (5076), Counselor and Dean of Girls, returned to live at St. Edward Hall. In the following years, she served as "house mother," first to the seminarians, then to a number of international boarding students. (The boarding of male students from overseas began in the early 1980s with a small group of Spanish exchange students; this service is now offered to boys from around the world.) Sister Rose Marie, the last Sister of Providence to staff Kennedy High School, retired in 1997, completing 27 years of devoted service.

Today, John F. Kennedy Memorial High School continues to flourish, its reputation for academic and athletic excellence appealing to Catholic and non-Catholic students from throughout the Seattle area. sponsorship information, and what existing histories might be helpful to researchers.

ARRANGEMENT

The record group is divided into eight series: *history, administration, personnel, local community, financial, reports, subject series, and publications.*

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Restrictions: Providence Archives is a private repository. Access to some records is at the discretion of the archivist.

Preferred Citation: [Title of cited item]. [Series Name]. John F. Kennedy Memorial High School, Seattle, Washington. Record Group 204. Providence Archives, Seattle, Washington.

Acquisition Information: Records were transferred to Providence Archives, Seattle from John F.

Kennedy Memorial High School staff.

Related Record Groups and Other Collections: After 1973, the activities of the sisters living or teaching at John F. Kennedy Memorial High School are recorded in the Chronicles of the Southwest Seattle/Olympia Region. The departure of the sisters from the campus residence in July 1976 is mentioned briefly, but otherwise there is little information on school activities or administration.

The records of the education ministry and the Education Division of Sacred Heart Province contain related correspondence, reports, and an incomplete set of enrollment statistics for the school.

See separate index for articles on Kennedy High School printed in the periodical Caritas, published by the Sisters of Providence, Sacred Heart Province.

A small number of photographs and artifacts are stored and inventoried separately.

Processing Information: Records arranged and described by Terri Mitchell, Assistant Archivist; completed on November 22, 2000.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

History

This series contains two sets of chronicles for John F. Kennedy Memorial High School, 1966-1974. The chronicles are brief, but provide an interesting summary of school life and the activities of the sisters teaching at the school. The school's chronicles end in 1973, at which time the sisters began writing regional chronicles. (See Related Materials for information on the regional chronicles.)

Also found here is a folder of newsclippings covering important events in the foundation of the school, such as ground-breaking, opening, and dedication. All clippings in the collection were copied onto acid-free paper, with the originals retained in a separate folder or in the oversize newspaper collection.

Box	Folder	Title
1	1-2	Chronicles, 1966-1974 (2 sets)
1	3-4	Newsclippings, 1964-1968

Administration

The administration series contains one folder of correspondence primarily between the Reverend John P. Doogan, the school's first Principal, and Sister Cecilia Abhold (5146), Provincial Superior, Sacred Heart Province. Spanning 1966 to 1969, the letters describe in detail the difficulties and anxiety shared by Monsignor Doogan and Sister Cecilia as they worked together to staff the new school in a time of great change in the religious community. The folder, which was accessioned into the archives from the Provincial Administration, also includes a few letters from other correspondents.

Box	Folder	Title
1	5	Correspondence, Principals/Provincial Superiors, 1965-1968

Personnel

This series contains only a folder of miscellaneous items related to students and alumni, including several issues of the newsletter, Alumni Profile. There are no official student records or faculty records in the collection.

Box	Folder	Title
1	6	Students/Alumni, 1981-1995

Local Community

Local community records, which concern the governance and administration of the convent (local community), include only a list of local superiors and a folder of correspondence, which deals primarily with the naming of the sisters' residence. Most of the traditional local community records are missing from the collection.

Box	Folder	Title
1	7	Superiors
1	8	Correspondence, 1964-1969

Finanacial

The main financial record is a binder containing the following financial reports in chronological order: Convent Fund Balance Sheets, local council Acts of Council regarding loans and purchases, and Annual Account of the Financial Archives. Interleaved in the binder are the annual Personnel and Works Report, which detail faculty and enrollment statistics. The binder spans the years 1966 to 1972, with a final Personnel and Works Report for 1974. Although it is unusual for these various records (especially the Acts of Council) to be bound together, the original order has been retained.

Also found in this series are the convent expense/receipt ledgers, 1966-1972.

Box	Folder	Title
1	9	Reports, 1966-1974
1	10	Expense/Receipt Ledgers, 1966-1969
1	11	Expense/Receipt Ledgers, 1970-1972

Reports

The one folder in this series contains a brief report from March 1970, which gives some basic information on the school's curriculum and organization.

Box	Folder	Title
1	12	Miscellaneous, 1970

Subject Series

The folders in this series are arranged in alphabetical order, including anniversaries, commencement, dedication, and fundraising activities. Of greatest interest are the dedication (1968) and twenty-fifth anniversary (1991) folders, which feature commemorative tabloids with good descriptions of the facility and curriculum.

Box	Folder	Title
1	13	Anniversary, 25th, 1991
1	14	Commencement, 1970s
1	15	Dedication, 1968
1	16	Fundraising Activities, 1970s

Publications

This series comprises an incomplete set of the school yearbook, Imago, from the 1970s and 1980s.

Box	Folder	Title
2	-	Yearbooks, Imago, 1970-1974, 1977, 1986