



The Flaget Museum

Xaverian Hall
St. Xavier High School Campus



Under the auspices of the Flaget Alumni Association

1942-1974

Contact Information

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This month I want to look back at a moment of history that we all wish we could change, the closing of Flaget High School. All of our memories change a bit as we age, so I have heard a great deal about the reasons and thoughts of the alumni on why the school closed and what happened to "the money we raised to save the school." Possibly I can refresh those memories and answer the money question. In 1952 Flaget was the largest catholic high school in the Archdiocese of Louisville. In 1953 Trinity High School was opened, then in 1956 DeSales was opened, and in 1960 Bishop David High School came into being. These three schools, all situated to draw potential students away from Flaget. In 1955 there were 16 Catholic elementary schools in the west end, by 1965 that number was down to 13, by 1970 it was down to 10, and in 1973, the number had declined to only 6. These were the root system that supplied the Flaget tree with the students it needed to survive, cut off the roots, and the tree dies. Combine the above with the fact that in the 1960s the advance work, land purchase, and construction of the Shawnee Expressway got under way, cutting a wide swath thru the neighborhoods which contained the housing where many of the Flaget families resided. Urban renewal projects in the west end further reduced the housing which was available. All of the above contributed to the condition that resulted in the January 1971 statement by Archbishop McDonough which said, and I paraphrase, in order for Flaget to remain open two conditions must be met. A minimum of 250 students in the senior high school must pre-register for the coming school year, and the Flaget community must raise at least one-half of the yearly deficit for running the school. For the 71-72 school year those requirements were met with about \$60,000 being raised. Many forms of fund raising were utilized to get to that mark, a walking marathon, candy sales, raffles, and a community mailing were all used and achieved the desired goal. The next year however, the monetary goal was not met, but the excess raised the year prior was used to make up the difference of what was needed for the archbishop's requirement. When January of 1974 rolled around the requirement of 250 pre-registered students fell short, and the community, weary of the constant fund raising could only supply about \$18,000, well short of the requirement. On top of this, a court had just ruled in a case which would bring to an end the program where Shawnee teachers taught science to Flaget students. This ruling would require the equipping of a new science lab at Flaget and the additional cost of hiring teachers for it. Also several of the Xaverian brothers would be leaving Flaget for a number of reasons and there was doubt that they would be replaced by the brotherhood, so additional teachers would have to be hired. In January 1974 with all these factors weighing heavily, the catholic school board voted, and the archbishop consented, to close Flaget High School at the end of the 1974 school year. It was decided that the money which had already been raised, would go for scholarships for Flaget underclassmen to attend other catholic high schools and for transportation supplementation for those who needed the help in order to attend another catholic high school. So, to those who have asked me, "where did our fund raising money go?" I hope this answers the question, but to the conspiracy theory people, I can only tell you that this is what was found and you have to draw your own conclusions.

As always the Flaget Museum is seeking vintage memorabilia. Anything to do with Flaget High School is wanted; no matter how trivial you may think it is. Sports programs and Landmarks are especially sought in order to complete our collections. A special thanks to Norm Lickteig '56 for his donations which included both football programs we needed as well as a Landmark newspaper which we were missing.

On the table in the front of the room is a photo of our speaker this month, Gene Rhodes. He is talking with Darel Carrier and Adolph Rupp.