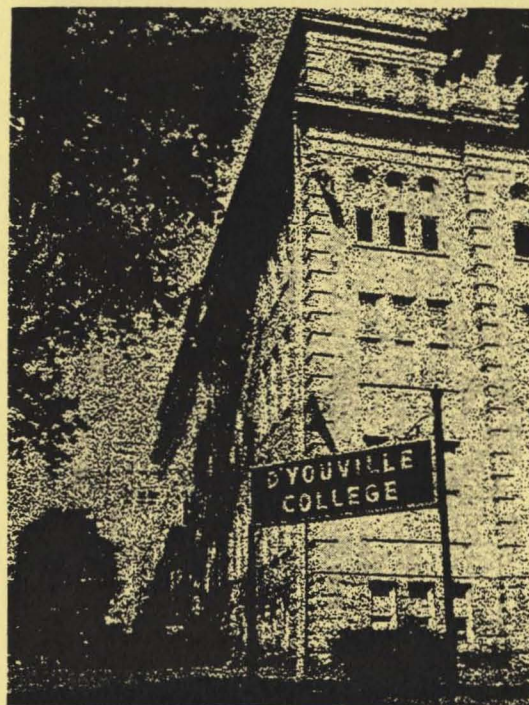


heritage series

a wing is built ;  
a college is born

1908



--- 75 years ---



## A CHANGE OF PLAN

By early 1907 it was evident that another addition to Holy Angels Academy was inevitable. Under the direction of Sister Stanislaus Mulhearn, superior and principal of the academy, specifications were drawn up and bids let for a wing on Prospect Avenue. The blue prints bear the title "An Addition to and Alterations in Holy Angels Academy" and clearly indicate that the new building was intended to be just that. Plans called for rooms for a kindergarten, a children's dormitory, juniors' play room, etc. Even today, if you were to remove the D'Youville College sign above the Prospect door, you would see clearly the name Holy Angels Academy.

Somehow, during those months when the addition was under construction, the idea of a college for women gained strength. The transition is not clearly cut. We cannot pinpoint a single source or a single founder. We do know that, in its almost fifty years of existence, Holy Angels Academy had built a tradition of culture and excellence in education. Alumnae and friends had, at times, urged consideration of a college. A few Grey Nuns at the academy had talked about it. Sister Stanislaus probably was the power behind the scenes. One source suggests:

Too little has been said about Sister Stanislaus, the humble Grey Nun who struggled so valiantly to obtain the permission to build the college. She had first to pay off a heavy debt on the community wing of the building. When that was done, the General Administration [of the Grey Nuns] of Ottawa very reluctantly gave their consent to the proposed project. Without funds, without a sufficient number of sisters properly qualified, without too much encouragement from the sisters, she undertook the obligation bravely. Sister Stanislaus was not only a great teacher and educator but a great builder as well. It is to her fearlessness and foresight that D'Youville College owes its existence.

The other strong figure was Bishop Charles Colton, head of the diocese of Buffalo and outstanding for his interest in education. Early in 1908, he made known his desire that a college department be added to the academy. He then applied to the New York State legislature for a change of name and a college charter. The bill passed the Assembly and was signed on April 4, 1908, by Charles Evans Hughes, then governor of New York State. Thus came into existence the institution entitled "D'Youville College and the Academy of the Holy Angels." The new wing was no longer merely an addition to Holy Angels Academy. The college name honors Marguerite D'Youville, a pioneer North American social worker who, in the eighteenth century, founded the Grey Nuns in Montreal.

## THE PROSPECT WING

A large building with four stories and a lower level, the addition joined the West Wing and stretched along Prospect Avenue. The Buffalo Courier called it "a magnificent new structure." Inside, the Victorian theater/auditorium graced the first and second floors. It was much like its modern restoration except that the stage was shorter and bordered by tiers of steps which accommodated large choral groups. Here were held Commencement and Class Day exercises, Dean's meetings and assemblies. Here were produced Shakespearean plays with lords and ladies seated in the boxes. And from this stage were delivered lectures by literary greats and scholars from the United States, England and Ireland.



St. Cecilia's Hall, now Joan of Arc, occupied the rest of the first floor. This small concert hall with a stage at the far end was an indication of the importance the college and academy placed on instrumental and vocal music. The present study cubicles and offices on either side were piano practice rooms, busy many hours each day with music pupils from first grade status through college. Recitals were a normal event each month. The rooms now used by Campus Ministry were instructors' rooms with baby grand pianos.

Second and third floors provided ample space for classrooms and for science laboratories. The fourth floor, ghostly now, was a lively area in its day for it was home to the resident students, called boarders. Rooms were large and airy. The ones fronting on Prospect Avenue looked out on the green trees of Prospect Park and the whitecaps of Lake Erie. Tiled baths connected adjoining rooms. The very large room with a skylight at the north end was, appropriately, an art studio.

Favorite sanctum of the college students were the three large rooms under the theater. These were the clubrooms. A piano, wicker furniture, rugs and cheery drapes created a homey atmosphere for the students who gathered there for study and

(continued)

recreation between and after classes. (Smoking, of course, would not be permitted for years to come.) At the other end of the lower level was a low-ceilinged gymnasium, semi-adequate for gym classes both for college and academy.

Some of these facilities were shared by college and academy, but at different times. Others, like the clubrooms, were completely off-limits to any except the college students.

SEPTEMBER 28, 1908

On this date, D'Youville held its first classes for the nine young women who presented themselves for higher education. On this date, then, D'Youville College became the first college for women in Western New York and the only area institution to grant baccalaureate degrees to women. It was also the second Catholic college for women in New York State. That, too, is another story.

Sister Sheila Driscoll GNSH  
D'Youville College Archivist  
September 28, 1982