

THE HISTORY OF ST. JOHN ' S

On May 10, 1876, A young girl from Dubuque , Iowa , Clara Fuhrman , age 7 , was introduced to Fr. Theodore Bruener , The rector of Pio Nono College and Catholic Normal School at St. Francis, Wisconsin . Father Bruener decided it would be wonderful if the teachers would work with deaf children as well as hearing. The word spread. On May 22, Oscar Tuvelis, age 7 , from Sheboygan was registered on June 8 , Joseph Wald entered. He was 11 years old and came from Windsor, Ontario , Canada. By September , 1876 There were 17 Deaf Pupils at the Normal School. May 10, 1876 is considered the founding date of St. John's School for the Deaf.

*St. Mary
Munich*

Father Bruener quickly saw the need for a separate school for deaf children and so He began visiting Wisconsin parishes and churches in the surrounding states. With the help of the Jubilee Collection of Pope Pius IX He was able to build a two-story brick building next to Pio Nono which became known as the Catholic Deaf and Dumb Asylum.

The first teaches at the school were Mr. Adam Stettner from St. Louis followed by Sister Longina , a Franciscan nun from St. Louis, and Mr. Louis Mihm who later became a Deacon.

The early school was concerned with teaching reading , writing , mathematics and religion. Lipreading and speech were taught and used in the classrooms. Sign language was restricted to dormitories and play periods. In 1882 Mr. Matthew Heck , a deaf man, joined the staff and began a shoe repair shop with the students this trade helped to support the school which received only a small tuition income from its students.

In June , 1889 the school closed because of financial problems but it was reopened only three months later when Father Gerend was appointed Director of Pio Nono College . He changed the name , Catholic Deaf and Dumb Asylum, to St. John 's Institutes for Deaf Mutes. He made the school a trade school by adding Mr. E. Brielmaier , a mason and carpenter, to the staff. The boys learned cabinet-making , carpentry , painting , decorating , gliding , drawing and designing. St. John's became especially known for making church furniture. The girls were taught sewing , cooking , baking and housekeeping. They did laundry and kitchen work for people in the neighborhood.

Father Gerend built a Chapel for St. John's in 1893 dedicated to Archbishop Heiss who had left his entire estate to the school.

In 1895 St. John's became independent from Pio Nono College and Fr. Gerend became its Director and remained Director of the school until his death. He supported the school through its trades , tuition (\$ 12

per month for those who could afford it) , and his writing . He wrote children 's stories and began a publication called Our Young People.

The fame of St. John's spread through his efforts and he was raised to the rank of Monsignor by the Catholic Church. When he died in 1938, he has a staff of eleven sisters and two assistants, Rev. Steven Klopfer and Rev. Eugene Gehl.

Father Gehl became the new Director. He continued the magazine for a time but became more well known for his retreats and missions. His travels not only aided the school financially but also spread the name of the name of St. John's States . Father Gehl changed the name of the school to its present titled, St. John's School for the Deaf. He died in 1963 on the anniversary of the school , May 10. He had given the entire fifty-four years of his priestly life to the school and the cause of the deaf.

Father Lawrence Murphy became Director in 1963. He had been assistant at St. John's since his ordination in 1950. For many years the eighth grade graduates of St. John's had been going to other schools , especially St. Mary 's in Buffalo and St. Rita's in Cincinnati. Furthermore, the buildings of the old were no longer suitable for residence and for the methods used in more advanced deaf education. Father Murphy began working on his dream of a high school department for the students in a completely new facility including dormitories and classrooms in one building and an adjoining recreational facility with a gym, swimming pool , theater , teen center and large playroom .

Archbishop William P. Cousins listened to the plans and offered generous encouragement. With the aid of money from the Archdiocese and the fund raising of the children and such friends as the Knights of Columbus and the Christ Child Society, the new buildings were both completed. The school was finished in 1967 and the old school building and little gym were razed. The recreational facility was completed in 1973. St. John's became one of the finest nursery through twelfth grade residential schools in the country. '

Father Murphy continued to encourage the oral method of instruction in the elementary grades and introduced the "combined-method" from the seventh grade through twelfth. That method later became known as "Total Communication."

In 1974 Father Murphy resigned because of ill health. Archbishop Cousins placed the school under the joint supervision of Father Donald Zerkel and Sister Roberta LePine. Father Zerkel was to be Director of the school buildings , non-teaching staff and all non-educational matters. Sister Roberta became Principal of the school and the entire teaching program.

Father Murphy was resigned because of ill health ; that not true . Because Father Murphy did molested about 200 deaf boys at St. John's School for the Deaf in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He was living up north by his parents in Boulder Junction, Wisconsin. He was playing at the casino and he fell to the ground and he got a massive stroke and died on August 21, 1998. In Milwaukee A lots of priest including the archbishop disliked Father Murphy.