Father Michael Caridi, pastor of the parish, reflected on the decision:

“While obviously there is much disappointment and great sadness that Saint Anne School had to close its doors this year, it does give the parish an opportunity to look back with a great sense of pride and gratitude that for 126 years we were able to provide generations of children with outstanding academic, spiritual and personal formation.”

The Early Years
Saint Anne Church, founded in 1889, holds a place of significance in the Pittsburgh diocese.

From its humble beginning as a mission under the Passionist Fathers, Saint Anne’s has come to be recognized as the ‘mother’ parish of the South Hills. A dozen or more parishes have sprung up in the once sparsely-settled territory to which it first gave a place of worship.

Education of the children of Saint Anne families began in 1893 under the leadership of the first pastor, Father Anselm Clemens, C.P., when “The Sacristy School” opened with the construction of the first Saint Ann (the original spelling) church building on Willow Avenue.

The Sacristy School was so-named because the church sacristy doubled as the lone classroom for two years. The school initially enrolled 15 students and the first teacher and principal was Flora Schafer.

The following year saw the construction of a one-room frame schoolhouse at a cost of $800. A Souvenir Program from 1954 included this reflection:

With their immediate spiritual needs fulfilled, the thoughts of Father Anselm’s flock turned to the matter of their children’s education, and the next year, 1894, a small frame schoolhouse was erected.

The site selected for the new school building is admirable as to location and adaptability. It is opposite the church and provided space for a fine athletic field and other outdoor activities in addition to room for the extension of the building, should there be a need for it.

The one schoolroom was adequate for the 1895 through 1898 academic years, but by 1899, enrollment had grown to 60 and the schoolroom was partitioned into classrooms. That same year religious sisters were brought to the parish to instruct students. First to arrive were the Sisters of Saint Agnes (CSA) of Fond-du-lac, Wisconsin.

Exactly how the CSA Sisters came to be invited to Castle Shannon remains a bit of a mystery. Father Michael Frank was the pastor in 1899 when Bishop Richard Phelan invited the Congregation to teach at the school. A clue is found in a 1990 letter in the parish archives from Father Frank’s great-nephew, John H. Frank of Clarksburg, West Virginia, in which he wrote the following:

Father Michael had younger sisters who became nuns of CSA. The older of the two entered her novitiate in 1886 and the younger in 1894. Perhaps
this family connection allowed Father Michael to obtain the services of the CSA in the school.\textsuperscript{14}

In October of 1899 the Congregation sent Sister M. Bernard Murphy, CSA and Sister M. de Chantal Welling, CSA.\textsuperscript{15} A third Sister followed later.\textsuperscript{16}

By 1903, under Father Frank’s tutelage, the one-room classroom building was demolished and a frame two-story building, with two-rooms on each floor was built and enrollment increased to 160. Naturally, the new school required the services of a janitor. One was engaged at a salary of fifty cents per month.\textsuperscript{17}

Because of the death of Sister M. Bernard and the serious illness of Sister M. de Chantal, the CSA were forced to withdraw from their ministry at the school in 1905\textsuperscript{18} and the Sisters of Divine Providence (CDP) arrived to begin 85 years of service to the school.\textsuperscript{19}

The dawn of the beneficence of the Congregation has been recorded in *Chronicles of the Sisters of Divine Providence*:

In the spring of 1905, Mother Frances again accepted a new mission, namely, St. Ann, Castle Shannon, near Pittsburgh. Reverend Anthony Vogel, a former assistant at SS. Peter and Paul parish, was pastor at St. Ann’s. This was a congregation of mixed nationalities, mostly coal miners who lived scattered among the mining regions. It was difficult for the children to make their way to school in all kinds of weather, and the many different languages of the pupils made teaching rather a difficult task. It was a real mission work, but the charity of Christ makes all burdens light. In the latter part of August 1905 Sister Theresa (Wehrheim), Sister Pascal (Teves), Sister Petronella (Schuler) and Sister Hedwig (Hauschmidt), took up their abode at St. Ann’s, Castle Shannon, which many years later became one of the largest and most flourishing missions in the Province.\textsuperscript{20}
Father Charles Hipp succeeded Vogel on January 10, 1907 and his first undertaking was to renovate the schoolhouse and build an addition to it in order to provide accommodations for the children of this rapidly growing section. A brick addition was built with a brick veneer added to the old frame building. Modern heating and ventilating systems were installed.

In 1912 a third story was added atop the school building to accommodate the increased enrollment of 370 students.

The first and second stories contain classrooms; the third story contains a large auditorium and meeting rooms. In the basement are the boiler rooms, gymnasium, pool rooms, bowling alleys, a model kitchen, and a lunch room. It was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. Regis Canevin, October 1912, on which occasion the Bishop delivered a most impressive sermon.

The rapid growth in Catholic population was not unique to Castle Shannon. The dramatic industrialization of the Pittsburgh region attracted Catholic immigrants mainly from Central and Southern Europe and the Catholic population of the diocese increased from 280,000 in 1900 to 581,327 by 1930. Between 1904 and 1921 the diocese erected a new church every month.

The World War I Years

The number of students continued to increase during the difficult years of World War I. At the time of Father Hipp’s death in 1918 enrollment had swelled to 600. However, the 1919 coal miner’s strike precipitated a loss of 250 students. The strike caused the parish a loss of many families who moved elsewhere to earn a livelihood. This reduced the number of pupils to about 350.

The Depression and Years Immediately Following

Father Joseph Gerold succeeded Father Hipp and served as pastor from 1919 until his own death in 1929 and was followed by Father F. Aloysius Angel who served from 1930-1949.

The first work undertaken by the new pastor (Father Angel) was the general remodeling of all the parish buildings entailing an expense of $7,285. By the year 1931, this expense had been paid. By this time inroads of the disastrous depression entered into the parish halting various projects in view. But thanks to Divine Providence and Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the parish weathered the storm and emerged with-
out borrowing one cent of money.28

The 25th Jubilee of service to the school by the Sisters of Divine Providence was celebrated in 1930, as recorded in the parish archives:

Human words fail to tell of the wonderful work performed by this noble and self-sacrificing band of nuns in a school of fourteen nationalities. The celebration for the occasion consisted of a High Mass of Thanksgiving attended by hundreds of former pupils. As a jubilee gift the former pupils donated a large Frigidaire and the individual members of the parish donated beautiful all-wool blankets for the twin beds in the convent. Even their dining room was not forgotten, as a member of the parish donated a complete set of dinner dishes. A nice spirit towards our teaching sisters is cultivated at Saint Anne’s. May it ever continue.29

School Patrols began in 1931 with the training of seventh and eighth graders to assist younger students at school crossings and other intersections in the community.30

During the years 1933 and 1934, owing to the Depression, only necessary repairs were made on all buildings. Conditions began to look brighter in 1935. In the school the corridors received new paint and the auditorium with its new walls and ceiling tinted presented a charming picture for the large gathering of parishioners to honor Father Angel on the occasion of his silver jubilee of Ordination, October 13, 1935.31

The Baby-Boom Years
Enrollment increased from 350 in 1948 to 400 in 1949, the year Father Eugene Harkins was appointed pastor.

The arrival of Father Harkins coincided with the start of the almost phenomenal post-war development of Castle Shannon and the problems of guiding a parish which was growing by leaps and bounds were prodigious. The most difficult task, however, was presented by the school. In five years the enrollment doubled to 800 pupils.32

The school building of 1912 was overcrowding to the extent that those facilities originally built for a gymnasium, kitchen, lunchroom and meeting rooms had been converted into classrooms. It was necessary for (Father Harkins) to build a new building.33

Father Harkins’ building campaign was kicked-off at the November 1952 Holy Name Society Communion Breakfast attended by nearly 500 men.34

Ground was broken on Easter Sunday, April 20, 1953 and the cornerstone was blessed and laid on June 28. Several classrooms opened in January of 1954 while construction was still proceeding. The addition added classrooms, a gymnasium and renovated cafeteria. The addition accommodated the 600 pupils enrolled in the first three grades while the 200 students in the upper grades continued their classes in the old building.35

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette announced the March 20, 1954 dedication:

Dedication of a new $400,000 addition to St. Anne School in Castle Shannon will take place next Saturday morning. The Most Rev. John F. Dearden will officiate at the ceremony. He will be assisted by his secretary, the Rev. Jacob Shirar. The Rev. Patrick D. Harkins, pastor of St. Matthew Church, Tyrone, PA, will preach the dedication sermon. The Rev. E.W. Harkins is pastor of St. Anne Church which is the mother parish of all Catholic churches in South Hills. The new structure, of Indiana limestone with aluminum trim, consists of 12 classrooms, a large multi-purpose room, a kitchen-cafeteria, and an audio-visual training room. From its original one-story frame building, erected in 1894 with a handful of students, St. Anne’s has grown to its present size and nearly 900 students.37

This was the first time in many years that the facility enjoyed a bit of breathing room.

During this time the first school uniforms were introduced.
A red and green plaid jumper was adopted for the girls. The boys uniform consisted of navy-blue trousers, light blue shirt and navy-blue necktie. Also it was during the 1950s that a class for “exceptional children” was introduced with 17 pupils. Sister Cyrilla was the teacher.

With spare classrooms now available in the original building, the school had twenty classrooms with a capacity of 1,000 pupils. But even that volume would prove insufficient within a few years as baptisms at Saint Anne’s numbered 261 in 1952 and 241 in 1953. In 1956, with enrollment approaching 1,500 it was again necessary to build and seven more classrooms were added.

In 1957, with an enrollment of 1,535, three buildings were in operation. Grades six through eight were housed in Building I (known as “the old school”) with grades four and five occupying the seven rooms of Building II and a room of the old building, and grades one through three occupied Building III, the 1954 building. The senior library was on the second floor of Building II; the junior library was on the top floor, taking the place of the former auditorium of the old school building. The children no longer ate lunch in the classrooms; a hot lunch program was initiated with the cafeteria and a section of the gym used for this purpose. The teacher’s lunchroom was on the stage behind the curtain. Three lunch periods were established and the students used both the Rockwood Avenue and Willow Avenue playgrounds for recreation.

The 1960s
In 1961 enrollment peaked at a historic high of 1,611 but dropped to 1,357 in 1962 when Saint Winifred School opened with four grades in Mt. Lebanon, two miles north of Saint Anne.

A number of extracurricular activities accompanied this growth in student enrollment. Sister Marlene Luffy, a 1960s faculty member, and later principal, shared this recollection:

During these years many activities emerged through the interest and involvement of the parents. The PTG which was begun in the late forties now blossomed into a dynamic and effective organization. Membership reached an all-time high of over 1,000 parents attending monthly meetings. Saint Anne’s began a school band under the direction of Mr. Louis Rocero. Through the efforts of Father George Leech a revision of the football organization occurred and a basketball team was organized. The Athletic Association was supported by Bob Kobosky, Don Boss, Joe Boss, Sr., Bill Malone, Jim Creehan and Art Creehan. Father Leech was instrumental in acquiring physical and financial assistance to construct recreational equipment on the playgrounds. Swings, slides, see-saws and gymnastic bars were installed on both playgrounds.

The President’s Physical Fitness Program began at Saint Anne’s, and the children now had physical education on a regular basis; Bill McArdle was the first gym teacher and the first coach of the basketball team. The sports program included boys football, basketball, wrestling and hockey. The girls cheerleading squads began in the early 50s and girls basketball in the middle 1960s.

The general physical education Program for the school was initiated in the mid-1960s by Sister John Ann Mulhern, a seventh grade teacher, who also initiated the girls basketball team at that time, and was the first girls basketball coach. In 1964 Mr. Joseph Quaquarucci was hired by Father George Leech as a full-time member of the faculty to coach both the boys football and basketball teams. Year after year a junior varsity and varsity team was fielded, and often won their section, or the local championship. Cheerleaders were chosen from among the female students, and with great enthusiasm led cheering before audiences on the home court and fields and when away games were played.

Sister Marlene also emphasized the philosophy of the school has always been to develop the whole child —
body, mind and spirit — and to encourage each child to use and develop his or her God-given talents and skills within an environment of Christian values and academic excellence. In fulfilling this philosophy, a Fine Arts program was initiated in the 1960s, which included an annual Fine Arts Night with Junior High choruses, talent shows and art exhibits. During these years the diocese embarked on a non-graded educational system of learning and the school was one of the pilot schools chosen as part of this endeavor. Additionally, an advanced mathematics system (“the Number-aid”) was introduced in the primary grades; conversational French was introduced in the early 1960s beginning in the second grade; and the Junior Academy of Science began in the Junior High.

In 1964 the school had the opportunity to execute with great success the oft-practiced fire drill when a wastepaper basket caught fire. The incident was recorded in the parish archives:

Some 1,300 pupils were driven from their classrooms by the smoldering wastebasket and stood outside as Castle Shannon Volunteer Firemen cleared the building of smoke and extinguished the burning paper. Fire officials say the fire was apparently started by a cigarette thrown into the wastebasket by a truck driver. Sister Muriel, principal of the school, said it took less than two minutes to evacuate the students.45

Saint Anne School now featured 32 classrooms averaging 43 students per class with 23 teaching Sisters of Divine Providence and 7 lay teachers. Enrollment stabilized near 1,300 until the summer of 1969 when, in the wake of...
Vatican II, the school lost 200 students — the beginning of a precipitous drop that would strip enrollment of nearly 1,000 pupils within a decade.

The 1970s
Father John Hugo was appointed pastor in 1970 and introduced the first Saint Anne School Board.

This period was a difficult one for the Catholic School System. It was at this period that Religious Women from all over the world were leaving their communities; the Sisters of Divine Providence were not spared. Most of the turmoil at this time was due to publicity. Mary Perkin Ryan’s book *Are Parochial Schools the Answer?* was on the market. Many questioned the value of the Catholic schools. Many religious were leaving the schools for other works. Because of fewer religious in the schools there was a need to hire more lay teachers and the cost of education was on the rise. Father Hugo felt a need for a consultative board and the first school board was appointed in 1970. The following members served: Philip Chimento, Joseph Connelly, Daniel Enright, Tom Garbark, Virginia Hogan, Dorothy Isabel, and Donald Swisher.

One of the first decisions of the Board was an expectation that a definite contribution from parents of the school children be given to the church each Sunday.

In 1971 the School Board inaugurated the Saint Anne Parish Fair, held in the school parking lot, as an event to fund-raise for the school. This event became an annual tradition, successful by all measures, and was held continuously through 2019.

Tuition was introduced for the first time in 1972 and was pegged at $100 for up to two students and $75 for each child thereafter. At this time more children were graduating than were entering the school. In 1971 enrollment stood at 573 but dropped to 414 in 1973 with 8 religious sister teachers and 16 lay teachers, marking the first year lay teachers outnumbered religious sisters. Also, in 1973 kindergarten was initiated with hopes of encouraging growth of the school. This was followed in 1975 with the introduction of a nursery school for 3 and 4 year olds.

Although enrollment had decreased, school spirit was high. Extracurricular activities at this time placed emphasis on the Arts — ballet, chorus, art, and public speaking. Forensics was introduced and Algebra, which began in the early 1960s, continued to be taught. French began in second grade and continued to be taught in the upper grades.

In the mid-1970s, due to deterioration in the old school, it was necessary to vacate the top two floors and only the first floor was occupied. In May of 1976 Monsignor Charles Owen Rice became pastor and saw an immediate need to evacuate the old building and renew the school structure. During this year the old school was abandoned. With the assistance of Father James Garvey, associate pastor, plans were in operation for a solid structure with more consolidation of space.

In February 1977, the energy crisis caused much turmoil in
all school districts. Heat was turned off and many schools were forced to close. Saint Anne’s was able to stay open because parents volunteered space heaters for the classrooms. In trying to keep a consistent learning atmosphere the school schedule was revised to accommodate teaching through the warmer part of the day. On May 23, 1977 demolition of the old structure commenced and construction continued into the 1977-1978 school year which saw an enrollment of 214 with eleven lay teachers and six religious. Not one day of school was missed due to the construction, but on February 21, 1978, a water pipe broke during the night damaging many areas of the building and destroying the gymnasium floor, requiring installation of a new floor two months later.

The dedication of the new $396,000 structure which included a CCD office, cafeteria, kitchen, new back entrance with plaza, and chapel took place on September 10, 1978 led by Bishop Vincent M. Leonard. Monsignor Rice was the principal celebrant and homilist for the Mass that preceded the dedication and blessing.

In the late 1970s the students of the upper levels participated in “interest classes” once a month with parents teaching the sessions and students choosing the class of their interests. Some of the offerings included woodcutting, sewing, chess, needlework, stamp collecting, macramé, crafts, tumbling, and folkdance. Parents and eighth graders collaborated to publish the first yearbook in 1979. In the mid-1970s, Marianne Welch, a parent whose four children were educated at the school, was an advocate of the performing arts who brought popular artists to Mt. Lebanon. In many cases she scheduled the artists so that they could appear at school assemblies. Some of the performances included string & woodwind ensembles, ballet, guitarists, classical piano, mime, and magicians. Wherever possible, students or groups of students were invited to participate in the performance.

During Sister Marlene Luffy’s eleven-year tenure as principal a spring show was presented annually with participation of students from the fourth to the eighth grades. The acting parts were taken by the seventh and eighth graders; the chorus was comprised of the fourth through sixth grade students. Pauline Baumgart conducted the stage; Father John Rushofsky, Parochial Vicar at the time, accompanied the chorus each year of his assigned time at the parish. When Father John was transferred, Karen Fort, the music teacher, accompanied the chorus. Baumgart continued to direct the plays for twelve years.

**Era of Change**

From 1978 until 1983 school enrollments stabilized near 240 with two sessions of kindergarten and a nursery school for four-year-old children held three afternoons per week. Though enrollment was steady during this period some extracurricular activities were affected, such as discontinuation of the football program in 1983 due to the small number of boys.
An Education for Total Development of the Child —

Body, Mind, and Soul

First St. Anne Church on the left, School building on right, c. 1910

Source: Diocese of Pittsburgh Archives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Congregation of St. Agnes</th>
<th>Sisters of the Holy Spirit</th>
<th>Sisters of Divine Providence</th>
<th>LAY FACULTY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899 - 1905</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905 - 1910</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920 - 1929</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930 - 1939</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940 - 1949</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950 - 1959</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960 - 1969</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 - 1979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 - 1989</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 - 1994</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: None were counted more than once though they may have served in multiple decades. 1990 was the final year any religious sisters served on the faculty. No written records were available after 1994.

Source: Saint Anne Parish Archives
### PRINCIPALS OF SAINT ANNE SCHOOL

**CASTLE SHANNON**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1893-1894</td>
<td>Flora Schafer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-1905</td>
<td>Sister M. Bernard Murphy, CSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905-1917</td>
<td>Sister Theresa Wehrheim, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Sister Michael Kindhauser, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-1929</td>
<td>No written record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-1930</td>
<td>Sister Jerome Gross, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-1932</td>
<td>Sister Luitgardis Moosmann, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-1934</td>
<td>Sister Justina Heilreigel, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-1937</td>
<td>Sister Anselma Elzer, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-1938</td>
<td>Sister Eulalia Huerbin, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938-1940</td>
<td>Sister Canice Nimpfer, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-1942</td>
<td>Sister Liguori Burkhardt, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942-1944</td>
<td>Sister Eusebia Reuss, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-1945</td>
<td>Sister Nathalia Goergan, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-1951</td>
<td>Sister Thomasine Hillenbrand, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1957</td>
<td>Sister Nathalia Goergan, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-1963</td>
<td>Sister Concepta Stanko, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-1969</td>
<td>Sister Muriel Young, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-1971</td>
<td>Sister Virginia Mertz, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1974</td>
<td>Father Charles Chatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-1976</td>
<td>Sister Marietta Ruhe, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-1977</td>
<td>Sister Mary Angela Vogler, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-1988</td>
<td>Sister Marlene Luffy, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1990</td>
<td>Sister Rita Adams, CDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-2015</td>
<td>Cathy Jakubowski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2020</td>
<td>Harmony Stewart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Saint Anne Parish Archives*
Still there were many hopeful signs as the school approached its tenth decade milestone as reported in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*:

As Saint Anne prepares for its 90th Anniversary, there are signs its fortune may be on the rise. Enrollment has grown from 200 students four years ago to 240 today. It has instituted a computer literacy program, established a nursery school and will open a day-care center next year.69

Monsignor Rice was quoted in the article:

> Our view is that the school will be able to support itself for many years. We have a nice, compact building that is in excellent shape, one we believe can handle any enrollment size in the future.60

The anniversary was celebrated with Mass in the church followed by historical exhibits, entertainment and refreshments in the school hall. The students released ninety helium balloons with messages attached61 offering a prize to the finder of a balloon the furthest distance from Castle Shannon. The eventual winning balloon descended 26 miles east in Greensburg.

In June of 1986 Monsignor Rice retired and Father Donald Breier was named pastor. At this time the faculty undertook a two-year self-evaluation to assess the strength and vision of the school. The evaluation was presented to the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) in May of 1988 and the school received its accreditation.62

In 1987 seventh and eighth grade students made news for a letter-writing campaign aimed at the clutter littering a vacant lot directly across from the school.63 The *Pittsburgh Press* ran the article headlined “Students tell mayor of a lot of litter on lot.”

Seventh and eighth graders at St. Anne Elementary School were so tired of looking at a vacant lot across the street that they took their complaints right to the top.64 Castle Shannon Mayor Thomas O’Malley received 31 letters. ‘They really caught my eye with their letters’, O’Malley said. Sister Marlene Luffy, principal, said the students last year spent free time at lunch cleaning up the lot. But they became disillusioned because each weekend beer cans and other trash were dumped there. As a result of the student campaign O’Malley said he wrote a letter of his own to the Bridgeville man who owns the lot, telling him to clean it up by Monday or face citations that could carry fines of up to $300 for each day the litter remains.65

The 1988-1989 academic year began with the implementation of recommendations made by the NCEA while the school also pursued accreditation of the Middle States Association (MSA) which it received on April 6, 1990.66

A commentary accompanied the accreditation:

> Your accomplishments are truly praiseworthy and reflect a faculty that is striving to make the best possible use of current ideas and resources. We also commend you on the effective use of the MSA School Improvement Process. The reader finds the quality of writing, the use of the English language and the obvious dedication and forward looking professionalism of the staff to be exceptional.

The teachers show commitment to enhancing their own professional knowledge and skills. The administration and spiritual leadership have demonstrated openness and vision, and the parents are very supportive. The students of Saint Anne School are indeed very fortunate.67

In 1989, Saint Winifred School in nearby Mount Lebanon closed after 27 years; 28 of those students enrolled at Saint Anne. With the closure of Saint Norbert School in Pittsburgh’s Overbrook neighborhood the following year an additional 20 students transferred, bringing the Saint Anne’s enrollment to 318. This increase created the need to add classroom space in the annex hall and third floor faculty room.68

During the late 1980s and into the next decade the school benefitted for several years from two campaigns sponsored by local grocery stores whereby equipment was provided by saving cash register receipts. The first program, sponsored by Foodland, resulted in the office entering the computer age, with both hardware and software for administrative use. The second campaign, sponsored by Giant Eagle, resulted in a five year collection of over 4.4 million dollars in register tapes by which the school acquired 21 computers, 3 printers, a camcorder, VCR, a color TV and 80 software packages.69

The number of teaching sisters from the Sisters of Divine Providence had been declining through the post-Vatican II years. In 1988 the Congregation assigned Sister Rita Adams as principal; she served for two years. When she resigned at the end of the school year in 1990 there were no sisters available to be assigned. Over the span of 85 years (1905-1990), 20 different Sisters of Divine Providence served as principal and 300 different sisters of the Congregation taught at the school at various times.70
Father Breier hired a lay principal, Cathy Jakubowski, in 1990. She was the second lay principal — the first was Flora Schafer who taught in the Sacristy School a century earlier.

There were a few other changes in the early 1990s. During the 1991-1992 school year there were problems with the boiler causing a number of chilly days in the classrooms, and the administration was advised the largest roof was beyond repair. Several leaks in the heat return pipes under the gym floor caused damage. Fortunately through the generosity of a number of parish organizations, especially the school’s PTG, all of these repairs were paid without any additional burden to the parish.

In addition to the changes required by necessity, there were also several aesthetic changes during this period, especially to the chapel, which was painted, papered, and a stained glass window was added. Plaques with Mary and Jesus and representations of the children of the world — hand-carved in Italy, as well as a new crucifix, updated Stations of the Cross, a renovated pulpit and altar were added. All of these were made through the generous donations of supporters of the school.

Cathy Jakubowski, the longest-tenured principal, in charge from 1990 until 2015, shared three memories of her lengthy term. First, she noted the natural assimilation of all the students. There was “no class distinction” among the students; they were “well-blended, completely assimilated and accepting of everything and everybody.”

Secondly, she recalled how a number of former students, Boy Scouts, perhaps at least one per year, came back after their graduation and offered projects at the school in pursuit of their Eagle Scout certification.

She remembers fondly the 100th Anniversary celebration in 1993 that featured a Mass in the gymnasium followed by a luncheon held outdoors on school property, and that many of the Sisters of Divine Providence who formerly taught at the school returned for the event.

That same year, in a report drafted by Dr. Henry L. Ferguson commemorating the Centennial Year of the school, the mission of the school was affirmed:

As the school ends one hundred years of service, the mission of sharing the Gospel message through word and service remains as strong as it was at its founding. The commitment of the faculty, staff, administration and parish continue to provide a quality education in a gospel-centered environment.

The Final Years
Jakubowski retired in 2015 and Harmony Stewart became the 25th — and last — principal of the school. During Stewart’s tenure, enrollment grew from 138 in 2015 to 185 in 2019, and there were extensive improvements made to the facilities.

These improvements were not without pitfalls as it became evident that all the additions and changes to the physical plant over the decades resulted in buried wiring, unknown access points, and the need for asbestos abatement. Those
challenges did not hinder the vast improvement to the educational tools provided to students that included the introduction of STREAM, an educational approach to learning utilizing Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry and dialogue. Regarding the new program, Principal Stewart wrote:

When I arrived as Principal in 2015 I asked our teachers to change the lens through which they viewed their teaching practices. Teachers across all grade levels began modeling their lessons, activities, homework, and language to create an environment where elementary STREAM is a natural and effective part of the curriculum. Our focus was shifted to critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.

We converted our traditional school library to a makerspace library. A makerspace is a hands-on place where students use technology and materials to solve problems and apply STREAM education. Additionally we turned one of our traditional classrooms into a functional science lab. I could not be more proud of the new spaces that we provided our students.

Stewart estimated that during her five year tenure 80% of all graduates went on to Catholic high schools including Seton LaSalle, Bishop Canevin, Oakland Catholic, and Central Catholic.

Saint Anne School closed permanently at the end of the 2019-2020 academic year after graduating the 26 eighth graders who comprise the Class of 2020. Stewart was disappointed that the students were not able to complete the year in the classrooms when the coronavirus crisis discontinued in person learning on March 16.

Lamenting the closing Stewart stressed “the loss to the community, and the void that will be left in Castle Shannon, in the parish, and most especially the disappointment felt by the students, their families, and alumni.” She remarked how she had felt especially welcomed by all the school and parish families and alumni at events such as the Annual Golf Outing and the Parish Fair: “Saint Anne people are a family.”

As the closing date approached Father Caridi addressed the matter in the parish bulletin:

Having been a part of the school family myself for the past six years, I have to admit that there is something uniquely beautiful about what unfolds there and it has been wonderful to be a part of it!

And so, as our final school year draws to its close, our parish honors all of the wonderful people whose blood, sweat and tears have been poured into the story of Saint Anne School: the children and their parents, the teachers and staff, the priests and sisters, the coaches, volunteers and generous benefactors, and the list goes on . . .

… So many awesome people and so much love and sacrifice are the legacy our school leaves behind. And how blessed our parish has been for the past 126 years to have had the privilege of providing a Catholic school for the community and forming generations of children in body, mind, and soul. WELL DONE SAINT ANNE SCHOOL! THANK YOU!

Endnotes:
2 Saint Anne School was officially founded and named in 1894, though education of children began in 1893 in what was known as “The Sacristy School.”
4 Saint Anne School Souvenir Program 1954, St. Anne Parish Archives (Parish Archives).
5 Father Anselm Clemens, C.P. was pastor from 1892-1896.
6 The second and current Saint Anne Church building is located less than one mile west at 400 Hoodridge Drive, also within the border of Castle Shannon Borough.
7 Although the first church building was constructed in 1893, the parish was founded in 1889 as a mission springing from Saint Michael, South Side, Pittsburgh, and served by the Passionists until it was turned over
to the diocese in 1896. From 1889 to 1893 Masses were celebrated in a private home. See James Hanna, “The First Fathers of the ‘Mother Church’ of South Hills,” Gathered Fragments 29 (2019). Designed by F.C. Sauer, Pittsburgh architect, and constructed by Benz Brothers, the church was completed at a cost of $8,000.00 (Souvenir Program 1954).

4 “Saint Anne School, Castle Shannon, PA.,” manuscript, 1936, Parish Archives. (Hereafter referred to as 1936 Document.)

5 Souvenir Program 1954.

6 Ibid.

7 Father Frank was the first diocesan priest to be assigned to St. Anne and served as pastor from 1899 until his death in 1904.

8 Richard Phelan was the fourth bishop of Pittsburgh, serving from 1899-1904.

9 Signed handwritten letter held in Parish Archives.

10 Celebrating 125 Years: St. Anne Parish 1889-2014, St. Anne School 1894-2014 (Castle Shannon: St. Anne Parish, 2015), 39.

11 The author contacted the CSA Archives and unfortunately, they have no record of assignments prior to 1913.

12 1936 Document.

13 Celebrating, 40.

14 1990 was the final year the school was served by the Sisters of Divine Providence.

15 Taken from the Chronicles of the Sisters of Divine Providence,” undated, Parish Archives.

16 1936 Document.

17 John Francis Regis Canedin was the fifth bishop of Pittsburgh, serving 1904-1920.

18 1936 Document.

19 Kenneth J. Heineman, A Catholic New Deal: Religion and Reform in Depression Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA., 1999), 89.

20 According to a document in the Parish Archives “the parish was plunged into mourning when Father Hipp died, one of the many victims of the great influenza epidemics of that time.” The document appears to be from 1954 and is titled “Saint Anne — Jack Ward-Sund-Tele.” (Hereafter referred to as Jack Ward Document.)


22 1936 Document.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Celebrating, 42.

26 Ibid.

27 Souvenir Program 1954.

28 Sister Maureen Luffy, History of Saint Anne School, Part II, manuscript, 1984, Parish Archives. (Hereafter referred to as Luffy Document.)

29 Souvenir Program 1954.

30 Ibid.

31 John Dearden was the seventh bishop of Pittsburgh, serving from 1950-1959.

32 Newspaper clipping, undated, Parish Archives.

33 Luffy Document.

34 Ibid.


36 Ibid.

37 President John F. Kennedy convened a Council on Physical Fitness. “Although the council did not have the authority to impose a national program, it developed and promoted a curriculum to improve fitness. The council’s fitness curriculum was devised with the cooperation of nineteen major US educational and medical organizations. Two hundred thousand copies were distributed at no cost and another 40,000 were sold. The council engaged in a sweeping drive to achieve widespread participation in the program for the 1961-1962 school year. A core group of almost a quarter of a million schoolchildren took part in pilot projects in six states. At the end of the year, half again as many students passed a physical fitness test as had a year earlier. Furthermore, there was a general improvement of physical education programs around the country.” Accessed August 11, 2020, https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/physical-fitness?p=2.

38 Jack Ward Document. St. Anne School boasts of the many awards both from football and basketball in the trophy case. According to Sister Marlene Luffy the present trophy case was built in the early 1970s by teachers Rich Viti, Bob Fonte and Ralph Kidder, when the trophy shelving and smaller trophy cases outgrew its space.

39 Luffy Document.

40 “Saint Anne School Has Realism in Fire Drill,” Pittsburgh Press, April 7, 1964, 52.

41 The book, published by Holt, Rhinehart & Winston in January of 1964 was reviewed at the time by Kirkus Reviews: “Considering present day Catholic education in the light of the Council, Mary Perkins Ryan, author and lecturer, poses the question Are Parochial Schools the Answer? Her answer — bound to be violently and vehemently disputed by many — is that the Catholic educational system has outlived its usefulness and that the needs of the Church now lie elsewhere. Mrs. Ryan’s searching analysis of this pertinent issue can’t be dismissed as a ‘hatchet job’ on Catholic schools. The importance of these schools, especially to immigrant parents of the 19th and early 20th centuries, she admits, can never be over-emphasized. But she, argues, what about the Catholic school system today which is educating only 55% of Catholic children in elementary grades, 45% in high school, and 37% in college. Could the effort, money and personnel involved here be used more effectively to provide adequate religious formation for all Catholics — adults as well as children and young people? Mrs. Ryan is convinced that it could, and she pleads her case soundly, reasonably and realistically. There must be an all-out effort on the part of Bishops, priests and religious to educate and train Catholics in the renewal of Catholic life demanded by the Council. Parents so trained would then be in a position to re-form themselves — and form their children — into the kinds of Catholics who give witness to Christ on every level and in every aspect of our society. This is certain to be one of the most controversial books of the season in Catholic educational circles. Serious-minded Catholic parents and educators — whether they accept or reject Mrs. Ryan’s main thesis — will find much of value to ponder in this excellent book.” Mary Perkins Ryan, “Are Parochial Schools the Answer? Catholic Education in the Light of the Council,” release date January 13, 1964, Kirkus, accessed June 26, 2020, https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/a/mary-perkins-ryan/are-parochial-schools-the-answer-catholic-educational/.

42 Luffy Document.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Vincent Leonard was the ninth bishop of Pittsburgh, serving from 1969-1983.

56 Luffy Document.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 “Saint Anne Increases Enrollment but Keeps Tuition at 1974 Level,” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Living South Section, March 8, 1984, 17.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Henry L. Ferguson, Ed. D., manuscript, July 2, 1993 Parish Archives. (Hereafter referred to as Ferguson Document.)

63 The vacant lot was the site of the former Saint Anne Church which was razed in 1967. The parish sold the lot when new church was built on Hoosier Drive, a half-mile away. The vacant is today the site of an apartment complex.


65 Ibid.

66 Ferguson Document.

67 Ibid.

68 “Niederberger, “Students Tell Mayor.”

69 Luffy Document.

70 See accompanying table “Number of Religious Sisters on Faculty”.

71 “Niederberger, “Students Tell Mayor.”

72 Luffy Document.

73 Ferguson Document.

74 No written records of a principal exist for 1918-1929.

75 Harmony Stewart, “What is STREAM?,” O Good Saint Anne — A Chronicle of Parish Life, parish magazine, Winter 2017

76 Harmony Stewart, interview with the author, 2020.

77 St. Paul of the Cross Parish Bulletin, May 31, 2020. The parish was named Saint Paul of the Cross Parish on July 1, 2019 with the merger of Saint Anne Parish and Saint Wifred Parish; the church buildings retained their titles, as did Saint Anne School.