



History of Catholic High - 1930s

Catholic High School for Boys was established in September 1930 by Bishop John Morris at 25th and State Streets which was previously used by Little Rock College. The Diocese of Little Rock had operated a high school in conjunction with its Seminary and Little Rock College called Bishop Morris Preparatory School, and these schools even accepted boarding students. The college closed temporarily in 1930, the Seminary took over Little Rock College's facilities, and Bishop Morris Prep became Catholic High School for Boys.

The campus at 25th and State had two main buildings in 1908. Little Rock College, the Seminary, and Morris Prep continued to grow, and Bishop Morris began construction in 1911 on Fitzgerald Hall which still stands today. The Diocese purchased the land in the Heights neighborhood and built Little Rock College's new campus known as St. John's in 1916 as space was becoming an issue. This gave the Morris Prep full control over the 25th and State Streets campus, and Catholic High remained there until 1960.

Catholic High's first graduating class had five students. By 1939, there were 30 graduates. Msgr. John Healy was the first principal, and he served in that role for eight years until he was appointed Superintendent of all Catholic schools in the Diocese. He was succeeded in 1938 by Msgr. James O'Connell. The first full-scale athletic program came with the start of the 1931 school year. The "Rockets" was chosen as the school mascot, moving away from Little Rock College's mascot the "Eagles." However, Catholic High did maintain some connections with the eagle. An eagle appeared on the first Catholic High seal, the senior ring until 1954, many of the early yearbooks until the 1950s, and the first school newspaper was called "The Squawk" which appeared in 1932. There was also a stuffed eagle in a trophy case in Fitzgerald Hall at least until 1945.

Stay tuned for the history of the 1940s...