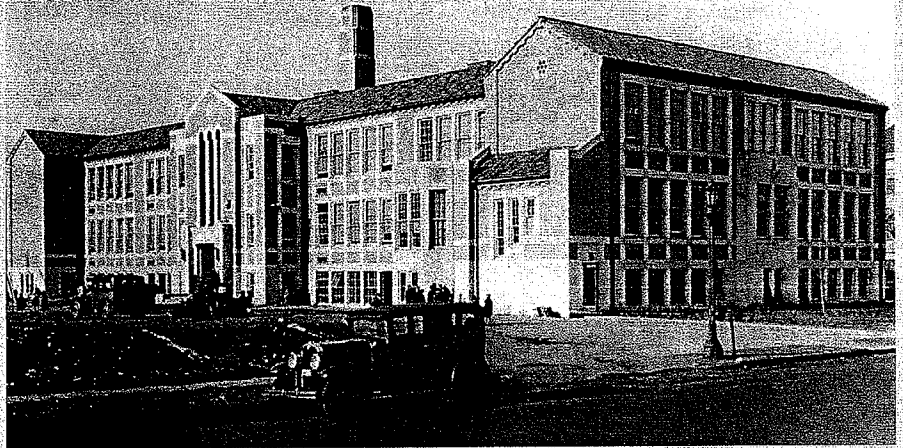


Located at the intersection of Portland and Victoria streets, OLP was owned and operated by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose headquarters was in Dubuque, Iowa. This order of nuns was nationally known for the excellent teaching it provided to children in the schools it managed. A day school, OLP enrolled only girls and just freshman attended classes in its initial year. Consequently on the opening day of school on September 10, the OLP student body numbered 113, representing thirty-one different parishes in the Twin Cities area. The establishment of OLP fulfilled an invitation that Bishop Joseph Cr tin had made in 1852 to the Sisters of Charity, BVM, that they open a girls' school in St. Paul.

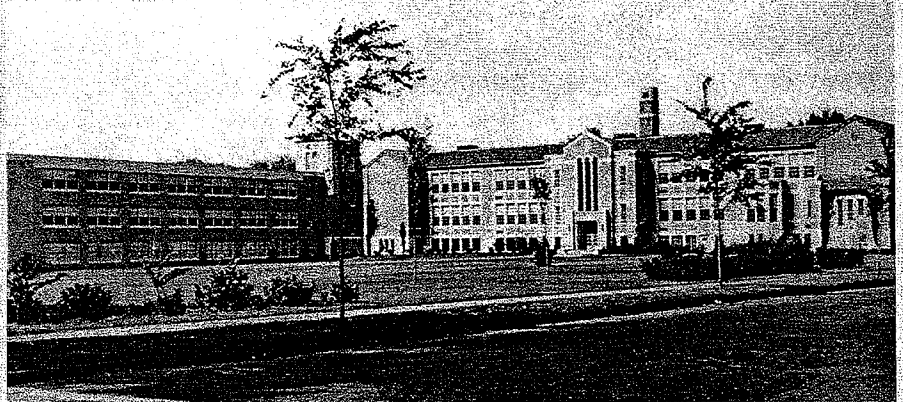
According to building permits in the St. Paul Building Permits Collection at the Ramsey County Historical Society, in 1931 St. Luke's parish (church building located at 1550 Summit Avenue) erected a school building for about \$280,000. This building replaced a school that St. Luke's had constructed on the same site (880 Portland) in 1904. Another building, a convent, was adjacent to the school.

OLP was a strong educational institution and was just one of a number of Roman Catholic schools in the Twin Cities area. In the early 1970s declining enrollments began to affect all the schools in the archdiocese. One newspaper report stated that in 1964, there were 178 schools in the archdiocese. When OLP closed at the end of the spring term in 1973, that total had declined to 132. Escalating costs was the primary reason for the school closures. The Sisters of Charity contracted with a local real estate company to handle the sale of the now-vacant building on Portland.

Ironically, rapidly increasing enrollments at the William Mitchell College of Law (WMCL), which had outgrown its quarters at 2100 Summit, forced the law school's trustees to actively look for a larger facility. In 1975 the college decided that the OLP site was the school's best choice for relocating in the Twin Cities. After much negotiating, which



*The second St. Luke's School, which was built in 1931. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.*



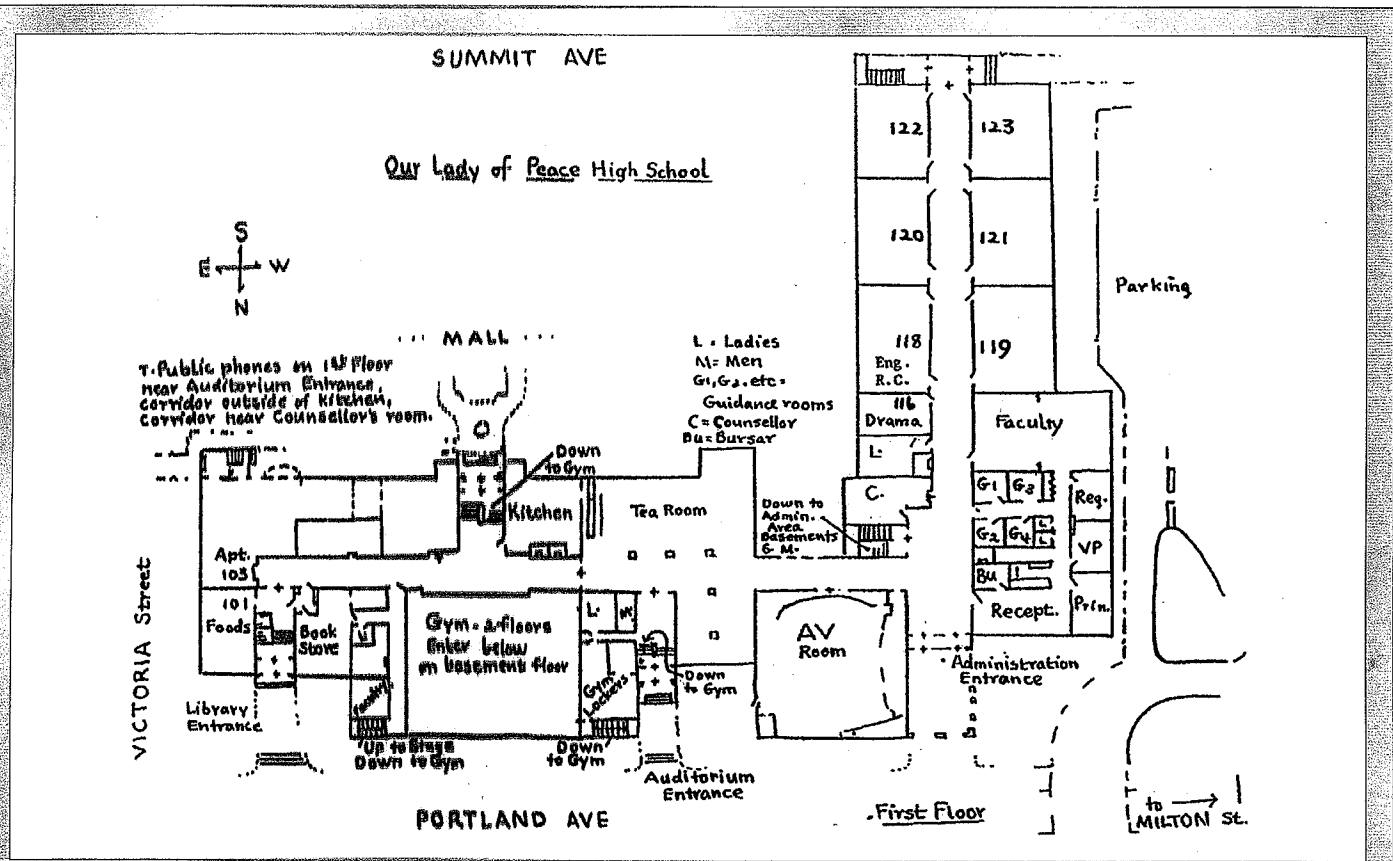
*Our Lady of Peace High School in the early 1960s. The street in the foreground is Victoria Street. Photo courtesy of Susanne Sebesta Heimbuch.*

involved at least one other party that wanted to buy the OLP facility, the law school bought the OLP building for \$1.325 million on November 7, 1975. WMCL's trustees initially deferred action on the separate, free-standing convent, but a short time later they went ahead and purchased it. The proceeds from the sale of OLP that the Sisters of Charity, BVM, received were used to provide financial support for retired members of their order.

Following the sale, WMCL's administration renovated the OLP building, moved to the new site in August 1976, and changed its address to 875 Summit Avenue. The law school held a celebratory dedication of its new facility on October 29, 1977, with Chief Justice

Warren E. Burger making the keynote address.

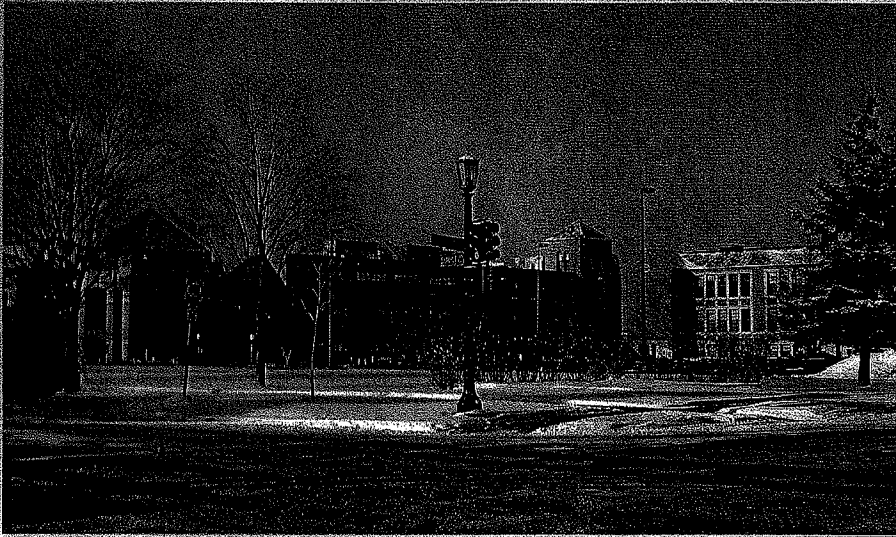
Today the 1931 St. Luke's school building is the wing of WMCL that faces Portland Avenue. Carved in the stonework above the former high school's entrance (now an emergency exit for the law school) at the east end of the building is "Our Lady of Peace." Similarly, in several of the former OLP classrooms, there remains a small shelf that once held a statue of the Virgin Mary. Another artifact of OLP that exists today in one WMCL office is what was probably a small altar with the symbol for the sisters' order and their motto (*Sicut Lilium Inter Spinis*) engraved on the front. This same symbol and motto, which is a shortened form of the Latin aphorism,



A blueprint of Our Lady of Peace High School showing the location of classrooms, offices, and the first-floor Tea Room that served as the school's cafeteria. Today the area identified as "Mall" includes a parking lot. The law school's main entrance and library are located at the south end of the wing on the right, which was added to the school in 1953. Blueprint courtesy of an OLP alumna.

"Sicut lillium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias Adae" or "As a lily among brambles, so is my love among the daughters of Adam," also remain carved in the granite near the now unused door of the former convent, which faces North Milton Street. Gone completely, however, are the former principal's office and adjacent administrative areas.

The former OLP site changed again in 1989 when WMCL broke ground for the construction of a new library that would be an addition to the high school building at an estimated cost of \$7.5 million. The new library was designed so that it faced Summit Avenue and tied the formerly free-standing convent to the main building. On September 16, 1990, the college dedicated its new library and other physical improvements to the OLP facility with a ceremony that included an address from Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. The new library was named



The William Mitchell College of Law today with the Chief Justice Warren E. Burger Library (far left) facing Summit Avenue. Photo by Maureen McGinn.

for WMCL's most eminent alumnus, Chief Justice Burger. In 2005 the law school again expanded its facilities, but despite all these changes and additions,

the OLP high school remains a central part of the law school's educational facilities.

John M. Lindley