

St. Joseph College

This was once the site of St. Joseph College, one of America's early institutions of higher learning for women. It was founded by Elizabeth Ann Seton in 1810 as St. Joseph's Free School for local impoverished girls. The school immediately flourished, growing with tuition-paying, boarding students.

The school soon after was named St. Joseph's Academy. Operated by the Sisters of Charity, it began a program of expansion starting in the 1820s that would continue for the next 40 years. The addition of accredited faculty and curriculum led to its becoming St. Joseph College from 1902 until 1973.



Illustration of St. Joseph's Academy in the 1870s.

Courtesy, Library of Congress; L. Enke, artist; Lith. A. Hoen & Co.



St. Joseph Academy students are seen in a science class (above), and studio art class (right) circa _____. The academy expanded its curriculum in 1828 to include rhetoric, philosophy, chemistry, botany, algebra, astronomy, and the arts. The Academy gained widespread favor among parents who wanted their daughters to receive a formal education. In 1902, the institution received college accreditation.

Photos courtesy, Daughters of Charity Province of St. Louise, St. Louis, MO.



Final Years

The popularity of single-gender colleges declined by the 1960s. Saint Joseph College held its final class graduation on May 27, 1973. The campus was sold to the United States government in 1979 to serve as headquarters for the National Fire Academy.

Sister Margaret Dougherty, President of St. Joseph College from 1968-1973, with three students.

Photo from 1968 Allegra yearbook. Courtesy, Daughters of Charity Province of St. Louise, St. Louis, MO.

National Emergency Training Center

The National Emergency Training Center serves as the home of the National Fire Academy and the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial.

National Fire Academy

The National Fire Academy (NFA) is overseen by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. NFA annually provides training for more than 100,000 first responders from all 50 states and around the world.

The Burlando Building (right), was constructed in 1873 for St. Joseph music classrooms. It still stands today. Courtesy, Wikiwand.



The National Fallen Firefighters Memorial

This 7-foot stone monument constructed in 1981 features a Maltese cross, the symbol of fire service. An eternal flame at the base symbolizes the spirit of all firefighters—past, present, and future. Plaques list the names of the men and women who have died in service from 1981 to the present.

Courtesy, Wikimedia Commons, Bill Koplitz