School celebrates 100 years

By Matthew Pape
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GRAND COTEAU — St. Ignatius Elementary School in Grand Coteau is celebrating its 100 years of service to the Grand Coteau community and diocese.

The centennial is being marked with events throughout the 1999-2000 academic year, starting with an 11 a.m. Mass in St. Charles Church here to be celebrated by Bishop Harry Fynes.

The school’s annual fundraiser, Fete Champetre, a dinner-dance, will be held at 7 p.m. Feb. 18 at the American Legion Post. More information will be available at the school or in Lafayette.

Later in the year, a time capsule will be buried on the St. Ignatius school grounds.

St. Ignatius was first opened under the guidance of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. It was called Sacred Heart Parochial School, as the church parish was known.

The original building served for more than 50 years, but by the mid-1950s it was felt the physical plant needed the renovation of the present building.

It was then decided that another site should be chosen to build the new school.

One of the reasons for choosing another location was that Oak Retreat House was located near the new site.

The new site was chosen because it was from the school make it hard for the students to attend.

Cleophus Quebedeaux built the new structure, the present main building, on the street leading to the church.

The old structure, located on the road to Oak Retreat House, was sold to Monsignor William Thigpen of St. Leo Parish in Lafayette.

St. Ignatius Church was moved to its present location.

Pictured is the main building of the 100-year-old St. Ignatius School in Grand Coteau. The school was originally known as Sacred Heart Parochial School. It was given its present name in 1956. Enrollment is 146.

DURING the early 1950s, during the tenure of the first Josephine head, Sister Adeline, the school needed a new building.

Initial plans were too high, however, and Brother Martin Laporte, an architect who was at St. Charles College in Grand Coteau, was commissioned to help.

He succeeded in revising the plans to reduce costs and keep within the budget.

In 1956, the name of the school was changed from Sacred Heart Parochial to St. Ignatius, in honor of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits.

A new principal was appointed, St. Charles Parish in Grand Coteau.

In 1982, an addition was added to the original building with the help of the administration of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. In 1996, the school was converted to a parochial school.

With the need for more space, the sisters volunteered to move, and the convent was converted to a primary school.


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