

Skyscraper Building Fact Sheet

Part of the Loyola University Chicago Lake Shore campus, the Mundelein Skyscraper is home to Loyola University Chicago classrooms and the Mundelein Center for Performing Arts. The limestone and steel framed building was one of the tallest structures in the Rogers Park neighborhood for several years after its construction. From 1930-1991, the skyscraper was home to Mundelein College, which by 1960, was the largest Catholic College for women in the United States. Below are some interesting facts about the Mundelein skyscraper. For more information, contact the Women and Leadership Archives.

- The Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary financed and supervised the construction of the building, breaking ground just days before the famed stock market crash of October 1929. It took only eleven months to complete.
- Built in 1929 by architects Joseph McCarthy and Nairne Fisher, the skyscraper was listed in 1980 on the National Register of Historic Places as the first successful experiment in a self-contained skyscraper college.
- Architecturally, the building is an Art Deco design with a stepped-back profile featuring low relief embellishment, ornamental iron grillwork, and leaded glass on the exterior.
- A pair of four-story high stylized limestone archangels flank the main entrance to the building. They represent the archangels Uriel, bearer of the book of wisdom, and Jophiel, guardian of the tree of knowledge.
- In their efforts to establish an all-in-one space designed to serve the student's needs with modern efficiency, college co-founders, Mother Isabella Cane and Sister Justitia Coffey installed a kitchen capable of preparing food for one thousand patrons, four stories of residential quarters, chapel, auditorium, conservatory, gymnasium, swimming pool, a tearoom, and a library.
- From 1938 until 1958, one of the skyscraper's elevator shafts contained a Foucault pendulum which plunged downward one hundred feet spanning nine floors of the skyscraper building. For a time, it was the longest pendulum of its kind in existence.
- The skyscraper was home to Mundelein College from 1930 until 1991, when the college affiliated with Loyola University Chicago.
- Loyola University Chicago hired architects Baranski Hammer Moretta & Sheehy to conduct a total renovation of the skyscraper building. After completion, the restored building was renamed the Mundelein Center for Fine and Performing Arts.

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