BENEDICTINE COLLEGE HERITAGE

Benedictine College is located in historic Atchison, Kansas, a small city on the west bank of the Missouri River, forty-five miles north of Kansas City, twenty miles north of Leavenworth, Kansas, and twenty miles south of St. Joseph, Missouri.

The heritage of Benedictine College is rooted in the fifteen-hundred-year-old tradition of the Benedictine Order and the more recent dedication of the American Catholic church to providing sound general and religious education to its members. In 1856, at the request of the Most Rev. John B. Miege, S.J., Vicar Apostolic of Leavenworth, two Benedictine monks arrived in Atchison with the intention of founding a Benedictine school of higher learning for the people of Kansas.

In 1858 the monks opened a boarding school and enrolled six students. From the beginning, the classical course served to prepare candidates for the priesthood, while the commercial course satisfied other needs of the pioneers.

On June 13, 1868, the college was incorporated under the laws of Kansas and empowered to confer degrees and academic honors. After 1915, St. Benedict's gradually abandoned the traditional academy, greatly enlarged the curriculum, and became an accredited liberal arts college in 1927.

Seven Benedictine sisters arrived in Atchison in 1863 to begin a school for the townspeople. St. Scholastica's Academy for young women opened on December 1, 1863, with forty-four students. In 1877 the sisters purchased Price Villa, now called St. Cecilia's, and moved from their location near St. Benedict's to the present site of the Mount St. Scholastica monastery. There, the sisters continued their academy, and in 1924 Mount St. Scholastica's Junior College was opened. The junior college soon became a senior college and in 1932 it conferred its first bachelor's degrees. In 1934 Mount St. Scholastica College was fully accredited by the North Central Association (now named the Higher Learning Commission).

Over the years, the monks and sisters cooperated in their educational ventures, ultimately merging the two colleges on July 1, 1971, to form Benedictine College. During the years since then, Benedictine College has formed its own identity, one steeped in the history and tradition of its parent institutions.