

Wisconsin Historical Society: Placed the St. Anthony Hospital on the State Register of Historic Places

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Milwaukee, Wis. – The Wisconsin Historical Society placed the St. Anthony Hospital (Milwaukee, Milwaukee County) on the State Register of Historic Places on August 18, 2017.

Saint Anthony Hospital, designed by the Milwaukee architectural firm of Erhard Brielmaier & Sons, was originally constructed in 1931. The hospital initially had 42-beds until 1947, when a seamless addition expanded the building and increased hospital capacity to 135-beds. As well, it featured a three-story wing on its east elevation that connects the hospital with St. Benedict the Moor Roman Catholic Church. The 1931 hospital and its 1947 addition exhibit modest Period Revival elements taken from both the Classical and Mediterranean Revival styles.

Saint Anthony Hospital is significant in medical and social history for its pioneering role in the integration of healthcare within the City of Milwaukee. The hospital had its origins in the missionary work of the Capuchin Order who established St.

Benedict the Moor Church, which was built to serve Milwaukee's African-American community. Initially establishing an infirmary for black children, the Capuchins secured financing for construction of a 42-bed hospital next door to the church with medical, surgical and maternity facilities. Dedicated in 1931 and administered by the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, the hospital's mission from the start was to serve all creeds and races at a time when racial discrimination limited medical care options for many African-Americans. This mission came to fruition and Saint Anthony Hospital's patient population into the 1960s was approximately thirty-five percent black and sixty-five percent white. Mirroring its

patient population, Saint Anthony also had an integrated professional staff featuring multiple African-American doctors and nurses when their ability to practice medicine elsewhere was restricted. This was highlighted with the election of Dr. John W. Maxwell, Sr. to the position of Chief of Staff by his fellow physicians in 1954. Dr. Maxwell was the first African-American chief of staff of any hospital in Wisconsin and amongst very few nationally. As an integrated facility, Saint Anthony Hospital improved the health outcomes for Milwaukee's black population, while also aiding the professional development of its black medical practitioners.

The State Register is Wisconsin's official list of state properties determined to be significant to Wisconsin's heritage. The State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers both the State Register and National Register in Wisconsin.

To learn more about the State and National Register programs in Wisconsin, visit www.wisconsinhistory.org.