

**Historical Marker - L2031 - Central High School / Central High School (Marker ID#:L2031)**



**Front - Title/Description**

**Central High School**

The first Central High School opened in 1849 in a stone building three blocks to the west. The state legislature instituted high school grading in 1859, and the first Central High School graduation was held in 1862. Two successively larger buildings housed the school during the next fifty years. When dedicated in 1911, this Collegiate Gothic building was a model of modern school architecture. The local firm of Robinson and Campau designed the school in consultation with architects from Detroit and St. Louis. The exterior is red paving brick with gray terra cotta and cut stone trim. Additions were built in 1927, 1930, and 1983. The original multi paned windows have been replaced.

**Significant Date:**

Industry and Invention (1875-1915)

**Registry Year:** 1997    **Erected Date:** 1999

**Marker Location**

**Address:** 421 Fountain St. NE

**City:** Grand Rapids

**State:** MI    **ZipCode:**

**County:** Kent

**Township:** Grand Rapids

**Lat:** 42.96526900 / **Long:** -85.65950900

**Web URL:**

**Back - Title/Description**

**Central High School**

Dr. Jesse B. Davis, principal of Central High School from 1907 to 1920, was responsible for much of the school's interior design. In 1914, under Dr. Davis's leadership, the board of education organized the first two year college in Michigan, the present day Grand Rapids Community College. Dr. Davis served as the college's first president, and classes met on the third floor of the high school. Prominent graduates of Central High School include: First Lady Betty (Bloomer) Ford; Astronaut Roger B. Chaffee, who died in the Apollo I fire; Floyd Skinner, five term president of the NAACP; and United States Senator Arthur Vandenberg, a leading advocate for the establishment of the United Nations.