



This Week in Eden History

March 26 | Dr. Irene Congehl, first woman to receive a divinity degree at Eden

Irene Congehl, the first woman to graduate from Eden with a divinity degree, was born on **March 26, 1895** in Chemnitz, Germany. She received a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Muenster and worked as an administrator in the Y.W.C.A. in Europe and as a translator in the association's headquarters in Geneva. She studied theology at Tübingen and then, escaping the upheaval in Europe, immigrated to the U.S. in 1941. She enrolled at Eden for the 1942-1943 academic year, graduating with a Bachelor of Divinity degree in May 1943. She went on to receive a master's degree in social work from Washington University.

Dr. Congehl worked on staff at Family and Children's Services in St. Louis and St. Joseph, Missouri. She went on to work in urban ministry in Akron, Ohio and, after returning to St. Louis, at the United Church of Christ Neighborhood Houses. She was a member of Grace Evangelical & Reformed Church in Akron and Pilgrim Congregational Church in St. Louis. She died in St. Louis on Sept. 15, 1984 and bequeathed \$80,000 to Pilgrim Church to continue inner-city work.