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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED MAY 27 1975  
DATE ENTERED JUN 11 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Old Normal School Building, Administration Building

AND/OR COMMON

Wrather Hall

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Murray State University *campus*

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Murray

VICINITY OF

01

STATE

Kentucky

CODE  
021

COUNTY

Calloway

CODE

035

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Murray State University

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Murray

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Calloway County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Murray

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky (Supplement)

DATE

1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This dignified and serviceable three-story building is composed of a front rectangular block with a large projection extending from the middle, rear of the structure (space used for the auditorium). The facade faces University Drive, the main thoroughfare of the older part of the campus of Murray State University. On the north and east side of Old Administration Building are new, much larger structures, yet Wrather Hall holds it own along with the older college buildings.

The ground floor of Wrather Hall is sunk in a half-basement, divided from the upper two stories by an emphatic stone water-table. A slender string course underlines the parapet which also has stone coping. The only vertical emphasis is provided by the central entrance, approached from the street level by a broad high flight of steps to the actual second story. The segmental-arched entrance (now filled with three large panes of glass in aluminum frames) is set between thick square piers which taper through a stone band into "Tudor" half octagonal towers framing a two-bayed, stone-framed second-story feature. The restrained details of the surface, concentrated near the center of the facade, include blind stone tracery, shields, and several decorative plaques.

Windows are grouped in horizontal bands, three on each side of the entrance and five at the outer ends. Shields replace the center windows of the inner groups on the main floor level. Raised crenellations mark the division between these grouped bays and provide the only termination at the ends. The window openings have thin recessed frames, stone sills, straight brick lintels, and two-sash windows with only vertical muntins. In spite of the central feature the over-all effect is flat and linear.

The interior of the first floor contains two classrooms, four large offices, and an auditorium. The floor of the wide corridor is concrete, but all other floors are wood. All original load bearing walls are 1'-1"-thick solid masonry.

Floor and wall construction on the second floor is identical to that of the first floor. The floor space is divided into eight large areas.

All original walls in the basement are 1'-1"-thick solid masonry. Some 6" stud walls now exist as the floor space was divided for offices. All basement floors are concrete, and the original walls are stucco. There are nine large rooms, two restrooms, boiler room, fuel room, and a 10' wide corridor running east and west. A vault is also located in the basement.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1924

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Joseph & Joseph Architects

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Dedicated fifty years ago on September 22, 1924, the Old Normal School Building, now known as Wrather Hall, at Murray State University has a great deal of significance for western Kentuckians. It is the charter building of Murray State, the only state university west of Bowling Green in Kentucky. It is also a symbol of local initiative and support of education in that area.

The college is a product of a report issued by the Education Commission, created in 1920 to survey and study the public school system in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. They found the condition of the schools unsatisfactory and one of their recommendations to alleviate the problem was to establish "more and better teacher-training schools"--one in eastern Kentucky and one in the western part of the state (Woods, pp. xix, 1).

Several towns in western Kentucky were interested in having the normal school located in their communities, including Murray in Calloway County. Murray, the county seat, was a small town in an area with no good roads and no means of crossing rivers except by ferry. Settlers came late to Murray and Calloway County as to most of the Jackson Purchase area which forms the western tip of the State and was made safe for the European settlers only by treaty in 1818. Murray was incorporated in 1844, twenty-two years after Calloway County was established. The people were not lacking in public spirit, however, and responded enthusiastically to the drive to raise funds for the proposed school. The movement was organized and headed by Judge Rainey T. Wells and in only one month's time, pledges of approximately \$100,000 were secured in Calloway County for the construction of the college. A total of 1352 citizens contributed money. The average donation was \$82.10, the largest, \$2,500. "It is not what the people of Murray have promised to do but what they have already done that counts" (Woods, p. 5). The Commission was convinced and chose Murray as the site for the Western State Normal School. (Morehead was selected as the location for the Eastern Normal School.

Dr. John W. Carr (1859-1960), an educator from Indiana, was chosen as the first president. In September 1923 the Murray State Normal School was officially opened, using four rooms and the auditorium on the first floor of Murray High School. There were 202 students and five faculty members present on the first day. Construction of the college's first building was begun a few weeks later. It was approximately one year in construction and when completed consisted of three floors and included classrooms, a bookstore, cafeteria, auditorium, and administrative offices.

(continued)



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

Wrather Hall/Administration Building

The structure was designed by Joseph and Joseph, a prominent Louisville firm from the turn of the century until the recent death of Alfred Joseph, Sr. They were noted not only for numerous public buildings, but also for their educational design, specializing in a modified Collegiate Gothic, as in Wrather Hall, Morehead State University, and a number of public schools. Joseph, Sr., gained his early architectural experience working for McDonald and Dodd and later McDonald and Sheblesy in Louisville, major firms of the period, known not only in Kentucky, but in much of the southeast.

In 1966 the Old Normal School Building, or Administration Building as it was sometimes called, was named Wrather Hall in honor of Marvin O. Wrather, executive vice-president of the university at the time of his death December 6, 1970. Dr. Wrather, a member of the first four-year graduating class at Murray in 1926, was secretary of the Alumni Association and director of Public Relations for many years.

The Old Normal School Building, which at one time was the physical substance of the college, has been the heart of Murray State for over half a century. Of all buildings on campus it carries the greatest significance to the more than 22,000 graduates of Murray State University.