

## Young-Quinlan Building

1926, 1989

Elizabeth Quinlan and Fred Young had opened the first ready-to-wear dress shop in Minneapolis, Fred D. Young & Company. Young and Quinlan had become friends while working together at Goodfellow and Eastman Dry Goods. The Young Quinlan Store was founded in 1894. Their first store was located at 513 Nicollet Avenue. A fire in 1903 resulted in a move to 716 Nicollet Avenue. The business was renamed Young Quinlan Company, with Quinlan as the sole manager. The business did well. In 1911, Fred Young died. Quinlan then purchased Young's shares in the company and became sole owner. To honor her friend, Quinlan decided to keep the full name of the company.

Quinlan was an acute businesswoman with cutting edge fashion instinct. Quinlan decided to build a new store allowing mass merchandising but with specialized departments.

Quinlan bought land on Nicollet and Ninth from George Dayton and retained New York architect, Frederick Ackerman, to design a building reflecting her preference for a simple Italian design, Renaissance Revival. James Leck Company was the general contractor. Magney and Tusler, structural engineers, at Quinlan's



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request, planned the structure of the five-story building to allow it to expand to twelve floors. (Said floors were never added.) Quinlan wanted room to grow. Because of the fire at the first store, she also requested sprinklers and fire alarms.

Construction began on August 1, 1925. The five-story building opened in 1926. At its opening on June 12, 1926, the Young Quinlan company issued a statement in the *Minneapolis Star*, "The Founders of this company believed in the future of Minneapolis and the people of Minneapolis believed in the reliability of the shop."

The building was constructed of brown-toned face brick and stone trim. The first floor was clad in rusticated Kasota limestone with brick walls above. Rather than using ordinary brick on the non-street sides of the structure, all four sides of the buildings were designed to be attractive. Ground floor windows are arched and trimmed in stone and are arranged in groups of large

windows flanked by smaller windows. Half the windows are for display, and the other half provided viewing of the interior space.



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Quinlan added unique features to the building to add to the customer's experience. The interior walls and ceiling were trimmed in Roman travertine and are gently arched and pillared. The first floor featured a staircase of travertine with wrought iron balustrades leading to a broad balcony. The interior woodwork was antiqued to soften the appearance.

The showcases were a warm bronze tone of Virginia walnut. The store added a tearoom, Rendezvous d'Esler, on the fourth floor. The fifth floor contained an auditorium for fashion shows. On the upper floors, thick carpet was installed to quiet any sound.

The basement and subbasement contained space for 235 automobiles, a novel feature for buildings dating from the 1920s.

The *Star Tribune* on June 15, 1926, reported that at its opening, Minneapolis mayor George Leach, described the building as a "gem in the crown of Minneapolis" and Elizabeth Quinlan as "one of the real builders of the city." 15,000 people attended the opening with thousands more waiting outside.



Hennepin County Library

One of the building's initial tenants was Moore and Scriver, home furnishers, which occupied 50,000 square feet on four floors on the Ninth Street side of the building.

Napiers Costume Booterie was another primary tenant occupying space on the Nicollet Avenue side of the building. Young Quinlan would occupy 105,000 square feet. The building's total square footage was 175,000. Additional tenant space was on the ground floor.

*Welcome*

## Napier's Costume Booterie

The Elizabeth C. Quinlan Building was erected for the primary purpose of providing larger quarters for the rapidly growing business of The Young-Quinlan Company.

The plans for the new structure not only provided generously for this Shop but for other progressive merchants as well.

Naturally The Young-Quinlan Company wished to secure as co-tenants of the new building retail establishments with high ideals of merchandising.

Negotiations with Mr. Napier resulted in a favorable lease. Months of preparation were required for the completion of

### Napier's Costume Booterie

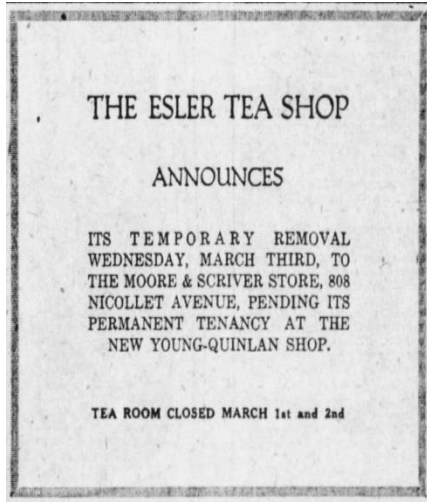
one of America's most beautiful and distinctive footwear shops. The opening of this elegant salon marks a forward step in foot-wear retailing. It is a credit to Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis and the whole Northwest.

*It is a shop of which Minneapolisians may well be proud.*

The Young-Quinlan Company in co-tenancy of the Elizabeth C. Quinlan Building extends hearty congratulations and best wishes to this enterprising establishment.

**The Young-Quinlan Co.**  
NICOLLET AVENUE-NINTH STREET

Start Tribune September 9,  
1926



*Minneapolis Journal, February 28, 1926*

The name of the building, as reported in the *Minnesota Journal* on March 14, 1926, was to be the Elizabeth C. Quinlan Building, but the name of the company occupying the building would continue as Young Quinlan Company.

*forgotten minnesota*, reported in a March 9, 2014, release that Young Quinlan’s mail-order business had 50,000 customers throughout the United States with revenue that annually reached millions of dollars. Neiman Marcus modeled its Dallas store after Quinlan’s building. In addition, famous actresses including Ethel Barrymore and Lynn Fontanne frequented the store.

The Stock Market Crash in 1929 and the Great Depression changed retail business. Quinlan worked to keep the business sponsoring displays in the fifth-floor auditorium, exhibiting antiques and artifacts, featuring holidays, and hosting fashion shows. During the 1930s, the store offered more moderately priced clothing and accessories. Quinlan’s efforts worked, and she kept the store’s staff employed. She was able to continue the business into the early 1940s.

In May of 1945, Quinlan sold the business, but not the building, to Henry Lytton and Company of Chicago. Quinlan died in 1947. In February of 1949, Young-Quinlan Company merged with Maurice L. Rothschild Company. Rothschild ran the store under the name of Young-Quinlan Rothschild which closed in April of 1985.



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Over the years, the building deteriorated.

In 1985, The 614 Company (Bob and Sue Greenberg) took control of the building. In 1988, Minneapolis designated the building as a local landmark. In 1989, Ellerbe Becket was retained to assist in renovation of the building. The building is currently retail and office space. Once again, the Young Quinlan Building is the “perfect gem” per *KARE 11 Television’s* review of November 12, 2016.

The Elizabeth C. Quinlan home in the Lowry Hill neighborhood is also of historical significance. The home was also designed by Frederick Ackerman and completed in 1926. Quinlan lived in the house until her death in 1947. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.