



THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY WOMAN'S CLUB
THE FIRST 100 YEARS
A CENTURY OF SERVICE

The First Years: 1909-1919

It was November 1, 1909, and the University's enrollment was 475, only 65 of whom were women students. The first meeting of the "Ladies of the Faculty of the State University" was in the Education Building. Deciding on the mission of the Club and the selection of an appropriate name created much discussion. An informal tea from 3:00 to 5:00 pm on the first Monday of each month at members' homes was agreed upon. On December 6th, 40 members were present who voted to have Mrs. W. T. Lafferty as president for a two-year term, and dues were set at 50 cents. The major mission of the Club was to assist students. The Woman's Club of Kentucky State University was chosen as the Club's name in January, 1910.

Many of the meetings were social in nature—teas, readings of books and plays, piano recitals, etc. By summer, service activities included maintaining a State University room at Good Samaritan Hospital, offering prizes to encourage male students to keep neat dormitory rooms, and asking the Board of Trustees to see that hot water was piped into the dormitories.

In March of 1911, the Club voted to join the State Federation of [Women's] Clubs as a move to "bring this Club more closely in touch with people in the State." In October, a college fair was held to raise money and a Student Benefit Fund was established.

In January 1913, a committee was appointed to identify the names of new professors so that their wives could be visited and asked to join the Club. Dues were raised to \$1.00.

These early members planned dances and other social events through the years. They also urged their husbands to use their influence with the "powers that be" so that the Music Department could grant academic credit to girls enrolled in music classes. How to lower "vice" in Lexington was a civic concern. Items were given to a lending closet, and some students were helped with food.

In 1917, the University conferred 153 degrees. For World War I efforts, members sewed, knitted, gave money to furnish the inside of an ambulance at the front, and sent books to soldiers. Home front activities centered around Camp Buell where they provided entertainment, cooked, and looked after the sick at that Army base. In 1919, a Liberty Bond was purchased for the Student Loan Fund, and food conservation was practiced by omitting refreshments at meetings. The list of their war efforts was long and varied.

In March of 1919, Miss McKinnon, head of the Home Educational Department, spoke to about 45 members and appealed for financial aid for girls, giving examples of girls being unable to continue in school due to a lack of funds. Club members were encouraged to provide opportunities for girls to earn money by working in members' homes. After much debate about giving money to a loan fund to be used exclusively for female students, a motion was passed that an Emergency Loan Fund just for girls be instituted. Could this have been the start of the student loan and scholarship programs that the Club has continued to develop through the years?

The Decade of the 20s

This decade followed the end of the "Great War" and all of the activities that it entailed. The 19th Amendment, passed in 1920, gave nationwide suffrage to women. Frances Jewell McVey, University President Frank McVey's wife, conducted meetings at Maxwell Place, the official residence, to organize Kentucky and Lexington Chapters of the League of Women Voters. Early in 1920, a revised constitution was adopted in which the name became "The Woman's Club of the University of Kentucky." The constitution stated: "The object shall be to promote good fellowship among the members, and to advance the best interests of the University, and to render such patriotic service to our Government as our circumstances will permit." In addition to faculty wives, any woman connected with the teaching or the executive force was eligible to become an honorary member when her name was proposed. Annual dues continued to be \$1.00, and a quorum was set at nine members.

The Club met monthly throughout the academic year and a membership of 100 was anticipated. Programs were varied. Different Club "departments" were responsible for programs and refreshments were served. Programs featured faculty members, performers from the Music Department, and outside speakers. In 1920, the Club started the annual fall reception for new faculty and took full responsibility for planning and carrying it out, including paying the bills.

The Club remained a member of the Kentucky Federation of Woman's Clubs and regularly sent delegates to those meetings. Reports made annually to the regional Federation meetings were very revealing of both the nature of the Woman's Club and its conflicts with Federation goals. The 1923 and 1924 reports included the following: "Ours is not an organization for study (other Clubs in the

Federation were). We are organized to provide good fellowship among faculty members and to address, in any way we can, the best interests of the boys and girls who come to us from their homes all over the state. We also provide good fellowship among our members. The deans of men and women turn to the Woman's Club for help in putting touches of homelike influence and surroundings into lives of students. We have assisted fraternities in furnishing houses, likewise for the YMCA and YWCA. The hospital committee visits the sick, carries flowers and delicacies to sick students and faculty." Monies to fund these and other projects were raised in many ways including bridge parties, children's parties, candy/bake sales, vaudeville shows, and special film showings. Through these years, the Club maintained and increased an endowed hospital fund which later became a general welfare fund, and regularly supported a student loan fund. While women of the '20s often are remembered as flappers, the record of the Woman's Club during this decade reflects both light and serious activities as members worked to fulfill their newly adopted objectives.

The Decade of the 30s

In the 30s the Club, struggling along during the Depression, kept the dues at \$2.00 but remitted \$1.00 to each member. The Book Club and the Student Welfare Fund Committee were organized, and it was recommended to the Executive Board that the Club membership be printed in the Club's yearbook. The Club enjoyed fashion parades, dinners, a March excursion trip to the Cincinnati flower show, several fund-raising projects, and many other activities. Four delegates and four alternate delegates were elected each year to attend the annual convention of the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs.

During the regular January 1930 meeting, members were invited to "*stay for tea*" afterward to help initiate the Club's new tea service which was purchased in New York City by Mrs. Pryor. Club minutes show that thereafter tea was served following regular meetings.

Committees and Interest Groups included the following: Finance, Budget, Member, Social, Legislative, Hospital, Dormitory, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Hostess, Federation, Publicity, Literature, Music, American Homes, New Comers, Faculty Brides, International Relations, Dinners, Child Study, Reading Circle of Arts, Garden Study, and Reading Circle. The Club established a \$400 Student Loan Fund to help needy students with hospital expenses.

A loan from the Club's savings fund to the Woman's Building Committee assisted in financing the redecorating of President Patterson's former home as a Woman's Building. "Committee members did much of the actual work of preparing this building for the girls."

The Membership Chair asked for a definition of membership with regard to mothers and sisters of faculty members. The Club voted to amend the constitution as follows:

Amendment to Article I. Any woman whose affiliation with the University is not described in Article I. and who desires membership in the Club may be declared eligible to membership upon the vote of the Executive Board.

On November 27, 1934, membership was 175, and the Club celebrated the organization's 25th birthday with a Silver Anniversary Dinner. A tea was sponsored in Frankfort for wives of members of the Kentucky Assembly as part of the 25th anniversary celebration.

The Decade of the 40s

The decade of the 40s was marked with the beginning and end of World War II which had a dramatic impact on the country and on the University. As the Woman's Club continued to be actively involved in University and community affairs, increasing attention was given to international events.

The United States entered the war in 1941. The Club helped sell war bonds totaling \$124,945, and Club members bought bonds amounting to \$16,000. They gave many pints of blood, spent 2,000 hours rolling bandages, 2,000 hours sewing for the Red Cross, 2,400 hours on Civilian Defense activities, and 238 hours working as nurse aides. Members also grew 125 Victory Gardens and canned 1,700 quarts of fruits and vegetables.

A Consumer's Study Group was organized which cooperated with the National Defense Council for furthering good nutrition practices. At one meeting of the International Affairs Group, the speaker was the Director of London's Tate Museum who spoke on protecting art treasures in time of war.

Club members' interest in student aid and the arts continued. Financial assistance was made available to students through a loan fund held by the Club. In 1940, the Club had a fund-raiser called a College Fair. The proceeds went toward furnishing a hospital room for boys in Calvert Cottage which was located immediately south of Patterson Hall. In addition to student aid activities, Club focus on the arts was demonstrated by active member involvement in various interest groups. Members wrote and staged plays and made elaborate costumes which were used in the productions; musical programs were presented by Club members at meetings of the Music group; the Book group had 100 or more participants and as many as 60 books were circulated in some years. The large Garden group also was active. Annual Club membership averaged about 300 in this decade.

Annual committee reports to the Club president were first published in October 1940 in the Woman's Club *Bulletin*, precursor to the present monthly newsletter. That year the Club's budget was \$236.40. A Bride's Club was started for the many young faculty wives. The University President's wife, Frances Jewell McVey, entertained newcomers and their husbands with a Christmas par-

ty, one of numerous occasions when Mrs. McVey welcomed University friends and others to Maxwell Place, often inviting them to "stay for tea."

In April 1947, the Club published a cookbook entitled, *Stay for Tea* to honor Frances Jewell McVey and to raise money for student aid. Six months after publication, \$3,200 in cookbook profits were deposited in the Frances Jewell McVey Scholarship Fund, administered by the Kentucky Research Foundation. Seventeen months later, memorials to Mrs. McVey and cookbook profits totaled \$18,000, and the first \$450.00 scholarship was awarded.

After the war ended, President Donovan asked that a clothing drive be held for Heidelberg University. Club members participated in the drive and packed 147 boxes of good clothing for shipping to Germany. At the request of the Donovans, the Dames Club was formed for wives of returning veterans.

The Decade of the '50s

In the 1950s, one of the University's greatest concerns was providing for the educational and campus housing needs of World War II and Korean War veterans who came to the University on the GI Bill. Enrollment grew to over ten thousand students, and the A. B. Chandler Medical Center was established, adding more faculty members. The increased number of faculty members affected the Woman's Club of the University of Kentucky (WCUK) because most faculty members had wives who needed to be welcomed and to be made a part of the University family. The Newcomers group had its own agenda and during those three years, many bridge groups were organized. Club meetings in the '50s were more formal. Members wore hats and white gloves and had tea or punch and cookies before the meetings. The Guignol Theatre, at that time a converted Army barracks located beside Jewell Hall, was the site of all Club meetings.

The Woman's Club continued its support of students. Sponsorship of the Dames Club, whose membership now included wives of graduate students, continued. Club members also furnished magazines for students in the Infirmary and entertained international students in homes of members, especially during holidays.

For the University, the Club remained responsible for the Fall Reception in honor of new faculty. Members decorated the reception area, and they furnished and served the cookies, small sandwiches, and punch at the reception. In the '50s during the annual Farm and Home Week, Homemakers from throughout Kentucky were entertained by the Club.

As a member of the State Federation of Women's Clubs, the WCUK joined other clubs in the community to help flood victims and collect books for a county library in eastern Kentucky. In the Fall

of 1959, Betty Dickey, a Club member and wife of University President Frank Dickey, entertained WCUK members at Maxwell Place. Anna Roosevelt Halsted, daughter of President Franklin Roosevelt and wife of a new Medical Center faculty member, was a special guest at this important social event.

The Decade of the '60s: The Winds of Change

This decade experienced restless graduate and undergraduate students, many new faculty, the first class of medical students, and five different presidents of the University, including one interim president. Student protests against the United States' participation in the Vietnam War climaxed with the burning of the R.O.T.C. building. This time of upheaval in the nation and on campus resulted in changes in the format of the University and of the Woman's Club of the University of Kentucky (WCUK).

Demands on the use of the Guignol Theatre made it imperative that other places be found for Club meetings. The new King Alumni House offered space for our "equipment" and for meetings. The Student Union, Chemistry/Physics building, Erikson Hall, and other campus locations were used at appropriate times. The Fall Membership Tea was held at Cooper House and the annual Fall Reception honoring new faculty was held at Spindletop Hall for the first time.

By April 1961, 400 members were on the Club's rolls and dues were raised from \$2 to \$3.50. The \$600 annual assessment by the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs claimed too large a portion of the Club's budget. Realizing the Club's primary commitment was to the University community, the WCUK withdrew from the Federation in 1966. Changes made within the Club's structure included: Newcomers status was reduced from three to two years; the president's term was reduced from two years to one year; and a president-elect was elected to serve a one-year term. A new Interest Group called Antiques Study Group was started. Fund-raising efforts concentrated on the Frances Jewel McVey Scholarship fund.

As the '60s drew to a close, three major events demanded members' time and energy as they worked on numerous committees and participated in many of the activities associated with those events: the inauguration of University President John Oswald; the University's Centennial Celebration; and the national meeting of the American Society for Engineering Education for which the WCUK planned and provided all hosting functions for the 2000 who attended.

At the end of the decade membership rolls numbered 500. This decade presented many and diverse challenges which resulted in positive contributions to the Club and to the University community.

1970 - 1979: A Transitional Decade

There were many firsts during the '70s. In 1974, the Club changed its name to The University of Kentucky Woman's Club, and in 1977, incorporation papers were filed. The Holiday Greeting, a successful fund-raiser for the UKWC Aid Fund, was started and continues to be an annual project. The policy to cancel meetings was adopted if the Fayette County Public Schools were not in session due to bad weather. The Twenty-Plus Interest Group was organized to provide social activities for members who have been associated with the University for twenty years or more or who have retired.

Another significant first was the establishment of a new UKWC Aid Fund to award scholarships for non-traditional women students enrolled at the University of Kentucky, in 1973. Prior to this time, the Frances Jewell McVey Scholarship Fund had been administered by the University. From this juncture on, the UKWC Aid Fund was invested by the Club and, in consultation with University Financial Aid representatives, scholarships were awarded by the Club. In the Aid Fund's first 25 years, more than 150 scholarships were awarded to women students. Being true to a primary mission of the Club since 1909, in addition to scholarship grants, the Aid Fund provided financial assistance to selected endeavors that benefit University students.

All this was possible due to the Club again successfully publishing a cookbook, *Stay for Tea, Again*, in 1975. Original artwork by Club members depicted well-known campus landmarks, and selected recipes from the original *Stay for Tea* were included.

Although Club meetings had been held at various campus locations through the years, having a Club House had been a dream of many members. In 1977, the University agreed to lease Hamilton House — on the corner of South Limestone and Keeneland Drive — to the Club on a trial basis for one year. All of the Club's general meetings and most of the Interest Groups met there. Much work by Club members was required to make the house suitable for Club functions. However, operating costs proved to be too great, so the lease was not renewed. The Club then accepted the offer of the E.S. Good Barn for meetings and has continued to hold some functions there. Thus, the dream of having a Club House ended.

Decade of the 1980s

The ebb and flow of UKWC events continued with several dramatic changes occurring in the University community. Enrollment was over 20,000. In 1987, Otis Singletary retired as President of the University. In recognition of her many contributions, the Club honored Gloria Singletary at the April 1987 meeting/luncheon at Spindletop Hall and named one of the Aid Fund scholarships the "Gloria Singletary Scholarship Award."

One of the Club's objectives is "helping newcomers become acquainted with the University and Lexington." Varying efforts have met with varied success. The September Welcome Coffee annually provides opportunities for newcomers to become acquainted with activities available through the UK Woman's Club. This event was held, starting in 1982, in the President's Room at Commonwealth Stadium. Packets of information were distributed to newcomers at this coffee and delivered to newcomers' homes. Family events included picnics and theatre parties in addition to several newcomer coffees in homes of members. The Mom & Tots Group was a real service and resource for Club newcomers. With more mature women returning to the University, the UKWC hosted well-attended receptions during the first five years of the '80s for adult women returning to school. The changing lifestyles of women also drew more of them into the workforce, influencing their interests and limiting their time available for UKWC membership. Membership numbers ranged from 300 to 350. Dues increased from \$6 to \$10. Associate memberships dues were approximately half the member's dues; associate membership was rescinded in 1986.

Direct service to international students began in 1981 and included donating household items and clothing. In 1986, the Club awarded a special \$500 scholarship to a Haitian student enrolled in the College of Allied Health Professions.

The publication of a third cookbook, *Stay for Tea . . . and More* in 1984 culminated a major four-year fund-raising project and 7,500 books were printed. Profits of more than \$15,000 were designated for the Aid Fund. Amounts available for annual grants increased to \$5,000 by the end of the decade. Support for the Aid Fund principally came from profits from the cookbook sales, Holiday Greetings donations and investment earnings. When the Nell Donovan Loan Fund was dissolved in 1988, the remaining funds were transferred from the University to the UKWC Aid Fund. At that time, the Club budgeted \$250 to be called the Nell Donovan Student Emergency Aid Fund. Loans for up to \$50 were distributed through Academic Support Services to students with emergency needs.

Decade of the 1990s

The '90s was the decade of a new beginning. The University of Kentucky inaugurated a new president, Dr. Charles Wethington, appointed a new Director of Athletics, and new basketball and football coaches. Lexington Campus enrollment was in the mid-20,000's. The Club had more than 500 members in the 1960s, but in the next three decades, membership gradually declined to 300-350. Many University women were employed out of the home and were unable to be involved in the Club. With the gracious help of the new UK President's wife, Judy Wethington, a long-time member and past UKWC President, efforts were made to increase interest and participation in the Woman's Club activities. Mrs. Wethington hosted Newcomer Receptions, Wine and Cheese Theatre Parties

for members and newcomers, and annual Holiday Teas at Maxwell Place. A self-study group was formed to examine the Club's organization, purpose, and direction. Through questionnaires and discussions, the group examined the membership eligibility and recruitment potential, future programs and activities, fund-raising, and ways to increase the Club's visibility on campus. As a result of the study, the Club's newsletter was sent to all new faculty wives for several months. This practice was discontinued when membership failed to increase. Dues were increased to \$12 effective for the 1996-97 Club year.

For administrative purposes, the Club organized its activities into two major categories: eight Interest groups and five smaller Special Activities groups. The major project of the UKWC in this decade was to sponsor scholarships to women 23 years or older—changed to 25 years of age in 1999—who return to the University to continue their education. Funds continued to be raised by the Holiday Greetings project. The Kroger Certificate program was started in the mid-90s and grew to be a profitable fundraiser. In addition, the Ways and Means Committee added to the Aid Fund through bake sales, raffles, and garage sales.

Virginia Lane, a longtime member, left \$20,000 to the UKWC Aid Fund for scholarships in 1993, and the Virginia Lane Scholarship has been awarded each year since. Many memorial contributions have been made to the scholarship fund in memory of members and friends. In May 1999, the Club approved the policy to fund full-tuition scholarships at the undergraduate in-state level. Renewed interest in the University of Kentucky Woman's Club w been evidenced in the decade of the '90s.

This completes the “Bridge to the Future” series, reprinted in newsletters, to celebrate the Centennial Year of the University of Kentucky Woman’s Club and culminates “a century of service.”

1999-2009: The First Decade of the New Millennium

At the beginning of the new decade, the goal to “have an impact and make a difference” was realized through initiatives to welcome newcomers and to be helpful to the student body, especially international students and non-traditional female students. These goals evolved into a change in the by-laws to clarify eligibility criteria for membership, resulting in guidelines for more inclusive membership. The Student Welfare Committee maintained the “Closet”, distributing useful items and clothing donated by members to students in need. They also organized the International Student lunch during the students’ January orientation, a tradition carried on to the present day.

Throughout the decade, the Ways and Means committee had a significant impact on generating resources to supplement the Club’s investments in support of scholarships for non-traditional students over 25 years of age. Each year since 1999, scholarships have been awarded for the full amount of

undergraduate tuition, a significant increase in funding for students over previous years. Since the inception of the Student Aid Fund in 1973, a total of 181 scholarships were awarded, in the amount of \$322,259. The total scholarship money awarded during this decade was \$180,424, more than 50% of the total amount. These efforts over the decade truly did ‘have an impact and make a difference’.

The year 2001 brought the retirement of Dr. Wethington and the inauguration of Dr. Lee T. Todd. The Welcome Coffee on September 11, 2001, went on despite the devastating news of the bombing of the World Trade Centers. Members took consolation in being with friends as updates of the horrific event were shared, and with the realization that the world had changed drastically. Several members addressed the group including Mrs. Patricia Todd, providing concern, condolences and encouragement, especially for those members with ties to the areas and victims affected.

In 2002, a need was identified to utilize Club funds in a more efficient manner. With thorough researching of the possibilities, a major commitment to student financial support was realized with the investment of Club funds to create an Endowment, in conjunction with the UK Development Office and the Graduate School. With matching funds from the Bucks for Brains, Club funds were doubled for greater impact. This provided a mechanism for the Club’s name to be perpetuated with the awarding of fellowships to graduate level students, based on a competitive process through the Graduate School. Each year, a Club member served on the committee in an advisory capacity to the faculty making the selections. Between 2007 and 2009, twenty students received awards, for a total of \$43,000. The major centennial project was the production of the cookbook, *Stay for Tea, the Centennial Edition*, with proceeds benefiting the Student Aid Fund.

As a part of the Club’s Centennial celebration in 2009, a series of articles was reprinted from the newsletters of 1999-2000, when the 90th Anniversary of the Club was celebrated. The theme for the year was: *90 Years: A Bridge to the Future*. At that time, under the leadership of Davis Gardner, President, (1999-2000), the following Past-Presidents, as members of the Anniversary Committee, spent much time and effort researching the Club history in the University Archives to prepare the articles.

Gayle Trutt. Chair (1986-1990)

Agnes Riley (1951-1953)

Mary Carpenter (1961-1963)

Juanita Sears (1970-1971)

Helen Denbo (1971-1972)

Peggy Parker (1977-1978)

Ruth Paulk (1982-1983)

Ruth Straus (1987-1988)

Midge Rischel (1990-1991)

Pat Harris (1991-1992; 1996-1997)

Barbara Crocker (1998-1999)

Judy Wethington, ex officio (1981-1982)

Our theme for the centennial year was: *100 Years: A Century of Service*. To mark that milestone, and to complete the series of articles, the article, *1999-2009: The First Decade of the New Millennium* was written by the following Past-Presidents:

Sally Leukefeld (2000-2001, 2004-2005, 2007-2008), and Jean Miller (2010-2011).

This is a condensed version of these historical documents.

With thanks and appreciation,

Meg Shaw,

Club Historian