

WHAT IS PAST IS PROLOGUE

The National Archives of the United States is an imposing, neo-classical building on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. On the facade of the building is the inscription: “What is Past is Prologue.” When my husband was at the Archives, he found that quotation extremely useful. When program chairmen needed the title of a speech he was to give in order to get it printed in their program for the occasion, Bob would tell them: “What is Past is Prologue.” The speech would not yet be written, but there was the title. I think every speech he gave on whatever topic—preservation of our cherished documents, electronic records, presidential libraries—all came out entitled “What is Past is Prologue.”

So I learned that that is a very useful title. Whatever the topic, it fits nicely into “What is Past is Prologue.” And so today, I am going to speak to you on: “What is Past is Prologue.”

It is indeed fitting that I have chosen this title today when we consider the source of the quotation. It did not originate with the National Archives, but is taken from Shakespeare’s The Tempest, Act II, Scene I. That is William Shakespeare, as in “Shakespeare in Love.”

What could be more appropriate today than a Shakespearean quotation. Just imagine for a moment that I am Gwyneth Paltrow standing before you—dressed in shimmering pink, décolletée spaghetti straps—hair pulled back sleek and smooth to accentuate high cheek bones and luminous eyes.... Well, if this strains your imagination a bit too much, I can’t blame you. But hold on a while—I may cry and then I might look more like her. Maybe.¹

In any case, to pursue a Shakespearean analysis of this year for the Faculty Women’s Club, I would say that, although at times it has been A Comedy of Errors, and sometimes Much Ado About Nothing, Measure for Measure the year has gone pretty well. We have tried to make the Club As You Like It, and we hope you do. In any case, All’s Well That Ends Well, and we think we have.

Why do I think we have ended well? We are all here, well-fed, reasonably happy, and in a nostalgic mood as we consider that this is the last annual meeting of this century. As near as I can figure out, there have been 76 of these luncheons. The Club was founded in 1921. There was no annual meeting in the Spring of 1922.

¹In 1999, the movie Shakespeare in Love was a huge box-office success. Its leading lady, Gwyneth Paltrow, won the Academy Award for best actress of the year. When she accepted the award, she was dressed “in shimmering pink, décolletée, spaghetti straps—hair pulled back sleek and smooth”, and she cried!

In 1923 the Board discussed the annual meeting at their February ^{Session} ~~meeting~~ and "it was decided to hold [an] annual meeting at the Faculty Women's Club House and that the meeting be preceded by a box luncheon with coffee served by the Club." But evidently they thought better of that box lunch idea, for on April 4, 1923, they held the annual meeting "in the form of a luncheon" at the Michigan Union with 101 members in attendance.²

Again in 1924 it was held at the Union where "the tables were made attractive with paper flowers made by the Art Section." An interesting sidelight of this luncheon—Mrs. Burton, wife of President Marion LeRoy Burton, and founder of the Faculty Women's Club as well as its first president, asked for all members who had had new babies during the year to stand. Twelve members responded. These babies of the 1924 meeting are now 75 years old. Just for fun, let's do it again this year. Anyone who has had a baby since our last annual meeting, please stand!

In 1925 the luncheon was held at the Ann Arbor Golf Club where the Refreshment Committee of the Club "served a very attractive and delicious meal." Again the call for new mothers was made, and 10 responded. Another interesting announcement was made. All new members of the Club were requested to stand in order to be initiated, and then they were directed to "remove the soiled dishes from the table and serve the dessert course promptly and properly." Would any new members like to stand and be initiated? I thought not.

In April of 1926 the Board voted that the Annual luncheon should not exceed 75 cents per person. But the price crept up. In 1932, the members paid 85 cents for:

- Minted grapefruit cocktail
- Chicken pies
- New peas
- Baked Tomato
- Head Lettuce with 1000 Island Dressing
- Roll
- Fresh Strawberry Sundae
- Coffee

But in 1933 at the height of the Great Depression, they pared down the menu somewhat and scaled the price down to 50 cents. There was no fruit cocktail. Chicken pies were replaced by ham loaf with but one vegetable - baked tomato. Fruit salad, strawberry ice cream (no sundaes) and coffee completed the menu. Faculty salaries were cut during the Depression and this cut was reflected in all aspects of University life.

The luncheons have not always gone smoothly, usually through no fault of the Faculty Women's Club. Sometimes it was the weather. On April 1, 1975, "the Michigan League

²Proceedings of the Faculty Women's Club of the University of Michigan 1921-1941. All succeeding descriptions of spring luncheons are from this same source.

Ballroom defied the swirling snow outside and presented a welcome forecast to Spring to the 172 in attendance.” The Tempest

Sometimes it was the decorations. In 1988 , 30 pots of short white narcissus bulbs were ordered to be forced, but they didn't come into bloom, so the day before the luncheon the Botanical Gardens “bought tall white daffodils from some unnamed local greenhouse. They were 2 feet tall and so two members of the committee had to spend ... quite a bit of time cutting off the tops so they would “look respectable on the tables” and presumably so people could see over them. A Comedy of Errors

Sometimes it was politics. In 1977 Betty Ford was invited to the Spring Luncheon where she was to be awarded an honorary membership in Faculty Women's Club. Naturally there was much excitement. But the day before the luncheon, came a letter of regret from Mrs. Ford. Nevertheless, on April 6, 1977, “The event ... went smoothly in spite of the fact that former President Ford was attending a luncheon at the same time on the same floor, and that Betty Ford at the last minute had to cancel attendance at the FWC luncheon due to health problems. The program people had to re-arrange their musical selections that were previously planned with Mrs. Ford's presence in mind. The [florist] gave us some anxious moments, delivering the geraniums late, wrong color, and poorly wrapped. The Committee had to re-wrap most of them. The Social Committee also had to help the kitchen people put salads together and members were held in line about a half hour past the time they were supposed to go to the Ballroom. The League had time problems due to President Ford's luncheon and shortage of help. In spite of all this, things went very well.” All's Well that Ends Well

Actually, it did end very well, for in anticipation of Betty Ford's presence at the luncheon, reservations shot sky high and “our treasury benefitted enormously.” Measure for Measure. Note to treasurer for next year: Invite Hillary Rodham Clinton to the Spring Luncheon. It might augment the treasury.

Through snow and sunshine, good times and bad, the annual spring luncheon has taken place. And it will continue in the new century. What is Past is Prologue.

The Faculty Women's Club will indeed continue. But for it to continue to thrive in the 21st century it must conform to new life styles, new attitudes, new philosophies. At last year's annual meeting I announced the formation of a Millennium Committee to guide the Faculty Women's Club into the new century. As I told you last year, this is a three-year committee. Mona Jones and I co-chaired the committee this year. I will now turn my part over to Bruni Culver, who will co-chair with Mona next year. I am pleased to report to you today that the Committee is a success. They have discussed at length problems facing the Faculty Women's Club. Much brainstorming has gone on and many ideas proposed, discarded, or implemented.

Everything we have done this year has been an experiment. But everything has worked. Some of the Newcomers' parties included children—lots of them, nursing, falling, crawling,

squalling—a happy bedlam which resulted in many young mothers joining the Club and we are indeed delighted.

The Fall Reception was held at noon, enabling working women to join us for what turned out to be a not very big lunch. I must admit I made much ado, but it turned out to be really Much Ado About Nothing, for despite the paucity of food, new members signed up. They may have been hungry, but they still joined.

The Holiday Reception was again geared towards working women. Formerly held from 2:00 to 4:00, it is now held from 4:00 till 6:00. We have to go home in the December darkness, but it is worth it, we think.

To the dismay of many and the delight of my husband, the dinner dance was discontinued. In its place we held the Theatre Party, following up on a suggestion made to me by Lila Greene last summer. As we left the Ann Arbor Civic Theatre after that fine performance of “The Rainmaker”, one young husband enthusiastically said to me: “Why don’t you guys do this every month?” So it was a success.

Thanks to Sheryl Manning and her book groups, we brought author Brenda Flanagan to campus. The Faculty Women’s Club had never gone out on such a financial limb before, but we decided to try another experiment. Fortunately, our speaker from Trinidad attracted the interest of other groups on campus—the Center for Continuing Education of Women, the Center for Afro-American and African Studies, and the Rackham School of Graduate Studies whose theme for the semester was diversity. Their financial contributions enabled us to enjoy the evening without worrying over the economics of it all. This, I think, was a first for the Faculty Women’s Club, and I hope it will not be the last. Cooperation with other campus groups not only helps us financially but raises our visibility on campus. I am urging the Liaison Committee of the Club to get in touch with other women’s groups—CEW, Academic Women’s Caucus, Women Engineers—not necessarily to work with them on programs but simply to let them know we are here.

We will also be working with other universities when our delegates, Bruni Culver and Shirley Paul, represent us at the Big 10 Conference of Faculty Women’s Clubs at the University of Iowa this June.

And I would also urge more community involvement. The party at the Civic Theater was a start. Our presence there showed that we are a part of Ann Arbor and not just the University. Actually, throughout the years the Faculty Women’s Club has contributed to the community through the work of the sections. In the 60’s and 70’s there were many beautification projects around town carried out by the Garden Sections. Some sections have donated money to local charities. You have read in the newsletters about the quilts made and donated to Ann Arbor Hospice and the cat-food cans turned into miniature gardens to brighten hospital trays.

All of this has gone on rather quietly. We are not a philanthropic organization. We were

founded as a social organization “to promote fellowship” and we have remained a social organization. But good works are done and will continue to be done by our members who give of themselves without a great deal of advertising. Through the Sections we reach out to the community.

“Promoting fellowship” has always been our mission and will continue to be our primary concern. Over and over again members have commented on what the Faculty Women’s Club has meant to them. Just read some of the statements in the back of our cookbook. A visiting faculty wife from Australia wrote me to thank me for all the Club had done to make her stay in Ann Arbor a pleasant one. I’m sure that the members of Hospitality for World Visitors would echo her thanks for everything the Faculty Women’s Club has done to make them feel welcome in a foreign country. Ernestina Parravano and Enid Galler, along with their committee, have promoted fellowship in many languages for many years.

And for those of us who live here, and have lived here for a long time, it is just as helpful as it is to those from foreign shores. If not for the Faculty Women’s Club how could I count among my friends people from the Music School, from Engineering, Law, Business, Natural Resources, Art, Pharmacy, Medicine? How else could I, wife of a historian/archivist, have become acquainted with a woman whose husband is a cellist and with another whose husband’s field of expertise is snails, slugs, and clams?

And it’s not just the husbands who do interesting things. We have women who paint, women who quilt, women who write, women who lecture on rain forests and real estate, on humor and homeopathy; we have women who are lawyers, economists, musicians, linguists, financial analysts, teachers, caterers, librarians, nurses, architects, and one who drives racing cars!

We have women who give great parties, cook gourmet meals, decorate beautiful homes, plant spectacular gardens.. We have moms whose basement playrooms attract all the neighborhood children—especially during ice storms. We have mothers who run the PTO, cook meals for the swim team, and plan all night parties after the prom. We have Room Mothers, Girl Scout cookie chairmen, and hospital volunteers.

And these are just the women I know. There are many of you sitting here today who are doing interesting, creative, wonderful things and I haven’t met you yet. But I will. If I stay in the Faculty Women’s Club long enough, I will meet you, and my life will be enriched from our acquaintance. My life has already been enriched by the Faculty Women’s Club and I hope many of you can say the same. I must admit the enrichment has worn a little thin at times this year as I pursued my presidential duties, but as I approach the end of my term the old warm, fuzzy feeling comes back.

But personal enrichment is not the only benefit from the Faculty Women’s Club. At the annual spring luncheon in 1982, Vivian Shapiro, wife of President Harold Shapiro, thanked the

Faculty Women's Club for adding to the quality of life at the University of Michigan.

I like to think we do. And I like to think we will continue to do so into the 21st century. But it takes effort—not just on the part of the officers and the Board, but the whole Club. So what will it take for us to be a vital, growing, caring Club in the year 2000 and beyond?

A few M & M's should take us into the 21st century.

The first M is MONEY. That's always a good starting point on the path to success. We need money to put on a nice reception (with plenty of food.) We need money for theatre parties, for luncheons, for Newcomers' parties. We would love to have large sums of money in order to award scholarships to deserving young—or old-women. But let's start with the basics. Dues. If everyone paid her dues our treasurer would certainly be more comfortable. Beyond that, all donations and memorial contributions are welcome. Many of you have contributed this year, and believe me, we appreciate your contributions. But an inordinately large number have not paid dues this year. That just isn't fair to those who have. Next Fall, mailings will be discontinued to those who have not paid dues for this year. If anyone here happens to fall in that category and wishes to be kept on the mailing list for the Faculty Women's Club, you can take care of that financial obligation today. Nancy Moore and Alison Paine are here and they will gladly accept cash, check, or family jewels.

The second M is MEMBERS. Our current membership is 472 paid members; 17
4 ← *Lifetime Members* honorary members, and 73 Golden Members. Membership chairperson Marlene Hubbard has worked hard this year. But we need to keep growing, and in this everyone can help. I have been pounding away at the Board this year, urging everyone to find three new members. It can be done. I did it. I didn't get Newcomers. I got three women who have been on campus for quite a few years. Whether they joined to keep me quiet or whether it was just the right time in their lives, I'm not sure, but in any case, they are now members of the Faculty Women's Club and all tell me they are enjoying the Sections, where they have found everyone very friendly and knowledgeable. Once again, Hurrah for the Sections, under the very capable leadership this year of Teri Teeri. And speaking of Sections, I know you have all enjoyed the beautiful exhibits put on today by the Painting and Quilting Sections. We thank you for sharing your creative efforts with us.

Through the untiring efforts of Kathe Wunderlich and Lori Director and their Newcomers Committee, we took in 48 brand new members this year. (Actually, they only got 45; the other three were mine). That is a huge increase over previous years and cause for rejoicing. We need to continue our efforts to bring in new people with new ideas to bring some excitement to the Club. But it can't all be done by the Newcomers' Committee. We all need to work at it. I got three new members. Suppose each of you brought in three new members, or two, or even one. If everyone here brought in just one new member, we would add over 100 women to the Faculty Women's Club. And that means 100 more membership dues. Think what the results of that influx would be both in finances and in fellowship! Could we give it a try?

Another M stands for MUSCLE—work, in other words. I don't mean hard labor, just a bit of effort. We need members who will work for the Club. You will have more fun if you get involved, believe me. Take a job on the Board. Help at the Russel Lecture or the Honors Convocation. Serve on Committees. None of these jobs are hard enough to produce any muscle strain—you'll just keep limber.

A final M stands for MEMORIES. We need to remember what has gone before. We need to remember the past, which is indeed prologue. Remember those ladies who met in Mrs. Burton's living room in October of 1921 and decided to start a Club to promote fellowship among faculty women. We need to remember our friends who are no longer with us. Since our annual meeting last year, we have lost 10 members and friends:

Ruth Williams
Hazel Baker
Britt Bieliauskas
Beth Carruth
Evelyn Stasheff
Alma Abrahm
Mary Elizabeth "Polly" Elderfield
Alice Warshaw
Anna Kauper
Lois Nicholls

In memory of them, Astrid Cleveland and Anita Baker-Blocker have prepared a Memory Book which is on the table and will be on display at Fall Receptions and Spring Luncheons in the future. And we need to remember the good times we have had at luncheons, dinner dances, holiday parties. Astrid Cleveland has once again prepared a display for us to bring back memories of those good times. And we will even remember the fun at Board Meetings. Yes, I'm one who thinks Board Meetings are fun and will carry with me memories of meetings I have had this year with an enthusiastic, innovative, cooperative Board. I think the Faculty Women's Club is a good memory-maker!

As we head into the 21st century we need these M & M's. We need MONEY. We need MEMBERS. We need MUSCLE. And we need MEMORIES. And we need to believe in the Faculty Women's Club. I do. And that's why I've been beating the drum all year for FWC and why I will continue beating the drum as past president. If you will all beat that drum along with me, we'll march right into the new century with an adequate treasury, increased membership, wonderful memories, and a true spirit of fellowship. What is Past is Prologue.