



Known as the Women’s Division Chamber of Commerce, we were founded in 1951 by a group of civic-minded women. Our organization has been working for the good of our community for 70years and has grown substantially from around 50 women in 1951 to over 240 today.

Our Mission

Working Together to Make a Difference in our Community

Our Vision

Supporting local non-profits and community projects

Encouraging community participation in our events and programs

Providing scholarships to students for their higher education goals

Enhancing and beautifying our neighborhoods and community

Continuing our heritage of inspiring volunteerism and leadership

Leaving a legacy of enduring contributions to our community

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP ♦ REMARKABLE VOLUNTEERS ♦ COMMUNITY FOCUSED

WDCC Board 2022-23

OFFICERS

- Farrah StarrPresident
- Erin VanderWier.....Vice President
- Marilyn FortonRecording Secretary
- Cecelia Taylor Corresponding Secretary
- Mary Kendall Treasurer
- Jannette BoleEx-Officio (Past President)

DIRECTORS

Term Ends

- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Bonnie Adamczak-Brown | 2025 |
| Betty Kinney | 2025 |
| Lynnette (Bloomberg) Lipan | 2024 |
| Lisa Luckey | 2023 |
| Sharron Mathes | 2024 |
| Barbara Morrison | 2024 |
| Caroline Shircliff | 2023 |
| Mary Suarez | 2023 |
| Cindy Timmerman | 2025 |

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Cheryl Deford

HISTORY

The Women's Division Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1951 with membership restricted to wives of Chamber members and business women, or women of note in the community. We were never an auxiliary of the chamber, but paid our dues directly to the State Chamber to maintain independence. This was important to the women members. We met at various restaurants around town and the VP was in charge of monthly arrangements. Hats and gloves were the accepted attire – we were very proper. We have always had a monthly newsletter and paid an office service to print and mail it each month, although one of the members was charged with writing it.

There were some years when many foreign ships were coming into our port doing business with various industries. Members met many of these ships and greeted them with produce from our area, apples, cherries, etc. We also greeted new people brought in by various members of the Chamber.

A major fundraiser was the Miss Muskegon contest that was held at the Frauenthal Theatre. We sold advertising spaces in the program as well as tickets to the event. We owned a throne and other props, and held a charm school for the young lady contestants over several weeks prior to the contest. Alice DenHollander ran the Charm School, and the young contestants were helped with their talents and stage presence. We spent several months working on this, and it was very successful. We also sponsored a "Get Acquainted Dance", and featured guests were junior Chamber members. Ticket sales made this another successful fundraiser.

The American Ideals Luncheon was held every September to honor new naturalized citizens. We always had a prominent speaker and had as many as 500 people in attendance at the Occidental Hotel Ballroom. This was a very big prominent affair held for many years on a break-even basis. When the privacy laws prevented us from obtaining the names of new citizens, we held it in honor of the 9-11 tragedy for several years.

We started the Nativity Scene in Hackley Park with department store mannequins making up a choir in the center of the park as well as the nativity figures. We used steel wool for beards on the wise men. As you can imagine, the weather took quite a toll on these figures, and we had weeks of work bees each year to keep them going. The Park Department did store them for us, but we did the work of maintaining them and also putting them up annually in the snow and cold for many years. In the late 80's or early 90's, Carol Brocci spearheaded a fund drive in the community to enable us to buy the figures we now have from Bronner's in Frankenmuth MI.

In the mid 80's, Mary Shanks and Marilyn Ballantyne started the volunteer Usher Program at the Frauenthal Theatre using WDCC members and other community members. After several years, the Theatre took over the program, and it is still a valuable part of their operations today.

WDCC has given scholarships to deserving students for over 50 years. This program continues today as do a variety of fundraisers that allow us to give back to our wonderful community.

WDCC was organized to create civic consciousness while encouraging and aiding in the development of our community. Our members represent all segments of the community: women in business, women sponsored by firms who employ them, retired women, women who work in the community as volunteers, and women in government, education and healthcare. The varied backgrounds and interests of our members create a very special ambiance in our organization.

Heritage Members who have given so many dedicated years to WDCC are valued for their knowledge and expertise. WDCC remains actively involved in the numerous projects that benefit the community. Our purpose has not changed through the years.

Written by:

Elaine McCulloch, 7/31/13, Parliamentarian, joined in 1959, Past President 1980-82

Heritage Members who have at least 15 years of service include:

Jean Corsi - 48
Bert Marshall - 41 PP (1985-86)
Florence Stahl - 37
Carol Brocci - 36 PP (1990-91)
Carol Beatty - 30 PP (2002-03)
Barb Spaniola - 30 PP (1995-96; 2003-04)
Mary Kendall - 27 PP (1999-2000)
Peggy Hartmann – 27 PP (2007-2008)
Esther Block - 36
Connie Bull – 19 PP (2008-2009)
Cheryl Deford – 19 PP (2006-2007)
Kathy Dickinson - 19
Claudine Weber - 18
Dacia Wait - 19
Kathy Workman - 19
Chris Nolan – 18 PP (2009-2010)
Christine Robere - 18
Peggy Tully – 18
Pam Babbitt – 17
Lois Lange – 17
Karen Mogdics – 17 PP (2011-2012)
Lynn New – 17 PP (2012-2013)
Sandy Nolan – 17
Judy Rahrig – 17
Bette Jeanne Russell – 17
Linda Slade – 17
Jill Barnes – 16
Katie Bolhuis – 16 PP (2014-2015)
Sharon Genter – 16
Amy Huss – 16 PP (2017-2018)
Denise Kanaar – 16
Paula Baker Mathes – 16
Barbara Morrison – 16
Jennie Naffie – 16
Judy Rich – 16
Seconda Addicott – 15
Valerie Alcorn – 15
Jan Anway – 15
Dianne Bernd – 15 PP (2013-2014)
Cindy Cotton Brady – 15
Linda Nicles – 15
Elaine Nielsen – 15
Joan Schmitt – 15
Mary Seeger - 15