

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 over 66 years and has grown substantially from around 50 women in 1951 to now well over 240.

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 by inspiring volunteerism and leadership**
- **Leaving a legacy of enduring contributions to our community**

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

REMARKABLE VOLUNTEERS

COMMUNITY FOCUSED

Women's Division Board 2017-18

OFFICERS

Amy Huss.....	President
Kay Bowen.....	Vice President
Marilyn Forton.....	Recording Secretary
Mary Kendall.....	Treasurer
Shawn Norden.....	Corresponding Secretary
Debra Walters.....	Ex-Officio (Past President)

DIRECTORS

	<u>Term Ends</u>
Diane Cunningham	2018
Linda Nicles*	2018
Sherri Schuitema-VanderWier	2018
Jo Anne Hoekenga	2019
Betty Kinney	2019
Farrah Starr	2019
Paula Baker Mathes	2020
Caroline Shircliff	2020
Kathi Upman*	2020

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Pat Shafer

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; the VP was in charge of monthly arrangements. Hats and gloves were the accepted attire – we were very proper. We always have had a monthly newsletter and paid an office service to print it 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 greeting 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". 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 each year 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 the mid 80's Mary Shanks and Marilyn Ballantyne started the volunteer Usher Program at the Frauenthal Theatre using WDCC members and then 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: they are 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

Our Heritage Members who have 15 years or more of service include:

<u>Heritage Members = HM</u>	<u>Year Joined; PP = Past President</u>
Eloise Selleck	1963
Jean Corsi	1974
Bert Marshall	1981 PP (1985-86)
Judy Gorham	1982
Florence (Bright) Stahl	1985
Carol Brocci	1986 PP (1990-91)
Lucia (Lucy) Nalley	19 PP (1991-92)
Winki Jepsen	1991
Carol Beatty	1992 PP (2002-03)
Barb Spaniola	1992 PP (1995-96; 2003-04)
Ann Archambault	1994
Mary Kendall	1995 PP (1999-2000)
Peggy Hartmann	1995 PP (2007-2008)
Esther Block	1996
Shirley Almond Meeks	2000 PP (2005-06)
Patricia Shafer	2000 PP (2004-05)
June Wurtz	2001