

**THE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB  
OF MONTREAL INCORPORATED**

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEARS  
1967 TO 1992**

*by*

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The Coach House *from a wood block by Lynda Nakashima*

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# THE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB OF MONTREAL INCORPORATED

## PAST PRESIDENTS

1927-1932	Mrs. Archie F. Byers
1932-1938	Miss Elizabeth C. Monk
1938-1942	Miss Virginia Cameron
1942-1944	Miss Grace Gardner
1944-1947	Miss Elizabeth Osgood
1947-1949	Dr. Margaret Gibb
1949-1952	Miss Barbara Dougherty
1952-1954	Miss Helen Falconer
1954-1956	Mrs. W. Boyd Campbell
1956-1959	Mrs. Graeme McLean
1959-1961	Miss Virginia Cameron
1961-1963	Miss Kathleen B. Farmer
1963-1966	Miss Margery W. Trenholme
1966-1968	Dr. Joan M.V. Foster
1968-1970	Mrs. A.J. Cipriano
1970-1972	Mrs. W.D.H. Buchanan
1972-1974	Mrs. C.A. Bengough
1974-1976	Miss Katherine Lamont
1976-1978	Miss Dorothy Kidd
1978-1980	Mrs. R.L. McLean
1980-1982	Mme Pierre Duchastel
1982-1984	Mrs. Alan Aitken
1984-1985	Miss Kathleen M. Gillespie
1985-1986	Mrs. J. A. Boa
1986-1987	Mrs. J.W. Tremain
1987-1988	Miss Lesley M.M. Forrester
1989-1991	Mrs. Joan K. Fitzpatrick
1991-	Miss Kathleen M. Gillespie

## HONORARY PRESIDENTS

1967-1980	Miss May Idler
1980	Miss Elizabeth C. Monk
1984- 1990	Mrs. Michael Joyce
1990-	Miss Margery Trenholme

## INTRODUCTION

In her history, *The First Forty Years of The University Women's Club of Montreal 1927 - 1967*, Catherine Holland Joyce looked back on what she called "the growing years" of the Club. She foresaw the future as a time of expansion and great satisfaction. Twenty-five years later, we see that membership, rather than expanding, is declining, and not only in our Club; this problem was addressed at the CFUW Annual Meeting in Moncton in 1990. Yet the words "expansion and great satisfaction" are not out of place when we consider the achievements of many of our members and our on-going efforts to improve the well-being of women.

On 17th March, 1967, 116 members and guests attended the 40th Birthday Party of The University Women's Club of Montreal. The President, Dr. Joan Foster, presided and cut the birthday cake. She announced that Miss May Idler, who was chairman of the original committee for the founding of the Club, had accepted the request of the Board to become the Club's Honorary President. Miss Elizabeth Monk read the citation and presented the scroll.

Mrs. Joyce was recognized for having written the history of the Club. Mrs. MacEwan was recognized for her work as chairman of the Expo Passports project which had made possible a donation of \$500.<sup>00</sup> towards the publication of "The Clear Spirit", the CFUW centennial project.

Dr. Foster paid tribute to charter members, life members and past presidents, many of whom were, of course, present. Then Miss Margery Trenholme, the immediate past president, who had written to all the above members, read messages from those unable to attend and from Her Excellency, Mme Georges Vanier.

Finally, a most distinguished speaker and former President of IFUW, Dr. A. Vibert Douglas, talked about the IFUW Council Meeting that had taken place in Iceland the previous summer, and showed excellent colored slides taken during her visit.

Thus this brief record of the twenty-five years of the University Women's Club of Montreal, Inc. since 1967, starts on a high note. That birthday party, taking place during Canada's Centennial Year, during which so many of the essentials of the Club were recognized, makes a fitting introduction to the story of the next twenty-five years.

## **CHARTER MEMBERS**

In *The First Forty Years*, Mrs. Joyce includes a list of the Charter Members of the University Women's Club of Montreal Incorporated. Three Charter Members, who are still members of our Club, will be honored at the 65th Birthday Dinner on 18th March, 1992. They are:

Gwendolyn E. Mabon (Mrs. H.O. Lough)

Maysie S. MacSporran

Mary C.M. Ross (Mrs. J.R. Hendry)

## **SUPPLEMENTARY LETTERS PATENT**

The University Women's Club of Montreal, Inc. was originally incorporated as a social club, and remained so even after the Club received its Charter from the CFUW in 1957. But times and circumstances changed. At the Annual Meeting in 1973, the Board was authorized to apply for Supplementary Letters Patent to bring our Charter up to date, not as an expression of our good intentions, but rather of our established commitment to the national organization. By the amended letters patent of 19th October, 1973, we are empowered and charged to co-operate fully and effectively with the purposes of CFUW. As might be expected, it was Miss Elizabeth Monk who undertook this task which involved a great deal of correspondence during several months.

## **“THE FOUNDATION”**

One of the aims of CFUW is to provide grants and fellowships and promote further education among women. Early in the 1980s, we made a short-term, interest-free loan to McGill, the income from the loan to be used to provide a \$1500 fellowship for a graduate student, preferably a woman.

Next, the University Women's Club of Montreal Public Foundation, always shorted in speech to "the Foundation", was formally set up with five trustees, a proper constitution and registration numbers obtained from both the Federal and Provincial tax departments so that receipts for income tax purposes can be issued. Since 1986, a Bursary has been awarded to a mature student at Concordia. In 1990, the Foundation held its first Auction to raise funds. This event, surely one of the jolliest - and noisiest - in recent memory, raised the princely sum of almost \$3000. As a result, a second bursary, for a native student, has been set up with Concordia. The Foundation also contributes to several organizations such as The Montreal Children's Library, Chez Doris, and Auberge Madeleine.

## **CFUW AND IFUW**

Throughout this time we have energetically supported CFUW and IFUW. We have hosted and attended Provincial Council Meetings and we have travelled across the country and around the world to attend CFUW Annual Meetings and to IFUW Triennials. We have studied issues and resolutions and made our views known, wherever and whenever possible. And, when we come back, we report in full to the other members of the Club.

Several of our members have held office in these organizations. Miss Margery Trenholme was CFUW National Membership Secretary from 1967, CFUW Recording Secretary from 1973 and was later Chairman of the CFUW Fellowships Committee. Mrs. Eileen Clark was Vice-President Quebec from 1973, President of CFUW from 1979 to 1982, then a Vice-President of IFUW for six years from 1983. Mrs. Rosslyn Tetley is currently CFUW Regional Director Quebec (English).

## **AT THE THEMIS CLUB**

In 1972, the Themis Club, with whom we had been associated for a period of ten years, decided not to renew its lease. The Board of the University Women's Club of Montreal appointed a committee to look into a new location. After exploring various possibilities, an approach was made to the University Club of Montreal. Our approach was received with courtesy and enthusiasm by the President of the day, Mr. Blakey Purvis. At a Special General Meeting in December of 1972, members present voted unanimously to approve the proposal for a future association with the University Club, retaining our separate identity and programs. The members also approved increased fees to meet the plan. The last meeting to be held at the Themis Club was our 46th Birthday Dinner held on 15th March, 1973, attended by Miss May Idler and all but one of the living Past Presidents.

## **AT THE UNIVERSITY CLUB**

The move from the Themis Club took place on 16th April, 1973, "a really beautiful spring day" according to Mrs. Norah Bengough who was President of our Club at that time. On Monday, 7th May, 1973, The University Women's Club of Montreal held its first meeting, which was also the Annual Meeting, at the University Club. No special programme was planned so that members would have time to explore their new surroundings.

It will never be forgotten by members of the University Women's Club of Montreal that women were not allowed to use the staircase in the University Club when we first went there. This policy was changed when the House Rules were amended in 1974.

When we moved to the University Club, we indicated that we would like to bring our paintings and some of our furniture from the Themis Club. Space was found for them on the third floor in the foyer and the lounge. Our furnishings seem to have been appreciated. As late as 1985, Mr Quinlan of the University Club asked that the Queen Anne mirror that was hanging in our office, be moved to the third floor. (This mirror now adorns the Coach House.)



Courtesy of Miss Margery Trenholme, the furniture that could not be accommodated was sent on loan to the Fraser Hickson library for use in their staff quarters. Rugs were sold to a member and the drapes were donated to the Douglas Hospital. In the spring of 1978, the Board decided to sell the furniture still at the Fraser Hickson Library and give part of the proceeds to the CFUW permanent scholarship fund. Of the \$665 raised, \$500 was sent to the fund.

In the spring of 1986, the President of the University Club notified our President, Mrs. Elizabeth Tremaine, that we could no longer enjoy the premises at the University Club. This was the subject of a special meeting of the Club on 30th September, 1986. The great distress of the members is a measure of how satisfactory our tenure at the University Club had been, and our President was empowered to continue discussions on our behalf. Sadly, it became evident that the position was not negotiable and that we had to leave.

At the same time a committee, Mrs. Holman, Mrs. Sproule and Miss Leavitt, was formed to find a new location for the Club. They submitted a report to the Board in February of 1987. After a spring and summer that were difficult for most members of the Club, another Special Meeting was held in September, 1987, at which the Montreal Badminton and Squash Club was approved as the new location for our Club.

On 16th December, 1987, we held our last Dinner meeting at the University Club. Miss Margery Trenholme organized a special review of our Club over six decades. The six speakers were:

1927-1936	Maysie MacSporran
1937-1946	Mary Hendry
1947-1956	May Robertson
1957-1966	MargeryTrenholme
1967-1976	Phyllis Duchastel
1977-1986	Catherine Scofield

## **AT THE MONTREAL BADMINTON AND SQUASH CLUB**

Our first Dinner meeting at the Montreal Badminton and Squash Club (MBSC) was held on 13th January, 1988. Two days before that, though, the daytime Bridge Group, under the leadership of Miss Maysie MacSporran, began meeting there.

One of the charms that the MBSC holds for us is the Coach House which was built in 1860 by the Sulpicians, and which is adjacent to the main building. At the time of our move, the MBSC was renovating the building to provide bedrooms on the upper floor. We were offered the lower floor, suitably renovated, to use as a Club House. This would provide us not only with a meeting place for small groups, but also with an attractive setting for our furniture and paintings.

In 1968, the family of Miss Virginia Cameron presented the Club with a McGill chair in memoriam. This chair can be seen in the Coach House today. Miss May Idler presented us with a brown hassock in 1969. In 1985, Miss Margery Trenholme presented the Club with a table which had belonged to Miss Monk and which became a treasured memento.

Ms. Jean Fisch, who is an architect, was our representative during the planning and execution of the renovations to the Coach House. Not all the redecorating was done by the professionals. We had painting parties during which members in their oldest clothes applied gallons of Chinese Red paint to appropriate surfaces. All the furniture was carefully checked for needed repairs during the preparations for our move to the MBSC and some chairs and couches were recovered in the grey "tulip" fabric chosen for the Coach House by Ms. Fisch.

Mr. Ritchie Bell, President of the MBSC, and his Board hosted a special welcome party for our Club on 24th February, 1988. At the same time, the Coach House was officially opened. Our decor excited great interest among the members of the MBSC. Among our own members, the Coach House has excited a great deal of support for Interest Groups of which there are probably more, than at any time in our history.

## **ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS**

In the late sixties, new members of the University Women's Club of Montreal were invited to a Sherry Party, cost \$1.<sup>00</sup>, before the first Dinner Meeting of the season. The date would be in October; Dinner Meetings in September did not start until 1973, at the University Club. Luncheon meetings were enthusiastically received when they were introduced in 1970, when some members found difficulty going out at night.

Programmes at both Luncheon and Dinner Meetings have always been of very high quality. In this regard, it can be claimed that some of the best speakers come from within our own membership. We have been privileged to travel to the South Pacific, to Guatemala and Mexico, and to Asia with Miss Maysie MacSporran. We had financial advice from Miss Margaret Davidson. Mrs. Esther Cushing informed us about the history of Art in Quebec. Patience Wanklyn read to us from her published work. In addition to the formal programme of the Club, members find themselves taking part in a variety of activities of which a mere sample is given here.

**Lunch at the Coach House** was an innovative idea from Miss Kathleen Gillespie to supplement the program of the Club during those months when there is a dinner meeting. Since 1988, many of our members have enjoyed informal lunches, prepared by some of the participants.

**The Bridge Group** is our oldest interest group, and is co-ordinated by Miss Maysie MacSporran. It was the first of our groups to hold a meeting at the MBSC. The Group started in 1974, soon after our move to the University Club, and meets on Monday mornings. Members have bridge lessons and lunch, and play into the afternoon.

**The Book Club** was formed in 1983 and now meets regularly in the Coach House. Between 1974 and 1976, a group met to study the French Canadian scene. At one point its members were easily recognized - they were all talking about the works of Gabrielle Roy. Another bookish activity began in 1971, shortly after luncheon meetings were introduced. Book sales were organized at the luncheon meetings. Several were held and raised welcome funds, before they were discontinued when we moved to the University Club.

**Royal Commonwealth Society** - In the autumn of 1969, the Club agreed to read and evaluate essays from schools participating in the Royal Commonwealth Society essay competition. That year, a team led by Dr. Margaret Cameron read 231 essays. For over a decade, with the exception of 1976 when the essays arrived too close to Christmas, members of the Club read, evaluated and duly reported on these essays. In 1972, we heard that one of the essays selected by our team had won first prize in its class.

Also in 1972, Miss Ellen Stansfield agreed to be chairman of the committee, a task she fulfilled for several years.

**The Montreal Council of Women** is supported by University Women's Club of Montreal which appoints at least two representatives to attend meetings. We have also acted as Hostess Club for meetings of the Council on many occasions. In 1987, the Montreal Council named our own Elizabeth Tremaine *Woman of the Year* for her work at Chez Doris, a drop-in centre for homeless women.

**Montreal Children's Library** was founded by the Montreal Council of Women in 1929. It was the first free public library in the city of Montreal with children's books on its shelves. Every year, the University Women's Club of Montreal gave the Library financial support; this is now done by the Foundation. Miss Maysie MacSporran cut the birthday cake when the Library celebrated its 60th birthday in 1989.

**Reciprocal Clubs** have been enjoyed by our members since the early eighties. Mrs R.S. Clarke worked hard to establish a list of about twelve clubs with which the University Women's Club of Montreal might enjoy reciprocal privileges. Both the University Club and the Montreal Badminton and Squash Club willingly supported us in this venture.

## "FIRST WOMEN"

During the past twenty-five years, the role of women has changed greatly. Perhaps it is still too early to evaluate the effect of the women's movement upon our collective consciousness. But it is surely true that the "world will never be the same again". Evidence of this, especially during the seventies, comes in the number positions held by women for the first time. As a tribute to the achievements of all members, past and present, of the University Women's Club of Montreal, Inc., a list of some "first women" who are or were also members of our club follows.

**1975 - Mrs. G.A.D. Reed** was the first woman to be elected President of the Montreal Branch of the English-Speaking Union.

**1977 - Mrs. C. Middleton-Hope** accepted the position as Secretary General of the Lakeshore Board. This was the first time that it had been held by a woman.

**1979 - Maitre Anne Marie Trahan** was the first woman to be appointed Legal Officer to the International Trade Law Branch, stationed in Vienna.

**1979 - Dr. Mimi Belmonte** was the first woman to be elected to the Board of la Corporation professionnelle de Québec since its foundation in 1847.

**1982 - Mrs. Joan Hanna** became the second woman to be presented with the Distinguished Service Award by the Quebec Association of School Administrators.

## **HONORARY MEMBERS**

The University Women's Club of Montreal Incorporated is proud that, since the beginning, the wives of successive Governors-General have consented to become Honorary Members of our club and have taken an interest in our affairs. On the occasion of our 40th anniversary, Mme Georges Vanier sent a letter in which she relayed her warmest congratulations and best wishes to the Club and acknowledged the contribution of distinguished members to community and country.

Her Excellency Mrs. Roland Michener was guest of honour at dinner at the Themis Club on 24th February, 1970. She received all the guests, spoke briefly at dinner and remained to hear the Speaker, Dr. Shamsie. Among other special guests on that occasion were the presidents from five University Women's Clubs in the Montreal area and the president of the Themis Club.

We were further honoured in 1985 when the Governor-General of Canada herself, Her Excellency, the Right Honorable Jeanne Sauv , PC., C.C., C.M.M., C.D., accepted our invitation to be an honorary member.

Her Excellency Mrs. Gerda Hnatyshyn, wife of the present Governor General, has been an Honorary Member since 1990. Our President and our immediate Past President have both been invited to luncheon at Rideau Hall, and Her Excellency will honour us with her presence on the occasion of our 65th Birthday Dinner.

## **MISS ELIZABETH CARMICHAEL MONK**

During the lifetime of Miss Elizabeth Monk, every President of The University Women's Club of Montreal expressed, in her Annual Report, her gratitude to Miss Monk for her support and her work on behalf of the Club. In her will, Miss Monk made a bequest to the Club with the stipulation that the principal remain intact, and that the interest and dividends be used specifically for the benefit of our members. In her honour, the Club donated a prize in the Faculty of Law at McGill to be given annually to a student who has done well in Family Law.

Shortly before her death in December, 1980, Miss Monk was awarded one of the five *Persons* Awards made to commemorate the five Alberta women whose efforts led to the historical decision in 1929 whereby women were recognized as persons. As members of The University Women's Club of Montreal, our debt to Miss Monk is of the same order as is our debt, as women, to these five Albertans.