

WCDNF
History for Spring Luncheon 2023

***This is a spotlight of a few of the varied and diverse projects
undertaken during our 40 years as a club.***

To strive for accuracy these projects are listed by year.

- WCDNF is founded: October 19, 1982
- WCDNF is federated: March 19, 1983
- Marilyn Wise and Doris Zeilman Lloyd and the 12 original members began what has become WCDNF. We now have over 200 members, and we are 40 years Strong!
- In the beginning, General Meetings were held at the Danbury Library. When the club outgrew that space, they moved on to the Scott Fanton Museum. When that venue became unavailable, the club moved its meetings to Hatter's Park. We are now meeting in the Amber Room, because our Club size is just too large for most other venues.
- When WCDNF moved its general meetings to the Scott Fanton Museum, they provided space for no fee. As we were a fledgling club, there was no money for rent. Several members rolled up their sleeves and painted the parlor of Rider House with one member making draperies for the windows!
- In March of 1984, WCDNF sponsored an Art Show of CT residents at the Governor's Residence in Hartford. In April that show was brought to Richter House in Danbury. The club had become friendly with the current Governor's wife, Mrs. Nikki O'Neill, after inviting her to speak at one of their early meetings. In 1984 the club voted to make Nikki O'Neill an honorary member of WCDNF. This began a relationship that lasted for years.
- In 1986, the club embarked on an adventure to help restore and furnish the Tarrywile Mansion which the City of Danbury had recently purchased. This needed to be completed before it could be used by the public as a Community Center. The Designer's Show House was born. WCDNF along with the Ives Center took on this project and chaired 9 out of the 13 committees, receiving 60% of the profit. 10,000 people toured the completed Show House at the mansion. The \$60,000 raised by WCDNF, along with \$48,000 thousand and \$69,000 in in-kind services contributed by local designers rendered a "new" mansion. The Designer's Show House was completed in 1987.
- 1988 saw the introduction of our club motto "Sharing, Caring and Giving" along with the naming of our monthly Newsletter, "From Under Our Hats". Sheila Vetter took the helm and has remained editor to this day!
- In 1990, WCONF was represented by seven of our members at the 100th GFWC Birthday Celebration at the International Convention in July in New York City.
- In 1990 we saw the club host a Garden Party to help restore the perennial gardens at Tarrywile Park. This was part of the CIP project for our club for this administration. This is part of our ongoing support of Tarrywile Mansion and the grounds surrounding the mansion. In addition to the funding, many of our members did much of the garden work. This continued through 1992 when another Garden Party was given to continue the garden restoration.
- The next Project the club took on was in 1993-94. We became active members of the SOAR Special State Project making Touch Books for blind elementary school children. These Touch Books became a CIP Project in 1994-95. This project was so successful we went on to win a

National Award for our SOAR Books.

- In 1995-96 our focus was to support the State Project CONNSACS. The objective was to reduce violence toward women and children. The monies we raised were given to the Women's Center of Greater Danbury. WCONF had been involved with the Women's Center, in addition to a local shelter, for many years. These partnerships began in 1984 when some of our members became advisors in a local shelter program. Their responsibilities included answering the hot line, court watching, helping with paper showers, food collections and donations. These relationships continue today although some of the organization names have changed.
- "Sister Act" was performed in 1995 by our very own "Harmonettes". This vocal group of women from WCONF performed at many state meetings, the Spring Luncheon, holiday meeting, and at the Veteran's Hospital. Truly a class act!
- In 1996 the Poinsettia Fundraiser was born! This has become our major fundraiser and continues to this day!
- In 1997 we took part in various events throughout the year to celebrate the GFWC/CT Centennial Celebration. One such event found us selecting our own "Pioneer Woman of the Future." We made posters with her picture to use at public events. This earned us a First Place Award at the State May Convention. Additionally, we entered a float in the Memorial Day Parade with the message "celebrating 100 years of service" GFWC/CT.
- Also 1998 found our String Quartet performing at the May 1st Inspirational Breakfast at the State Convention. This quartet of WCDNF members provided many interludes at events within Connecticut.
- In 1998-99 one of our founding members was nominated to be honored in a "Women in Danbury History" exhibit held at the Danbury Historical Museum (formerly known as the Scott Fanton Museum). She was interviewed about her contributions to women in the community and about her goals when helping to establish WCDNF. The Public Affairs Department then helped put together a display of her memorabilia for the museum.
- During this time, we also collaborated with the Housatonic Valley Tourist Office in hosting the NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Tournament. We were responsible for welcoming teams as they arrived in town. Members manned welcome desks at the various hotels during the tournament so guests could get information about Danbury and its tourist sights and entertainment venues. We also sponsored a table at the opening banquet in support of the athletes. We would go on to join the Tourist Office again the following year when the NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Tournament came to town, repeating our prior services with the addition of hosting three of the players during their stay.
- In 2000, we decided our CIP project would be the renovating of Hatter's Park banquet hall where we held our meetings. Working with Parks and Recreation, we spearheaded the efforts to make improvements to the city-owned Hatter's Park.
- In October of 2000 we provided all hospitality foods and services for the Volunteer Center's 25th Anniversary reception held at the Holiday Inn. We received the "Heart of the Community Award" for our many years of volunteer activities.
- Our 2002 - 2004 CIP project "Save Our Sculptures" was born. This included researching local outdoor sculptures and recording locations. An album entitled "Don't Walk on By" was created. Through GFWC, we applied for and received a grant from Shell Oil to develop and print a pamphlet directing a trail to follow and view these sculptures in the greater Danbury area. This S.O.S. project was part of a National program through the Smithsonian Organization to develop an awareness of local outdoor sculptures to help promote the need to acknowledge and preserve them through restoration. This project did earn a First Place Award at our State Convention.
- In 2005 we began a new endeavor in conjunction with the USPS, Danbury Historical Society, and the

Danbury Music Center to have a first-day stamp unveiling for the new Marion Anderson stamp. This became a two-day event to honor Ms. Anderson, a former longtime resident of Danbury.

- WCDNF website is born in 2005!
- 2007 brought "A Tarrywile Anniversary Party" held in the mansion we had helped to restore, to celebrate our 25 years of service to the greater Danbury area. In the fall we were awarded a "Best of the Best Award" from the GFWC/CT!
- 2008 saw our club joining the GFWC/CT 2-year state project for the Veteran's Oasis program. By the conclusion, in 2010 a Veteran's Oasis was created at WCSU's Westside Campus. These Oases provide a place for returning veterans to meet and discuss among themselves the issues they are facing upon returning to society.
- By 2009, we have realized the need for a larger venue for our General Meetings. The club voted on changing our meeting venue to the Amber Room where we still hold our meetings.
- In 2009, we are awarded first-place award for our twenty-five-year history with Tarrywile. In the fall of 2008, in celebration of our 25th anniversary, we dedicated a Green Mountain Maple Tree and plaque at the entrance to Tarrywile Park. We additionally dedicated the installation of a new light pole at the park.
- In May 2012, our Board decided to present the organization "Homes For The Brave" to the GFWC/CT membership for consideration as the next 2- year state project. This was approved at the May Convention, and we embarked on this two-year project as the lead club.
- The fall of 2014 sees WCDNF hosting the State President's Tea. This is the first time we have hosted as one of our members is now the GFWC/CT President.
- In 2015 we earned a Gold Award at the International GFWC Convention for our Shot@ Life donations. Loose change can go a long way in helping to save a child's life.
- For the state project 2018-2020, Tackling Hunger, our WCDNF "Hunger Has No Taste" CIP, project helped us take over from United Way in providing weekend food to students in need. This project went on to win first Place at the GFWC/CT annual Convention and an International Award! The project for tackling hunger was awarded the "Distinguished Friend of Education Award" by the CT Association of Schools. This was awarded on April 12, 2021, in recognition of the three-year project in support of Roger's Park School. (A delay in receiving the award was due to Covid).
- Then came COVID C l u b meetings and trips were canceled while we figured out how to keep going. Georgeann introduced the club to Zoom meetings and we continued to shine albeit with different media! Not to mention the close ups.

Congratulations

WCDNF

40 Years

&

Going Strong!!!