



FWC History 2010 to 2021

The years 2010 through 2021 kept our calendars and day-planners filled...until they didn't. (More on that a bit later.)

While America was climbing out of a recession, bad news shifted to catastrophic events both natural and man-made. An earthquake in Haiti and Hurricane Sandy brought destruction and the Boston Marathon bombing left us shocked. Through the decade, we mourned for the victims of myriad mass shootings across the country.

On the brighter side, rainbow flags flew and both the White House and Empire State Building were awash in rainbow colors as LGBTQ rights were expanded and same-sex marriage became legal.

As President Obama's second term wound down, we experienced a particularly contentious presidential campaign, pitting Hillary Clinton against Donald Trump. The political divisions created and leveraged during the 2016 election intensified for the next four years.

Social media continued to flourish, perhaps most notably in < 140 (now < 280) characters. Twitter changed the meaning of the # symbol (formerly number or pound, but now known as hashtag). It brought us the #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo movements as well as tweets from anyone and everyone on all topics imaginable, occasionally resulting in Twitter wars, followers being blocked, and suspended accounts.

U-M made several nods to the past throughout the 2010s. In 2014, an historic Bur Oak was relocated to accommodate renovation and expansion at the Business School. The University marked its bicentennial in 2017 by offering a wide range of opportunities to celebrate its rich history. This decade also saw two former players return to their alma mater as coaches: Jim Harbaugh (football, 2015) and Juwan Howard (men's basketball, 2019).

Within FWC, sections flourished and new ones were formed. Interest in yoga returned, with our current section established in 2013. (An earlier section ran from 1977 to 1983.) In 2014, Hospitality for World Visitors became Friends from Around the World. FWC Goes to Happy Hour started, well, GOING to happy hours in 2016. Arts & Crafts, Beginning Spanish, and Mystery Books also launched in this decade. International Cooking enjoyed a long-awaited and strongly lobbied-for menu as one of their 2017 meals: Last Night on the Hindenburg.

FWC changes weren't limited to section happenings. We donated *Quartet*, a sculpture by Physics faculty member Jens Zorn, in honor of U-M's bicentennial and our 95th year, in 2017. In 2020, we opened membership to all gender identities. Additional bylaws changes were passed in 2021, further expanding membership to U-M staff and staff spouses/partners, an idea floated as early as 1953 according to Board minutes. Also, the Friend member category was abolished. Instead, non-University members sponsored by a current FWC member immediately have the status of regular members, with the potential to serve on the Board as officers and to sponsor new members.



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Our history highlights wouldn't be complete without mention of Covid-19. Michigan was one of the states heavily impacted in the early months of the pandemic. Local businesses and non-profits, including U-M, migrated to remote work & teaching; restaurants & bars pivoted to take-out and delivery only; cultural & sporting events were paused; and residents holed up at home, using online ordering to source groceries, ready-to-eat food, clothing, plants, and (lots of) Ikea furniture. Those who masked up to shop in-person (socially distanced, of course), saw shelves empty of or signs limiting quantities for toilet paper, paper towels, disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer, yeast, flour, and other “essentials.”

Under stay-at-home orders, FWC canceled our Spring Lunch & Annual Meeting and instead voted online for bylaws changes and our Board slate. We figured out which sections could meet successfully (socially-distanced, outdoors, or online) and we learned how to use Zoom. The Information Resources Committee's online membership forms and dues payment links were completed in time for us to use in Fall 2020.

President Kay Erdman deftly navigated this unusual year. She held monthly Board meetings through the summer months and worked with Communications Chair Anne Wasiuck to provide a monthly newsletter to help keep us connected. Throughout 2020-21, Jasmijn Quon and the Social Committee created innovative online events that brought many of us together.