



FWC History The 1970s

Welcome to the 70s! The Summer of Love, assassinations of national political & spiritual leaders, the moon landing, and Woodstock were all in our collective rear-view mirror. FWC, the University of Michigan, the United States, and the world were changing course—and it wasn't always a smooth ride. This decade saw the fall of Saigon and the end of the war in Vietnam, a massacre at the 1972 Munich Summer Olympics, the Arab oil embargo, Three Mile Island, and the Iran hostage crisis grab international headlines.

We celebrated the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, and, just weeks later, mourned the shootings at Kent State and Jackson State. In 1971, Congress approved the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), pushing it to states for ratification it hoped would be complete by 1979. (Such optimists!) Two years later, the Supreme Court ruled on *Roe v Wade*. Facing impeachment due to the Watergate scandal in August 1974, President Nixon resigned and was replaced by Michigan native Gerald R. Ford. 1976 gave us nation-wide bicentennial celebrations and put peanut farmer Jimmy Carter in the White House through the end of the decade.

We went to the movies to see *Jaws*, *Star Wars*, and *Saturday Night Fever* or stayed home, tuning in to a new NBC show called *Saturday Night Live*. While only some of us listened & danced to disco music; most of us waited in long lines at the pump to buy gas and watched as both postal workers and air traffic controllers went on strike. While they might not have been household names (yet), innovators Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Steve Wozniak were busy founding Microsoft and Apple.

Change wasn't just happening elsewhere. As early as 1970, groups across U-M's campus were advocating change on a number of fronts, including:

- Student organization **Environmental Action for Survival** (ENAC), with support from U-M and local schools, held a five-day environmental teach-in with more than 125 rallies, panels, and workshops.
- Students formed the **Child Care Action Group** to build support for a free childcare facility for children of students. Some group members crashed the March 18, 1970 FWC Tea at the President's House. (See the 3/19/70 [letter to the editor](#) in *The Michigan Daily* for more details.)
- After the Board of Regents didn't meet their demands for increase in Black enrollment (to 10%), financial & non-financial support for those students, and an increase in Black faculty hiring, the **Black Action Movement** (BAM) called a strike that was announced at a rally outside Hill Auditorium during Honors Convocation. Eventually, 75% of LS&A classes were cancelled and AFSCME members refused to cross picket lines. On April 1, 1970, the Regents agreed to assure funds to reach the 10% goal, hiring of additional recruiters, and organization and support of a supportive services program. The strike was then called off.

Just like our campus and world, FWC changed with the times—albeit without protest marches, strikes, or teach-ins. The 1971-72 Board roster was the first to include women's first names, such as Ackley, Mrs. Gardner (Bonnie). In 1974-75, the directory listing also included women's first names in this format: Ackley, Mrs. Bonnie (Gardner). In hindsight, these shifts may seem inevitable or even overdue but—like most change—were likely hotly debated in the moment. Coverage of FWC



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events in *The Ann Arbor News* trailed this trend slightly, referring to members as Mrs.+husband's first name+last name (e.g., Mrs. Gardner Ackley) in articles and captions until about 1976.

The Faculty Women's Club celebrated its 50th birthday in 1971. To commemorate this milestone, *The Ann Arbor News* Women's Editor, Diana Orban, chronicled the Club's history in an [article](#) published in the December 26, 1971 edition.

New sections created during the 70s included Antiques Study Group, Couples Bridge, and Quilting. The Red Carpet Committee both began and ended during the 1970s; its purpose was to welcome and acclimate visiting faculty and spouses, domestic and international, to the University and Ann Arbor community. Likewise, Paperbacks Unlimited—one of the Book sections—ran its course from 1972-75.

Our sports sections remained popular throughout the 70s, with badminton, bowling, golf, hiking, horseback riding, ice skating, swimming, and tennis all active for at least part of the decade. Skating (at one point boasting 70 active members) disbanded in 1973 due to increased fees after the U-M rink at the Coliseum was replaced by Yost. After years on Central Campus, Swimming moved to the North Campus Recreation Building (NCRB) in 1977-78, where the group enjoyed a private hour in the pool Monday through Friday from 9-10am. Hiking, one of the Club's original four interest groups, re-organized and began regular walks again.

Social events of all sorts, including receptions, dinner dances, and teas, remained a staple for the Club. A February 1974 "Mid Winter's Night Out" featured jazz music for dancing, a dessert buffet, and musical revue with vocalists accompanied by the U-M Jazz Band. The 1976 dinner dance with a "Valentines in Ragtime" theme included a performance by School of Music faculty member and noted ragtime scholar William Albright.