



FWC History The 1990s

The 90s. These ten years had Larry Page go from U-M College of Engineering undergraduate to Google co-founder, saw pop culture vying with politics for what would be deemed “newsworthy,” and put the world wide web at our fingertips.

In national and world news, the 90s provided headline after headline. In 1990, the United States joined coalition forces to fight the Gulf War in response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. 1993 saw Bill Clinton inaugurated as our 42nd president. The following year, Nelson Mandela was elected President of South Africa. The O. J. Simpson car chase, trial, and verdict provided us with plenty of live TV drama in 1994-95. (It also introduced a last name—Kardashian—that would make headlines of a different sort in future decades.) Bill Clinton’s impeachment (12/98 vote & 1/99 trial) made Monica Lewinsky a household name and the punchline of myriad late-night TV jokes.

If focusing on the news was depressing, there were plenty of distractions. NBC gave us *Law & Order* (the first title in that franchise) in 1990 and *Friends* just four years later. McDonalds let us “Supersize” our orders starting in 1992. Ty Beanie Babies flew off shelves and took up residence in (or took over) kids’ rooms. People were dancing to the Macarena, listening to grunge, and reading a new book from unknown British author J. K. Rowling—*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*.

On campus, U-M was celebrating the creation of both legacies and facilities. Legendary football coach Bo Schembechler retired in 1990, quickly moving to the front office of the Detroit Tigers. The second half of the decade saw Michigan sports fans celebrate multiple national championships: men’s swimming & diving (1995), softball (1996 & 1998), ice hockey (1996 & 1998), and football (1997). The polarizing “halo” circled Michigan Stadium for two years beginning in 1998. On Central Campus, the School of Social Work moved from the Frieze Building to their own space on the southwest corner of South & East University in 1998. North Campus saw several new buildings constructed in the 90s, including the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Tower. Its 60-bell carillon became the second such instrument on campus, making U-M one of two American college campuses with dual carillons. (Illinois is the other.)

FWC started the decade with annual dues of \$12 and a March 1990 Quilt Show at the Kempf House Center for Local History. This was the first time the Quilting Section displayed their work outside the Club. Hospitality for World Visitors enjoyed a 1991 tea at the President’s House hosted by Anne Duderstadt. In the late 90s, we tweaked our social events: the long-standing tradition of a Dinner-Dance was replaced by a Theatre Party and the time of the Fall Reception was changed from late afternoon to mid-day. The Social Committee’s September 1998 report to the FWC Board indicated they hoped the new timing and light luncheon “would attract more people, including working women.”

We celebrated FWC’s 75th anniversary in print, on fabric, and in person. The Club’s *Maize and Blue Gatherings* cookbook was issued in 1996. The Quilting Section designed, sewed, and donated a commemorative quilt which hangs in the main hallway on the first floor of the Michigan League. Its pattern celebrates FWC’s history and interest sections. (You can find more information about the creation of the 75th anniversary quilt [here](#).) We toasted ourselves as “the ladies who lunched” as part of our Spring Luncheon and Annual Meeting.



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While the Club's annual leadership transition usually happens without a hitch, 1997 was an exception. In April, Vice President Ruth Whitaker announced she would not be able to serve as FWC President since her husband Gil had accepted the presidency of Rice University. Mona Jones (then VP-elect) assumed the FWC President role, leaving the Vice President position open. Fortunately, in May Jane Warner agreed to serve as VP for 1997-98. While this potential leadership gap was resolved quickly, it is worth noting that late 1990s annual reports from at least two Club officers mention the Nominating Committee's challenge in finding members who'd agree to serve in leadership roles on the Board. (This same challenge continues through the next couple decades to today.)

The 90s ended with all of us—in FWC and worldwide—counting down to Y2K and crossing our fingers in hopes the “Millennium Bug” wouldn't wreak havoc on banking, computer systems, and the power grid.