



## **FWC History The 2000s**

Despite our fears, digital clocks and computers—as well as the banking, utility, government, and university systems that relied on them—successfully transitioned from 12/31/1999 to 01/01/2000. (Had we only known then that this was the easiest part of the decade, perhaps we would have enjoyed it more!)

FWC began the new century discussing whether Club membership should expand to include women who did not have a faculty connection (either themselves or through their spouse/partner). These individuals had been able to join sections as guests and pay section-specific dues but were not members of FWC. Lively discussions at Board meetings followed and we polled our Big Ten peer clubs to learn their membership standards. Board minutes indicate those supporting this shift saw it as an effective way to ensure FWC would continue to thrive as we entered the new century.

FWC added a “Guest” membership category in April 2000; this allowed Regular Members to sponsor someone who did not have the U-M affiliation required to join on her own. Guest Members were expected to pay section and Club dues and were welcome to attend Club-wide events. As of September 2000, Board minutes indicate there were about 110 non-members participating in section activities. It took another couple years and additional bylaws changes to coin the term Friend Member (instead of Guest Member), integrate Friend and Regular Members into a single list in our directory, allow Friend Members to vote, and permit them to serve on the Board of Directors, although not as Officers of the Club.

Election night 2000 left us wondering which candidate would be inaugurated in January: George W. Bush or Al Gore. The protracted recounts and court challenges meant that question lingered until December, and brought the phrase “hanging chads” into everyday use. Tuesday, September 11, 2001, saw coordinated terrorist attacks on U.S. soil by Al-Qaeda. America’s war on terror quickly ensued, putting American troops on the offensive across the globe. After eight years of George W. Bush in the White House, Barack Obama was elected President in 2008—the country’s 44<sup>th</sup> and the first African American.

Hurricane Katrina blew ashore and ravaged New Orleans in August 2005, displacing many NOLA citizens for months or years. On the heels of that lingering regional devastation, thousands of Americans saw—then felt—the late-decade financial storm: the housing bubble, subprime mortgage crisis, banking bailout, and Big Three (auto) bailout. The U.S. economy was officially labeled a recession in December 2008.

If these headlines had us turning away from the nightly news, we might have been turning toward our computers. Email use increased and began to replace “snail mail” as a way to send letters, information, and messages across town or across the globe. Social networking sites mushroomed, with Friendster, Myspace, Facebook, and Twitter all hitting our collective consciousness between 2002 and 2006.

Beyond expanding membership eligibility, FWC changed in other ways during the Aughts. Dinner After Work (now known as FWC Goes Out to Dinner), started in 2002; it was geared to those members unable to participate in the Club’s daytime activities. Friday Aces organized in 2007, adding another bridge group to our section roster.



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The first decade of this new century brought change at U-M also. Mary Sue Coleman was inaugurated the 13<sup>th</sup> president of the University of Michigan—the first woman to hold this position—in 2002.