

**THE FINAL INSTALMENT
OF THE HISTORY OF
THE UNIVERSITY ARTS WOMEN'S CLUB-
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

2020 – 2024

Compiled and Written

By

Sue Russell

Foreword

This is the final history of the 95-year-old organization of women at the University of Toronto. The three previous histories covered the periods 1929 to 1974, 1975 to 1999 and 2000 to 2020.

These past four years, sadly, are the final years of the most wonderful, exceptional, and beneficial years of this Faculty Wives' organization, initiated in 1929 by Lady Falconer, the wife of Sir Robert Falconer, President of the University of Toronto at that time.

“The Object shall be to promote friendly relations among the members of the club with the particular aim of providing a nucleus of interest for members who are new to the University.”

From these words of Lady Falconer sprang the organization that benefitted many hundreds of women, initially Faculty wives, which grew to Faculty women and Librarians, women senior staff and most recently, administrative staff, women alumnae, and close friends. The inclusion of the latter three groups was the attempt to increase membership. Words of past members still ring in my ears:

- *The Club was very important to me as a young wife in a strange country,*
- *My 20 years of membership in UAWC have been wonderfully rewarding and far exceeded my expectations,*
- *I have many fond memories of the years since I joined as a young bride in 1932.*

Sue Russell

Introduction

March 2020 was the beginning of the COVID pandemic when everything had to change. Our Spring Luncheon and Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the newly amalgamated University Arts Women's Club-University of Toronto Women's Association (UAWC-UTWA) had to be cancelled.

Despite the Covid pandemic our organization continued as scheduled with both General Meetings and Executive Meetings being held on Zoom from October 2020 to March 2022, a new experience for us all. Our Membership Coordinator ran our meetings beautifully with the new technology which we all had to learn on our computers.

Our first Zoom General Meeting was held October 15, 2020, and our first Zoom presenter was Carol Bishop-Gwynn who talked about her book *"Art and Rivalry: The Marriage of Mary and Christopher Pratt"*.

Instead of our memorable Christmas Party at the President's House, in December 2020 we settled for a very imaginative "Show and Tell" presented by many of our members. This was broadcast on Zoom. By 2021 we were able to meet in person and our Christmas parties were changed from the President's House to The Faculty Club where, in 2021, we were served a delicious lunch in the Fairley Lounge. In 2022 and 2023 we gathered in the W. D. Foulds Dining Room and enjoyed The Faculty Club's Christmas Buffet.

In April 2022 our regular scheduled events began again, and our Spring Luncheon and AGM was held in person at The Faculty Club with The Honourable Dr. Vivienne Poy as our speaker. However, due to frequent inclement winter weather, we decided that future February meetings would continue to be held on Zoom.

The organization learned early in 2021 that St. Thomas's Church would not welcome us back and it was decided that our General Meetings would be held in The Faculty Club's Main Lounge. Instead of a sandwich lunch tea, coffee and cookies would be served at 1:00 pm with the meeting beginning at 1:30 pm.

The name UAWC-UTWA was slightly altered, the slash (/) between the two original names was changed to a dash (-) to comply with some computer use standards.

Interest groups

The Pandemic quarantine months allowed our members to participate in only one of our interest groups, which, of course, was held on Zoom. The Reading group of 10 members continued their meetings on Zoom. Antiques and Art Appreciation with 29 members had no planned activities during the Covid restrictions. The Gourmet Lunch with 8 members had only one meeting and then curtailed all activities. The Theatre group of 13 members suspended all activities during Covid. In 2022 a new interest group, Restaurant Lunch, was founded with 14 regular members. It was well attended.

Special Events

During the quarantine hiatus, in order to entertain us, we were treated to two Special Events organized by our Special Events Coordinator and presented via Zoom. Using slides and videos, the first illustrated the lives of Hummingbirds; the second explained the banding of Monarch Butterflies and their migration to Mexico.

Changing Times

At the Executive Meeting of March 2023, the Treasurer reported that there were only 48 paid members compared to 61 last year. Even though our expenses were greatly reduced during Covid the Treasurer explained that expenses will exceed revenue by about \$2,000.00 for the 2022-2023 financial year due to decrease in membership. If expenses continue to exceed income, we will be in a deficit position in two to three years. The Executive then passed a motion to increase fees to \$75.00 for the 2023 – 2024 year. The Spring Newsletter encouraged original members of UTWA who have not joined the merged club to join and pay the membership fee.

In January 2024 it became clear that declining membership meant the Club could not remain viable and the difficult decision was made to cease operations on June 30, 2024, the Club's year end.

The final event of the merged UAWC-UTWA was the 2024 Spring Luncheon and AGM held April 18 in The Faculty Club's Main Lounge with 42 members attending. We were entertained by Dr. Andrée-Ann Cyr, PhD from Glendon Campus, York University. She talked about Optimizing and Learning in Old Age. Such an appropriate topic for the aging members of our group.

Our final delight came in the way of a gift from the University of Toronto Press. For the many years since the UTWA gave the Press \$40,000.00, they had been giving us five books a year as door prizes to our members. This year the Press surprised us by donating a book for each member attending the AGM.

Winding Up

A portion of the Club's funds was used to pay for the lunches of all members who attended the Spring Luncheon and AGM, and the balance of \$3,000 was donated to the University of Toronto to be added to UTWA's scholarship fund.

Scholarships and bursaries established by the UTWA are administrated by the University and will remain in place for perpetuity. The 2023 Scholarship report explained that there are 18 perpetual scholarships and bursaries, and during that year 18 students received financial support totalling \$27,639.00. Since 1989 a total of 398 students have received \$473,058.00 in financial support.

Items in the Club's possession were listed in the Appendix of the 2000 – 2020 history and they all needed new homes. The engraved silver pieces were offered to the Office of the President and were accepted. Other items were accepted by Bloor St. United Church and by several of our members.

It was agreed that the Arbor Award certificate and silver pin that were presented to UTWA in 2011 will go to the University of Toronto Archives (UTARMS).

A digital copy of our website <https://uawc-utwa.artsci.utoronto.ca> has been archived by UTARMS.

A *News and Events* page was added to the UAWC-UTWA website in 2018, and the final function listed is the April 18, 2024 Spring Luncheon and Annual General Meeting.

And so ended the amazing gift of Lady Falconer of 1929.

UAWC-UTWA Presidents 2020 – 2024

2020 – 2022 Kirsteen McLean

2022 – 2024 Patricia Nevins

2024 – Sharon McCarthy

Our sincere thanks to the many dedicated executive members who worked diligently to keep our Club functioning well for many years, especially in challenging times –

- Presidents (past, present and future) who so ably led the team through these past few years,
- Treasurers who kept a sharp eye on the bottom line and a realistic eye on the future,
- Secretaries who faithfully recorded our meetings and activities,
- Program Coordinators who discovered and booked such amazing speakers, making sure we were entertained and informed,
- Special Events Coordinators who treated us to a variety of new experiences,
- Media Coordinator who kept everyone informed by posting program information and newsletters on our website,
- Membership Coordinators, who originally managed membership and attendance records, and more recently mastered electronic communications with our membership and facilitated our Zoom meetings,
- Lunch Coordinator for liaising with The Faculty Club and her unconditional organization of all our events,
- Publications Coordinators who have produced our Annual Directories and Newsletters,
- Scholarship Coordinators who have liaised with the University and relayed information about UTWA's scholarships and bursaries and the recipients of funds,
- Archivists who assembled various Club documents,
- Convenors who led Interest Groups, and Committees who organized a wide variety of events.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Office of the Dean of Arts and Science for their many years of support.

A special thank you to Sue Russell for compiling and writing the third and fourth instalments of our History Books, *A Continuation of The History of University Arts Women's Club 2000 - 2020* and *The Final Instalment of the History of the University Arts Women's Club-University of Toronto Women's Association 2020-2024*.

July 10, 2024



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Merik S. Gertler, CM, FRSC, FBA, FAcSS
President

March 27, 2024

Ms Patricia Nevins
President, University Arts Women's Club-University of Toronto Women's Association
University of Toronto
nevinsp@gmail.com

Dear Ms Nevins:

On behalf of the University of Toronto, I write to thank the University Arts Women's Club-University of Toronto Women's Association for its decades of service to the University of Toronto community. U of T has benefited tremendously from your hard work and dedication, both as independent groups and also after merging. The provision of over \$445,000 in scholarships and bursaries to 380 students since UTWA's founding in 1982 is a testament to your decades of hard work on behalf of the University community. The various interest groups, programmes and social events of the UAWC, particularly the annual Holiday Party at 93 Highland that my wife Joanna was delighted to join, have truly helped to foster camaraderie and friendship as the UAWC founders intended. Joanna was also delighted to serve as Honorary President.

We are therefore saddened to learn that you will soon cease operations after a combined 95 years of operation. The UTWA-UAWC leaves an indelible impact on the U of T community. Your dedicated service and warm friendship will be remembered fondly and with deep appreciation.

Sincerely,

Merik S. Gertler
President