

Award # 71 GCI Garden Club Anniversary Celebration

For 18 months, The Des Plaines Garden Club prepared to celebrate our 90th anniversary in 2021, then came a pandemic called Covid-19.

90 years is a big deal, and we were determined to not let a little thing like a pandemic to deter us. Just like the gardener who rescues a forgotten plant under the table at the garden center, where there is a will there is a way. So, with much determination we started off our year in January. The virus had other ideas.

Meetings were moved online using Zoom instead of being in person. Not what we planned, but certainly better than cancellations. It was a challenge to host a Zoom meeting with 73 participants. Scrolling between several screens to make sure everyone who wanted to make a comment had their chance and teaching Zoom etiquette, so we weren't talking over each other. Even some of our members who have retired to warmer climates joined our Zoom meetings. A few of them are former officers and certainly important links to our 90 years.

In the second quarter, March through May, our local history center gave us their exclusive display space. We went into the archives at the history center and pulled out all the important documents, including the list of the charter members, and showcasing our 90 years of activity in Des Plaines. Several of our members loaned us memorabilia they had from prior years. We had enough materials to fill 6 eight-foot tables. The history center, our local paper, the library, and our website, advertised the display. At the end of the quarter, the curator noted very nice attendance each month to see our display.

By March the infection rate was going down, and we were able to start meeting in person. Well sort of, preregistration was required and no more than 35 members could attend. Instead to being able to hug each other, we all wore masks, stayed a distance apart, sat singularly at tables 4 feet apart, no food or beverages, no raffle table, but we were together. Several members continued to join us via Zoom. We stated planning our BIG 90th Anniversary year.

June is our actual anniversary so let's have our annual birthday trip, call the city we want to be in the 4th of July parade, let's plan a fun activity for the youth in the fall and our course of 90th Anniversary Luncheon and fall fund raiser in November. The wheels were in motion. But so was the second season of Covid. It became apparent that our annual birthday trip on a bus, was just not possible. We quickly found plan B. Our club celebrated their 1st anniversary with an afternoon picnic at a member's home. We have the photo showing all the ladies in a dress, dress shoes, some with gloves and everyone with a beautiful hat. Let's recreate that moment. No one had room for card tables in their yard, so we went to our local conservatory. Again, we were limited to 50 participants. We took sandwich orders in advance and each person had their own box lunch. The members dressed for the occasion in their finest 1931 style apparel. What's a birthday without cake? But no serving cake. So, each member had a beautiful cupcake properly served in a personal container. We sang Happy Birthday, and we played a trivia game about our club, our city, and life in general in 1931. The mayor declared June 2021 Des Plaines Garden Club month and gave us a proclamation. Was it what planned no, but it wonderful!

Our local 4th of July parade was cancelled and so were our plans to have our members ride on a trolley with 1931 music playing. So, 2022 we will participate in the parade for our 90ish anniversary. In late summer we went into power mode planning our 90th Anniversary Fall Luncheon. We needed to make sure we kept our members as safe as possible. Would our members feel safe to attend? Would the banquet hall accommodate us? Could we find a floral designer for the program? Of course, we can! We are that little forgotten plant, with a little water, a ray of sunshine, and good luck we can make it happen. And happen it did.

The menu was changed to a plated meal from our traditional family style. Everyone was required to wear a mask unless they were seated eating their lunch. Everyone did their part to insure a comfortable setting. Each table had a beautiful vintage centerpiece, each member received a handmade bookmark, and special 90th anniversary cookies were at each place. The meal was great, Kim Hartmann presented a beautiful holiday floral program, the raffle baskets were a success, and everyone had a great time. State Senator Laura Murphy was in attendance to present a proclamation from the State of Illinois honoring our 90th anniversary. We were also honored to have Carol Yee representing National Garden Club Central region, Marilyn Krueger representing Garden Clubs of Illinois, and Barbara Gilblair representing GCI District IX.

Was the celebration of our Anniversary what we planned? Not even close, but it was perfect. 90 years of service to our community, continuing projects into 2022, over 100 members genuinely enjoy each other's friendship, knowledge shared among our members, new members with enthusiasm for the future, and many, many fond memories of events, friends, and good times. That forgotten little plant is thriving in the care of The Des Plaines Garden Club and well bloom long into the future.

Des Plaines Garden Club's 90th Anniversary Celebration

June, 2021
90th Anniversary
Luncheon



Des Plaines History
Center Display



Des Plaines city mayor
proclaimed June 2021
Des Plaines Garden Club
month



The State of Illinois presented a
certificate of recognition for
our 90th Des Plaines Garden Club's
anniversary during the November
Fundraiser

