

THE EARLY YEARS (1928 - 1969)

The 1920's and 1930's

It was a golden October 1, 1928 when thirteen dynamic business women answered the call of Mrs. Elizabeth Gardener of Austin, Texas to meet in the Peacock Terrace of the Baker Hotel in Dallas to organize an Altrusa Club.

These women liked the idea of Altrusa, so the wheels began to turn to make organization a reality. Among these women were an elementary school principal, a doctor of medicine, a cateress, and a pharmacist, so early programs were entitled "Duties of an Elementary Principal," "Early History of Women in Medicine," "Work of a Cateress," "Law, Its Classification," and "Health in the Dallas Schools."

Some of the charter members were *Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun, Cecile Lowenstein, Kate Frierson, Ruth Cooper, and Leita Marsh*. *Dr. Calhoun* died in 1995. *Leita Marsh* died in 1998.

The first national meeting after Dallas was organized was held in Denver, Colorado, July, 1929. *Dr. Calhoun* attended as the Dallas delegate.

For the first year and a half, the Dallas Club was part of the Texas Association of Altrusa Clubs. At the end of the second year, the membership was twenty-two. At that time, forty members were required to charter.

At the 1930 national meeting, Altrusa was divided into ten districts. The Governor of each district was a representative on the national board. Dallas was then in District Seven, which included Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Mexico, Guatemala, and Texas. Harriette Quisenberry, of El Paso, was Governor for 1930-32. *Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun* was elected the second Governor of District Seven for 1932-34.

Early meetings were luncheons held at the Dallas Athletic Club. By the second year the club was meeting at night in the home of Ray Jacobs, who catered the dinners.

It was not until 1934 (under the presidency of *Cecile Lowenstein*) that the membership requirement was reached. The charter for the club was granted at the national meeting in Chicago.

One of the first service projects in history proved worthy of community praise. The project was the addition of books related to vocational training at

N.R. Crozier Technical High School. The librarian, *Margaret Walraven*, was a member of the club.

Early presidents were:

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| <i>Grace Fitzgerald</i> | 1928-29 |
| <i>Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun</i> | 1929-31 |
| <i>Eva Pinkston</i> | 1931-32 |
| <i>Dr. May Agness Hopkins</i> | 1932-33 |
| <i>Cecile Lowenstein</i> | 1933-35 |
| <i>Dr. E. May Fry</i> | 1935-37 |
| <i>Kate Dinsmore</i> | 1937-39 |
| <i>Frances Alexander</i> | 1939-41 |

The 1940's

In 1940 the coordinated program was adapted, and the annual program was introduced.

Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun became International President in 1941. She served two terms from 1941 to 1945.

During World War II, the meetings were held in the members' homes. They were very informal, but the programs were excellent, as was the fellowship. The members worked in USO Clubs serving coffee and doughnuts; helped soldiers find places to live; and entertained them at dances.

Another war project was the Help Counsel Service. Altrusans helped ladies in the community find work. One lady said her greatest interest was visiting the sick. Altrusans helped her find work at the East Dallas Christian Church visiting the sick – a job she held for many years. This project became an "Older Women's Counseling Service." As the pressure of jobs became less, this project developed into the "Mature Women's Project." The *Mature Woman's Award* was started in 1949 to give recognition to women who had gone into a new type of work after 40 years of age, had continued the work for five years, and were earning a living from it. The project was discontinued in 1969.

The club was very active in the 40's. It organized the Texarkana Club in 1941, the Sherman Club in 1942, and the Denison Club (since disbanded) in 1948. The *Communiqué*, the club newsletter, was started in 1945.

Beginning in 1948, the club emphasized scholarships with a post-graduate course in American nursing for Mrs. Jn Ai Yangs, post-graduate training of Filipino nurses, and scholarships to three students at North Texas State University.

Also in 1948, a Career Clinic was established at N.R. Crozier Technical High School. Roundtables on many vocations were led by outstanding men and women of Dallas. A Career Clinic followed at Forest Avenue High School. After two years, Bryan Adams High School and Sunset High School were added. Kiwanis joined Altrusa in the Career Week project. The Altrusa Club of Dallas served the public high schools from 1948 until 1966 through the Career Clinics. A manual, "Procedure for Career Clinics," was printed. At the last, thirteen schools were being served.

This was an exciting period in the life of the Dallas club. Clubs were organized and projects were started and continued through the years. All in all, the Altrusa Club of Dallas made its presence felt in the city of Dallas.

Presidents during this decade were:

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| <i>Margaret Walraven</i> | 1941-43 |
| <i>Louise Childress</i> | 1943-45 |
| <i>Adaline E. Rutherford</i> | 1945-46 |
| <i>Mildred Lively</i> | 1946-47 |
| <i>Ruth H. Gardner</i> | 1947-49 |
| <i>Becky Inman</i> | 1949-50 |

The 1950's

Many things happened in this decade. The regular meetings were held at the Stoneleigh Hotel. A "Little Old Ladies Christmas Party" was given for a poverty area in Oak Cliff, in the Zonta Community House, from 1953-57. The party was so successful that friends and family wanted to be part of the festivities. Things got out of hand, so the party was discontinued.

A Friendship Fund was established in 1953 for members who, after lingering illness, were without funds. This fund still exists, with the majority of withdrawals being repaid.

Also in 1953, the club organized clubs in Greenville and Paris.

In April 1956, International completed redistricting all clubs. *Edith DeBusk* became the first Governor of the new District Nine. She was installed at the Hotel Galvez in Galveston in October, 1956; presided at the Second Conference in October, 1957 in Abilene at the Hotel Wooten; and presided at the third conference in Waco at the Hotel Raleigh in October, 1958. District Nine was comprised of Texas, Mexico, Guatemala.

In 1956, the club received the "*Times Herald* Award for Community Service." (The *Times Herald* was one of the major newspapers in Dallas.)

In 1958, the Elmer Scott Playschool Project was started. Indian, Mexican, and Anglo-American children of pre-school age attended this school. The club furnished the teachers' salaries, fruit juices, and food for mid-morning snacks.

In 1959, the Dallas club was granted permission to organize an Emeritae group. These women were retired Altrusans, were sponsored by the Dallas club, paid dues, and had service projects. This was a pilot project with International that was accepted and has been proved to be a worthwhile endeavor.

Presidents during this decade were:

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| <i>Lois Acker</i> | 1950-51 |
| <i>Alecia Paschall</i> | 1951-52 |
| <i>Edith DeBusk</i> | 1952-53 |
| <i>Olivia Smythe</i> | 1953-54 |
| <i>Bess Morgan</i> | 1954-55 |
| <i>Frances Welch</i> | 1955-56 |
| <i>Marguerite Green</i> | 1956-57 |
| <i>Beryl M. Phares</i> | 1957-58 |
| <i>Louise Timmerman</i> | 1958-59 |
| <i>Aileen Aiken</i> | 1959-60 |

The 1960's

When the 60's came in, the Dallas club was extremely busy. The club worked with the Council of World Affairs and local colleges to assist in entertaining foreign students and visitors.

In 1961, the club sponsored "Miss X," who had been a mental patient, by helping her with clothes, etc. for two years in an attempt to help her assume a place in society. This was the first Person to Person project.

In 1962, the club received the "*Times Herald* Award for Community Service" in honor of the Career clinics and the Elmer Scott Playschool.

The Thanksgiving Project was begun in 1963 with a program each November, at which an organization chosen by a committee was given a sizable check for its work in the community – a "Thanks" gift from the members.

The Friendship Fund Trust was officially established as a formal trust on September 5, 1967 to assist any member who was faced with a catastrophic need. The original fund had been established in 1953.

Aileen Aiken was International Program Coordinator from 1963-65 and District Nine Governor in 1966-68. The Yearbook for 1966-67 was dedicated to Aileen for her devotion and commitment to Altrusa.

The Dallas club organized the Denton Club in 1960, the Oak Cliff Club (since disbanded) in 1964, the Irving Club in 1964, the Garland Club (since disbanded) in 1965, and the Richardson Club in 1966.

In 1965, the *Communiqué* won first place in International.

The George Loving Playschool started as a project in 1967-68 – the same type of Headstart School as Elmer Scott for the children in the housing area. It was discontinued after 1968-69.

The Foster Parents Project was started in 1961, with the first club recipient being a Greek boy who was sent a money gift each month, as well as letters and cards on special days. Camperships for girls without financial help were given over a number of years.

The Job Corps at McKinney became a project in 1969. A plaque was given with the name of the "The Girl of the Month" inscribed on it. Plans were to help the girls get started in the business world and become self-supporting.

Mini-scholarships for this purpose were given. Special projects were planned from time to time for their cultural enrichment and enjoyment. Job placement was done for them.

On June 4, 1969, five dozen *Texas Memorial Plates*, specially designed for the Altrusa Club of Dallas, were presented to the first lady of Texas, Mrs. Preston Smith, for the Governor's Mansion in Austin.

In 1969 *Dr. Dollie Woodul* suggested having "a Big Money-Making Project," thus the yearly Antique Show was born. This same year, the Edith DeBusk President's Award was established as a continuing award for the club president's report. *Edith DeBusk* was legal advisor to Altrusa International.

Another 1969 happening was the International Relations Committee's entertainment of foreign exchange students with a Christmas party and the international comparative law students at SMU with a June picnic.

Vocational Services Project, *ACTION* – Altrusa Career Training In Opportunities Now – was started and worked through the help of SMU, giving guidance to college age students. Club members made themselves available on a continuing basis to serve as career advisors and to work with teachers conducting career courses in the regular curriculum of El Centro College. Career Clinics were no longer held.

Presidents during this decade were:

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| <i>Clara Vaden</i> | 1960-61 |
| <i>Frances Lawler</i> | 1961-62 |
| <i>Sara Frances Chester</i> | 1962-63 |
| <i>Martha Knowles</i> | 1963-64 |
| <i>Margaret H. Cone</i> | 1964-65 |
| <i>Mildred Arnett</i> | 1965-65 |
| <i>Ruth Behrens</i> | 1966-66 |
| <i>Willena Monroe</i> | 1966-67 |
| <i>Etha Forman</i> | 1967-68 |
| <i>Dr. Erie Darnall</i> | 1968-69 |
| <i>Dr. Dollie Woodul</i> | 1969-70 |

