

Zonta Club of Lansing
90th Anniversary Address
By District 15 Governor Denise Quarles
December 13, 2011

Anniversaries give us an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments and longevity, to recognize commitment and hard work, to reminisce about friendships developed and our own individual personal growth. What makes this Zonta Club of Lansing anniversary event particularly noteworthy is the recognition of **90 years** of service improving the lives of women. It is a celebration of the 16th club chartered by Zonta International, and it is a celebration of the District 15 club with the 3rd greatest longevity only exceeded by the chartering of the Detroit I Club in 1919 and the Grand Rapids Club in 1921.

Think about the significance of a group of women in Lansing, Michigan in 1922 having the strength of conviction to say we want to be a part of a fledgling organization founded in Buffalo, New York with the mission, at that time, to improve the lives of girls and young women through education and constructive work. This was no small step at a time when women had just realized the right to vote in 1920 and there was a profound lack of equitable treatment in major aspects of their lives such as in marriage, education, owning property and participating in the business world, etc. Women were beginning to make small strides in the work force and began to be hired for office jobs. It is in this context that in 1920 the presidents of Zonta clubs recommended that instead of the original purpose of service to humanity and standardizing business principles and practices that the primary focus of the organization should be education and constructive work for girls and young women.

The Zonta Club of Lansing has a long history of making a difference - of being significantly impactful.

- As the first Zonta club in the Lansing area, it established a Zonta presence that has continued to grow with that presence having been expanded to a total of 4 clubs in the area today.
- It has been responsible for establishing 8 other Zonta clubs.
- It spearheaded the establishment of the Golden Z Club at the Michigan State University.
- It initiated many great service projects including an international project establishing a micro credit program in Ghana.
- Several members served at both the Zonta district and international levels such as Sue Eareckson and Jane Rhodes as former District 15 Governors, Jackie Pulford as the Zonta International Treasurer and member of the International Finance Committee as well as others who have served on the District Board.

- Most of the 8 Zontians inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame were members of the Lansing club.
- Several current and past members* have as individuals made significant contributions to the community as public officials and in other prominent capacities.

So let's salute the Zonta Club of Lansing for its 90 year commitment to improve the lives of women. On behalf of the District 15 Board I want to express our appreciation for your dedication and hard work, and I want to congratulate you for a job well done!!

*Note: Some examples of former members of the club –current US Senator Debbie Stabenow, current Michigan State Representative Joan Bauer, former Lansing City Councilwoman Lucille Belen (deceased) and Michigan Hall of Fame Founder Gladys Beckwith. Lansing Police Chief Teresa Szymanski is a current member.