

her greatest ambitions "the development among children of an appreciation of good music and plays." In 1920 she brought the American Opera Company to Western New York and in the summer of 1932 promoted the first Pop Concert that gave work to unemployed musicians. It was also in the early 1930's that she played a major role in the formation of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra which introduced to Buffalo some of the most prominent artists of the day.

Founder of Zonta

It was during the time as a working woman in a male establishment that Marian and some close friends conceived the idea of an organization that would bring together women in executive positions. They envisioned a strong network that would help women reach their rightful place in the professions.

She understood how important it was to break through the glass ceiling long before the term was ever used. On November 8, 1919 she gathered at the Hotel Statler in Buffalo a group of like-minded women who held prominent roles in the professional world.

The nine founding clubs that made up the Confederation of Zonta Clubs were Buffalo, Rochester, Binghamton, Elmira, Syracuse, Erie, Utica, Ithaca and Detroit. The Confederation later became Zonta International with the incorporation of Toronto in 1927.

Zonta was founded and continues to be, a service organization of executive women working to improve the legal, political, economic and professional status of women. The group chose *Zonta* as a name which comes from a Lakota Sioux Indian word that means *honest* and *trustworthy*.

In one of her early speeches, Marian explained, "Zonta stands for the highest standards in the business and professional world... seeks cooperation rather than competition and

considers the Golden Rule not only good ethics but good business." She envisioned Zonta stretching across the country and beyond. In her own words, "This is the woman's age and in distant lands and foreign climes women of all nations are rallying to the call... Zonta is given the opportunity of uniting them into one great, glorious whole".

Woman of Peace

Marian died in February, 1935. As the world views this remarkable woman through the lens of history her accomplishments are even more significant today. She was a trailblazer on many fronts; however, Zonta remains the jewel in her crown. An excerpt from her radio address on the occasion of Zonta's 15th Anniversary exemplifies her spirit and charisma... "Far reaching is our plan to

assemble in Zonta International the women executives of the world, an army of experts who through friendship, understanding, cooperation and good will, will become an irresistible force of peace."

Zonta Growth

During the first 15 years of Zonta's existence, Marian not only founded Zonta

but led with remarkable vitality and power of persuasion. Zonta grew from 9 to 124 clubs nationally, in Canada, and in Europe. The excitement of bringing to reality this dream and the heady experience of seeing the fledgling organization's unprecedented growth also brought dissension, conflicts and disappointments. Such challenges only increased her passion for the cause. As a result, membership grew at an unprecedented rate. The dramatic history of Zonta is housed in the archives of the State University of New York at Buffalo and Zonta's International Headquarters in Chicago (Zonta International, 557 West Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60661-2206; telephone +1-312-930-5848; FAX +1-312-930-0951).

ZONTA Today

From its beginnings in 1919, Zonta International has grown to include more than 1,300 clubs in 69 countries with more than 35,000 members.

Zonta plays an important role at the United Nations and currently holds Non-Governmental Organization status. In addition, Zonta has been granted consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, UNICEF, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Labor Organization and the Council of Europe. Zonta maintains active representatives at United Nations' sites in Geneva, New York, Paris and Vienna.

Zonta International enjoys a special partnership with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Like Zonta, UNIFEM recognizes the importance of focusing attention on the activities and roles of women which are critical to sustainable development.

Financially, Zonta contributes to UNIFEM to fund women's self-help projects. These projects focus on providing labor-saving technologies, vocational training, and financial credit to enhance women's roles as farmers, entrepreneurs, managers and technicians.

Through the Amelia Earhart Fellowship Awards, Zonta International awards fellowships totaling over 5 million dollars. These \$6,000 annual awards are presented to women pursuing graduate study in aerospace-related sciences and engineering.

What ZONTA offers members

Zonta members serve and make a difference in the community to which they belong. Zonta provides opportunities to develop leadership potential with growth at a variety of levels - in the local club, at the district, or the international level.

Compiled by the Archives Committee, Zonta Club of Buffalo, 1998. Sister Paula Fox OSF, MaryAnn Stegencier, co-chairs; Dr. Vivian Cody, Dr. Gail Willsky, Lillian Levey, Anna Parenti Conn. Sponsored by Zonta International District 4.

ZONTA



INTERNATIONAL



Marian deForest
founder

*Her Life
Her Legacy*