

HISTORY OF UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ALUMNI CLUB OF SEATTLE

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Many times in the past there has been a need for a history of the University of Michigan Alumni Club of Seattle. Such a history should prove of great interest to University of Michigan authorities and to the local alumni. But in preparing this history, the authors found that the files of the club secretary for most of the period, particularly the early years, were missing. So they found it necessary to resort to their memory or that of some of the alumni to supply part of the information. So here goes!

In the years prior to 1913 there were a few impromptu alumni get-togethers thus sowing the seed for eventual organization of an alumni club. In that year a committee of local alumni met, organized and applied for a charter from the General Alumni Association at Ann Arbor. It was granted Charter #4 and was only preceded by the Ann Arbor, Detroit and Grand Rapids clubs. The committee included Dan Earle '05L, Frank Helsell '08L, William Shannon '07E and Morris J. Robinson '04L.

This history prior to World War I is very sketchy but there was at least one notable event that many of the alumni still recall. It was in 1917 when Football Coach Fielding H. (Hurry Up) Yost visited our club. At the dinner in his honor, Bruce Shorts '01L and Dad Gregory '04L, both being players on Yost's immortal "Point a Minute" football teams, carried in a big artificial apple and placed it on the table in front of the coach. The trap door opened and out stepped 4-year old Duane Robinson in football suit and frosh cap to lead the large group present in the old Michigan yell and to present Mr. Yost with a football inscribed as coming from the Seattle Club. He had the boy sit on his lap most of the evening. Until his retirement, the coach displayed that inexpensive football among the game footballs and other trophies in his office. He always told Seattle visitors this was the most memorable alumni event of his life.

"Morrie" Robinson served as club secretary almost continuously from 1919 to 1947, a span of 28 years. Speaking of this period, here is a quote from a letter of March 11, 1938 from General Alumni Secretary T. Hawley Tapping to the Eighth District Alumni officers as follows:

"Mr. M. J. Robinson was considered the finest secretary in the United States during his term of office and the man who made the University of Michigan Club of Seattle the outstanding club in the whole alumni family."

Among others performing yeoman service as secretary following Robinson were Richard Fleming Jr. '23E, James McCrae '30E, Ted LeGros '45L, Ray R. Chalmers '54D, Roby M. Burley '20, Don Conley '32 and Gordon Griffes '63MBA.

When the Seattle club organized in 1913, it started holding monthly luncheons right off the bat. Although these still are the backbone of our activities, the club provides many other functions for the benefit and entertainment of the alumni. This is illustrated by an excerpt from the 1948 report submitted by the Seattle Club at the annual district alumni conference as follows:

"Seattle had 19 separate functions the past year. This included 9 monthly luncheons, Rose Bowl pictures (2 showings), annual family picnic, President and Mrs. Alexander G. Ruthven (2 meetings), H. O. (Fritz) Crisler (2 meetings), champion high school football presentation, annual Michigan Birthday Party sponsored by Dean E. H. Lauer '06 at the University Faculty Club, and Michigan alumni lawyers' luncheon at the time of the General Alumni Association convention in Seattle. The at-

tendance at all of these events was around 3,600. Actually Seattle held more functions than the New York City alumni."

The Seattle alumni have always been one of the leading clubs in the district alumni organization and have done considerable to encourage active clubs in other cities in the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. Over the years we gratefully acknowledge the invaluable guidance of the General Alumni Association at Ann Arbor through the persons of General Secretaries T. Hawley Tapping, John E. Terrill and Robert O. Morgan and Executive Director Robert G. Forman.

In 1922 the club provided the first of three eventual trophies for award to the annual champion Seattle high school football team. Dr. Herbert E. Coe '06M and A. M. Young '07E designed and supervised the making of the trophies.

Garfield High School of Seattle won the first trophy three times after which it received permanent possession in 1932. The club then provided a second trophy more elaborate than the first. Garfield again won it three times and retired it in the early forties. So the club invested over \$300 in a third silver trophy. But it finally got wise and stipulated that this is a perpetual trophy which can be only retained by the winning school during the year or years it is champion.

Usually when the winning high school had an all-student assembly to present letters to its varsity football players, the Michigan alumni were invited to sit on the school auditorium stage while one of its number presented the trophy to the school principal, football coach and team captain. The Seattle newspapers would carry a story and pictures of the event. Although this gave wonderful publicity to our alumni body, it finally worked in reverse to what the alumni intended. Things reached a point where everybody wanted to get into the act. Now several sports organizations, such as the "101 Club" of the Washington Athletic Club, have come up with various athletic trophies, taking the limelight from the Seattle club. Isn't there a saying that "imitation is the sincerest flattery?"

The Michigan Glee Club visited Seattle under our club sponsorship in 1917. Frank Helsell '08L was committee chairman for the concert which was well attended and netted a profit to the alumni of around \$600. In order to put this sum to good use, the club transferred this amount to the University of Washington to establish a student loan fund. Herbert Condon '94L, Dean of Men at Washington, was the first administrator of the fund. The fund is still active.

The Michigan Glee Club honored us with four more visits the past 12 years - in 1957, 1961, 1965 and 1967. On the first of these we realized another profit of around \$600 which we transferred to the Seattle Michigan Alumni Scholarship Fund. There were 924 tickets sold at \$2 each which made the profit possible.

This brings up the story as to how the Seattle scholarship fund came into being. Some of the alumni wished to do something for Michigan under the "Ten Year Program" so prominent during the thirties. There were proposals to provide a history library of the Pacific Northwest, of equipping a Seattle room in the Michigan Union or of promoting some other minor project. None of these seemed to have the proper appeal. Then the idea of the scholarship came up. This struck a very responsive note. But we waited until the depression of the thirties was pretty well over before starting to beat the drums.

Finally in 1943 Nelson R. Anderson '08L, Dr. Don McEwan '25D and Morrie Robinson conducted an intensive campaign among the alumni through dinner meetings and personal solicitation, resulting in \$6,000 in pledges. The original goal was \$10,000, requiring about 3 years to reach. The striking thing about this fund was that it was the second one to be started by the alumni clubs, only the first was that it was the second one to be started by the alumni clubs, only the

our area give to the Michigan Alumni Fund and some of these obligingly ask that their gifts be credited to the Seattle Scholarship Fund. For instance the fund had reached \$15,000 in 1968 and will continue to grow. By 1975 at the latest it looks as if \$20,000 should be reached.

Since the fund started in 1943, many students have been financially aided. In recent years there have been as many as four recipients at one time. Most of the students receiving help come from the vicinity of Seattle. However, the only residence requirement is that they must come from the state of Washington. Among those most active in interviewing candidates have been Nelson Anderson '04L, Thomas G. Holcomb '42L, Dr. Robert A. Pommerening '42M, Roy E. Mattern Jr. '42L and Clyde Wiltse '52E.

The Seattle Club one year won a trophy from the General Alumni Association for securing the largest number of new subscribers to the MICHIGAN ALUMNUS. About a month before Father's Day, the club secretary (Robinson) called the wives of many non-subscribing alumni concerning a year's subscription as a Father's Day gift. The wives really went for the idea like hot cakes. If a number of alumni clubs were to do this it undoubtedly would be quite a circulation stimulus.

Club Secretary Robinson attended a general alumni "Ten Year Program" meeting in Detroit in the thirties. General Secretary Tapping invited him to give a paper on "How to Run an Alumni Club." Later the MICHIGAN ALUMNUS carried the talk in full. This has been just one of many events sustaining our club's reputation in the entire alumni association.

An amusing event, though not so amusing at the time, occurred after Michigan's January 1, 1948 victory in the Rose Bowl over Southern California 49 to 0. Jackfield Coach George Ceithaml on his honeymoon visited Seattle and other West Coast clubs to narrate a film of the game. A noon luncheon at the Washington Athletic Club drew 200 business men and 900 tickets were sold for a night showing in the Queen Anne High School auditorium on May 20, 1948. Imagine our chagrin when the film was so fuzzy in spots one could hardly identify the players. There was some grumbling but fortunately no one asked for a ticket refund.

Basketball coach C. C. Cappon brought the Michigan team to Seattle during the 1936 Xmas holidays for a series with the University of Washington, won by Michigan. The alumni occupied a special section of seats in the pavilion. It was a big week-end, socially and otherwise.

Now we come to the most outstanding occasion in the history of the Seattle Club -- the week-end of September 25, 1954 when Michigan played Washington in football here. Here was the attendance at the various alumni functions:

Friday before game - Alumni luncheon, College Club	113
Alumnae luncheon, Women's Univ. Club	45
Dinner, Hotel Olympic	475
Saturday of game - Brunch, Rainier Club	319
Total	952

Notable features of the dinner were the entertainment by the Seattle Club Orchestra and the raising of \$200 from a raffle of a football autographed by all players of the football team. King Neptune, the Prime Minister and Miss Seattle, constituting the royalty of the annual Seattle Seafair festival, met the team and the accompanying Ann Arbor contingent at the Seattle-Tacoma

Airport, welcomed them with appropriate speeches and kisses and escorted a portion of the group into Seattle, where they attended a reception at the Olympic Hotel for the visitors and key alumni in the suite of the Edgar N. Eisenhowers of Tacoma maintained for the week-end as a sort of social headquarters.

Among the more prominent visitors hosted by the club were University President Harlan H. Hatcher, University Regents Joseph Herbert and Charles S. Kennedy M.D., Athletic Director H. O. Crisler, Ralph W. Aigler of the Board of Control of Athletics, General Alumni Secretary T. Hawley Tapping and James A. Miller Jr., Manager of the University Development Council. California and Oregon alumni were heavily represented. There were quite a few from Montana and Idaho. For example, there were twelve attending from the little town of Kalispell, Montana. Bruce Palmer, an insurance company president and prominent alumnus, was also here from New York City.

District Director John P. Lawton '24 and General Committee Chairman Roby M. Burley '20 headed up the affair, ably assisted by other district and Seattle Club officers and a large committee of about fifty alumni and alumnae. Two years of hard work went into the planning. President Hatcher and numerous others were lavish in their praise that this was the finest Michigan alumni event they ever attended. The fact that Michigan won the football game may have contributed to this mood.

In 1958 Dean Charles Odegaard of the Michigan faculty was elected President of the University of Washington and he brought with him from the Michigan faculty Frederick P. Thieme as an important member of his staff. The Seattle alumni went all out on April 2, 1959 to give them and their wives a typical Michigan reception at a dinner at the Fort Lawton Officers Club. There were 187 present including some alumni from Tacoma, Bremerton, Everett, Raymond and Olympia.

Over a long span of years there was a club stringed orchestra composed entirely of Michigan alumni. It performed at all major meetings, mainly the ones where there were guests from Ann Arbor. It once staged an hour musical program over Seattle Radio Station KJR. Its last appearance was at the Odegaard dinner in 1959.

The Seattle club was instrumental in promoting annual "College Night" meetings for a number of years. These were social gatherings of alumni from all universities and colleges, including those from the "Big Ten" Conference. The University of Washington sponsored the meetings and had the biggest attendance. Second largest attendance was from the Seattle Michigan Alumni group.

We entertained President Clarence C. Little in the late twenties. His successor, Alexander G. Ruthven, was our guest twice. The first visit was when 175 alumni and wives attended a dinner for President and Mrs. Ruthven at the Edmond Meany Hotel on April 1, 1938. Similar to the Big Apple act for Coach Yost, the twin sons of the Club President, Dr. Edward Hoedemaker '29M, came out of a huge artificial king salmon placed in front of President Ruthven. It was the latter's birthday and the wife of Col. William T. Perkins '84L presented him with a birthday cake. The Ruthvens again were our guests on February 7, 1948. The club then presented Mrs. Ruthven with a silver bowl containing red roses. The Ruthvens greatly impressed the alumni with their gracious down-to-earth qualities.

President Ruthven's successor, Harlan H. Hatcher, visited our alumni twice - the first time in September 1954 when Michigan played Washington in football, and the second time in March 1967 with Mrs. Hatcher on his farewell tour of Pacific Coast alumni clubs prior to his retirement. There were 118 present at the Hatcher Club on the latter occasion.

"Fritz" Crisler was our guest three times. The first was on May 25, 1947 when Judge William J. Wilkins '25L and Seattle Mayor William J. Devin met him at the Sea-Tac airport and brought him into Seattle under official police escort where the mayor attended an alumni luncheon for him at the Hotel Mayflower. That evening 150 alumni attended a dinner for him at the Hotel Edmond Meany where he narrated a Michigan football film. The alumni stringed orchestra was in great fettle that night. The next day he was guest speaker at a Washington Athletic Club weekly luncheon, the Michigan alumni having a special table. The newspapers gave excellent publicity to his visit. A couple of years later he again came to Seattle under the auspices of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and its sports editor, Royal Brougham, who engaged Crisler to conduct a week's football clinic for high school coaches from around the state. His final visit was with the football team in September 1954. "Fritz" was very popular with our alumni.

After Michigan played in the Rose Bowl, we had a special visit from Coach Penny Oosterbaan and Assistant Coach Jack Blott in 1949. We gave them the red carpet treatment.

The 1949 conference of the 12th Alumni District (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska), of which Seattle was a member club, was held jointly with the 8th Alumni District clubs in San Francisco at the time of the Michigan-Stanford football game October 1, 1949. Eighty-five attended from the Pacific Northwest, mainly Seattleites. The San Francisco club was an excellent host. The latter club also entertained our alumni again at a second Michigan-Stanford football game in 1952.

The Seattle club by-laws provide for a Board of Governors of six members. The term of office is three years and on a staggered basis two governors are elected each year to replace retiring members. The immediate past president is an ex officio board member, making seven members in all. Annually the Board elects a President and Vice President from its members. It also appoints a Secretary-Treasurer. He does not have to be a board member and may be selected continuously from year to year as long as desirable in order to give continuity to the office.

Three Seattle alumni have served as district alumni directors with terms of three years. M. J. Robinson '04L was a director of the 8th Alumni District during 1927-28-29. R. M. Burley '20 was a director of the 12th Alumni District during 1947-48-49. J. P. Lawton '24 was also a director of the 12th Alumni District during 1953-54-55. Directors serve one term after which they become Past Directors of the General Alumni Association for life and are eligible to attend the semi-annual directors' meetings in Ann Arbor. It was in 1943 when the Pacific Northwest states separated from the 8th Alumni District to form the new 12th Alumni District. However, in 1958 the 12th Alumni District was disoanded and its member clubs again became a part of the 8th Alumni District.

Five alumni from the State of Washington have received the highest citation of the General Alumni Association. This is the Distinguished Alumni Service Medal. The University President presents such awards at an all-alumni luncheon at Ann Arbor as a part of the commencement exercises. Three of these alumni were from the Seattle club - M. J. Robinson, Nelson Anderson '08L and R. M. Burley. Robinson received his for an outstanding job as club secretary and his invaluable contribution to the welfare and advancement of the General Alumni Association over a long span of years. Anderson received his for his tireless efforts in pioneering and establishing the Seattle Alumni Scholarship Fund. Burley received his for his long service as a club and district officer and for his part as general committee chairman in promoting the elaborate entertainment for the 1954 football week-end. Other two alumni from the state of Washington honored were

Alfred H. Syverson, Spokane, and Edgar W. Eisenhower, Tacoma.

As a result of a visit from Wyeth Allen, General Alumni President, and Mrs. Allen on March 19, 1949, final touches were added for the formation of two alumnae groups, one for afternoon and the other for evening functions. These groups were reasonably active for around fifteen years but lately have not functioned. The alumnae, however, are welcome to attend all major alumni functions of a mixed nature, including all club luncheon meetings.

One of the main functions instituted in 1921 was an annual picnic in the summer for alumni and their families. Some of the time the site was a public park but for a long period it was at the spacious home of Dr. and Florenz Klopfer '14D on Lake Washington. There has been a picnic only intermittently since 1958.

The Boeing Airplane Company has a large number of graduate engineers from the University of Michigan in addition to graduates from other departments of the University. This contingent is quite active in club matters and festivities and the Boeing Company welcomes their participation in alumni doings. The Board of Governors usually has at least one representative from Boeing at all times.

At various times the club has issued a directory of active alumni, mostly at 10 year intervals. This program is dormant at the present time.

The family of the late Nelson R. Anderson '08L specified the Seattle Alumni Scholarship Fund for memorial donations, as a result of which the fund was increased by several hundred dollars. Some alumni also are providing in their wills for gifts to the University or to the scholarship fund of the Seattle club.

Some Seattle alumni contributed greatly to Michigan athletic prowess. Already mentioned were Bruce Shorts and Dad Gregory on the Yost "Point a Minute" football teams. In addition to these, Charles Dvorak won the pole vault in the 1904 Olympic Games and Harry "Spider" Coe placed high up in the hurdles in the 1900 Games.

Recipients in the past of honorary life memberships in the Seattle Club were Col. William T. Perkins, '04L, Morris J. Robinson '04L and Charles Dvorak '04L, all of whom are deceased.

Seattle, as well as most alumni clubs, has a long list of notable alumni too numerous to mention in full. John H. Yeasting '27, Boeing Vice President, received an honorary degree from Michigan in 1900. Joseph P. Gandy '20 was the person most responsible for the success of the 1962 Seattle world's fair and for voter approval of a new domed stadium for Seattle scheduled for completion in the early seventies. To go farther would involve listing of dozens more alumni prominent in professional, athletic or civic fields.

One situation worth mentioning! In 1936 four of the seven justices on the State of Washington Supreme Court were Michigan law graduates. Three of these were from the Seattle club - John S. Robinson '03L, Bruce Blake '05L and William J. Steinert '05L. Our club president, Superior Court Judge William J. Wilkins '25L presided at a luncheon on December 4, 1936 at which one Michigan alumni judges on the Supreme Court were guests of honor. This was at the College Club and there was a reverse turn-out of eighty-five alumni.

On May 20, 1908, our club was host to the new President of the University of Michigan - Robben W. Fleming. There was a turn-out of 110 at the Women's University Club for the occasion. Everyone agreed that President Fleming made a very favorable impression and felt that he would continue the record of progress for our great University. George Hartung headed up the entertainment committee and J. Henry Brockhaus '51L did a fine job as master of ceremonies. Among prominent alumni at the head table were C. Dorr Demaray, outgoing president, and David L. McKenna, incoming president, of the Seattle Pacific College.

The June 1968 issue of the MICHIGAN ALUMNUS carried a full page spread about our Seattle club under the title of "Profile of an Alumni Club." The Editor's very complementary note to the article read as follows:

"Down through the decades, few University of Michigan Alumni Clubs have been more active than the one in Seattle, Washington. It was, then, with real enthusiasm that the Alumni Association recently received a history of the Seattle club, written by Roby M. Burley '20 and Marris J. Robinson '04L. With pleasure, the ALUMNUS herewith brings you excerpts from this history."

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Here is a practical plan for annually up-dating this history. The club officers now prepare and publish an annual report covering major activity for the previous twelve months. The President and/or Secretary-Treasurer will attach a copy of this report to the history volume, thus insuring continuity for the future. The Secretary-Treasurer is the official custodian of the master file. Each newly elected member of the Board of Governors should receive from the Secretary-Treasurer an up-to-date copy of the history so as to be familiar with the club background and tradition.