

THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF LARCHMONT

Member Portraits



Therese Boyd



My name is Therese Boyd and I was born in Skokie, Illinois. I was blessed with the opportunity to pursue my educational goals and completed a Bachelor of

Arts in Sociology, Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master's in Social Work. I enjoyed raising my two children, taking care of our many family pets (dogs, hamsters, a frog and gecko, and a porcupine in short-term residence), volunteering with my children's activities, working in the helping professions and I enjoyed a lifelong curiosity and interest in comparative religions. The greatest influence in my life was my pursuit of God and faith and the many teachers (everyone) and authors I met along the way.

My move to Larchmont, NY, in 2000 was precipitated by a career change for my husband who was a university administrator. I felt at home when we moved to Larchmont because the area and community evoked the feeling I had for the Skokie Evanston area where I grew up.

For several years, while I was a member of the St. Augustine parish, members of the Woman's Club of Larchmont would encourage me to join the club. I was hesitant to join because I had not been in a club since high school and did not consider myself the least bit clubby.

In 2018 I cautiously took a leap of faith and joined. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that the stereotypes I had previously held about clubs were unfounded. From 2018 to 2025 I had the pleasure of serving on the board.

I enjoyed everything about the club. All the activities of the club including attending board meetings, club days, committee meetings, luncheons, outings, working on philanthropic projects and fundraising allowed me an opportunity to get to know and develop friendships with amazing women in the community while participating in meaningful activities that served to enhance my wellbeing and the wellbeing of the community.

My hope is that all will come to understand the many benefits of becoming involved in clubs and that, God willing, the Woman's Club of Larchmont will be around to celebrate their bicentennial anniversary and beyond.

Hannie Corten



Congratulations to The Woman's Club of Larchmont for its service to the Larchmont-Mamaroneck community for 100 years! The club has changed over the years,

of course, but it's good to know that the prime mission is still philanthropy. Actively dedicated to its philanthropic endeavors, the WCOL also remains a source of fellowship for its members, women, and more recently (2021) men.

I have enjoyed my association with the WCOL over a number of years. My initial introduction to the club was probably back in the 1950s when I became a member of an active "sub-group," The Junior Woman's Club, for women in their 20s and 30s who met monthly in Russell

Hall, Larchmont Avenue Church. With similar policies and bylaws, it was run by an elected executive board but under the watchful eyes of an advisor from the “regular” club. I attended several of their meetings and eventually became a member. It was the era of hats and gloves, teas with all the fancy silver, and most programs featuring fashion, home and child rearing issues, and charitable philanthropic programs supporting the Children’s Village and The Jennie Clarkson Home for Young Women.

In the late 1950s I moved to CT. It wasn’t until 2011, when I was back in Larchmont that Ruth Lowy, the membership chair, suggested that I join the club or in my case, rejoin. I became a member and immediately found myself chairing a committee, Education. After several years I switched to taking minutes and became Recording Secretary and finally chaired the Drama Committee for several years.

In looking back through the years, I remember that my mother also enjoyed the WCOL’s programs and activities. It would have been in the 1980’s and recently widowed that my mother attended some of the club programs, luncheons, and theatre outings. I don’t recall if she ever became a member, but I do know that she enjoyed the fellowship and the club’s programs and outings.

Bio note: I came to the US with my family in the middle of WW2 from Sydney, Australia. We had left the Netherlands via Genoa to sail to Indonesia, then on to Sydney for my father’s new job assignment. Due to the war and after several years living in a suburb of Sydney, we were asked to move to New York. We settled in Larchmont. I have lived here, except for 6 years in CT, for

many years. After Mamaroneck High School and college, I was with the School District of New Rochelle for 35 years. After retirement I worked as an adjunct for The College of Mount Saint Vincent in Riverdale.

I had lived in Larchmont for many years without ever meeting anyone with a Dutch background. So, it was a surprise to me in 2011 to meet 4 wonderful members originally from the Netherlands at a WCOL meeting - Anne-Mieke Smeets, Adriana Jervis, Renee de Vries, and Myra Hiemstra † (1939-2016).

We have enjoyed some “Dutch” tea gatherings. And years ago, I spent two lovely long weekends in Saint Martin where 5 or 6 club members also used to spend the winter season.

Janet Demasi



I have been a proud member of the Mamaroneck/Larchmont community since 1976, dedicating myself to volunteerism and civic engagement from the very

start. My involvement began with the Central School PTA and expanded to serving on the boards of Central, Hommocks, and Mamaroneck High School. I was also honored to serve on the Emelin Board and became Larchmont’s first Commissioner of Girls Soccer.

Professionally, I have worked in real estate for over 40 years and continue to find joy in my career. Before that, I worked in marketing and advertising and was a remedial reading teacher

in Title 1 programs in NYC public schools. A Brooklyn native, I graduated from Fort Hamilton High School before earning degrees from Baruch College and NYU's graduate program—all the while balancing my professional and academic pursuits with raising three children. My husband, Rudy, and I feel incredibly fortunate that our children and seven grandchildren all still reside in the local community.

Over the years, I have held leadership roles in numerous organizations, including serving as President and Co-President of the Larchmont/Mamaroneck Center for Continuing Education, Student Aid Committee, Selection Committee, Larchmont/Mamaroneck Summit, and The Woman's Club of Larchmont. My community service also includes roles on the Fairway Green Association, Board of Assessment Review, Town and Village of Mamaroneck, Board member Home on the Sound, and Orienta Point Association, and I even ran for County Legislator.

My civic engagement deepened through the League of Women Voters, where I was fortunate to connect with inspiring women such as Sandy Feldman, Lee Korchin, and Marie Wolf. In 2007, encouraged by these remarkable women, I joined The Woman's Club of Larchmont, drawn to its mission of philanthropy and community enrichment. Starting with the Public Affairs Committee, I soon took on greater leadership responsibilities, ultimately serving as Co-President along with Valerie O'Keeffe from 2016 to 2018.

Today, I remain an active member of The Woman's Club, chairing the Annual Celebration Luncheon and Installation, as well as serving as a longtime member of the Ways & Means Philanthropic Fundraiser and Centennial Celebration

Committee. I am continually inspired by the Woman's Club's dedication to service, philanthropy, and education, and I am honored to contribute to its lasting impact on our community.

Carolyn Gallaher



Carolyn Gallaher, Philanthropy Director for the Woman's Club of Larchmont, has been participating in service projects for most of her life. She remembers

in fifth grade organizing her friends and family to fill a box of items for the local Red Cross. As an adult, Carolyn realized that the items were not exactly what the local Red Cross needed, but that her mother's encouragement and the Red Cross director's support was an early example of what set her on the path. Later, her local pastor was pivotal in encouraging her in this direction.

In the early 60's, after graduating from Duke University, Carolyn taught history in El Salvador, where she was a member of Cruz Roja Salvadorense. Later she joined the Peace Corps to work in educational television in Colombia. From the beginning Carolyn eschewed simple travel and has tried to participate in the society and culture of any of the several countries in which she resided. During her year-long grant in Russia, she introduced her high school students in Omsk to the plight of abandoned children in a local hospital. The Christmas holiday vocabulary in the American culture class included gift giving and helping one another. Energized, the students

organized themselves to find gifts to take to the orphans and, more importantly, continued to visit and play with the children on a regular basis after Carolyn left Omsk.

After she settled in Larchmont in the early 70s and raised three children, Carolyn continued her love of travel and classroom teaching with educational programs around the world, which had included a Fulbright in the former Yugoslavia and now expanded to teaching with Global Volunteers in China, Ghana, Crete as well as the Blackfoot Reservation in Billings, MT. Originally introduced to the Woman's Club of Larchmont through the now defunct Junior Section in the 70's, she soon became their president. She is currently Chair of Philanthropy for the Woman's Club and doing a marvelous and very active job.

Carolyn's family consists of three children: two boys, Andrew and Sloan (born in Western Samoa) and Sarah Jane. All three are married with families so Carolyn has 5 grandchildren. Two of the adult children live in New York while Sarah Jane lives in Mexico City. Her active family often keeps her busy, especially during the holidays.

We applaud Carolyn for her efforts involved in the development of an educational guide for our Larchmont Sculpture Garden in Constitution Park. The father of her son-in-law, Juan Aceves Navarro, was the sculptor of one of the displays in the garden. Juan and Sarah Jane's donation of Gilberto Aceves Navarro's Bicicletas (which had been part of an exhibition in NYC) to the Sculpture Garden was the motivation for Carolyn to write the needed Guide which provides information on the sculptors and the donors.

Carolyn values the Woman's Club as a great

path for friendship and service in our community for all of us who have retired but still active.

Some of above excerpted from *Larchmont Living*, January 2025

Gerald Gerace



I was born in Yonkers NY (10-28-1949), and moved to Mt. Vernon with my family (mother, father and 2 older sisters) to live with and take care of my grandparents. I went

through the Mt. Vernon School System, attended Westchester Community College, and graduated from the College of New Rochelle in 1976, and I earned a master's degree at Fordham University in 1981. Both degrees were in Psychology and Education.

My Father was a WWII veteran and was an oil truck driver, and my mother, as I got older, worked as a waitress. My father was one of the biggest influences in my life because he was always helping other people and doing volunteer work. It was definitely instilled in me to do things to help out. My mother (a hard worker herself so we had things we needed) said that family is very important and being honest are two major essentials in life.

My entire career as a substance abuse counselor/director from 1971 to 2018, EAP (employ assistance counselor), and from 2009 to 2019, the Teamster (at night) Union in Elmsford, N.Y., was about caring and concern for helping people. It came to be a matter of saving lives. I was on a

Federal Advisory board (at the time with Congressman Ben Gilman) to discuss the drug issues, educational information in school systems, and the current state of rehabilitation efforts in the late 70's and early 80's. I was also Involved with the State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, dealing specially with all drug rehab issues and educational components

I have been a volunteer fireman for the last seven years, and I also volunteered for the Larchmont Volunteer Ambulance Corp several years ago.

Before I joined The Woman's Club of Larchmont in 2021, I did volunteer work for different activity events by helping to direct traffic, etc. I decided that WCOL was an agency/club that helps the community, and I wanted to be part of this effort because I live in this community and all my three boys have grown up here. The Woman's Club provides a service that has helped many people over the 100 years it has been in existence. I believe that we need to continue on the same path. What I would like to see because of the way the economy is now with prices sky rocking is for us to expand our food collecting efforts, and also to recruit more male members.

The Woman's Club of Larchmont has afforded me the opportunity to meet and work with some of my neighbors in the Larchmont, Mamaroneck and New Rochelle area. I have enjoyed continuing to work (volunteer with others) club members who are concerned and caring to help others. The monthly business meetings when we have a special speaker to talk about an interesting topic have been very informative. I have enjoyed the luncheons and the trips we have had (especially the West point tour for the day). I look forward to other trips in the future.

I want to take the opportunity now to thank Theresa Fanelli and Zsuzsanna Baan-Jonas for convincing me to join back in 2021.

June Hesler



Although I grew up in Mamaroneck, before I started working at the Larchmont Public Library in the 1970s, I hardly ever was in Larchmont. In fact I had only

been once in the library before I worked there. (I was an avid Mamaroneck Public Library user.)

Part of my responsibilities was the local history collection at the library. The library would receive copies of the annual Yearbook and issues of *The Larch Tree*. So I knew there was a women's club in Larchmont but honestly I really didn't know anything about it. Until I retired and joined the Club in 2016 I thought it was a nice organization that held programs. I knew nothing about the philanthropic aspect of the Club nor about the many hard working volunteers.

Almost immediately I was asked to do publicity for the Club, a position that I still hold, although cut back some. In addition I started to assist with the website, updating the calendar and later posting pictures of the Club Days and special events.

But what about that philanthropic aspect? I have found over the years I've been participating in the projects, that those overseeing it have made great efforts to assist the communities. The ongoing food collection at the Club meetings and

the community food drives are core features of the Club, something I don't think the public realizes.

There were also special community projects the Club participated in. Which ties into why I continue to do the publicity despite trying to have someone else take some of it on. I feel it is important for the community to know what the Club does and for the Club's name and activities to be seen. This is why I write and post about the food drives before and after the events. And send pictures of our events to *Larchmont Living* and for posting on Facebook. And publicize our annual Book & Author Event and our Philanthropic Luncheon so community members can participate.

And as was mentioned in one of the past President's Annual Reports, if you want to meet people, volunteer. I've met way more members by being involved than I would ever have met had I just showed up to a Club Day program. If you are reading this, consider volunteering. Besides, we need you to help us reach another 100 years!

Georgia Jesse



My entire life has been spent in Larchmont. However, I was born in Providence, Rhode Island while visiting my grandparents, who resided on Benefit Street

for 70 years. I wasn't due to arrive but decided it was time to emerge during a major February snowstorm. We returned to Larchmont by train several days later.

I attended Chatsworth Avenue School and Mamaroneck High. After graduating, I traveled extensively, returned to Larchmont and attended Berkeley Business School in White Plains. They guided me through the process of finding two wonderful Corporate jobs working at various levels at Kraft Foods and IBM Corporation for many years. I traveled for work and often lived elsewhere but always returned to my favorite Village.

The person who influenced me the most was my mother. She always worked but found the time for me and provided me with the confidence and ability to get along in the diverse world and to conquer the obstacles that presented themselves along the way.

After a 40-year career in the corporate world, I retired. Adjusting to retirement was difficult for me. My love for animals took me to the New Rochelle Humane Society, where I volunteered. That experience led to my starting a Pet business, which I continue to do today. Growing up, I had always wanted to become a veterinarian, but that wasn't in life's plan.

I am relatively new to the Woman's Club, having become a member in 2021, but have totally enjoyed working with the Food Drive group and helping wherever I can. The programs and speakers are most enjoyable. The Woman's Club to me signifies helping others in and out of our community and meeting new friends. The scholarship fund and food drive are wonderful for our community and to the neighboring communities. In the future, I would like to see the Woman's Club continue their philanthropic work and the programs/speakers that everyone enjoys.

Anne McAndrews



I have always loved maps. My name is Anne McAndrews, and I grew up as Anne Hewitt, the oldest of those seven Hewitt girls, who with one brother, Bill, grew up in Dorchester,

Massachusetts in a big Edwardian house. In those days you were identified by parish, so I was St. Mark's. I did find an old map of Dorchester from 1902 with our house on it, surrounded by fields. Soon the "three deckers" were built, great housing for the families I grew up with. Everybody went to the same school and the same church, until high school when the boys went to the boy's schools and the girls went to the girl's schools. I was followed by my six sisters to an all-girls school in Milton, Fontbonne Academy. Its motto translates to "wisdom and grace" and our alma mater declared us to be "women of courage."

At that time, things were mapped out for us . . . and on to a Catholic college, Stonehill, where I received an excellent classical education, Aristotle and Aquinas included, majoring in political science.

And then I took a route less traveled, law school. I was one of sixteen women in my first-year class at Georgetown, really fifteen women and one girl, me. I thought I was there to learn the law, but I was really there to learn to think. Oh, how I wish I could do it again, armed with a little more wisdom and grace!

Looking back on my legal career, I see a pattern. How do I get here to there? That map again. There is a problem, how to resolve it, what are the rules

and regulations? I guess that it was natural that I fell into tax law, even to the point of getting a graduate law degree, called an LLM from Boston University.

What saved me from a tax practice in Boston was meeting a wonderful New Yorker, marrying him, finding a small Tutor in the Town of Mamaroneck and starting a family. This is the second part of my story. I was a "poli sci" major and always interested in government. Although I was "hatched" which means my federal employment (IRS) prohibited political activity, Boston was the scene of constant politics, issues and controversy. When I first came to Larchmont, Janet Demasi was membership chair for the local League of Women Voters, and I was introduced to the local political scene. Within a few years I was on the Town Zoning Board. (Maps again!) When we moved to the Village of Larchmont and a bigger house I joined the Planning Board. Later I ran for office, became a Trustee and eventually Mayor for two terms.

After I left office, Janet Demasi teamed up with her co-president, Valerie O'Keeffe, and asked me to be an interim recording secretary for the Woman's Club of Larchmont, perhaps the worst in its long history. I was wearing a cast on my hand and could barely write. I got the Book and Author luncheon mixed up with the Philanthropic luncheon! (Under the cover of being the Archivist next year it is my ambition to "deep six" those minutes.)

Between that humbling experience and becoming President, I was on the bylaws committee with Camille Odierna and Margaret Shultz where we continued the long (I think the proper word is lugubrious) process of acquiring charitable

organization status with the IRS. Another destination reached.

All of this happened in the background of raising five children now blessedly out of school and on their way.

In closing, I am deeply grateful to the Woman's Club for showing me how to walk off my map to expand my experiences and circle of dear friends.

Sheelah Mohan

written in memoriam



Some people have given such outstanding service to their community and have dedicated so much energy helping others that special recognition is certainly

required. Such a person was Sheelah Mohan who gave much time and energy to The Woman's Club of Larchmont and the Larchmont/Mamaroneck Lions Club.

Born in Bangor, Northern Ireland, Sheelah emigrated to the US, married, became a Sales Manager for Verizon, then moved to Larchmont in 1977. Motivated by the birth of her grandson, Jake, who was born blind, Sheelah became an active member of the Larchmont/Mamaroneck Lions Club, as well as the WCOL in order to be able to serve the needs of the visually impaired.

Through LMLC, Sheelah received training and certification in Vision Screening, then worked with both Lions and WCOL teams in local Head Start programs, Health Fairs, and schools.

After joining WCOL in 2007, Sheelah served in several leadership positions. Her warmth and good cheer attracted many new members while her good heart and creative energy were behind the monthly Raffles Baskets, which she initiated, and which have benefitted so many. Although members also donated wines, articles, books, and baked goods, it was Sheelah who created the enticing baskets, bringing in hundreds of dollars to be donated to many organizations such as World Central Kitchen (Ukraine, Gaza), STEM Alliance, and Speedway gift cards.

Sheelah died suddenly of a massive heart attack on April 21, 2023. Both WCOL and LMLC members wanted to memorialize her in some way. The philanthropies closest to Sheelah's heart centered on the blind and visually impaired. She was an articulate supporter of the VCB camp in Spring Valley which her grandson Jake attended. The camp features athletic fields and a large, specially adapted swimming pool. Here he learned adaptive independent living skills, received college counseling and job training, hung out with friends, and became a regular teenager at camp.

Visions: Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VCB) whose central office is in NYC, runs a camp of 37.5 acres in Spring Valley, NY, which serves both individuals and families. VCB was designated as the choice for our friend and colleague as the best way to commemorate her life. Sheelah's son, Stefan, and family (wife Kristen, son Jake and daughter Riley) were also all united in asking that any funds be sent to VCB. During 2023 and the beginning of 2024, WCOL raised \$2200 toward this project.

It was Sheelah's son, Stefan, who requested

that donations be made to the camp while it was Jake who made specific suggestions. They could use a specially adapted rowboat for use on their newly aerated pond or for benches or chairs that could be rearranged into conversational groupings to enable campers to sit together outside by the pool. The chairs would have a prominent brass plate honoring Sheelah Mohan. Through this gift Sheelah, dedicated to helping others, will continue to support those children and families about whom she was most concerned.

On Sunday, June 1, 2024, the dream became a reality. The money raised by WCOL members helped pay for a pontoon boat (largely underwritten by a generous donor) and several chairs. In recognition of Sheelah's dedication (plus Woman's Club of Larchmont and Lion's Club support), the following plaque was placed on the dock as well as on the all-weather, wooden armchairs.

Camille Odierna



I was the oldest of four children brought up in the Bronx with a loving extended Italian family. My Mother was one of nine children and the first to marry and have a child. My Father was one of four children, and I was also the first grandchild in my Father's family. I could have been spoiled, but I don't believe I was. I attended a very strict Catholic elementary school and then Cathedral High School in Manhattan. I then worked for Marine

Midland Bank International Division. In the evenings, I attended the American Institute of Banking and then Hunter College. I did this for six years. During that time, I married and then left the Bank to have my daughter and three years later my son. I became involved with the Parents Association of their elementary school and soon became the President of the Association. Both of my children attended the Bronx High School of Science, and I then became President of their Parents Associations.

When my son was in intermediate school, I decided to go back to work. I was always interested in traveling since my days in international banking. I traveled with my husband when he went on business trips, and we also went on many family vacations.

I attended the Sobelson School of Travel and received a state certification. Working part time for 27 years as a Travel Agent allowed me to pursue other interests.

We moved to Larchmont in 1986. My neighbor, Carolyn Holleb, tried to take me to Woman's Club meetings, but I resisted until 1988 when I attended the Book and Author Luncheon as her guest. She worked on me to attend the Philanthropic fundraiser in the Spring of 1989, and after that I gave in and joined the Woman's Club. I knew if I joined, I would have to be involved, and I was involved from the beginning. At that time, we had an evening division of the club. The day group, which I was a member of, had a position on their Board to be liaison to the evening group and attend their meetings and report back to them. I was asked to take that position on the Board because I was one of the youngest members of the

day group and could drive and attend meetings in the evening. So began my career with the Woman's Club of Larchmont.

Since then, my Board positions included Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary, Finance Director, Philanthropy Chair, Presidential Advisor, Book and Author Chair, Notebook Chair, President 2006-2008, and at present Parliamentarian.

In the future, I would like to see the Woman's Club get involved with more hands-on activities and projects. I know we all have many commitments for our time. One of the complaints we hear from new members is that we don't go out of our way to make them feel welcome. If we have some joint service projects, maybe this will help.

Patricia O'Donnell



I am a native of Westchester County, having grown up in the Crestwood section of Yonkers. I left when I married a career naval officer. We moved from coast to coast

and were living in Virginia when he suddenly died. I decided to return to Larchmont with our four children because we belonged to the Larchmont Yacht Club and had always intended to return to the area.

I joined the Junior Section of the Woman's Club (we had one then) in 1963, but faced with the choice of moving up to the Senior Section or getting a full-time job to support my children, I resigned. I worked locally and then moved to a

stock brokerage business in White Plains, where I became a registered representative. I eventually joined a firm on Wall Street, where I sold and marketed municipal bonds.

After retiring, I rejoined the Club in 1999. Soon after, while attending a lunch at Helen Bonardi's, I was asked to serve as co-chair of the American Home Department with Josephine Zegarowicz. Since my three older children were finished with college, and only the youngest still home, I had time to get involved with the Club's activities. I moved on to become Director of Personnel. My predecessor handed me boxes of index cards with details on past and present members, and I immediately knew that there was a better way of keeping track of our members. I developed a single page information sheet on each active member that could be collected in a notebook. This notebook became a familiar resource at nominating sessions.

I believe that my proudest memories are from my time as Philanthropic Chair.

With the support of the President and the Executive Board, we created new ways of soliciting money to be donated to local causes. I met with the Town Supervisor, the boards and the agencies to find out how the Club could help address the needs of the people in the town. One thing that immediately stood out was food shortages, so a food drive was started at the next Ways and Means luncheon.

I am delighted to see that our members have become much more involved in local activities and are fulfilling a major part of the Club's mission by increasing its commitment to our community.

Christel Pugin



In 2003, when my job with a German technical glass company had ended and I was going to be home full time, Celia Dentzer and Phyllis Young recommended that

I join the Woman's Club. They had both served as Presidents at one time. I knew them from the Larchmont Avenue Church and admired them greatly. I was happy to fill out the membership application and become involved in this philanthropic organization.

Some forty years earlier, I had arrived in the U.S. on the SS *Rotterdam* with a working visa. I was 23 years old and wanted to see a bit more of the world. Born and educated in Switzerland, my plan was to stay in New York for a year and then return home. I found a job with Swissair right away and a place to live in Queens. My Swiss girlfriend was active in the young adults group of the Marble Collegiate Church in New York City. It was at their outing to Pawling, NY that I met Adrian whose parents had also come here from Switzerland some twenty-five years earlier. We started dating, fell in love, became engaged and married within a year, with the blessings of both sides of the family.

Our first home was in an apartment building in Jackson Heights, NY. Adrian commuted to his job in Manhattan, and I continued my work with Swissair close to the then named Idlewild (now JFK) airport. Our daughter Catherine was born in November 1965 in the Physician's Hospital, which was only a couple of blocks away from our

apartment. We walked there to give birth. As was the custom at that time, I gave up my job to take care of the baby. I would walk for miles with the baby carriage, seeking green parks. When Adrian took a new job in Princeton, NJ we happily got used to living there and after the birth of our son Philip, we bought our first home in the Princeton township.

Adrian's job took us to Boston, MA, where we settled in Needham, MA. In 1977, when our children were in 7th and 5th grade respectively, we moved to our present home in Larchmont. Again, it was a move dictated by Adrian's work. Even though I had received a well-rounded education to age 19 in Switzerland and spoke both German and French fluently due to our family living in French-speaking Lausanne, Switzerland for six years, I longed to have a college degree. With our children now at Mamaroneck High School, it was time for me to begin my bachelor's degree at SUNY Purchase. Once that was achieved, I looked for a job but found that the best for me would be to continue using my secretarial and language skills, but this time as the secretary to the CEO. I liked working for him and the company but missed the stimulation of school and returned to earn an MBA at Pace University while continuing to work full time. In time I was promoted to Personnel Manager.

My interests have always centered on home, reading and gardening. After joining the Woman's Club, I also joined P.E.O., a philanthropic organization that helps women achieve their educational goals. To this day, I am an active member of P.E.O., two garden clubs and a book club. I enjoy attending the monthly Club meetings where I so appreciate mingling with members, learning

from the programs and attending outings. My contributions to the Club some years ago were doing the yearbook, helping with the annual philanthropic luncheon and, more recently, being the Recording Secretary for three years. I admire the brave women who take on greater leadership positions, but I was happy doing my bit in a less demanding role.

My hope for the Woman's Club is that it may continue to flourish actively for many years. It certainly has enriched my life, and I am so grateful for being a part of it.

Dorothy Krauss Rainier



I came from a family of six in Union, New Jersey, with two older brothers and an older sister. My father had emigrated from Czechoslovakia, and my mother's parents came from Hungary. Catholic schools were a big part of my days, and I had a best friend and two or three other friends. The 1950's were a time of the Korean War. We worried because my eldest brother had joined the Air Force in 1949, but he was discharged from the service after a short time.

I had the opportunity to attend Benedictine Academy, a private all-girls high school in nearby Elizabeth, New Jersey. And I received a scholarship to attend Nursing School at Muhlenberg Hospital in Plainfield, N.J. I attended Hunter College part time for ten years—thanks to a tuition reimbursement from New York Hospital

and The City University of New York's low enrollment fees. My BA was in Psychology with a minor in English Lit.

Influences in my life: my parents who were loving and thrifty. My father's love of the garden, and my mother's kindness and listening skills. My sister gave me useful advice—how to ask, "Sister, may I please be excused," when I needed to go to the bathroom in first grade.

I learned from early teachers, mostly nuns for twelve years. The challenges of nursing school met with the help of skillful instructors. Many college professors touched my life. One suggested memorizing poetry, as a way of occupying your mind while waiting. A useful addition to my life, to memorize verses.

After moving from Brooklyn Heights to Larchmont in 1977, with husband Robert and two young children, I joined the Newcomers' Club and served as president for one year. The next organization that I joined was Local Involvement for Environment (predecessor of the Sheldrake Environmental Center). I led a lot of nature walks, taught indoor classes, took courses in Environmental science and served as president of that organization in the 1980's. I went back to work part time as a psychiatric nurse in 1987, and retired in 2015. I also served on the Committee on the Handicapped in the Mamaroneck School System and on the vestry of St. John's Church, while taking art classes with various instructors.

"Only connect . . ." those words of E.M. Forester come to mind when I think of The Woman's Club of Larchmont. Since I joined the Club in 1988, I have met some of the best and the brightest women in our community. Athena

Ploumis was President in 1988, and she insisted that I join. I have worked on many committees and in many positions including President, 1st VP of Programs, Co-chair of Fundraising, Book and Author Luncheon, Book Group Co -chair, Head Nominating, Drama and Art committees, and now, the membership in the 100-Year Event Planning Committee. I always say that the more you put into an organization, the more you get out of it. So, the WCOL has enriched my life in myriad ways.

A special part of my WCOL experience has been organizing and helping to organize the Book and Author Luncheon. I have met fascinating authors, and I began an important friendship because of my involvement in this activity. The fashion show at the Philanthropic Luncheon in the spring of 2024 was another enjoyable event. “Giving Together” was the theme, as we worked with the Junior League of the Sound to recycle clothing and support charities.

Water coloring workshops were a project of the Art Department at the Town of Mamaroneck Environmental Resource Center. Lots of hidden talent was discovered. The Art Department made several trips during my tenure – Storm King Outdoor Sculpture site and Dia Beacon are among the highlights. We went to the Aldrich Museum in Ridgefield and had lunch at the nearby Bernard’s. A trip to the Hudson River Museum followed lunch at X20 on a Pier in Yonkers. We enjoyed visits to the nearby newly expanded Bruce Museum and had lunch in their charming café. Trips to the Met Museum and the Cropsey collection in Hastings were arranged by previous directors. When you include the frequent art programs at club days, the Woman’s Club of

Larchmont has enhanced my appreciation of art in many ways.

Anne-Mieke Smeets



Born and raised in Zeist, The Netherlands, I had a wonderful time growing up there. I was raised with two older brothers and two younger sisters. We were all active

and went to school, and studied in Zeist, and other towns. We did a lot of sports, volunteered, and were engaged in lots of activities after school. I did ballet, girl scouts, ballroom dancing, water polo, and conditioning training. Our swim club, Laga, was an important part of our life. Most of our friends were also members. My parents both worked (my Mom part-time), volunteered a lot, and we were raised to be independent. I was on the Board of Laga, and we organized many events besides playing water polo and swimming.

In 1977, I decided to go to the U.S.A. where two of my siblings already lived in California. A couple of years later, my other two siblings -one brother was married, and had three kids, and my youngest sister- also came to America. My parents stayed in Holland but visited us all a lot in California, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, etc., and went with us on great vacations, and we traveled a lot. I came to New York City and was lucky enough to explore the city for several months, before finding a job, and I studied at NYU. I lived with my eldest brother and at that time his girlfriend, who he later

married. I met my husband, Jan Karel, and we got married in New York City. In 1981 we moved to Larchmont, where our three boys were born and grew up. They are married to three wonderful women, all live now in the U.S., and we love our eight grandchildren.

Having always been a volunteer, I did the same here in Larchmont-Mamaroneck. I became involved at our Church and at the schools of our three sons, (PTA & PSPA) School Board functions as well as other organizations like Larchmont Friends of the Family, Dance, Tennis, Tap Dance, sailing at the Larchmont Yacht Club, many Church functions (Parish Council & Trustee, Ladies Auxiliary and I organized Holly Party every year and I still do), plus Religious Education Board, organizing Irish Fleadhs, Holly Party-Fundraisers every year for about 27 years, Anniversaries, Woman of Spirit Luncheons, Mamaroneck High School YES office, etc.

Suzanne Carpenter invited me to several Book & Author luncheons of the Woman's Club, and I decided to become a member of The Woman's Club of Larchmont in 2010. Very soon I got involved as a member of several committees like the Tea Table, Music and Philanthropy. I was elected a Co-Chair in 2012 of the American Home with Margaret Merigliano, and we became Executive Board members. Slowly but surely, I started to help on other committees and for the 2014-2016 term was elected as the President. It was a great two years, but a lot of work. I loved working with lots of talented women who brought so much to the table. Especially as an ex-officio member of all committees, I attended many meetings and therefore I got to know and work with many members.

I enjoyed especially organizing the "High Tea" for the 90th Anniversary of our Club. At the same time my husband became Commodore of the Larchmont Yacht Club and we both were very busy with all the volunteer work.

After being President of WCL, I became the Yearbook Director for five years. I still proofread and help out with the Yearbook each year and I also proofread *The Larch Tree*. I was a committee member of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee and was involved with the rewriting of the Constitution & Bylaws in April 2019. This enormous overhaul had to be done for the Club, so we would be able to apply for a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status.

I was involved as a member of many committees: Press & Publicity, Archives, Book & Author Luncheon, Ways & Means, Installation of Officers Luncheon, Notebooks, Taking Photos, and for several years as the Presidential Advisor. All these years I also was an Executive Board member, and I still am. I am now the Director of Communications and the Chair of both the Centennial Committees 2025.

I became involved with Federation (Westchester County Federation of Women's Clubs) since I was President. I am the Registrar and a Board member for the last 4 years. I like putting the Federation Yearbook together, being part of the Constitution & Bylaws Committee, as well as going to the meetings, and Luncheons, and the Fundraiser of Federation. Many of our Woman's Club members are always well represented at Federation events, and we always have a big table and enjoy being there and have fun.

In 2020 our slate of candidates for the Board did not have a President! Nobody volunteered

to be President. I volunteered to be President for one year, and for the 2nd year of the President's term Dorothy Rainier followed me up for one year as the President.

It was not an easy year with the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, on the other hand we managed to connect with each other on Zoom and we continue to organize great events and all Club business. We even held two successful outdoor Fundraisers!

We are now celebrating the Centennial Year of our Club. I started organizing a Centennial Celebration Committee (2025) which has many members involved. We split up the committee as a book/writers committee making a Centennial 2025 book, do research, write articles. The Centennial Committee-group organizes the Gala, makes and send "Save the Date" cards as well as formal invites, conducts the fundraising part, discuss decorating, music, etc. Each committee meets once a month, and notes are distributed to each committee member, so everybody knows what was decided and what is supposed to be done by members. We are looking forward to a great Gala Fundraiser on May 1, 2025, and we hope many members with their spouses, guest(s) and other invited people will attend.

Our objectives of the Woman's Club of Larchmont: "Fellowship, Philanthropy and Service" has been very successful over these 100 years of existence. However, we need all members to volunteer and bring in new members to have our Club grow and to be able to achieve our objectives. We should promote our Club as this wonderful organization where the members will learn, have fun, volunteer, do service projects, have luncheons together, meet new friends, and

enjoy being a member of an interesting, worthwhile and energetic Club.

Lorraine Stratis



In 1944, I was born in the Bronx. I was the third of seven children. I always saw my mother caring for or feeding a baby. My parents were not rich, but we were well

cared for and loved each other—it was a lovely childhood. My older sister, Carol (2 years older) was in charge of me! I was blessed. Carol was one of the most influential people in my life. I looked up to her and constantly learned from her.

My grandmother lived on the first floor of our building. Before I went home to our fifth floor apartment, I would often stop in for a visit and have tea and cupcakes with her in her first floor unit.

I went to Catholic school for elementary and high school. When I graduated I was thankful to get a scholarship to attend Marymount Manhattan College in New York City. At the time Governor Rockefeller was ensuring city kids had access to merit and need based scholarships. Throughout college I worked at Patricia Murphy's Restaurant on Central Avenue in Yonkers. Good times and generous tips!!

Meanwhile, my sister Carol got married and started to have a family. They bought a small house in Larchmont. When I visited her I thought that I was in heaven! My husband and I were 25 years old and soon after found a small Tutor-Cottage on Weaver Street. My two daughters

went to school at Murray Avenue. Once they started school I went back to the College of New Rochelle to get my Master's Degree.

My first teaching job was in the South Bronx at P.S. 46. After four years of teaching in the Bronx, I headed to Ardsley High School where I taught until my retirement at sixty.

Post retirement I went on many adventures. I sailed around the east coast with my husband Carl. It was one of our favorite activities and we made lots of friends and memories.

For years I read articles in the local paper about the programs and events hosted by the Woman's Club of Larchmont. I wanted to be part of the organization to help others, make new connections and enrich my daily life. At my first meeting, a dear member Renee Faulkner (may she rest in peace) warned me to be careful, as a newbie/"Fresh Meat" you would be asked to join many committees. Shortly after my first meeting, Camille Odierna said, "... you like to read, so you will be good at running our Book and Author Luncheon," and she swiftly signed me up to run the committee. The rest is history ...

Judith Summerfield



How do we tell the stories of our lives? That is the question that has shaped much of my life and work. I grew up on stories. My father was a storyteller, a survivor, who every day of his life was telling the story of how, as a teenager, he escaped from Ukraine during the

Russian Revolution and spent a year and a week on the run, before he gained entry to the United States, with the help of his older brother in Pennsylvania. My father's stories, which I represent in my book, *A Man Comes from Someplace: Stories, History, Memory of a Lost Time*, brought me to the Woman's Club of Larchmont in 2015.

My good friend, Eleanor Dreyfus, had read the book and thought it a good fit for the Book and Author Luncheon, so she gave the book to Dorothy Rainier, who agreed. I gave the talk, and, happily, joined WCOL.

A few more notes on my life: I grew up in small coal-mining town along the Monongahela River in southwestern Pennsylvania. My mother and father believed that we should do what we can to "repair the world." The expression in Hebrew is *tikkun olam*, which means we all bear responsibility for making the world better, for social justice, for equal rights. My sister is a social worker, who works for a not-for-profit mental health clinic in Maryland. And I became a teacher.

I was destined to become an English teacher (my mother said that my head was always in a book, and I wrote my first book when I was eight years old). I graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and became a high school teacher (for a short time), never dreaming that I would become a college professor, but I did, here in New York.

As a professor of English at Queens College, CUNY, I developed collaborative programs to teach multi-cultural students from places around the world not only to write standard English (so that they could succeed in college), but also to try their hand at writing fiction and

poetry, news reporting, drama, a daily journal, and, of course, their college papers. I earned a Ph.D. in English Education from New York University, writing a dissertation on “narratology,” on how we tell stories in different cultures. Among the awards and grants I received, was that of New York State Professor of the Year, by the Carnegie Foundation. In the decade before retirement in 2015, I was appointed University Dean of Undergraduate Education, bringing together faculty and administrators from all 24 colleges of CUNY to improve undergraduate education.

I have written ten books, including my latest, which is a story of my own professional life – how I came to do what I did and still do. *Compositions, A Life: An Autoethnography*, was published in 2023. I gave a talk at the Book and Author Luncheon, and a book talk/writing workshop at WCOL in September 2024. I am now working with Nancy McGarr to develop a writing workshop for WCOL to be offered in the fall of 2025.

And I am honored to be assisting in editing the Centennial Book with Anne-Mieke Smeets and the Centennial Committee.

*The Woman's Club of Larchmont, Inc.
A Continued History, 2000-2025*

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