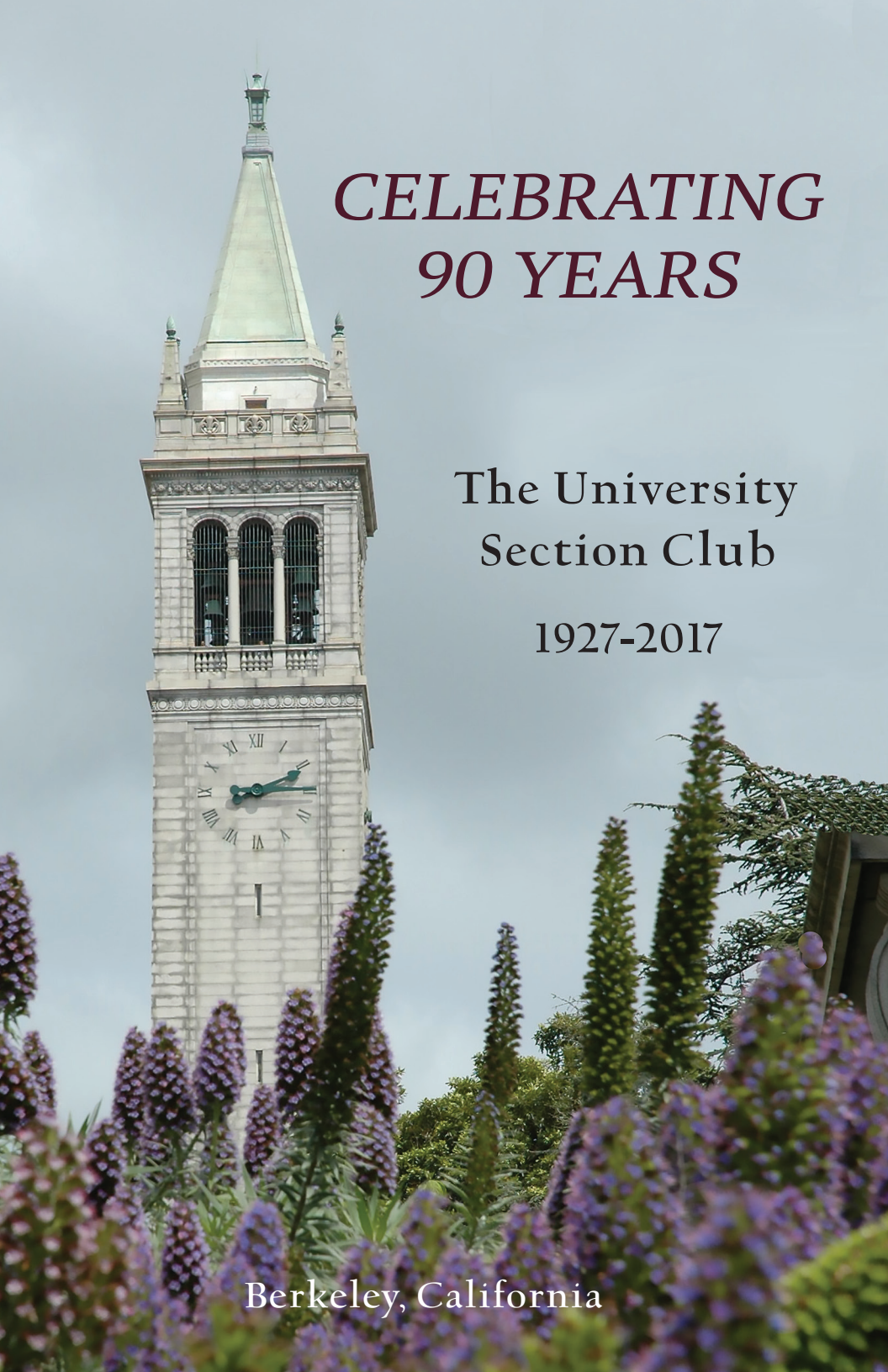

CELEBRATING
90 YEARS
The University
Section Club
1927-2017
Berkeley, California

Celebrating 90 Years

The University Section Club

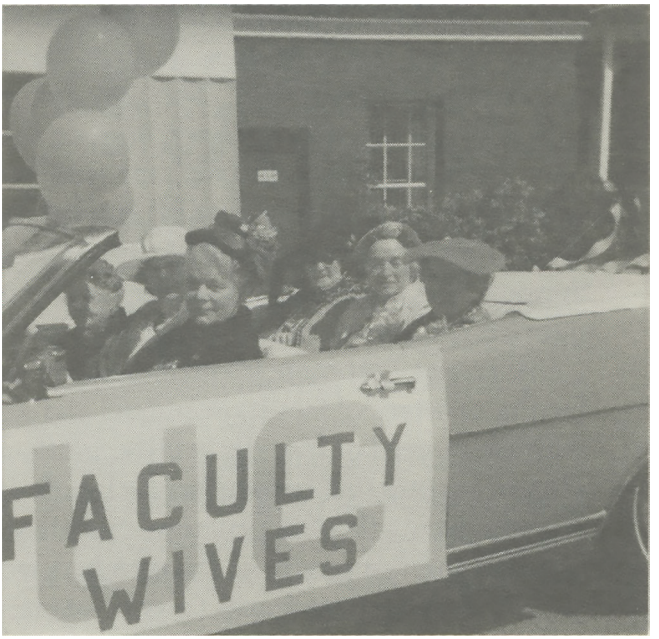
1927-2017

Berkeley, California

Contents

Introduction

Since its founding in 1927, the watchword of the University Section Club has always been and always will be 'Welcome.' It is a wide embrace, reaching every corner of the Cal community, cultivating friendships and mutual interests as well as offering service to both individual students and to the larger institution. This small publication is the club's effort to honor over ninety years of accomplishments. With generosity, creativity and energy, our members have responded to the ever changing, ever challenging needs of Berkeley. It is time to celebrate our story.



Section Club entry in City of Berkeley Centennial Parade, 1978. *Section Club Papers, University Archives.*

The Beginning

It has been said, in jest, that in the past the best way for an intellectual woman to be welcomed on a major university campus was to marry a professor and not, perish the thought, to compete for a place on the faculty herself. For whatever reason, faculty wives have always been a particularly lively, talented group with a special appreciation of university life. At Berkeley these gifts have found expression in the University Section Club and its welcoming spirit. Our founder, Theodosia "Ted" Stewart, arrived with her husband George, a new member of the English Department, from Ann Arbor where her father was president of the University of Michigan. A newcomer with little children, she imagined what a pleasure it would be if Berkeley had a community group like the one her mother had started at Michigan. And so, she did it. With a nucleus of new friends and the support of the University President's wife, Mrs. W.W. Campbell, the Section Club held its first general meeting in the living room of University House on January 28, 1927.

As described in its Constitution, the club would "promote friendship and sociability" among women who were members of the faculty or wives of faculty members, as well as "standing ready to assist so far as possible any who are in need of friendly service, particularly in University circles." Its structure would be flexible, made up of as many sections or interest groups as the members chose to support. They would include sports like tennis, swimming or walking, language groups such as French, Greek and German, and arts like music, drama and sketching, all of which evolved in the early years. Club-wide social events would complement the life of the sections.

The University Section Club was not Berkeley's first effort to encourage a sense of community. In 1907, responding to challenges in the wake of the San Francisco earthquake, President Benjamin Ide Wheeler's wife had started the College Teas, a subscription series of four elegant parties each year. A small black account book in the Bancroft Library archives offers a snapshot of every detail from the

choice of tea sandwiches to what the man who moved the potted palms was paid. It was not until 1942, during World War II, that the hostesses were no longer expected to wear long tea gowns. Such formality was not the goal of Ted Stewart and her friends. The teas would continue in tandem with the Section Club until the 1980's, but the new group's hope was to launch something much more informal that would be an active part of their daily lives at Berkeley.

The club's accomplishments did not go unnoticed. Visiting faculty wives who had enjoyed their year as members of the Section Club carried the idea back to their home campuses. Just as Berkeley had followed Michigan's model, campuses such as Columbia, West Point and the University of Hawaii followed our example. Their experience is a happy part of the Section Club's legacy.

A Club Without Walls

Unlike many other Berkeley clubs, the University Section Club has never had a clubhouse. The Town and Gown Club, the Berkeley Piano Club, the Berkeley City Club, the Hillside Club and various others all have a physical home, often a building of architectural distinction. This simple fact has had a great effect on the life of the organization, its psychology, its finances and the character of the projects that we have undertaken. In a positive sense, we have been an institution without walls. We have been forced to think openly, to cultivate partnerships, to make ourselves useful, in short, to justify our existence. We have literally had no place to rest on our laurels. At the same time, it should be noted that we have not had the financial burden of maintaining a building.

In a certain sense, the Section Club has always thought of the campus as our home, but it has never been a home that we could take for granted. Relationships need to be negotiated. Times change. Budgets shift. For example, since the Section Club's launching, University House provided a welcome berth for the club – until it didn't. The Fall Reception was traditionally held on the main floor and in the garden. Addressing sessions and annual meetings took place for many years in the basement. Our 75th birthday was celebrated with a dinner there. It was our gracious anchor. The University President and, since 1952, Berkeley's Chancellor have officially been members of the club's Board of Directors and, as such, have been, in effect, our patron. In the years before the student body and the administration grew so dramatically, our relationship with the campus was typically very personal.

The closest that the Section Club has ever come to having a designated home on the campus was in 1957 when the University received a bequest from the Haas family for the construction of a recreation center behind the stadium. Among other things, the Haas Clubhouse was to be "for the use of women's groups on the campus such as faculty wives' organizations and the Dames Club," the student wives group. Carrie Grether, our president at the time, was the club's

representative on the design committee, and the club raised funds to contribute furniture, shades and various pieces of equipment. But eventually the University's priorities changed, leading to escalating fees and difficulties that forced the Section Club out in the 1990's. A comparable struggle ensued over our access to campus tennis courts, specifically the courts that the Tennis Section had used for many years in Strawberry Canyon.

Fortunately, in 1993, a toehold was restored on the campus. With the leadership of Joan Finnie, the Section Club for the first time launched a major financial campaign, raising $52,200 for the new Health Services Building, now known as the Tang Center. Our reward was a named room on the first floor that, with careful advance scheduling, can be used for business meetings and by S.O.S.

Otherwise the spaces needed for our activities are found in three different ways. The most important resource is the hospitality of our members who graciously open their homes for our section meetings and many other special occasions. Theirs is the most explicit expression of our welcoming spirit. Secondly, we rely enormously on our partnerships with other organizations who make their facilities available for our joint projects. For example, starting in 1948, we jointly sponsored a series of popular spring dinner dances with the Men's Faculty Club. More recently dinners have been held there with all rental fees waived by the Faculty Club board. I House has welcomed the Section Club for our shared programs on behalf of international students, including our beloved annual Holiday Party for the students' children where every child is sent home with one of our handmade bears. The University YWCA has been another remarkable partner. Weekly, since 1978, they have welcomed The Centre, our program for families with pre-school children who have come to Berkeley from abroad. In 1993, the Y was also the gracious host for our first Evening for the Arts, including an exhibition, a concert, poetry readings and monologues.

Thirdly, in recent years the club has unfortunately had to rely more on rented space than we did, if ever, in the past. The Fall Reception has found a new home at the Brazilian Room in Tilden Park. The January Dinner has been held in the auditorium at I House and at the Bancroft Hotel. In 1992, the Beehive Luncheon moved from the Haas Clubhouse to the Unitarian Church in Kensington and has been held there ever since.

The Section Club must be creative to make up for the rental funds that might otherwise have been available for our service projects. But living by our wits is what we have always done. With our multiple venues, we tend to remain almost invisible to everyone except our members and the people we are helping. A great deal can be accomplished if you are willing to work without a public presence and without public recognition.

University of California, Berkeley liaisions accepting S.O.S. grants.

STRUCTURES FOR SERVICE

Over the past ninety years, the structure of the University Section Club has gradually evolved. At its founding in 1927, it was essentially a social organization and, as such, was unincorporated. It could be described as a club of clubs with each section led by its own officers and collecting its own dues. Membership in a section depended upon also joining the umbrella organization whose responsibilities included policies on service projects, financial priorities, fund raising and special social events, all overseen by the Board of Directors. Eventually service oriented sections grew into independent Sponsored Services, once again with their own officers. With so many moving parts, the success of the Section Club has always depended on flexibility.

An example of how a section morphed into a larger, multifaceted Sponsored Service is S.O.S., the original Philanthropy Section that had come to describe itself as S.O.S., Services Offered Students. As needs were identified, it expanded in many directions. It absorbed the Cowell Hospital Auxiliary, forming a Visiting Committee whose members would arrive with magazines and flowers from their gardens for sick students. Other subcommittees supported a nursery school in Albany's University Village and cooperated with the student wives group, the Dames.

Cowell Hospital, the Nursery School and the Dames are now gone. Instead we work through our staff liaisons with the Tang Center, the Disabled Students' Program, University Village and CE3, a consortium that addresses the needs of transfer and re-entry students, veterans, student families, students from challenging family backgrounds and from foster care. The labels and channels have changed, but the goals of our "friendly service" have continued with remarkable consistency. This fiscal year, for example, the Section Club has disbursed almost $59,000 in 77 grants to individual students and to programs. Our hope is always to reach the student in need of financial aid who has fallen between the cracks. Since our funds are limited, we try to plant seeds with our programs, initiating projects whose funding, once their value is demonstrated, will be picked up by the University or, in

some cases, the federal government. For example, the computer center that we started many years ago for the students living at Albany Village was eventually enlarged and funded by the University. The amazing 'pens' that make it possible for disabled students to take notes in their lectures were another success story. After proving themselves with our funding at Berkeley, they were adopted by Washington and distributed throughout the country.

Another Sponsored Service, the International Student and Scholar Committee, developed quite apart from the sections. It was triggered by an unexpected experience of Kay Kerr, wife of Berkeley's then Chancellor and later University President, Clark Kerr. The Kerr's had hired an Egyptian graduate student in Botany to help in their garden. When he was about to leave Berkeley, he brought the Kerr's a stack of gifts that he had intended to give the new friends by whom he had assumed he would be entertained. The story of his isolation shocked the Section Club into action.

The Foreign Student Committee was started in the 1950's, initiating a cascade of services: the Home Hospitality Committee, the Equipment Loan Center, the Housing Committee and in 1978, the Centre. In 1962-63, for example, 430 foreign students were placed with 330 host families, and over 250 students were helped to find housing. At the end of the day, Sigvor Thornton would famously bring them home if they were still without a roof. In 1996, housing needs were addressed in another way as the Section Club endowed the International House Room and Board Scholarship.

The process of direct financial aid to individual students has also evolved, in part by trial and error. Loans proved difficult to manage. Our scholarship funds, administered by the Dean's office, typically helped young women who were nearing graduation but needed a hand at the end. In recent years, the club has settled on two kinds of gifts made on the advice of our staff liaisons. On the one hand, grants of typically $1,000 are made by our Student Grants Committee. Smaller emergency grants from the Sylvia Elberg Memorial Fund are administered through S.O.S.

The Section Club has come a long way. Originally our "friendly service" had been very hands-on and focused on the whole community. During the Depression we worked with the Red Cross to provide clothes for the unemployed, and in World War II the club coordinated its efforts with Save the Children to send clothing abroad. In 1949, members made 24 layettes for student families. But as the Section Club became aware of the increasing financial needs of individuals within a larger student body, we addressed the importance of establishing our non-profit status to facilitate fund raising. In 1957, the club was incorporated in the State of California as a charitable organization and in 1962, received 501(c)3 status from the IRS. Among our new initiatives, the club started the Beehive thrift shop program in partnership with a series of different charities, originally through Herrick Hospital's shop and later the Lincoln Child Center.

A second, in this case quasi-legal change in the Section Club's structure became official in 1997. The University's Development Office included us in their efforts to regularize organizations that it identified as "support groups" at Berkeley. Fortunately, we were able to limit their control, persuading them that it was essential for the Section Club to be able to write checks immediately for emergency grants. We must be audited annually by the campus, but a waiver allows us to handle our finances within their guidelines, but independently. After years of relative informality, the more bureaucratic culture of the modern campus had reached us as well.

We trust that we will never lose the personal spirit of our "friendly service."

Membership

Ninety years of cultural change have meant ninety years of change in the composition of the University Section Club's membership. Started by young mothers in search of a tennis game or the chance to exercise their French, the club is now more typically a community of grandmothers. We still want to play tennis and speak French. We are still committed to helping students and the university. But for obvious reasons, such as the priority now given by women to their careers, our demographics have changed dramatically.

In general, eligibility for membership has been fairly consistent: faculty and upper levels of the administration, their spouses, visiting faculty and colleagues from neighboring institutions like the Graduate Theological Union and other UC campuses. It was assumed that this was the Section Club's natural constituency. But gradually over the last thirty years, our by-laws have been changed, redefining a larger, more inclusive pool of potential members. Husbands, always welcome as guests, can now be considered members. Partners are included along with spouses. University staff are welcome. Admission procedures for community members have been relaxed. The core of our membership is still made up of faculty wives, but the definition of our community has expanded. A shared commitment to the University is our foundation.

Over the years, newcomers have presented a variety of challenges. How could we identify potential members? How could we make them feel welcome? As the University grew exponentially after World War II, their numbers were overwhelming. In 1948, for example, the Calling Committee, which made a personal visit to each newcomer, was given 251 names. In an extraordinary gesture of hospitality, for twelve years between 1947 and 1959, Carol Sibley, whose gracious home was near the campus, extended a standing invitation to all faculty wives for tea on the second Tuesday of each month. The Section Club's efforts bore fruit. During the 1950's and early 1960's, membership soared. In 1962, for example, there were 809 members, including 100 newcomers.

Today the Section Club faces multiple hurdles in cultivating membership. We have a special section for newcomers, but since the 1990's, privacy legislation has made it very difficult to discover the names of new faculty members, not to mention the names of their spouses or partners and their contact information. We had traditionally received these details from department secretaries, but now the process has become much more fragmented. We must rely on individual members reaching out to individual new arrivals whom they have met.

In 1991, our President Joan Finnie and President-Elect Mary Lee Noonan visited Chancellor Chang Lin Tien to ask if the Section Club could send representatives with information about the club to his fall party for new faculty at University House (an inquiry that inadvertently led to our new role as hostesses at the chancellor's large parties). But together with the choice by so many women to pull back from the volunteer sector and to enter the workforce, these efforts didn't solve our problem. In the 1990's, membership hovered around 500. Today it has stabilized above 300. The values represented by the University Section Club live on. Our work continues. But as in the past, the club must continue to reinvent itself as it adapts to cultural change.

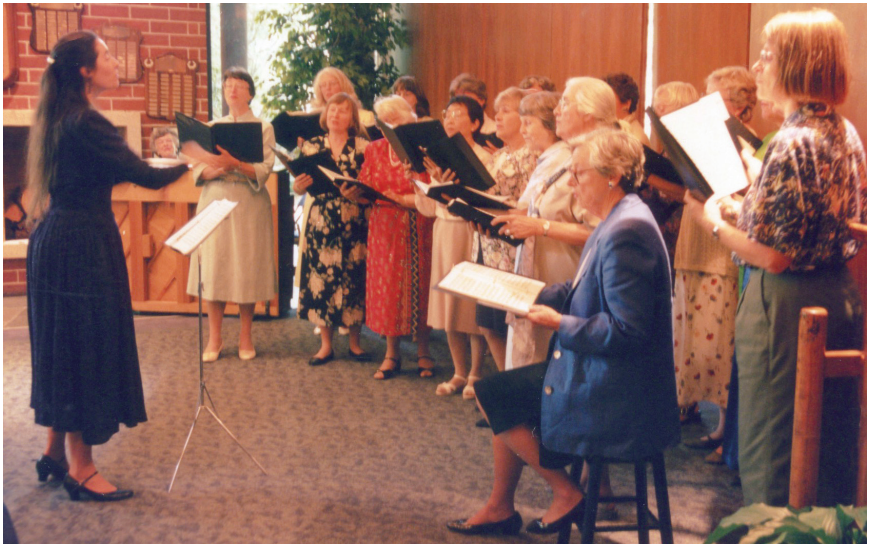
The Sections

Perhaps the most problematic thing about the University Section Club is its name. What is a 'section,' and what on earth is a 'Section Club'? In the late 1980's, the Board drove to Bodega Bay for a day-long retreat at a member's beach house. Its primary objective was to review the club's name and to come up with a better one. After a lovely outing, they came home empty handed.

Although they have never accounted for our entire membership, faculty wives have typically defined the organization. If you are talking with a staff person for the Disabled Students' Program, for example, and introduce yourself as from 'the faculty wives group,' they immediately place you. If you say that you are from the 'Section Club,' you are never sure if they will understand, particularly if the person is new to the campus. But as every member quickly learns, our sections are the life blood of the organization. The shared interests that bring us together, the common backgrounds that we often discover, and the experiences that we enjoy together at our meetings create very special bonds. Friendships are born. Social cement bridges different departments and disciplines. We quickly discover that the 'sections,' instead of defining little divisions, are a perfect way to unite our community, to build our special coral reef. 'Section' may be an unduly vague, generic word for our interest groups, but until we mint a better one, it will have to serve to describe our multiplicity of clubs within a club.

Over the past ninety years, countless sections have been started, ceased to exist for a variety of reasons or have sailed on continuously. In many ways, the roster of sections has mirrored the culture of its time. In 1929, the young women who founded the club launched Progressive Education for Mothers. In 1939, as World War II loomed, Peace Education was started, followed in 1942 by the disbanding of the German Section and the beginning of Home Nursing. Before the advent of television, there were four Drama sections, two producing and two reading. Memories such as the Caldwell's dog, Bones, playing a sheep in a medieval Christmas play illustrate their free spirit. Some sections like Music, with its multiple attractions for both performers and audience, have flourished consistently, sometimes with as many as 100 members. Fortunately, not everyone could attend each meeting! Our living rooms have their limits.

The only limit to the variety of our sections is the range of the human spirit.



Celebrations

Since 1927, the University Section Club has been synonymous with hospitality and friendship. As a result, it is no surprise that its club-wide events, whether they are labeled as simple meetings, fund raisers or parties, are typically festive occasions. For example, the Fall Reception, usually held at University House but in the last few years at Tilden Park's Brazilian Room, is nominally an opportunity for members to pay their dues and to sign up for their choice of sections. In fact, it is a wonderful reunion after the summer, complete with September sunshine, a lovely buffet lunch and the spirit of a gracious garden party.

In retrospect, celebrations like 1932's Spring Blossom Festival at the Hillside School, featuring folk dancing and choral singing, can seem rather quaint. But in our own way, we too continue to celebrate spring in Berkeley. Since 1968, when the first Beehive Luncheon celebrated the University's centennial, the event has continued annually as the Section Club's primary fund raiser. Originally it was held in late February at the Haas Clubhouse which was transformed into a bower of camellias. Since 1992, it has moved off campus to the Unitarian Church in Kensington, decked with a sea of daffodils, generously donated by the Pease family. And in an unconscious echo of the Hillside School party, this year the Faculty Wives Chorus sang a bouquet of songs about spring for both the May meeting of the Music Section and for a gathering of their families. The festivities roll on.

Other traditional parties continue to pepper the Section Club's calendar. Winter dinner dances at the Faculty Club have lost a bit of their frolicsome spirit but have continued as a lovely winter dinner with a topical speaker instead. An Intercampus Open House that rotates among the University's Northern California campuses, Berkeley, Davis, Santa Cruz, UCSF and Merced, has become another welcome institution. In the late 1990's, Rita Atkinson, the University President's wife, took this coordination one step further, initiating the idea of a lovely luncheon where officers from all the campuses could meet and

share insights about their respective organizations.
All of these events are duly celebrated in the Section Club's newsletter, the Breeze, copies of which have been preserved through the years in our archive at the Bancroft Library. Its scale and content have varied widely, frequently embellished in the past by the social commentary of cartoons from The New Yorker and now more often enlivened with photographs taken at club events. It is the best continuing chronicle of the Section Club's celebrations.

To which we add the booklet that you hold in your hands. Happy 90th Birthday to the University Section Club! May you continue to thrive in all your endeavors.

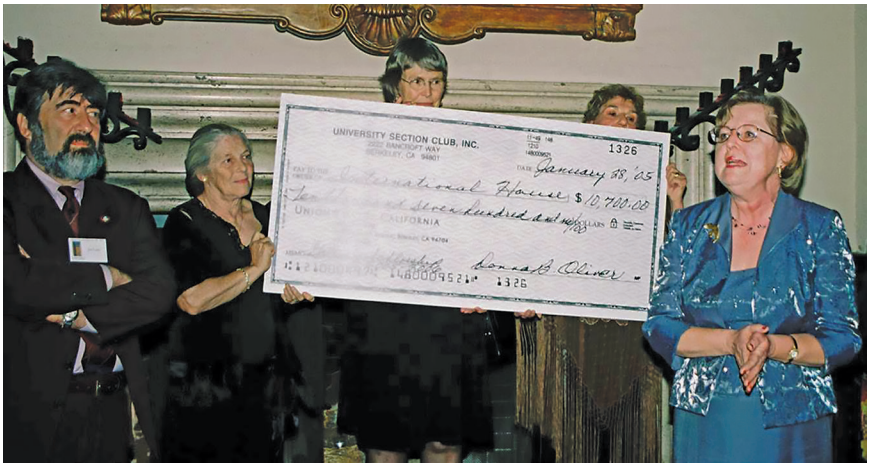
The Past as Prologue

Our celebration of ninety remarkable years offers a special opportunity for the University Section Club to take stock. Our rich history of friendship, community and service should inspire us to plan thoughtfully for the years ahead. How are the needs of Berkeley students changing? How have our resources evolved? How can we continue to honor and develop our tradition of 'friendly service'?

Our membership now embraces a broader base who share our mission of support for the campus. We are working in close collaboration with our new Chancellor, Carol Christ, joining her initiatives to meet the challenges faced by students today. Our sections continue to be vibrant groups of energized members. In short, this is an exciting time to be a member of the Section Club at UC Berkeley!

Mary Lee Noonan


PANTRY
HELLO


UNIVERSITY SECTION CLUB, INC.
1326
January 28, '05
$10,700.00
1326

In 2005, the Section Club began a fundraiser with the sale of a silver or gold dove pin designed by Cecile & Jeanne, jeweler in Paris. All profits from this project were used to support a full scholarship for a graduate student in residence at the International House. Afterward, proceeds from the sales of the pins were given to student grants of Section Club. Its symbolism of peace and unity expresses the values which the club has always hoped to cultivate.

UNIVERSITY SECTION CLUB, INC. PRESIDENTS

1927..... Mrs. George Stewart
1928,'29..... Mrs. M. Y. Hughes
1930,'31..... Mrs. Edward C. Tolman
1932,'33..... Mrs. Charles W. Porter
1934,'35..... Mrs. C. O. Sauer
1936,'37..... Mrs. D. O. McGovney
1938..... Mrs. Herbert I. Priestley
1939,'40..... Mrs. G. C. Evans
1941,'42..... Mrs. P. B. Fay
1943,'44..... Mrs. George C. Kyte
1945,'46..... Mrs. Harper Goodspeed
1947,'48..... Mrs. Harold Kirby
1949,'50..... Mrs. Gerhard K. Rollefson
1951,'52..... Mrs. Howard S. Ellis
1953,'54..... Mrs. Murray B. Emeneau
1955,'56..... Mrs. Ewald T. Grether
1957,'58..... Mrs. Edwin M. McMillan
1959,'60..... Mrs. Milton Chernin
1961..... Mrs. George Lenczowski
1962..... Mrs. M. Edwin O'Neill
1963..... Mrs. James Hart
1964..... Mrs. Carl Nordley
1965..... Mrs. W. Glenn Marders
1966..... Mrs. Arleigh Williams
1967..... Mrs. William Balamuth
1968..... Mrs. Theodore Vermeulen
1969..... Mrs. Robert Thornton
1970..... Mrs. Paul Casamajor
1971..... Mrs. Adrian Kragen
1972..... Mrs. Don O. Horning
1973..... Mrs. Frederick H. Carpenter
1974..... Mrs. Robert Steidel
1975..... Mrs. Bruce Cork
1976..... Mrs. David Lyon
1977..... Mrs. Richard Fulrath
1978..... Mrs. David Jenkins
1979..... Mrs. Joseph Pask
1980..... Mrs. Paul Tappan
1981..... Mrs. Frank Kidner
1982..... Mrs. James Parsons
1983..... Mrs. William Griffiths
1984..... Mrs. Luna Leopold
1985..... Mrs. Kenow Lou
1986..... Mrs. Robert Scalapino
1987..... Joan Glassey
1988..... Grace Kobayashi
1989..... Joyce Brekke
1990..... Patricia Mote
1991..... Joan Finnie
1992..... Mary Lee Noonan
1993..... Beverly Bolt
1994..... Dolores Williamson
1995..... Gerda Janos
1996..... Ellen Hahn
1997..... Marjorie Sauer
1998..... Audrey Richards
1999..... Carolyn Dundes
2000..... Nancy Oldham
2001..... Judy Gordon
2002..... Betsy Smith
2003..... Terry De Luca Schooler
2004..... Christa Shannon
2005..... Geneviève Dreyfus
2006..... Danielle de Fontaine
2007..... Sally Presser
2008..... Sonja Velez
2009..... Julia Wenk
2010..... Mary-Ellis Adams
2011..... Melinda Buchanan
2012..... Janice Lieu
2013..... Rita Purcell
2014..... Mary Kay Duggan
2015..... Sally Stevens
2016..... Geraldine Morrison
2017..... Dorian Bikle
2018..... Shahla Verrall

UC Section Club 90 Years Celebration Booklet Committee

Joan Finnie, Co-Chair
Mary Lee Noonan, Co-Chair
Dorian Bikle
Joan Glassey
Natalie Hahn
Gerda Janos
Audrey Richards
Terry Schooler
Linda Vida

University Section Club
c/o Tang Center at UC Berkeley
2222 Bancroft Way
Berkeley, CA 94720–4300
www.sectionclub.berkeley.edu
sectionclub@gmail.com