

Founders Day Program

Walk with us through the early years of Pilot.

The year is 1921. History is in the making and is felt throughout the United States, into Canada and across the sea to England, France, Japan, Bermuda, and Hawaii. It is way down South in the land of sunshine and peach blossoms. A group of farsighted women in Macon, Georgia are busy as only women can be.

It is the period of flappers, but these women are sharing constructive ideas. The fruits of their endeavors blossom into a classified service club for businesswomen to be known as "The Pilot Club" with Friendship and Service as its principle. The word Pilot means "to lead or guide" and these 40 women pledge to steer the "True Course Ever". Friendship is unselfish, so the first Pilots want to share what they have founded to help build better businesses, better communities, a better nation, and a better world. The first Pilot Club is chartered in Macon, Georgia.

These women are ready to extend Pilot and organize more Clubs. Their first stop is Montgomery, Alabama in November 1921. It is now 1922, and these women continue to move forward by visiting Alabama and Georgia. Pilots are excited to be attending Pilot's first International Convention on May 27, 1922. Lucy B. Allen of Macon has just been elected as the first Pilot International President.

These women consider it a wonderful challenge to start working together with other businesswomen to bring their ideals and purpose into realization. They like to have fun, too. Their favorite dance is the "Charleston".

It is now 1926, and Pearl Sparks from Florence, Alabama is on her way to the International Convention in Montgomery, Alabama. Pearl is inspired to compose, from notes that she is jotting down, our beautiful Code of Ethics.

The 1930's are desperate times, but Pilot continues to grow despite the depression. Districts are being organized for the purpose of more efficient administration and with the formation of districts comes the wonderful district conventions. Pilots want to share their opportunities with like-minded Pilots. Pilots sing "Sail on International" at the close of convention.

September 1939 - Pilot International establishes a permanent headquarters in Macon. We have 78 clubs and 2,039 Pilots. Macon has been chosen because it is the home of the first Pilot Club. Miss Wilda Richardson is serving as Executive Director.

1941 - Pilot accepts an anonymous gift of \$100 to establish a fund to be called the "True Course Ever Fund" for the purpose of assisting Pilots in financial need or distress.

Pilot International is continuing to grow during the second world war. Members are attending the International Convention in Memphis, Tennessee in June 1940. Pilots are excited to become the first women's organization to give a fully equipped ambulance to the Red Cross for overseas service. They feel the call to serve their country - in the armed forces and at home. Travel is curtailed in 1942 so District and International Conventions are cancelled for the next five years.

It is now 1947. Pilots can travel again, and they are attending the International Convention in Columbus, Ohio. Five members of our first Canadian club, the Pilot Club of Windsor, Ontario sing a Canadian song.

In 1948 the Pilot Club of Honolulu, Hawaii is organized, and the charter is being presented by President Laura Albrecht of Davenport, Iowa.

June 1949 - Ruby Newhall from Gainesville, Florida is installed as Pilot International President at the Chicago Convention. The honor nor the glory were important to Ruby, but always the responsibility and the opportunity for service are foremost in her mind. Ruby dreams of a Pilot scholarship fund for international students. Ruby Newhall dies on October 18, 1949, and the Ruby Newhall Memorial Scholarship is established making her dream come true. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the scholarship fund. Pilots continue to make Ruby's dream a reality.

1949 - Antoinette Boris of the Pilot Club of New York is organizing the Pilot Club of Paris. The charter will be presented in March 1949 by her club President Josie Roberts. Daisy Bland from Houston, Texas will accompany Josie to Paris and stay to organize the Pilot Club of London. The Pilot Club of London is formed, and the charter is being presented in October 1949 by Susan Beyer who just learned that she has become President due to the death of Ruby Newhall. Pilots are thrilled to have Gwen Henry from the Pilot Club of London attend the 45th convention.

1949 continues to be an eventful year. The most challenging project of Pilot International is going to take place in June. They will adopt the French village of Vimoutiers which was bombed through error by the U.S. Air Force in World War II. Pilot International is working together to meet the individual and community needs of the village. Clothing, furniture, and household appliances are being contributed and the stained-glass windows in the village church replaced. The rehabilitation of the village is adopted as a five-year project.

With the coming of the fabulous 50's the Pilot Club of Tokyo, Japan is looking forward to their chartering in 1951. Pilot's hand of friendship and service stretches across the waters to Hamilton, Bermuda.

1952 International Convention - Pilot has delegates from the United States, Bermuda, France, England, and Japan. This is the first convention where overseas clubs are represented. At this convention, Pilot establishes the Anchor Club as an international project.

1954 - The International Convention is being held in Boston. President Marguerite Dimerling is invited to be an observer at the United Nations and District 4 (Florida) receives the National Safety Council's Carol Lane Award of \$1000.

Pilot's first convention on the west coast is being held in Los Angeles in 1955. The Board of Directors votes to establish the District Administrative Council.

It is 1956, and Pilots are attending convention at beautiful Miami Beach. Pilots purchase "friendship trees" for planting in Vimoutiers, France.

In 1956-1957 Jean Conacher serves as Pilot's first International President to live outside the United States. President Jean and Executive Director Wilda have received authorization to visit the French and English clubs of Pilot International. They will attend the first council meeting of the clubs of England.

In 1958 the district governors become members of the Board of Directors immediately after installation at their district convention. Pilot International assumes all approved expenses for the district governor to attend the Governors' Council and the International Convention.

1959 - Our International Convention is held in Chicago. President Mildred Bradshaw is working with the Allstate Foundation to develop an educational program to

stimulate safer driving for teenagers. The program "Contract for Safety" is being developed for Anchors and is sponsored by the Allstate Foundation. Mildred will have the honor of presenting the flag of the newly admitted 49th state, Alaska, to the Freedoms Foundation. The Village of Vimoutiers is celebrating 10 years of Pilot affiliation and in appreciation have named a prominent square "Place de Pilot International."

1960 - Allstate Safety Foundation is presenting Pilot with our first grant of \$5000 to be used to promote safety at our 1960 International Convention in San Francisco.

Pilot International is making a gift of the flag of Hawaii, our 50th state. This completes the collection of state flags displayed in the George Washington Hall at Freedoms Foundation, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

It is our 40th year, and Pilot International is now a member of CARE. Pilot is the only women's service club to be extended this opportunity. President Virginia Anderson, Joplin, Missouri, is our first International President to serve on the CARE Board of Directors.

During our Pilot year 1962-1963, fifteen new clubs are chartered.

Pilot is experiencing another first. Allstate Foundation is making it possible to attend the safety conference. The first place National Safety Council's Carol Lane Safety Award of \$1000 and bronze sculpture is given to the Pilot Club of Dalton, Georgia.

1964 - Pilot celebrates the 25th anniversary of Pilot Headquarters in Macon and pays tribute to Executive Director, Wilda Richardson.

And now in the soaring sixties Pilot is being recognized for its work with CARE, Meals for Millions, American Cancer Society, The National Foundation, U.S. Savings Bond Division, Committee of Employment of the Handicapped, American Heart Association, Salk Institute, Freedoms Foundation, and Project S.S. HOPE.

It is 1964-1965, and Pilot International Headquarters now has a permanent home in Macon. Pilots rally to the cause and use play-money corsages at the Convention, raising \$2440 for the building fund. Pilots sell over 50,000 copies of the first Pilot cookbook, "Cake Favorites", bringing in additional building funds.

Thank you for joining us in the walk through the early years of Pilot. Today we celebrate our rich heritage provided through our founders of Pilot International. It all began in October 1921, and together we continue the journey onward envisioning Pilot's future.