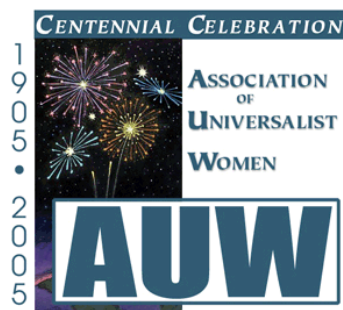


AUW Centennial Chronicle

The Association of Universalist Women (AUW) continues the celebration of its 100th anniversary, featuring a brief historical note by decade and the profile of a distinguished member from that time.



AUW Tradition Begins – Decade 3: 1925-1934

The women’s Christmas Tea has been a popular celebration over the decades and is documented as an AUW annual tradition since 1932, making this year our 72nd annual event. Christmas teas have typically involved some type of musical performance or occasionally poetry readings by members such as published poet, Esther Friedlander.

The tea often motivated women to donate small amounts of money for social projects, which added up to significant contributions to important projects by our denomination. For example, the 1954 tea raised contributions for the Clara Barton Camp - recently sold to fund an endowment for a paid staff member on women’s issues in the UUA Washington office (first intern, Kiersten Homblette, supported UU participation in the March for Women’s Lives in Washington, DC last April).

Biography of Marion Griffith (1896-1994)¹

Long-time church staff worker, Marion Griffith, enjoyed a career that spanned thirty-seven years as church secretary and assistant to three ministers. She was also active in many other roles with the church including youth programs and AUW.

In 1927, Marion came to work in the office of the First Universalist Society of Minneapolis (as it was then known). For twelve years she was the assistant to Dr. M.D. Shutter—until his death in 1939. She continued to serve with Dr. Carl H. Olson who followed, and later with Dr. John Cummins.

Always active with Universalist Youth (then the YPCU) locally, she also served on the state and national boards. In 1937 she traveled to Oxford, England, where she attended the International Association for Religious Freedom as a representative of American Universalist young people. Helping wherever needed, Marion served as substitute director the Religious Education Program, as a Sunday school teacher, and as the first Girl Scout leader of Troop #29 – which formed in 1928 and was sponsored by the Clara Barton Guild². She was also the historian for the church (First Universalist Church of Minneapolis) and for Unity Settlement House and was treasurer for the AUW.

Marion was at the heart of the church family. Whether a committee was in trouble or a family in need, she was quick to respond with her ready ear, efficient hand, and compassionate heart. She was a “minister to the ministers.” Marion retired in May 1964, but continued to play an active role within the church, remaining a member of AUW through 1992.

¹ AUW President, Mary Jane Anderson, wrote this biography in 1984; edited by Mary Junge and Jennifer Thomas, 2004.

² Published history #3 by Dave Junker.