

**30 Year Anniversary**

***VIP CLUB***

1980 – 2010

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## VIP CLUB

The club is a sponsored non-profit social and service club of retirees of Twin Cities- based UNISYS and Lockheed Martin and their predecessor companies in the Twin Cities, starting with Engineering Research Associates, ERA. The club is dedicated to enriching the lives of the members through social interaction and dissemination of information. Membership in the club is voluntary and is available to former employees and their spouses of Twin Cities-based Univac/Unisys organizations and predecessor or successor business enterprises who are retired or eligible to retire and are no longer employed by one of the sponsor organizations.

The club provides opportunities for social interaction and information exchange appropriate to the interest of the membership. Additionally the club provides a mechanism for member services to the community through several various volunteer organizations and opportunities.

Our VIP Club traces its beginning to the fall of 1979 when our founder Millie Gignac was conducting pre-retirement interviews with Sperry employees. She saw that most employees were reluctant to rapidly break their ties with the company and in particular friends with whom they had many shared memories. So putting action to words she persuaded management not only to set aside approximately 1,465 square feet of valuable manufacturing area but to also refurbish and furnish the area to the tune of about \$35,000

### **SIGNFICANT VIP CLUB EVENTS**

- 9/1979 -6/1980 Club organization and club room preparation
- 7/24/1980 Club room officially opened and dedicated. Ribbon cutting ceremony with retired President and CEO of UNIVAC participating in the event.
- 9/1980 First official meeting of the VIP Club in the new club room. First set of officers and board of directors elected.
- 1984 Registered with IRS as a 501(c)(7)-non-profit social club with the name of Sperry Retirees Club.
- 2000 Lockheed Martin joins UNISYS as a sponsor of the club
- 2002 First VIP web site on line with Joe Schwarz developer and web master
- 2007 VIP Club website and legacy web site combined. Lowell Benson developer and web master.  
Officially transmitted name change to VIP Club to IRS  
Along with Legacy committee formed a team to promote our legacy at the Minnesota Sesquicentennial Celebration in May 2008 and at the Minnesota State Fair in August of the same year.
- 2008 Newsletter and copy of website provided to Charles Babbage Institute Booth at Sesquicentennial Celebration  
Booth at State Fair in conjunction with Sesquicentennial Celebration  
Member Emeritus awards to Millie Gignac, John DuFour, and Bernie Jansen
- 2009 Member Emeritus awards to Charles and Midge Homan and Warren and Dorothy Becker

## **OUR FOUNDER**



Millie Gignac

Starting on 26 March 1956 as a clerk in the payroll department at Plant 2 at 1902 West Minnehaha Ave. in St. Paul Millie was very shortly promoted to the position of secretary to the Director of Financial Control. In this position Millie was very active in the United Fund Drive and other Company events such as golf tournaments and the Winter Carnival. This is probably where Millie got her indoctrination to volunteerism in which she continues.

In 1962 Millie transferred to the Personnel Directors office and in 1966 she was promoted to Group Leader of that department. She left this position to become supervisor of Benefits Research and Administration until transferring to UNIVAC Corporate Headquarters in Blue Bell, PA, as an Employee Information Specialist. She served in this capacity till 1972 when she was promoted to Supervisor of Benefits Research and Administration and with in a year was again promoted, this time to Manager providing direction to all Operating Divisions Personnel Departments relative to insure and retirements programs.

In 1974 Millie returned to St. Paul as Manager of Pre-Retirement Counseling for the Twin City Operations.

In 1975 Millie was promoted to Manager of Administration in the Resources Group in Defense systems. It was while in this position that Millie started her efforts for a retirees club that was fulfilled in 1980 with the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new club room.

Before retiring in April 1986 Millie was promoted to Director, Administration and Benefits. Millie was the first female to be named a Director in the Twin Cities Operations.

## ***THE BEGINNING***

In the fall of 1979, while working closely with employees getting ready to retire, Mille observed that many were reluctant to break the "Sperry-tie". This prompted her to start plans for a clubroom for the retirees. Plant Engineering Department was asked to draw up floor plans with cost estimates. The prospective club was allotted approximately 1,465 square feet in the Shepard Road plant on West 7<sup>th</sup> Street. This plant was centrally located sort of "in the middle" of all our Twin City plant locations and was accessible by public transportation. Not only were top management supportive, but also manufacturing management, who gave up prime space in a manufacturing facility.

Construction of the new clubroom started in early spring 1980. The section of the plant to be used had to be completely renovated. Also, new wiring and plumbing had to be installed, and a fully equipped kitchenette designed and installed. Carpeting was laid, and furniture was selected and ordered. It was decided that, in addition to the kitchen, a lounge area with a television, comfortable chairs and sofas, plus an area with tables for card playing, games, and writing letter were needed. The basic purpose was to provide a permanent base from which the retiree club could operate. However, it was to be group's own responsibility to plan activities, take trips and engage in projects. It was envisioned that company support would be limited to aid in the initial forming of the organization, providing the space and facilities without charge, a very modest budgetary contribution annually and continuing guidance and support from the Personnel Office.

In April 1980, a group of male, female, salaried and bargaining unit retirees was contacted and invited to lunch to discuss starting a Sperry Retiree Club. Needless to say, the group was ready to go! A letter was sent to over 450 Twin City area retirees.

By June 1<sup>st</sup> 150 retirees had responded with an interest in forming a club. A follow-up letter was mailed advising them that due to summer vacations, the first meeting would be held in September.

Meanwhile, the construction and furnishing of the club room was completed (at a cost of \$35,000). A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on 24 July, 1980 with Bob McDonald, previous head of St. Paul Operations and UNIVAC CEO, who had just retired as President and Chief Operating Officer of Sperry Corporation, taking time to participate in the ceremony formally opening the clubroom and establishing the VIP Club.



Cutting the Ribbon

Al Mueller, 1<sup>st</sup> president, Bob McDonald, Millie Gignac

The first general meeting was held on September 3<sup>rd</sup> with about 75 people in attendance. Officers were elected, plans were made for future monthly meetings and a set of rules was drawn up. Club members were advised they would have to abide by Company regulations, but other than that they were on their own -- it was their club -- even as far as clean-up was concerned. Company maintenance people (in fact, all employees) were not allowed in the room. It was not intended to be an employee lounge area. A well-written constitution and by-laws were drawn up which protected the Club and the Company. The Club Room was open 24 hours a day.

The club room continued in operation with meetings held there and in the cafeteria of the Shepard Road facility until 8 Nov. 1995, when due to the various mergers, sales, etc, the then UNISYS Defense Systems was sold to Loral Corporation which did not wish to continue sponsorship of the club. With the termination of the club room at Shepard Road the club moved operations to UNISYS building 2 in Roseville, MN, and continued operations there until 2000 when Lockheed Martin became a co-sponsor of the club. At that time meetings alternated between UNISYS Roseville and the Lockheed Martin facility on Pilot Knob Road in Eagan until due to security requirements the Eagan meetings were shifted to the Eagan Community Center.

## **OUR SPONSORS**

Beginning on day one, with the support and sponsorship of Sperry in 1979 getting our club started and the donation and construction of the club room in the Shepard Road Facility, right on through today with the continued support of both UNISYS and Lockheed Martin we have indeed been extremely fortunate. Both of our sponsors have in the past and continue today to support us in many ways. To UNISYS and Lockheed Martin we extend a heartfelt – THANK YOU!

### **UNISYS and LOCKHEED MARTIN**

Congratulations on 30 years of service to the community! The VIP Club has been a significant presence in the community through its volunteerism and participation in community events. We can all be proud of the continuing contributions of our retirees. In the last two years Unisys and Lockheed martin have been privileged to support the VIP Club at the:

- Minnesota Sesquicentennial exhibition
- Eagan July 4 Funfest Celebration
- Minnesota State Fair
- Charles Babbage Institute at the University of Minnesota
- Minnesota History Center
- University of Minnesota Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Displays
- Pioneer Press through Tom Webb's Jan. 3, 2010 Article – *The Almost Silicon Valley*

All of these activities brought home the contributions of our companies and employees to the history and economy of the region and made them visible to the community. Many thousands of people have viewed these events and talked to VIP Club members about the contribution of our companies.

UNISYS Liaison:

Sue Carrigan  
Ron Q. Smith

Lockheed Martin Liaison:

Peggy Mullikin  
John Westergren

## ***PRESIDENTS***

Starting with our initial president, Al Mueller, and continuing on to the present our club has been fortunate to have had people who have served with distinction as our president. All of these people have been dedicated, hard working servants fully committed to the service of our club. We indeed owe a debt of gratitude for a job well done to each and every one of them.

### **PRESIDENTS Current and Past**



Thomas (Tom) N. Turba  
(2009-2010)



Al Mueller (1980-  
1981)



Vida Hildyard  
(1982)



Ray Nimmerfroh  
(1983)



Ray Miller  
(1984)



Ed Kulczycki  
(1985- 1986)



John Bleckner  
(1987)



Millie Gignac  
(1988-1989)



Warren Becker  
(1990-1991-1992)





Owen Scharf  
(1993-1994)



Chuck Homan  
(1995-1996)



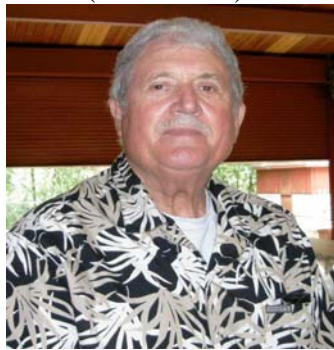
Barney Buss  
(1997)



Bernie Jansen  
(1998-1999-2006)



John DuFour  
(2000-2001)



Hank Dotzler  
(2002-2003)



Dale Phelps  
(2004-2005)



Brian Berggren  
(2007-2008)

## ***Members Emeritus***

The officers and boards of directors of the club have awarded ‘*Member Emeritus*’ status to certain persons in honor of their dedicated long standing service to the club. They are:



Millie Gignac



John DuFour



Bernie Jansen



Chuck and Midge Homan



Warren and Dorothy Becker

## ***VOLUNTEERISM***

One of the goals of the club, as stated in article III of our constitution, is to “provide a mechanism for member services to the community”. This goal has and is continuing to be met by our members, not only in the Twin Cities but also in Arizona, California, Illinois, Nevada, North Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin.

Since the club's inception members have provided in excess of 438,120 hours of volunteerism: that's over 50 person years of volunteer efforts for such diverse activities as ushers at the Guthrie Theater and for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, critique presentations of law students at William Mitchell Law School, phone work for public television fund raisers, United Way, Wright Brothers National Memorial, etc. Through these activities club members have not only served their communities but have also been good-will ambassadors of our companies.

The list of known organizations for which the club has provided volunteer services is provided in the table below. As can be seen this is a very diverse group of organizations and shows that the club has not concentrated on any one sector.

One of the longest, if not the longest, serving volunteer is Marion Scott who is also a current club director and manager/coordinator of blood drives held at our sponsor's facilities throughout the Twin Cities. Marion has coordinated and managed the collection of over 10,300 units (1,300 gallons) of blood. Many lives have been saved and much pain and suffering eased through her efforts. Marion, “Thank You”.



Marion Scott

## **Known ORGANIZATIONS SERVED**

AARP Tax Aid  
Accessibility Inc.  
Alexander Ramsey House  
American Cancer Society  
American Red Cross  
Animal Humane Society  
Appalachia Project  
Arden view Kiwanis Club  
Arthritis Foundation  
Assoc for Couples in Marriage  
Bach Society of Minnesota  
Basilica of St. Mary  
Boy Scouts  
Bridging  
Churches and Support Organizations  
Civil Air Patrol  
Community Food Shelves  
Community Schools  
Courage Center  
Daffodil Days  
Dakota County Library  
DARTS  
Dorothy Day Center  
Dunwoody Institute  
Eagan Arts & Humanities Council  
ECHO (Education Concern for Hunger)  
Fair Share of Inver Grove Heights  
Fairview/Riverside University Medical Center  
Food Shelves  
Fridley City/Community Organizations  
Fridley Lion's Club  
Guthrie Theater  
Habitat for Humanity  
Health East/St. John's Hospital  
Hi-Rise Project  
Juvenile Court (Guardian), Ramsey County  
KEEY (Kids, Education, Environment & You  
Loaves and Fishes  
Master Gardner Program  
Mdewakaton Indian Community  
Meals on Wheels  
Melpomene Institute (Women's Research)  
Metro Senior Federation  
Minneapolis Chamber Symphony  
Minneapolis Symphonic  
Minnesota Historical Society  
Minnesota Senior Federation-Metro Area  
Minnesota Transportation Museum  
Murphy's Landing  
Navy League  
Neighbors Helping Neighbors  
North Suburban Chorus  
Paint-A-Thon  
Paws for People (Blaine)  
Pinebrook Lakes Condo Association  
Political Party Support  
Public Television  
RSVP  
Science Museum  
Senior Centers of Burnsville & Fridley  
Senior Options  
Sewing Project (YWCA Homeless Children  
SSI Project  
St. Croix Care Center, Prescott WI  
St. Joseph's Home for Children  
St. Paul Chamber Orchestra  
St. Paul Rehabilitation Center  
St. Paul Winter Carnival  
Tamarisk Resources (Fridley)  
Twin City RISE  
U. of M, Arboretum  
Union Gospel Mission  
United Way of St. Paul  
University of ST. Thomas  
Veterans Home and VA Hospital  
Vision Loss Resources (Edina)  
William Mitchell School of Law  
Winona Memorial Community Hospital  
Winona Volunteer Services  
World Relief of MN Refugee Resettlement  
Wright Brothers National Memorial



## VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES



Ushering for St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, May 1983, United Church of Christ



William Mitchell Law School Student Case Presentation Review



United Way



PBS

## ***SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS***

Since its beginning the club has sponsored and coordinated various social activities and events for the enjoyment of the members. These have included picnics (probably the best attended event), Christmas parties, pot luck dinners (suppers), camp outs, river boat excursions, trips to the track and many others. Photos of some of the various activities are provided below.

A quick glance through the photos shows that most events involve food. But then, we are Minnesotans and as some have pointed out before, food brings us out – and we enjoy.

**Picnics** - The annual picnic is probably the most highly attended and anticipated event of the club. Picnics including golf outings, camp outs and pool parties have been held at various venues throughout the years with the Highland Park in St. Paul being the most recent and longest running spot.



On the St. Croix



Campout



Trap Park



Minnehaha Park





Highland Park

**Potluck and Dinner parties** – These events have been held at various places including the club room and sponsor plant facilities. They have been enjoyed evenings as well as at noon and in the afternoon.



1985



1983



1997



1986

**Excursions and Outings** – Club members, over the years, have been active, enthusiastic partakers of local excursions as well as more distant travels and outings. These have included trips to the Janisch Brothers farm in Wisconsin to enjoy the collection and processing of maple syrup; overnight casino/theater bus trips; St. Croix River boat and bus trips; river boat cruises on the Mississippi; horse racing at Canterbury Park and many other enjoyable events.



Mississippi River Boat Cruise



Jazz Band at the Club



Canterbury Park



Klondike Kate Night at the Club



**Christmas Parties** – The annual Club Christmas Party is another event that has been well attended and enjoyed by members. The initial parties were held in the club room provided by Sperry in the Shepard Road location. In later years the party has been held at the NCO Club in Minneapolis.

