



La storia del Soroptimist e i valori fondanti



BRIGHT PAST
BRILLIANT FUTURE



Stefania Briganti 09-12-2020

THE ORIGINS

During a sojourn in the East Bay while attempting to form an Optimist club in Oakland, **Mr Morrow** called upon the "*Parker-Goddard Secretarial School*" in search of a candidate for membership. Presuming that the school was run by two men, he was surprised to learn that, instead, it was operated by women.



It was then that **Adelaide E. Goddard** commented, "*When the men admit women as members of their clubs, I would be interested.*"



This remark sparked an idea for Mr. Morrow. He called together several of the outstanding business women in Oakland to pursue the idea of forming a **club for women**.

In 1921, the first Soroptimist club, Alameda County was formed in California .



Charter members of the first Soroptimist Club, 1921



Soroptimist International
Where it all started... Oakland, California, 1921

Alameda, California, 1921

About 80 business and professional women from in and around the city of Oakland

Mr Morrow named himself as originator, founder and general manager of the corporation, therefore having 90 percent of the voting power, property rights, and interest of the corporation. *In other words, he owned Soroptimist!*

Aimed at forming an international Soroptimist organization during the planned June 1927 conference in San Francisco, inquiries were sent to Mr. Morrow seeking his demands for selling his property rights and vested interests in the Soroptimist Club, Inc.

After the discussion at the June **1927 conference in San Francisco**, a compromise settlement was approved in the amount of **\$5,500**
Finally Soroptimists owned Soroptimist!!

Why the name Soroptimist?

From the Latin:

Soror meaning **sister**

Optima meaning **best**

Was interpreted as ***The Best Of Women.***

In current usage as ***The Best For Women.***

This change shifted the focus away from the early qualifications for Soroptimist membership to the lives of the women and girls whose betterment is the worldwide Soroptimist mission

Violet Richardson

First Soroptimist International President



Early and determined feminist, and an innovator in the Physical Education field for women

About Violet

- Was born in Summit, New Jersey in 1888
- Parents had emigrated just three years earlier, in 1885, from Great Britain
- Both had been active in the care of the poor, ill and homeless with *William Booth* in London, when Booth founded the **Salvation Army**
- They were an *emancipated couple* who had total respect for each other

Violet's early experiences with her energetic parents were noteworthy:

- Age 10 with her mother traveled by ship to **London**
- Age 12 went to **Mexico City** with her father
- Same year her father took her to **Washington**, DC and visited the slums
- A parade of **interesting guests** were frequently invited to dinner by her father or mother, providing non-stop intellectual stimulation
- Through his work on the railways her father set up **free day trips** on holidays for the underprivileged.
- Violet had **a horse** to ride to school, thus distinguishing herself very early from the norm

- She studied *health and physical education* at the *University of California in Berkeley*
- Organized the *Berkeley Women's Gymnasium*, shocking the local people by allowing her students to wear *bloomers* while exercising or playing basketball, unheard of before that time.
- In 1912, she received her baccalaureate *degree in Physical Culture*
- Begun to *teach physical education* classes
- On discovering that *she was being paid less than a man* she insisted on equal pay, and when she was refused, she quit

- In 1914 her father bought her a car, so she became *one of the earliest car owners* in the Oakland area
- In 1916 Violet received her Master's Degree from the University, and was hired by the *Berkeley School District as Supervisor of Health and Physical Education for the District.*
- Wrote Sunday supplements for The San Francisco Chronicle, The Oakland Gazette and The Berkeley Gazette
- In *1921*, when Mr. Morrow got to Oakland, Violet was *one of the first women approached* about the new women's organization. She was now 33



Miss Snake Hunter-1914

Berkeley Teacher With Shotgun Declares War of Ex- termination on Reptiles

Rattlesnakes, take warning! Miss Violet Richardson is looking for you. She wears a khaki suit, leggings, a blanket strapped over her shoulder, is tall and good looking, has a wealth of brown hair, which is crowned by a straw hat with wide brim. She will make her presence known by a shotgun, but duck for cover, for she is a crack shot.

With several bunches of rattles tied to her belt, Miss Richardson, who was formerly connected with the physical culture department of the University of California and is now with the Berkeley school department, has stant-

ed a war of extermination of the "varmints."

During leisure hours she practices with her shotgun, and on Sundays and holidays stalks the Berkeley hills for the reptiles. Miss Richardson has organized a hiking club of women, who will pay particular attention to the wigglers and have already sounded the alarm of their impending doom.

Miss Richardson, besides her prowess with the rifle and shotgun, has organized the Women's Gym club of Berkeley, and is a dainty dancer and exponent of physical culture for fabled nerves and tired bodies.

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In **1971**, the Fiftieth Anniversary of Soroptimist, ***the Golden Jubilee*** was celebrated. Violet, now ***aged 83***, Stanley, her husband, and granddaughter, Sandra, traveled to ***Rome for the International Convention***, where she was accorded the ***recognition*** she so justly deserved.



On their way home Violet and Sandra attended Queen Elizabeth II's Garden *Party at Buckingham Palace* in London
Back home in Oakland Violet had *a giant Redwood tree in the Soroptimist Grove* of Humboldt County in northern California named "Violet Richardson Ward" after her, *as a living memorial to her contributions*
She died just twenty-five days short of her ninety-second birthday, in 1979



She instilled in the organization some of its early traditions:

- *Its international scope* (she wouldn't join the club until she had the organizer's word of honor he would also organize clubs abroad)
- *The use of first names among members* during a more formal era

- **Quality, Armony and Service:**

- ***Friendship***

- The term ***service*** clubs was never used in Oakland prior to Violet's term as Soroptimist President. Clubs such as Soroptimist, Rotary and Lions were originally referred to as ***luncheon clubs***. Soroptimist accentuated service and as such, the term became the vogue

In their first calendar year of only three months Violet's first President's Report lists ***the projects for the year as installation of a heating plant for a Rescue Home, care of three destitute families at Christmas, and a civic project , the "Save The Redwoods"*** campaign

- They met weekly, *debating service projects* and hearing *speakers on various worldwide issues* that would broaden members' horizons
- She introduced rules of *punctuality, concreteness, discipline*

*Additional Soroptimist clubs soon followed along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, amounting to **15 clubs** within 5 years.*



UPPER LEFT:
VIOLET RICHARDSON

UPPER RIGHT:
ELOISE B. CUSHING

LOWER LEFT:
HELENA M. GAMBLE



Violet Richardson Ward's lifetime Mottos were: *"It's what you do that counts"* which sum up Our Work as Soroptimists

Attorney **Eloise B. Cushing** was the major writer of the first Soroptimist **Constitution** and **Bylaws**. These were required for the filing of the Charter and they subsequently served as guidelines for all national and international clubs. Cushing was a life long Soroptimist and one of Violet's closest friends.



Helena M. Gamble was the first Soroptimist Club Secretary who later became *Historian for Life* for her meticulous collection of early records and photographs. Soroptimists owe much of our early written history to this lady, including reports of the many problems, disputes, pleasures and accomplishments of the early Soroptimist clubs



Anna Maria Isastia

La nascita del Soroptimist dagli Stati Uniti all'Europa

Il club di Milano

Worldwide Expansion of Soroptimist International



The prominent French plastic surgeon **Dr Suzanne Noël** was the founder of the **first SI club in Europe, Paris** in **1924** and inspired the founding of many others in Continental Europe. She became the *first President of the European Federation*, which was established in **1928**

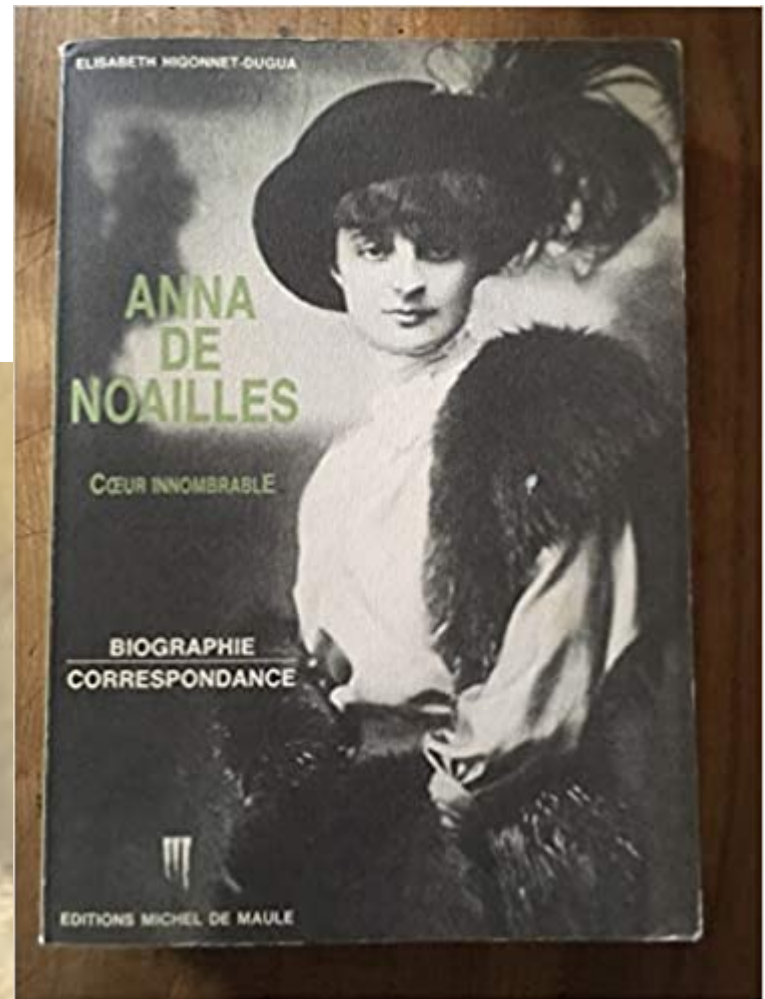
EARLY MEMBERS in Paris



Jean Lanvin



Therese Bertrand



Anna de Noailles



Cecile Brunschvicg

DERNIÈRE ANNÉE — N° 106
 Le numéro : 50 centimes
 MARGUERITE DURAND
 T. L. M.
 PARIS LE 27 JUIN 1936

La Française

Journal d'information et d'action féminines

Fondateur : JANE BOURG
 PARAIT LE SAMEDI
 Directeur : C. BRUNSCHVICG
 Rédaction, Éditions : 22 rue Scheffer — PARIS 19^e
 Abonnements : 100, Boulevard de Courcels — PARIS 19^e
 (N. 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49)
 Téléphone : PASTEUR 48-49

Trois Femmes font partie du Gouvernement

Par la grande porte...

Trois femmes sous-secrétaires d'Etat, candidates — au premier, Particulier d'abord — au poste de Titulaire, à l'Assemblée nationale. Deux sont socialistes et ont obtenu devant la loi. La troisième n'y a pu accéder de ses autres titres de Française, mais à l'Assemblée et possédant l'indemnité de plus que celle de l'Assemblée qui la définit, le titre de Titulaire de la C.G.T. l'une de ses collègues parlementaires. Par une liste honteuse absente de notre Constitution, vive la liste internationale d'Etat — candidates, il se agit d'un grand événement historique pour toutes les femmes.

Il se demande que qu'il y ait en jusqu'à présent, le nombre d'admissionnaires, privés par notre gouvernement, qui sont les femmes des droits des hommes, par leur participation aux femmes. Quel est le Français qui ne s'élève d'abord par une liste de la discussion, les femmes de sa nation, celles qui demandent à son pays ?

Mais JEANNE LAURE, sous-secrétaire d'Etat à la protection de l'Enfance.

Mais IRÈNE JOLY-CURIE, sous-secrétaire d'Etat à l'Éducation Nationale.

Mais C. BRUNSCHVICG, sous-secrétaire d'Etat à l'Éducation Nationale.

Les trois, avec une expérience qui s'étend par l'énergie, la sagesse, la science par l'expérience n'a jamais été interrompue, n'a jamais cessé l'une des plus jeunes, n'a voulu en contraire, qu'obtenir toutes les forces.

Et de même qu'on discute le moment.

Vers l'égalité

LES FEMMES VEULENT LE DROIT DE VOTE

Une démarche au Palais-Bourbon
 Le Bureau National des Femmes socialistes, socialistes, socialistes, ses membres de la région parisienne à se joindre à la délégation qu'il organisait auprès de la Chambre pour réclamer le droit de vote et d'éligibilité pour les femmes.
 Environ 1.000 femmes répondirent à cet appel et furent de nombreuses et de nombreuses parties leurs amoncellements se rassemblèrent aux abords du Palais-Bourbon.
 Des organisations féminines et féministes furent parties de cette délégation.
 Une délégation de chacune des groupements fut reçue par les représentants de divers groupes parlementaires.
 La délégation demanda à obtenir de tous et d'autre de leur solliciter auprès du gouvernement pour obtenir de lui le droit d'un projet de loi concernant les femmes le droit de vote et d'éligibilité dans les mêmes conditions qu'aux hommes.
 Pendant que leurs déléguées étaient reçues à la Chambre, les membres des organisations participèrent au défilé devant une grande salle sous le leur disposition par M. M. Sanguin. En sortant cette salle fut interrompue. Les femmes y manifestèrent d'inspiration leur volonté de lutter jusqu'à l'obtention de l'égalité des droits.



In 1924 the **Greater London Club** was formed in Great Britain, with about 100 Charter members. *Kathleen, Vicountess Falmouth*, was the Founder President. The London Club installation was reported to be the social event of the season, attended by 250 people, including members of the British Royal family.

They were able to charter *seven more Soroptimist Clubs in 1929*".

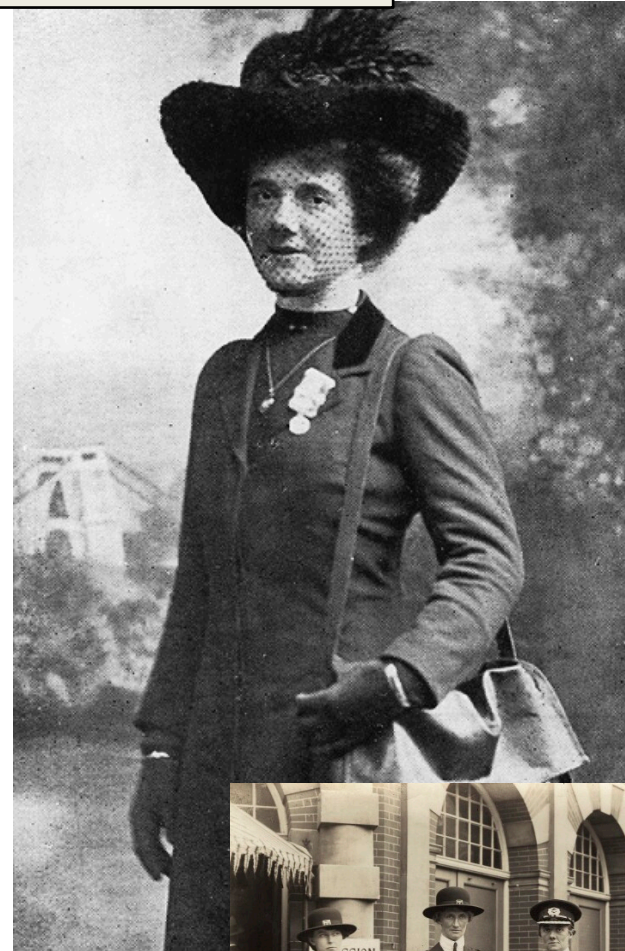


Kathleen, Vicountess Falmouth

EARLY MEMBERS in London



Flora
Drummond



Mary Allen





Sybil Thordike

Despite their similarity, *neither club knew of the other* and as *similar clubs began forming in other cities*, all without knowledge of each other, **a seed was sown and a global membership was taking shape.**

With the support of her Soroptimist contacts, Suzanne Noël rapidly **expanded** Soroptimist internationally, founding new clubs:

Netherlands (1927), *Italy* (1928), *Austria* (1929), *Germany*(1930), *Belgium*(1930), *Switzerland*(1930), *Estonia* (1931), *India* (1932), *Norway* (1933), *Hungary* (1934), and *Denmark* (1936). The inauguration of the first *Lithuanian* club was interrupted by the start of WWII



Socie fondatrici in Italia

Alda con le altre socie a **Milano**, 1928



Alda Rossi De Rios, conferenziera, conosce 6 lingue, importante esponente della borghesia laica
Prima Presidente Club Milano, 1928
Prima Presidente Fondatrice **Unione Italiana**, 1950



Carla Strauss, coreografa e danzatrice, scuola di ginnastica artistica
Socia fondatrice



Ada Negri, scrittrice e poetessa



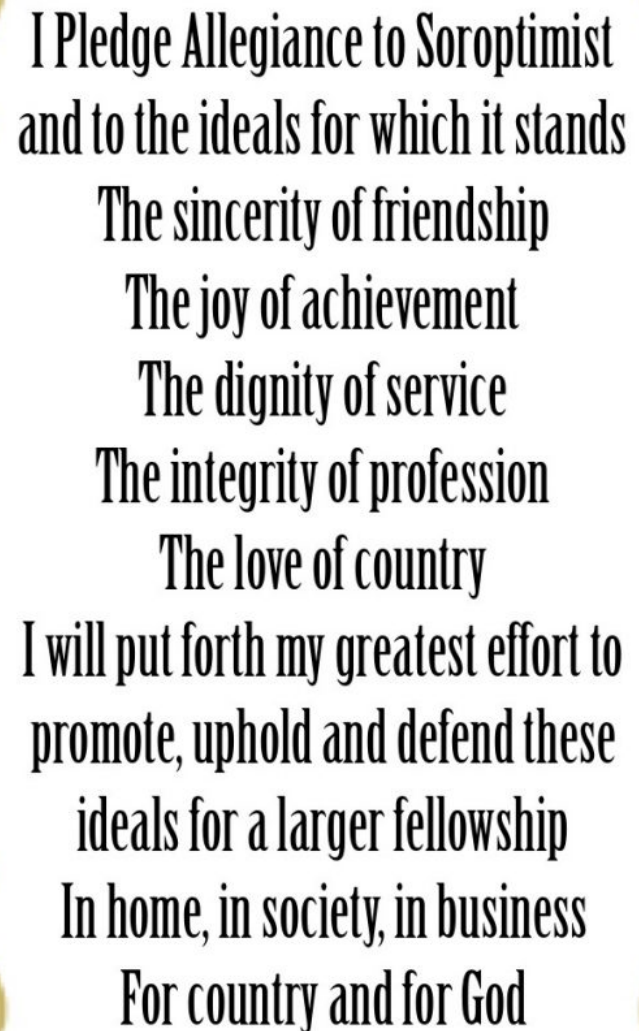
Milly Dandolo, romanziera,
poetessa, scrittrice per ragazzi



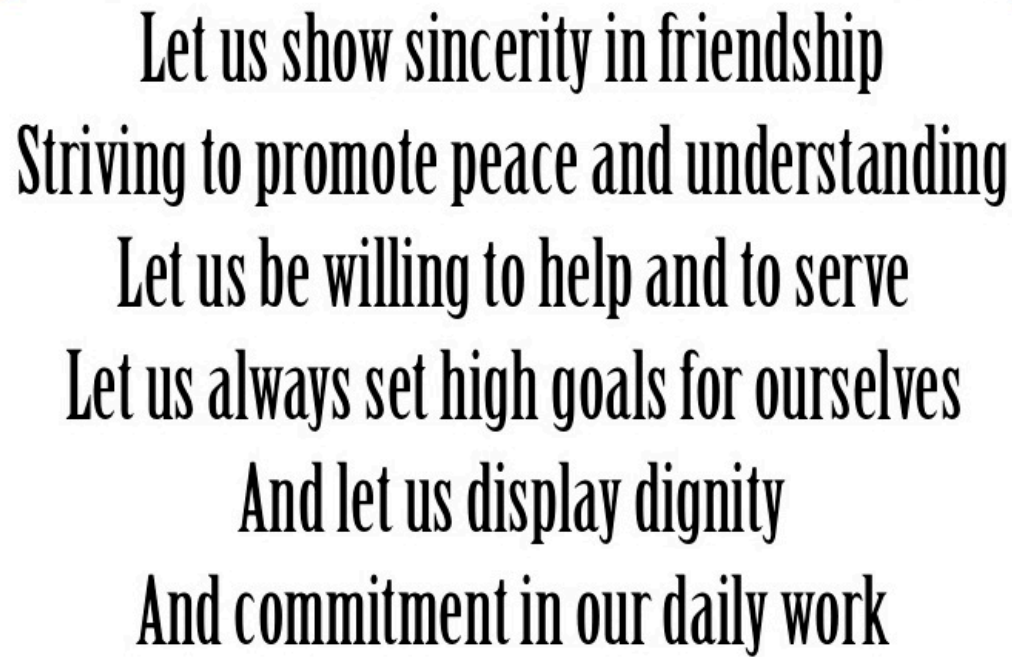
GERMANY. SI Club Berlin was founded on Jan 13, 1930

The *Soroptimist pledge*
was written in 1927 by
Candis Nelson, from
Seattle
Adopted in 1930

Ethel Knight Pollard, director of
Midwestern/South Atlantic regions,
noted “*we want a creed that we*
can use and work by and live by, not
one that will simply be printed and
stuck away to get dusty and have
no use to us.”



I Pledge Allegiance to Soroptimist
and to the ideals for which it stands
The sincerity of friendship
The joy of achievement
The dignity of service
The integrity of profession
The love of country
I will put forth my greatest effort to
promote, uphold and defend these
ideals for a larger fellowship
In home, in society, in business
For country and for God



Let us show sincerity in friendship
Striving to promote peace and understanding
Let us be willing to help and to serve
Let us always set high goals for ourselves
And let us display dignity
And commitment in our daily work

NORWEGIAN SOROPTIMIST PLEDGE

FIRST SOROPTIMIST WORLD CONFERENCE

Washington DC 1928

*United States and Canada formed the **American Federation SIA** and clubs already established in *Great Britain, France, Holland and Italy* formed the **European Federation SIE.***

Other significant milestones at this conference:

1. Soroptimist International conventions be held *every four years* from 1930 onwards.
2. The *constitution* was agreed.
3. The *representative body* would comprise the Presidents and Vice Presidents of the two Federations.
4. The “*Soroptimist Emblem*” was adopted for all members

SOROPTIMIST EMBLEM



Mrs **Anita Houts Thompson**, a founder member, whose Soroptimist classification was “designing and engraving”, submitted an emblem design, in competition with others. It was selected from among 18 entries