

Through the Years...

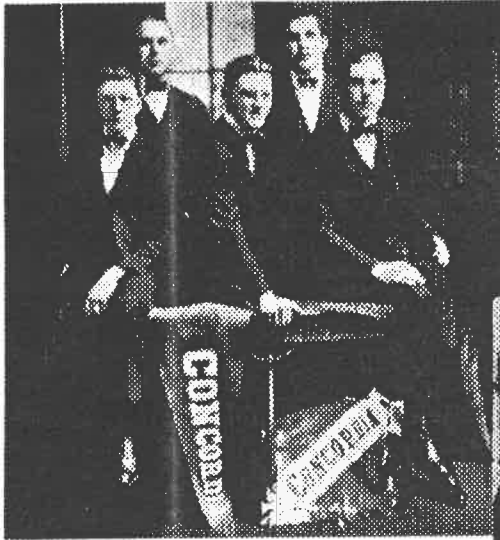
Guild helps students through thick and thin

By Dorothy Klug
April 26, 1992

For many years at our synodical institutions of higher learning, "Donations Day" were major functions of the school. In order to keep costs of food down for the "poor students," farmers and housewives brought gifts of produce and canned goods to the campus. Some gave cash in lieu of food. In one such promotional account, the students were described as having "the feeling of being more less orphans of the Lutheran Church, expected to expire shortly."

The ladies of the church have always helped Concordia Theological Seminary throughout its various moves ever since its Fort Wayne founding in 1846, one year before the synod's formation in 1847. During the Civil War, it existed alongside the St. Louis seminary, sharing the campus. In 1875, it was moved to Springfield, Ill., where it remained for 100 years until 1976 when it came full-cycle back to Fort Wayne.

Many of us remember our mothers and grandmothers speak-



*The Concordia Supply Company, 1923:
A. Beversdorf, O. Riemer, H. Stahnke, W.
Motzkus and A. Wessel.*

ing about the "Sunday boys" their families were assigned in the early days. A "Sunday boy" not only got to spend the day with his host family where he was sure to be treated to a good home-cooked meal, but sometimes was lucky enough to find a good soul willing to do his laundry. By the time he reached the seminary level in his preparation for the holy ministry and by attending church with his host family, he was sometimes even lucky enough to find a bride. The men were not allowed to become engaged as students, but at graduation and placement, it was

strongly suggested he have a wife.

In 1937, with the cost of food and maintenance rising, resulting in an increase in student boarding rates (then upward of \$135 a year), it was decided to acquaint the women of the

Prof. Baepler read a constitution and by-laws formulated from the River Forest Guild and adapted it to our needs. The motion was made and carried, as well as a second motion that the Concordia Donations Day Committee preside at the first



From the 1960 Candidate yearbook, the Concordia Day committee co-chairs: Mrs. O. Stahlke, Mrs. H. Meyer, and Mrs. R. Brege.

Springfield Lutheran churches and surrounding territories of the needs of the seminary.

As plans were underway by the Donations Day Committee of 1938 to serve 1,008 registrants and a possible 1,300 people at its annual gathering on campus, chairman Mrs. Baepler asked the opinion of the ladies on the launching of a new society to be known as the Concordia Seminary Guild.

meeting, which was held on Feb. 1, 1939. Invitations had been sent out on penny postcards, and 75 ladies were in attendance.

Enthusiasm ran high. Many projects ensued — everything from refurbishing the school's hospital and kitchen to procuring much-needed items for dormitories. All kinds of sales and programs were initiated to raise funds, from selling magazines to war stamps and victory bonds

during World War II.

With the return of 100 GI's studying for the ministry, the need for a new library and gymnasium was mentioned in a 1949 account. At that time, the 10th anniversary was observed and record-breaking donations came in as "Donations Day" continued: 5,000 quarts of home-canned goods, 221 dozen eggs, 97 chickens, 57 pounds of lard, 50 pumpkins and squash, 106 bushels of potatoes and other commissary supplies, plus \$1,500 in cash!

Students were recruited to help with the heavier work, as well as provide entertainment and campus musical renditions to make the day a success. One thousand people attended, including guests of the St. Louis seminary. All were given tours of the campus.

Through the years, every seminary president has been very supportive of the Seminary Guild. Either he or his representative attended the meetings to lead devotions and update the school's progress and goals.

By the time the Guild celebrated its 25th anniversary, the annual event was called "Concordia Day." The year was 1964. Times had changed, but not the focus of the Guild. Interest and support of graduates in the mission field remained high. Faculty and stu-

dent lounges were generously provided for.

By then, many of the students were second-career men and were married with families. The seminary took on a new look. Food and clothing banks were started for the students. Plans were underway to establish a student adoption program.

Some of the projects completed by then, 46 in number, were accomplished quickly; others took years to bring about. One comes to mind. We had been promised the library of a renowned theologian/professor at the time of his demise for the sum of \$10,000, which took the Guild three years to raise. For the next 10 years, he had the money, we had the promise, and he had the books! By then we were in Fort Wayne, which brings us to the present.

The spirit goes on. Current members of the Guild generously give of their hospitality, time and talents, providing many ongoing services, such as hosting seminary functions like the Spring Call Service and graduation exercises.

There are many ongoing projects benefiting the dormitories, faculty homes for interim professors, seminary student wives and families, the food and clothing banks in particular, graduate missionary families, as well as providing student association and library needs and refurbishing lounges.

A new project, just launched, is inviting congregations throughout The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to



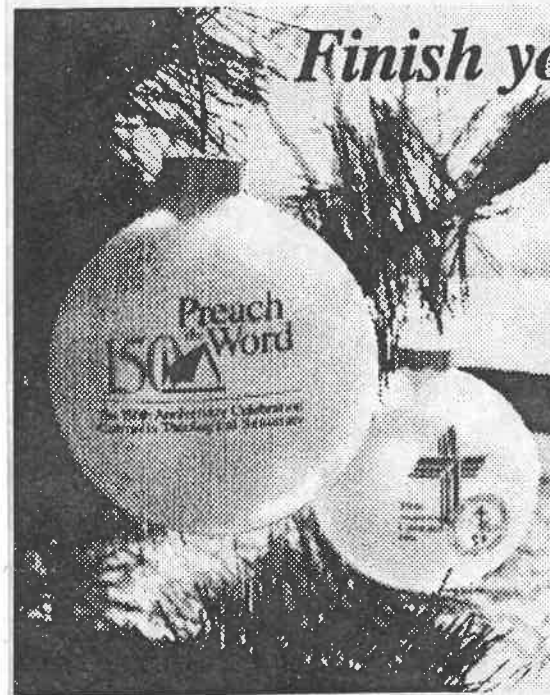
Concordia Day donations in 1960

become affiliate members. We invite you to take along a brochure to acquaint yourself with it and to share it with your home church or wherever you may go on vacation.

Bonnie Hazen
September 1995

The dedicated members of the Seminary Guild continually adjust to the changing times and continue to generously support the seminary and the students and their families. The Lord continues to supply us with a wide variety of opportunities in which to serve.

We strive to assist the seminary with the training of men for the holy ministry, especially as the seminary to celebrate its 150th anniversary, January 1 through October 31, 1996.



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