

YWCA Minneapolis 1891 - Present

Answering the Call. Leading the Change.

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Minneapolis

1858
First Association in the U.S., "Ladies Christian Association," New York, NY.

1859
YWCA name first used in Boston, MA.

Last slave ship to North America from Africa.

1861-1865
Civil War

1865
President Abraham Lincoln is assassinated.

1882
The first ever athletic games for women in the U.S. were held at YWCA in Boston, MA. At the time, athletics were considered unfeminine and unhealthy for women.

1890
National American Woman Suffrage Association forms and wages state-by-state campaigns to obtain voting rights for women.

1891
YWCA Minneapolis is founded with quarters in a small second floor flat at 45 South Eighth Street. Its objective was to provide a place where working girls and women could eat lunch.

Mrs. W.A. Miller >>
Board President 1891

Mrs. J.W. Mauck
Board President
1891-1892
(Not Pictured)

1892



Larger rooms rented at 55 South Fourth Street above a store, giving on-site space for gym classes and noon lunches. Outing groups (bicycle and rowing clubs) and sports were organized and conducted by YWCA's Physical Education Department, in addition to classes on cooking, sewing, languages and Bible study.

Mrs. T.K. Gray
Board President 1892-1893 (Not Pictured)

1893
Mrs. O.S. Chapman >>
Board President
1893-1894

1894
YWCA relocates to 808 Nicollet Mall. First floor contains a gymnasium and dressing room. The parlors, offices and lunchroom are located on the second floor.

Mrs. George A. Wheaton >>
Board President
1894-1896

1895
Local YWCA Travelers Aid program organizes to help newly arrived young women find work, a place to live and education in the city. This program, offered by many YWCAs, sought "to ensure the safety of innocent girls regardless of either nationality or color arriving without suitable protection by train or steamer."

1896
Case of Plessy v. Ferguson is argued before the Supreme Court; that Southern segregation practice (Jim Crow) conflicts with the 13th and 14th amendments. It is denied by the Court which defends its decision by articulating the "separate but equal" doctrine.

1896
Mrs. L.W. Ballard >>
Board President 1896-1898

1898-1901
Spanish-American War

1898
YWCA moves to "splendid" new quarters at 512 First Avenue South which includes space for offices, restrooms, a library, a cafeteria, a classroom, dressing rooms and a gymnasium on the third floor.

1898
Mrs. E.S. Slater >>
Board President 1898-1902



1900
Mrs. W.S. (Emma P.) Benton secretly buys a plot of land on South Seventh Street to donate to YWCA.

1900
Minnesota leads all states in the number of young women working outside the home: 28.1 percent of women are the breadwinners in Minneapolis homes.

1902
Mrs. Emma P. Benton gives \$400,000 to construct the new YWCA building.

Mrs. W.S. Pattee >>
Board President 1902-1906



1903
YWCA opens its doors at 89 South Seventh Street - one of the first buildings to be owned and operated by women in the state of Minnesota.

1903
The National Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) is established to advocate for improved wages and working conditions for women.

1906
Mrs. J.M. Anderson >>
Board President
1906-1908

1908
YWCA opens a small camp on Bde Maka Ska (formerly Lake Calhoun) named Camp Lindsay. Participants are girls who work in Minneapolis factories.

Mrs. George Harrison >>
Board President 1908-1911

1908
Annette Kellerman, an Australian swimmer, is arrested in Boston for wearing a brief one-piece bathing suit in protest of women's heavy woolen aquatic wear which prevents them from learning how to swim.

Henry Ford introduces the Model T car, priced at \$850.

1911
Mrs. Charles W. Gardner
Board President 1911-1917 (Not Pictured)

Emma Benton raises \$10,000 to build a YWCA pool so girls have a place to swim year-round.

1911
The National Women's Life Saving League starts to encourage women and girls to learn to swim following the drowning deaths of hundreds of women and children.

YWCA USA begins social advocacy work with formal vote and commitment to educate public on the need for a living wage for women and to support legislation to regulate hours and wages for women workers.

1913
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) forms to promote the use of courts to restore legal rights of African Americans. National Urban League formed.

1913
First YWCA Minneapolis pool is completed.

1913
Mrs. A.E. Zonne >>
Board President 1913-1926

1914-1918
First World War. The United States enters in 1917.

1916
Jeannette Rankin of Montana becomes the first woman elected to the United States Congress.

1917
South Town YWCA branch opens at Bloomington Avenue and Lake Street.

Mrs. E.H. Cobb >>
Board President 1917-1918

1917
Margaret Sanger opens first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, N.Y. The clinic is shut down 10 days later and Sanger arrested.

1918
Mrs. Frank E. Sprague >>
Board President 1918-1924



Mr. Frederick W. Lyman "sells" his Lake Minnetonka summer home, along with the furniture, for \$1 to be paid in 100 years without interest. The camp is named "Elizabeth Lyman Lodge" after Mr. Lyman's late wife.

YWCA adopts the National Board of Girl Reserve programs.

1919
The YWCA Business and Professional Women's Club is organized.

1919
Minnesota State Legislature ratifies a woman's right to vote September 8.

"Red Summer" - 20 race riots take place across the country between April and October.

1920
19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote, is signed into law.

Swimming is the first sport recognized for women by the Amateur Athletic Union. Swimmers and divers are the only female athletes to represent the USA in the first Olympics women are allowed to compete in.

1924
Mrs. A.E. Zonne >>
Board President 1924-1926



1927
June: The first capital funds drive raises more than a million dollars in 10 days for a new building. The theme of the campaign is "What's a Girl Worth in Minneapolis?"

1936
The first YWCA building at 89 South Seventh Street is torn down.

1936
Basis of YWCA membership is changed nationally from church membership to personal membership (following action at the YWCA National Convention).

1929



YWCA's new building is located at its current site of 1130 Nicollet Mall.

Mrs. Roger I. Lee >>
Board President 1929-1935

1929-1941
The Great Depression

1929
Stock market crash on Wall Street generates an economic slump. YWCA Minneapolis severely cuts program budgets and staff salaries.

1930
YWCA actively recruits African American women for membership.

1932
Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic.

1933
Frances Perkins is appointed Secretary of Labor by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, making her the first woman in a Presidential Cabinet.

1935
National Council of Negro Women, a coalition of Black women's groups that lobbies against job discrimination, racism and sexism, is formed.

1935
Mrs. Cyrus P. Barnum Sr. >>
Board President 1935-1936



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1939-1945
World War II

1940
Mrs. Clarence R. Chaney >>
Board President 1940-1944

1941
Japan attacks Pearl Harbor; the United States enters World War II.

First woman superhero, Wonder Woman, appears in *All Star Comics* as a strong, self-reliant and confident role model for young girls.

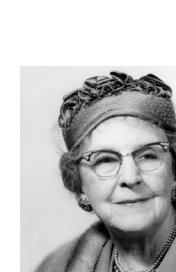


1942
Phebe Mae Givens is the first African American woman elected to YWCA Minneapolis' board of directors.

YWCA Japanese Resettlement Committee organizes to aid those forced to resettle in Minnesota from internment camps.

1943
A Saturday evening U.S.O. program is developed by YWCA to serve Japanese American servicemen in the Twin Cities.

1943
With virtually all single women employed, married women are allowed to work.



1944
<< Mrs. Caroline R. Barnum
Board President 1944-1947

1945
YWCA offers the first racially integrated swimming pool in the Twin Cities.

1945
World War II ends and the European death camps are liberated. More than 80,000 Holocaust survivors immigrate to the United States between 1945 and 1952.

1946
Interracial Charter is adopted by the 17th YWCA National Convention; 35 recommendations of the Interracial Study Commission are accepted, including the inclusion of African-American women and girls in the mainstream of Association life.

Girl Reserves are renamed Y-Teens.

1947
Jackie Robinson signs with Brooklyn Dodgers, becoming the first African American to play in the major leagues since the introduction of Jim Crow policies. The league is fully integrated two years later.

1947
Mrs. Cushman K.D. Minar >>
Board President 1947-1949



1950-1953
Korean War

1951
Rewey Belle Inglis >>
Board President 1951-1953

1952
Tuskegee Institute reports no lynchings in America for the first time in 71 years.

1953
Gladys Brooks >>
Board President 1953-1957



1953
Betty Friedan publishes her highly influential book "The Feminine Mystique".

Brown v. Board of Education forbids school segregation.

Cornelia G. Knutson is the first Minnesota woman to hold a position in Congress.

1955



YWCA Camp Mekahga opens on Lake Pokegama near Grand Rapids, MN.

1955
Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white man on a bus in Montgomery, AL. Her arrest sparks a 381-day boycott of the city's bus system.

1957
Kathryn McKinlay >>
Board President 1957-1960



1949
<< Mrs. Russell Powers
Board President 1949-1951

"Solo Parents Club" is organized for single parents.

1961
President's Commission on the Status of Women is established documenting substantial discrimination against women in the workplace and making recommendations for improvement.

1963
Harriet Holden >>
Board President 1963-1966

1963
Dorothy Height, YWCA USA leader and president of the National Council of Negro Women, is the only woman involved in organizing the March on Washington, standing close to Martin Luther King Jr. during his "I Have a Dream" speech.

Betty Friedan publishes her highly influential book "The Feminine Mystique".

Congress passes the Equal Pay Act.

1964
Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in public accommodations and in employment. At the same time it establishes the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to investigate complaints and impose penalties.

1965-1973
Vietnam War

1965
Malcolm X assassinated.

President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act prohibiting states from imposing any "voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice or procedure ... to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color."



1966
Betty Malkerson >>
Board President 1966-1969

1966
The National Organization for Women (NOW) is founded.

1967
Race riots erupt in Minneapolis during the summer of 1967 and much of Plymouth Avenue is burned.

Supreme Court makes interracial marriage legal.

1968
Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act (the Fair Housing Act), reinstating and strengthening the Civil Rights Act of 1957 and 1964 as well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965, reinvestigating African Americans' right to full citizenship.

Archbishop of the Roman Catholic diocese removes restrictions forbidding Catholics from becoming members of the YWCA and YMCA.

Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy are assassinated.

1969
Mary Lee Dayton >>
Board President 1969-1973

50% of YWCA Minneapolis' membership is under the age of 18. It has the largest Y-Teen department in the country.

After a decade of suburban and university satellite development, YWCA focuses attention on inner city needs.

Rachel (Rae) Mueller, Executive Director 1969-1975

1969
Stonewall Riots in New York City mark the starting point of the modern gay rights movement.

1970
YWCA holds a three-day seminar at Lyman Lodge with the purpose of combating racism.

YWCA begins providing pregnancy prevention programming for teens.

YWCA cafeteria closes after 41 years.

1971
National Women's Political Caucus founded by Dorothy Height, Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan and Shirley Chisholm.

1972
Shirley Chisholm becomes the first major party African American presidential candidate.

Equal Rights Amendment is passed by the Senate and submitted to the states for ratification, but defeated in 1982.

Title IX of the Education Amendments bans sex discrimination in schools. As a result, the enrollment of women in athletic programs and professional schools increases dramatically.

1973
Ruth Hawkins Center (at North Commons Park) opens in North Minneapolis through a gift of \$100,000 from the estate of Ms. Ruth Hawkins who grew up on the north side. She was a devoted YWCA supporter.

Meeting of Native American Women of the YWCA held in Minneapolis, MN.

Barbara Thell, Executive Director 1976-1985

1978
Pregnancy Discrimination Act bans employment discrimination against pregnant women.

1979
Lois B. Bishop >>
Board President 1979-1981

1981
First medical reports describe Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court.

1982
Jean Wigley >>
Board President 1982-1983

1983
<< Roxanne Givens Copeland
Board President 1983-1985

1986
Doris Pagelkopf >>
Board President 1986-1988

1975
<< Bernadette J. Klein
Board President 1975-1979

1976



New YWCA Minneapolis building opens at 1130 Nicollet Mall. It is home to the organization's administrative offices along with providing health and fitness facilities and the first Children's Center.

Barbara Thell, Executive Director 1976-1985

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YWCA sells Camp Mekahga.

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Board President 1986-1988

1975
<< Bernadette J. Klein
Board President 1975-1979



1987



YWCA opening opens at 2808 Hennepin Avenue after being converted from the West High School Gym.

1988

Diana Doshan Lewis >> Board President 1988-1990

Lauren P. Weck, Executive Director 1988-1992

1989

YWCA Minneapolis Phillips Children's Center opens as the second child care center to meet the needs of families in the community.

1990

Jacqueline Hill >> Board President 1990-1992

Lyman Lodge is sold.

1990

Minnesota Supreme Court becomes the first state supreme court in the nation to have a female majority seated as justices.

1991

Persian Gulf War

1992

Kathleen Farley >> Board President 1992-1994

Nancy Hite, Chief Executive Officer 1992-2005

1993

Minnesota teacher Ann Bancroft becomes the first woman to reach both the Earth's poles by land.

1994

Linda Denson >> Board President 1994-1996

1994

Violence Against Women Act tightens federal penalties for sex offenders, funds services for victims of rape and domestic violence and provides special training of police officers.

1996

Elizabeth Trumble >> Board President 1996-1998

1997



YWCA Minneapolis hosts first signature fundraising event, Circle of Women.

1998

<< Elizabeth Olson Cipriano Board President 1998-1999



1999

Adrienne Tietz >> Board President 1999-2000

2000

Emma Hixson Board President 2000-2001 (Not Pictured)



YWCA Midtown and urban sports center opens upon the successful completion of the \$21.4 million capital campaign chaired by Sue Bennett, Peggy Burnet and Kathy Farley. It is the largest YWCA health and fitness center in the country and includes YWCA's third child care center.

2001

Rita Wilczek (Hartos) >> Board President 2001-2003

2001

On September 11, two hijacked jetliners fly into the World Trade Center in New York resulting in its collapse. A third severely damages the Pentagon and a fourth crashes in rural Pennsylvania.

Afghanistan War

2002

YWCA board of directors establishes the Racial Justice Department to actively work in the community on eliminating racism through public forums, community dialogues and unlearning racism workshops.

2003

<< Alice Kim Board President 2003-2005



2003

YWCA holds the first annual community forum on race relations, It's Time To Talk: Forums on Race™.

2003

Iraq War

2005

Kimberly Nelson >> Board President 2005-2007

Becky Roloff, President & Chief Executive Officer 2005-2016

2006



YWCA Children's Center at Abbott Northwestern Hospital opens. This center includes multi-cultural English language-based care, as well as Spanish and Somali language-based care.

2007

Susan Denk >> Board President 2007 - 2009

2001

Girls Inc. at YWCA Minneapolis is a new affiliate member of Girls Incorporated, the oldest girl-centered organization in the United States.

2009

Velma Korbel >> Board President 2009 - 2011



Fifteen YWCA Channel Challenge swimmers cross the English Channel to raise awareness of racial disparities in swimming in Minnesota and raise money for YWCA Swim for Change programs. The youth and adult relay teams are the first from Minnesota to swim from England to France.

2008

YWCA USA celebrates its sesquicentennial - 150 years of working to eliminate racism and empower women.

2010

YWCA Phillips Children's Center closes; children and staff successfully transition into other three Centers.



First YWCA Women's Triathlon celebrating the strength in all women is held. Five hundred women and girls ages 14-71 swim 500 yards, bike 15 miles and run a 5K. Nearly half are first-time triathletes.

2009

Velma Korbel >> Board President 2009 - 2011



Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act signed into law giving the Justice Department the power to investigate and prosecute bias-motivated violence based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act signed into law restoring worker protections against pay discrimination. The act allows individuals who face pay discrimination to seek rectification under federal anti-discrimination laws.

2010

YWCA Children's Center at Downtown is recognized as an Engaging Diverse Families exemplary program by the National Association for the Education of Young Children - the world's largest organization working on behalf of young children. Our Early Childhood Education program is one of only 10 programs nationwide to receive this honor.

2011

Pamela Stegora Axberg >> Board President 2011 - 2013



YWCA Children's Center at Saint Paul College discontinues operations due to decisions by the college. Children and staff successfully transition into the Hubbs Center and other YWCA centers.

2013

Julie Owen >> Board President 2013 - 2015

The Early Childhood Education department adds more centers to serve 850+ children and families annually in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

2009

On January 20, Barack Obama becomes the first president of color of the United States of America.

2013

Three African American organizers - Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi - create the #BlackLivesMatter movement in response to the murder of an unarmed African American teen, Trayvon Martin, and the acquittal of his killer.

2014

The Power to Soar™ comprehensive campaign chaired by Susan Denk, Rebecca Driscoll and Lana Slavitt successfully completed raising over \$22.5 million for key building infrastructure work and renovations, expansion of programs for girls and youth, growth of racial justice consulting business and significant planned gifts to keep the mission and vision vital and strong into the future.

2015

Irene Quarshie >> Board President 2015 - 2017

2011

YWCA Children's Center at Saint Paul College discontinues operations due to decisions by the college. Children and staff successfully transition into the Hubbs Center and other YWCA centers.

eliminating racism empowering women ywca 125 Minneapolis

2016

YWCA Minneapolis marks 125 years of being at the forefront of social justice change focused on racial justice and empowering women.



YWCA Downtown renovation completed with new entrance signage and renovation of early childhood classrooms, fitness locker rooms and administration space.

2016

Ilhan Omar is elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives, making her the first Somali-American and Muslim legislator elected to office in the United States.

2017

Val Moeller >> Board President 2017 - 2019

2017

YWCA Infant Center at General Mills discontinues operations.

2017

#MeToo spreads virally as a hashtag used on social media to help demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace.

2018

YWCA Minneapolis holds community conversations commemorating the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination.

2018

YWCA Minneapolis presents the inaugural Woman of Power award to Kim Nelson. >>

2020

Kate Berman, beloved Board Chair passes away on April 9.

2020

Our Health and Wellness on-demand workout videos and YWCA Live! virtual fitness classes are launched and free to all.

2018

Under the Trump administration's "zero-tolerance" policy against illegal border crossers, U.S. authorities separate some 2,300 children from their parents.

2018

Meghan Markle joins the British royal family: On May 19, the biracial, divorced American actress Meghan Markle marries Prince Harry, becoming a real-life princess (officially, the Duchess of Sussex).

2018

The Miss America pageant announces an end to its swimsuit competition.

2019

Kate Berman >> Board President 2019-2020



<< YWCA Minneapolis presents the Woman of Power award to Sharon Sayles Belton.

2019

Climate change strikes held by school children take place around the world inspired by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg. Students from 185 countries stage the world's largest-ever protest on climate change.

Pulitzer and Nobel Prize author, Toni Morrison dies on August 5, 2019. She was 88 years old.

In October, NASA astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir exit the International Space Station to replace a power controller, becoming the first to complete an all-female spacewalk.

2020

Kate Berman, beloved Board Chair passes away on April 9.

Jenine McGee >> Board President 2020-2022

Our Health and Wellness on-demand workout videos and YWCA Live! virtual fitness classes are launched and free to all.

To accommodate families' needs during the pandemic, our Early Childhood Education and Girls and Youth programs add part-time child care options and distance-learning support.

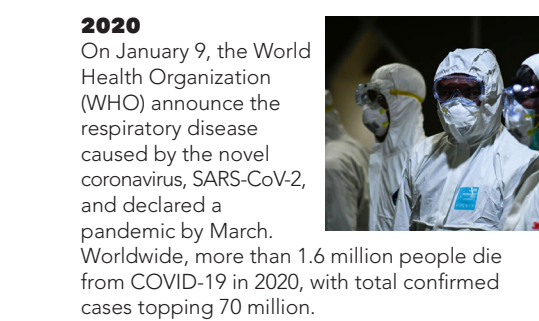
<< YWCA Minneapolis presents the Woman of Power award to Shelley Carthen Watson.

First cohort of Eureka! participants graduate from 5-year program.



YWCA opens the Minneapolis Sports Center to distribute food and essential supplies to neighbors, serving 600 people a week in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder.

YWCA Minneapolis hosts facilitated community forums with Black leaders on the Black lived experience and anti-Blackness in Minnesota.



The Korean director Bong Joon Ho's film "Parasite" makes history on Oscar night, becoming the first non-English-language film to win the Academy Award for Best Picture.

On May 25, George Floyd was arrested by police in Minneapolis and video footage shows one of the officers kneeling on Floyd's neck for nearly 10 minutes as he is pinned on the ground.

In the weeks that follow, outrage over Floyd's murder and support for the Black Lives Matter movement fuel mass protests against systemic racism and police violence in more than 2,000 U.S. cities and 60 countries around the globe.

City officials remove monuments celebrating Confederate leaders in Richmond, Virginia; Charleston, South Carolina; Nashville, Tennessee; Jacksonville, Florida and elsewhere.

Civil rights icon John Lewis dies.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Joan Ruth Bader Ginsburg dies on September 18. Ginsburg was the first Jewish woman and the second woman to serve on the Court, after Sandra Day O'Connor. She was a fierce advocate and fighter for gender equality and women's rights.

In November, Joe Biden and Senator Kamala Harris defeat the incumbent President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence in an election that sees voting in record numbers. They receive more votes than any other U.S. presidential candidate in history.

2021

YWCA Minneapolis celebrates the 25th anniversary and sunsets its signature fundraising event Circle of Women.



YWCA Minneapolis presents the Woman of Power award to Maria Gonzalez. <<

In partnership with Children's Minnesota, YWCA Minneapolis hosts a COVID-19 panel discussion and vaccine clinic helping the community make informed decisions about the vaccine and get vaccinated.

Shelley Carthen Watson, YWCA Minneapolis' first African American President & Chief Executive Officer 2021-present

YWCA Minneapolis hosts Race Against Racism 5K. More than 450 racers attended this family-friendly, community event.

2021

In what becomes a record for the fastest vaccine development in history, vaccines are authorized and distributed. By year's end, more than 200 million Americans are fully vaccinated, as use of the vaccines expands to cover first adolescents and later children aged five and over.

Biden is inaugurated on January 20 as the 46th president of the United States. Kamala Harris becomes the nation's first female, Black and South Asian vice president.

Former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was found guilty of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in the death of George Floyd.

Juneteenth becomes a federal holiday.

2022

Carissa Rollins >> Board President 2022-present



YWCA Minneapolis presents the inaugural Kate Berman Leadership award to Wenda Weekes Moore. >>

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2022

The U.S. Mint issues quarter coins commemorates poet Maya Angelou, first Black woman to be depicted.



Ketanji Brown Jackson becomes the first Black woman to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate to the Supreme Court in 53-47 vote.

