

Janet Haywood.

Born in 1939, prior to the outbreak of World War 11 and after the completion of a private school education, Janet arrived in the workplace as a Private Secretary. In 1960 she joined a newly formed catering company and spent the next 35 years with the same organisation. Being the only female member of the board of Directors, and until retirement a member of the Institute of Personnel Management, Janet had responsibility for the group's 2000 employees as their Director of Personnel. She was also a local preacher in the Methodist Church until her career regrettably forced her to give up this work through sheer lack of time.

Janet's Soroptimist "career" began when she joined Soroptimist International of Leeds in 1971, becoming their President in 1981 and President of SI Yorkshire 1985/86.

As a member of "63 Bayswater Road" Committee, Federation Executive Council, and Chair of the Federation Extension and Membership Committee, Janet felt privileged to meet and work with a large number of distinguished members, many of whom remain friends. Attending Conventions in Sheffield, Hawaii and Nottingham, Friendship Days (held between Conventions) in Barbados and every Federation Conference until 2000 widened her knowledge of Soroptimism, increased her list of friends, and in her own words "has been full of fun".

In 1988 Janet moved from Leeds to Harrogate and transferred to S.I. Harrogate. She was then Chief Steward at the Federation Conference held in Liverpool in 1991.

In the same year Past International President Thelma de Leeuw, on behalf of the Board of S.I. invited Janet to write The History of Soroptimist International. This was published in 1995 to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Organisation. We know from the enquiries which the Club receives, that it has been used by many members to give them a clearer insight into the "workings" of the organisation up to that date. Janet considers it an honour to put her name to this work, and acknowledges that in writing it she had the help of hundreds of members throughout the world.

The greatest honour to be bestowed upon her was when Club Past President Rachel Richardson invited her to become an Honorary Member of S.I. Harrogate and District in 1995.

Janet will celebrate her 50th Anniversary of becoming a Soroptimist in April 2021. During the last few years Janet has suffered ill health, which has prevented her from being as active in Soroptimism as she would wish. When she is at home she enjoys reading and spending time with her poodle Harvey.

If ever on Desert Island Discs her favourite book would have to be the Bible, and her favourite author would be A.G. Street who writes about country life from the 1930s to 1950s. Her favourite piece of music would be The Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah, yet she never ceases to enjoy Bette Midler singing "From a Distance", which sums up what Soroptimist International means to her.

