

Mary McCurry

Soroptimist International of Lichfield & District

I grew up in a village near to Lichfield, Staffordshire and attended Cannock Grammar School, leaving at 16 years.

I worked as a legal secretary, before joining Birmingham City Police in 1962, some 12 years before the Sex Discrimination Act came into force. In general, the policewomen dealt mainly with women and girls, particularly in respect of domestic violence and sexual offences.

I joined the C.I.D. in 1969, dealing with crime in general. My last 10 years were spent as Divisional Juvenile Liaison Officer for South Birmingham, having responsibility for juveniles reported for crime or involved in child abuse.

I joined Soroptimist International of West Birmingham in 1984, which opened up whole new horizons to me; meeting with many vibrant ladies, from a large range of working environments, and carrying out voluntary work to help women and children throughout the world achieve their potential. The Club worked for over 10 years funding "Helping East European Doctors" (HEED). We funded one doctor a year to travel and stay and attend Birmingham Women's Hospital for further training in obstetrics/gynaecology and birth control. The first doctor who attended, returned to Bratislava and with the help of SI West Birmingham, formed the first Soroptimist Club in that country.

I served the club as Secretary, Programme Action Officer and as President on 3 occasions. I also took office as President of Midland Arden Region 1991/92, followed by Regional Programme Officer on the newly formed U.K. Programme Action Committee.

My roles within Soroptimist International were many and varied, as I also served as Chief Steward at the Hong Kong Federation Conference in 1993, and Transport Officer for the Birmingham Conference in 1994. Problem solving being an extremely useful skill in these roles.

Retirement from the Force in 1992 provided the opportunity for additional voluntary work outside of Soroptimist International, mainly with the local hospice, carrying out secretarial work and café duties. I also served on the Y.W.C.A. Committee in Edgbaston.

Sadly, my husband developed Dementia/Alzheimer's in 2005, and died in 2009. During this time I cared for him at home.

In 2012 I returned to live in my home village and I transferred to SI Lichfield & District Club, which has a very keen, vibrant membership, working hard to fulfil the goals of the SIGBI organisation, serving as President from 2016/17, during which time membership of the club increased to 30 plus members. We have, for a number of years, successfully produced dresses for schoolgirls in Africa so that they can attend school, and produced Day Packs for Girls in Africa so that their schooling is not interrupted.



I have continued with my voluntary work outside of Soroptimists by volunteering with Shenstone Carers Elderly Support Group, which provides transport for the elderly to do shopping, attend musical entertainment and pub lunches.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being an active Soroptimist and look forward to carrying on contributing to the activities of SI Lichfield & District.