

A Voice from the 1980s Doris Pieroth, Guild President 1985-86

[This begins an effort to maintain a conversation between some of the founding members and new members who are urged to bring their own visions with them into the Guild. Past presidents of the Guild are being invited to write memories of their years, stories of origins, and thoughts about what might come next for the Guild. Doris Pieroth was President of the Guild from Fall of 1984 through the fall of 1986. – C.S.R.]

As I recall, a group met with Prof. Robert Burke (UW history mentor of so many regional historians) to discuss forming a guild before calling an organizing meeting. The first meeting was held in a classroom in Hutchinson Hall on the campus-in the fall of 1980.... I attended that first meeting where people were encouraged to bring copies of their publications. Howard Droker was elected president that evening.... Officers served two year terms. Jack Berryman succeeded as president, and I followed Jack....

The first conference was held the year after the Guild was founded. It was a modest undertaking-the banquet was added a year or so later...in the ballroom of the Meany Hotel. The speaker was Featherstone Reid, U.S. Warren Magnuson's long-time legislative aide. During my two years the speakers were Judge William Dwyer and Murray Morgan....“

As for my own tenure as president - the main thing I can claim is starting the newsletter. My husband John and I put the stuff in Pagemaker and then took it to his office, ran it off on the copy machine and 'bootlegged' it through[the] postage meter. It was also this period when Jane Sanders and I 'rescued' a pick-up truck full of back issues of *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* from a dumpster behind the UW Administration Building; Carol Zabilski had alerted us to their planned destruction. Those hundreds of issues-dating back to the beginning-were sorted in our garage. Anyone who came to help could have a full set - the rest went into the Guild PNQ 'stash' that was housed in the county archives in Burien for a number of years after that, and were sold at conferences from then on. “

The conference has always been the best 'recruiting tool' the Guild has. When the Guild was founded, there were very few people working in regional history around here. Over the years, it has evolved from a small group of trained historians into a larger organization of people...'doing' Northwest history - the state centennial in 1989 provided enormous impetus and interest has remained high.

I have always said the main purpose of the Guild was "aiding and abetting" work in local/regional history as well as providing collegial support for members to share ideas and work through problems encountered in their own work.... The annual conference still occupies a special niche and serves a constituency that no other such gathering does. With MOHAI and WSHS again providing support and cooperation, I think the future looks bright." -- Doris Pieroth, 2002.