

September 26, 2024

Past Grand Lodge President Responses from Laurel Schmoke in written format for the interview project by Jill Beatty, GL Historian. Laurel was Grand Lodge President 1990-1992 and is from the Sonja Henie Lodge #29 in Reno, Nevada

When was my term? I was installed as Vice-President in 1988 in Everett WA. Marilyn Ball was installed as President. Marilyn was diagnosed with Breast cancer and during her term dropped out due to treatments, etc. I filled in for her at the 1990 convention and also acted as President at the convention in 1992.

What does a typical workday look like for a Grand Lodge President?

I would address any correspondence or phone calls I received right away and plan the agendas for the board meetings. It was not an everyday job, but I answered any correspondence as soon as I received it to avoid delays as we did not have email then.

What prompted me to pursue this leadership role?

I was a delegate to the convention from Sonja Henie Lodge and was encouraged to run by members of 2 other lodges. I went to the convention with no intention of running and ended up as President.

What was my main goal?

I asked all lodges to give me stories from lodge members of Norwegian/Scandinavian traditions they remembered from their past to put together and share among lodges.

Did I complete that goal?

No, I only received a very few responses and put those together to pass out at the 1992 convention. I was disappointed that more members were not interested in sharing those memories as I knew when the older members passed, a lot of those memories would be gone forever.

What is my history with Daughters of Norway?

Olive Maurstad, a member of Camilla Collett Lodge in Silvana, Washington, and my mother's (Bernice Schmoke) best friend from school, moved to Reno and convinced my mother to start a lodge in Reno. The two of them advertised the start of the lodge and I was there from the beginning as I was 13 when they started the process. So, I am a charter member of Sonja Henie Lodge #29. I have held every office in the lodge over the years, some more than once. I have been on the Grand Lodge board and really enjoyed meeting most of the women during my terms.

How has Daughters of Norway made me feel in touch with Norwegian culture?

In the beginning, I feel I learned a lot about Norway and its culture. Between the lodge programs and the Grand Lodge classes and meetings, I have come to learn so much that I had not known before. I find the programs interesting and have learned about authors, plays, traditions, geography, and more that I would not have learned just through school.