

# Presidents of the Young Women Organization through the Years

**YOUNG WOMEN PROGRAM ESTABLISHED NOVEMBER 28, 1869,  
BY PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG FOR HIS DAUGHTERS**



*"I desire [our girls] to retrench from their extravagance in dress, in eating and even in speech. The time has come when the sisters must agree . . . to set an example before the people of the world worthy of imitation. . . . I want you to set your own fashions . . . and set the style for all the rest of the world. . . .*

*I want my daughters to learn to work and to do it. . . . There is need for the young daughters of Israel to get a living testimony of the truth. . . . I wish our girls to obtain a knowledge of the Gospel for themselves. For this purpose I desire to establish . . . a Retrenchment Association, which I want you all to join, and I want you to vote to retrench in . . . everything that is bad and worthless, and improve in everything that is good and beautiful. Not to make yourselves unhappy, but to live so that you may be truly happy in this life and the life to come."*

**President Brigham Young (1801–77), quoted in Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association* (1911), 8–10.**



**ELMINA  
SHEPHERD  
TAYLOR**

1880–1904

*"The aim of the leaders of this movement has been to cultivate every gift and grace of true womanhood, recognizing the fact that it is not the outward appearance but the forces which gather within the soul that go to develop the individual."*

(*Young Woman's Journal*, May 1891, 383)

### Events

- 1889 – First issue of the monthly *Young Woman's Journal* is published.
- 1893 – Tuesday night is designated as Mutual night.
- 1898 – Traveling MIA libraries are begun.
- 1902 – Joint opening exercises are held for young men and young women.





### MARTHA HORNE TINGEY

1904-29

*"My heart is with the Mutual Improvement work. I love the youth of Zion, and I am anxious that . . . they may become a mighty army for righteousness in the kingdom of God."*

(Quoted in Thomas C. Romney, "Martha Horne Tingey," Instructor, July 1950, 199)

#### Events

- 1912 – Liberty Stake holds first summer camp for girls.
- 1913 – First Churchwide speech and other contests are held during June conference.
- 1913 – Beehive girls program is organized.
- 1920 – YLMIA operates Beehive House as a home for girls.
- 1920 – Road shows sponsored by the MIA are written and performed.
- 1922 – Summer home for young women is built at Brighton in a canyon east of Salt Lake City.
- 1922 – Gold and green become the official colors of the MIA.
- 1922 – First gold and green ball is held.
- 1925 – Golden jubilee is held with YMMIA.



### RUTH MAY FOX

1929-37

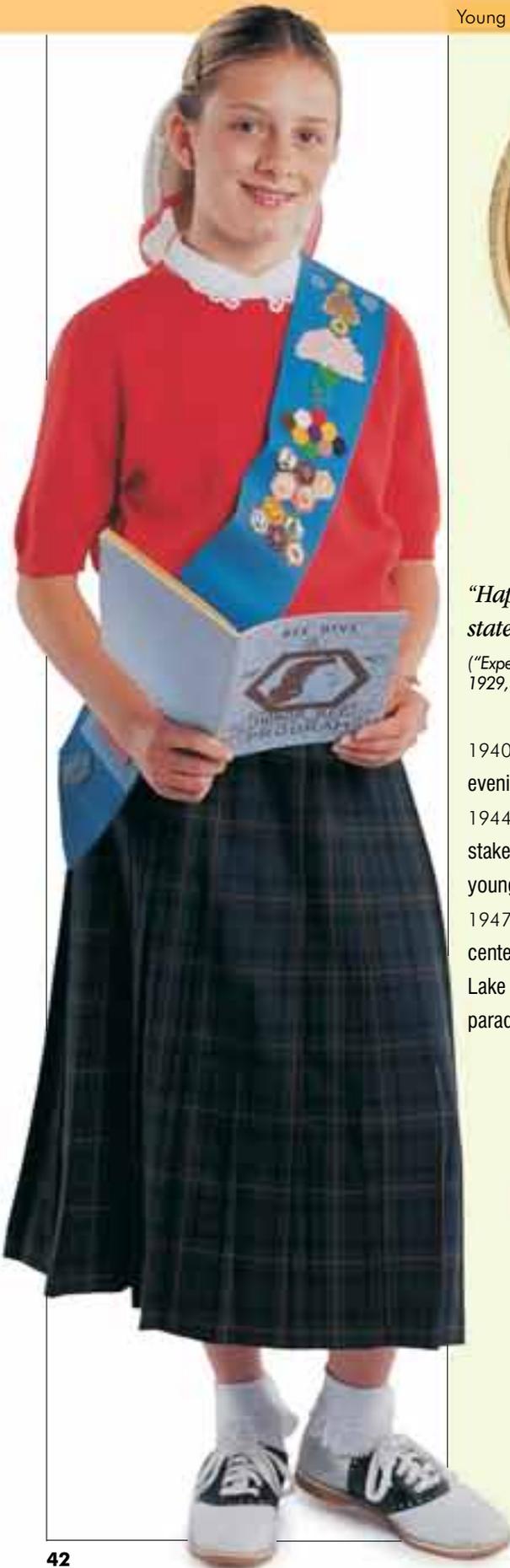
*"Ever since I could understand, the gospel has meant everything to me. It has been my very breath, my mantle of protection against temptation, my consolation in sorrow, my joy and glory throughout all my days, and my hope of eternal life. 'The Kingdom of God or nothing' has been my motto."*

(Quoted in Janet Peterson and LaRene Gaunt, Keepers of the Flame [1993], 49)

#### Events

- 1930 – The song "Carry On," written by Ruth May Fox for the Church's centennial, is sung by youth at June conference.
- 1931 – The Lion House becomes a social center for girls.
- 1935 – Scriptural themes replace slogans.
- 1936 – First MIA dance festival is held.





### LUCY GRANT CANNON

1937-48

*"Happiness comes from within; it is a state of mind."*

(*"Experience,"* Young Woman's Journal, June 1929, 410)

#### Events

1940 – Golden Gleaner awards and Sunday evening firesides are introduced.

1944 – Big Sister program is initiated for stakes in large cities to provide support for young women living away from home.

1947 – YWMIA members celebrate the centennial of the pioneers entering the Salt Lake Valley through festivals, music, parades, and square dancing.



### BERTHA STONE REEDER

1948-61

*"Nature does indeed renew those who keep close to her. . . . If I were in my teens, I would take time to come close to nature. . . . I would realize again more fully the infinite variety in God's creation. I would learn to feel the difference in the seasons and to love each for what it gives to me. I would know that rain and sunshine are both important in God's plan."*

(*"If I Were in My Teens,"* Improvement Era, June 1954, 470)

#### Events

1950 – Age groups are realigned:  
Beehives 12-13,  
Mia Maids 14-15,  
Junior Gleaners 16-17,  
Gleaners 18-24.



1950 – Speech and quartet festivals are held in local units and at June conference.

1950 – Individual Awards are introduced.

1950s – A series of posters is produced: "Be Honest with Yourself."

1959 – The name Gleaners is changed to Laurels.

1960 – Era of Youth section is inaugurated in the *Improvement Era*.



## FLORENCE SMITH JACOBSEN

1961–72

*“It is my prayer that we can be so dedicated that not one single girl in this great Church will be forgotten.”*

(“Women, This Is Our Time,” Ensign, Mar. 1972, 39)

### Events

1960s – Large Churchwide festivals are held annually.

1962 – Worldwide youth conferences are held.

1965 – *For the Strength of Youth* is published.

1967 – MIA begins annual presentation of *Promised Valley*.

1968 – The restored Beehive House and Lion House are opened to the public.

1969 – YWMIA celebrates its centennial.

1971 – The *New Era* is published for youth.



## RUTH HARDY FUNK

1972–78

*“I marvel as I look back at the divine orchestration of my life. I really do believe that the Lord customizes our experiences according to our needs.*

*... I feel the Lord expects us to go as far as we can with what he has given us. But I know that I cannot do what I need to do or must do until I finally come to him in total dependence.”*

(Quoted in *Keepers of the Flame*, 117)

### Events

1972 – YWMIA becomes an auxiliary to the priesthood.

1973 – Youth leadership and the bishop’s youth committee are emphasized.

1974 – “Behold Thy Handmaiden”: Six areas of focus and *My Personal Progress* are introduced.

1975 – Final June conference is held.

1978 – *Songs of the Heart*, a Young Women songbook, is published.



## ELAINE ANDERSON CANNON

1978–84

*“You can soar if you find out who you are and why you are here. There are two important days in a woman’s life: The day she is born and the day she finds out why.”*

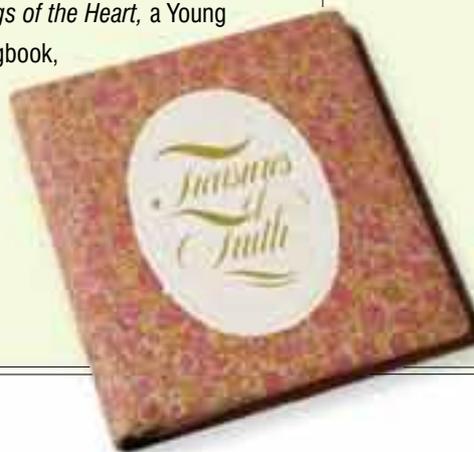
(“‘Let Me Soar,’ Women COUNSELED,” Church News, Oct. 17, 1981, 3)

### Events

1978 – First general women’s meeting is held in the Tabernacle.

1980 – Sesquicentennial of the organization of the Church is celebrated. Young women are encouraged to make banners representing commitment or heritage.

1980 – Sunday instruction for young women is implemented with the consolidated meeting schedule.





## ARDETH GREENE KAPP

1984–92

*“I see the crest of a great wave forming . . . that will move across the earth, reaching every continent and every shore. I call upon you to stand with me to prepare to take your place in a great forward movement among the young women of the Church—a movement in which you are destined to shape history and participate in the fulfillment of prophecy.”*

(“Stand Up, Lead Out,” New Era, Young Women Special Issue, Nov. 1985, 23)

### Events

1984 – Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary offices are all housed in the Relief Society Building.

1985 – First Young Women satellite broadcast is held, introducing the Young Women values and theme.

1985 – A new *Personal Progress* book is published, and age-group mission statements, motto, and logo are introduced.

1986 – First Young Women worldwide celebration, “Rising Generation,” is observed.

1989 – Second Young Women worldwide celebration, “Stand for Truth and Righteousness,” is observed.



## JANETTE CALLISTER HALES BECKHAM

1992–97

*“I have tremendous reverence for each one of you. My hope for you during these important years between the ages of twelve and eighteen is that you are going from being a dependent child to becoming a righteous, problem-solving woman of faith. It is a mighty work you do during these years, and when you do your work well, you will build a foundation for a responsible and righteous life.”*

(“Growing Up Spiritually,” Ensign, May 1994, 96)

### Events

1992 – Third Young Women worldwide celebration, “Walk in the Light,” is observed.

1993 – New camp manual is introduced, focusing on service, spirituality, and the Young Women values.

1994 – 125th anniversary of the Young Women is observed.

1994 – First general Young Women meeting is held, separate from Relief Society.

1995 – Fourth Young Women worldwide celebration, “Experiment upon the Word,” is observed.



## MARGARET DYRENG NADAULD

1997–2002

*“Women of God can never be like women of the world. The world has enough women who are tough; we need women who are tender. There are enough women who are coarse; we need women who are kind. There are enough women who are rude; we need women who are refined. We have enough women of fame and fortune; we need more women of faith. We have enough greed; we need more goodness. We have enough vanity; we need more virtue. We have enough popularity; we need more purity.”*

(“The Joy of Womanhood,” Ensign, Nov. 2000, 15)

### Events

1998 – Fifth Young Women worldwide celebration, “Turning Hearts to the Family,” is observed.

2000 – Final Young Women worldwide celebration, “Stand as a Witness,” is held.

2002 – Young Women Personal Progress program is revised.

2002 – *For the Strength of Youth* is revised.

2002 – Annual Mutual theme is reinstated.

2002 – The words “strengthen home and family” are added to the Young Women theme.



## SUSAN WINDER TANNER

2002–2008

*“If young women know of God’s love for them, it will influence and shape all of their thoughts, feelings, and actions. They will understand they have a mission to perform in this life. They will have confidence in their ability to make responsible, righteous decisions. They will be able to resist temptation, to flee from worldly things, to dress modestly as is becoming of a divine daughter of God.”*

(<http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,6821-1,00.html>, adapted from “How Will They Know Unless We Teach Them So?” open house address, Sept. 2003)

### Events

- 2004 – Young Women section of the Church’s Web site LDS.org is launched.
- 2006 – Large youth cultural events, especially temple celebrations and celebrations of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s birthday, are re-established.
- 2007 – *Young Women Camp: A Guide for Priesthood and Auxiliary Leaders* is published.
- 2004–7 – Many large Church camping properties are developed.



## ELAINE SCHWARTZ DALTON

2008–

*“Remember who you are. There is power and strength and freedom and joy in living a virtuous life. You are a daughter of God, and you have a unique mission to perform on this earth. Gain a testimony of Jesus Christ and allow Him to guide you through your life. You are a generation of destiny. You are the youth of the noble birthright. You have a great work to do.”*

(<http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/news-releases-stories/new-young-women-leaders-see-bright-future>, adapted from press conference, Apr. 6, 2008)

### Events

- 2008 – Called April 5, 2008, as Young Women general president. ■

