



### **First JPS national officers**

Standing: Nona Farquharson (left) and Carol Turner

Seated: Marion Masters (left) and Ruby Williams

It was early 1937. Our country was slowly pulling itself out of its worst depression. Though storm clouds were gathering over Europe, most Americans were looking hopefully toward a bright, new future.

Women had been enjoying the vote for nearly two decades, making deeper inroads into man's world of business. Liberation was coming in other ways. Lisle hose gave way to silk, corsets lost their punishing whale bone to less restrictive rubber, and rouge and lipstick were as common as soap and water.

An optimistic nation danced away its worries to "Harbor Lights," thrilled to the animation of Disney's "Snow White." It was a time of chewing gum, coca-cola, quick lunches, and movies.

In this national mood of social change, a small group of Bartlesville women began talking up the possibility of forming an organization for women working within the ranks of Phillips Petroleum Company in its Bartlesville, Oklahoma, headquarters. Only 20 years old at the time, Phillips was a small petroleum company in a small Oklahoma town. Employees worked in an atmosphere of belonging to one big family. Even the company chairman and his wife were called "Uncle Frank" and "Aunt Jane."

But there also existed a challenge for women of the fledgling company, not only job wise but socially. One block east of Phillips headquarters was another oil company, Cities Service, rival in business, social, and civic status. This company had already organized a club for its women, the Doherty Girls Club. Phillips women were asking the obvious: why not a club for them?

With this question buzzing through the offices, a meeting was called for 4:15 p.m. on April 7, 1937. The response was a clear indication of the future for the organization. Out of a total of 250 women employed at this time, 101 were present at the first meeting. Rose Roux of the gasoline department acted as a temporary chairman. The proposal was made to organize a women's club, and of 101 votes cast, all but one were in favor of the proposal.

No time was lost in laying the groundwork for the new club. A committee was selected to prepare preliminary and detailed plans for the new organization. Nona Farquharson, production, was elected chairman to be assisted by Elnora "Bill" Green, comptrollers, and Izola Moore, public relations.

First on the committee's agenda was a request for Executive Committee approval and support. Management didn't bat an eye; the request was made April 8, and approval was given April 9.

With enthusiasm at a high, the committee worked nights and weekends, preparing preliminary plans and general regulations

for membership approval. the intent of the new club's purpose soon became apparent when the committee asked members to forget personalities and organize for the good of all under an umbrella of cheerful companionship, social enjoyment, and high standards. The committee also suggested that a binding obligation to these principles, more on the order of a sorority, be encouraged for the club's success.

The first official meeting was held April 14 to make definite plans for organizing and to hear suggestions from the membership. Officers were elected for the coming year: Nona Farquharson, president; Elnora Green, vice president; and Marie Latinis, secretary-treasurer.

On April 21, 150 members met to select a name for their club. In presenting the proposed name of Jane Phillips Sorority, Nona Farquharson reviewed Frank Phillips' illustrious career as president of the company and the high respect in which he was held by all employees, adding:

"Nevertheless, back of that dynamic personality is still another--Mrs. Frank Phillips, the princess of our company. In the stories about the building of the company we see little credit given to Mrs. Phillips, yet I am sure that Mr. Phillips would tell you that without her guiding hand and spirit our company would not have progressed to the point it has today. Mrs. Phillips must have displayed much courage and helped in the dark hours of adversity.

"It is definitely acknowledged that a man to be a success must have as his helpmate a wife of great understanding, strong and lovable character, high ideals, and capabilities in the execution of those many duties which may fall to her lot. Jane Phillips has filled this role to a very high degree. We love her. Tonight we extend our respects to her in proposing to name our organization the Jane Phillips Sorority."

By unanimous vote, the organization was so named and Mrs. Phillips was elected honorary president of the sorority. General rules and regulations to govern JPS were also adopted.

At this same meeting, the membership committee announced that out of a total of 282 women on the Phillips payroll in Bartlesville, 255 had pledged their membership and would become charter members if they so desired. Annual membership dues were set at \$1.00 and regular meetings slated for the third Thursday of each month.

With JPS firmly launched, Phillips made available the second floor of the Montgomery Ward building at 322 1/2 S. Keeler for the sorority's use. To convert the space into a clubroom, members and friends painted walls, cleaned, polished and waxed floors, built storage space, and made curtains. To foot the bill for this redecorating, the women sponsored a benefit bridge.

Once in the new quarters, the sorority bought kitchen equipment and furniture. Lunches were served at a cost not to exceed 15 cents. Not only did JPS use the clubroom for meetings, but various company departments reserved it for Christmas parties, annual meetings, sales meetings, monthly operating meetings, and banquets.

Word about the new JPS was spreading quickly to field offices. Just ask any corporate employee about the company grapevine, and you'll hear how it moves faster than a speeding bullet. Rumors were sparking interest and inquiries, so a letter was sent to all managers in division offices on April 29, 1937, to determine if there was any interest in forming chapters in their areas. The response was overwhelming, and JPS was soon on the road to national growth.