

Friend of powerful cited for grassroots service

By JEANNE WHITTAKER

Women's Association (49-51) we hired 78 men and Walter Poole to conduct them." The move, she added, marked the rebirth for what is now a world class symphony orchestra.

All this didn't come about just because she was president of the women's association, she said. Much of the strength she counted on came from a group of women, including Mrs. Fred T. Murphy and Mrs. Walter O. Briggs, both deceased, whose social and economic clout made things happen in Detroit.

The women held their meetings at Mrs. Murphy's Grosse Pointe home or at the Women's City Club not far from Grand Circus Park, she said. The club was the leading meeting place of its day, she recalled.

"At one luncheon at Mrs. Murphy's house," she marveled, "Mrs. Horace Dodge gave us a check for \$10,000."

ON RARE OCCASIONS when memory fails, she dips into personal papers stored at her Royal Oak apartment overlooking the Red Run Country Club golf course. Facts, dates, names and details of hundreds of committee meetings and social and benefit events are at her fingertips.

Her interests range from the symphony to the Detroit Grand Opera Association, to the Michigan Federation of Music Clubs, Altrusa, the Cranbrook Music Guild and Festival, the DAR, the Cancer Society and the American Red Cross.

A frequent and favorite topic is the Detroit Swedish Council, whose president, Wesley R. Johnson, was enthusiastic with praise following the announcement of her selection as the awardee.

A charter member of the council, during the early '50s she spent hundreds of hours working with advertising executive Ernest A. Jones to research background material for "They Made A Difference," an informative

book the council dedicated to Swedes who settled in Detroit.

"It all began when I was president of the Jenny Lind Club (39-41)," she said. "Because I was a hard worker, other groups began asking me to do things."

However, working with the Swedish Council is among the most rewarding of her projects, because "it's not an ethnic group. It gets something done when it needs doing."

Among its most exciting activities, she said, were assuming official host duties when Princess Christina visited Detroit in 1974, followed by her brother, now King Carl Gustaf, in 1976.

Strictly on a local basis, she noted, the club works to preserve the Swedish national heritage, most notably by celebrating traditional holidays. The members even travel to Sweden, she said, to locate authentic ingredients for ethnic dishes and beverages.

A NATIVE of Goteborg, Mrs. Karlstrom first arrived in Detroit in 1922 to visit an uncle, the late Carl B. Parsons, the first vice-consul to be assigned to the city. When she returned to Sweden two years later, it wasn't long before the Parsonses were able to convince her to return with them for a lengthier stay.

This time the visit became permanent when she met and married Gunnar Karlstrom, a native of Orebro, Sweden, who had also immigrated to Detroit.

The marriage, which lasted until his death in 1952, she said, was one in which music played an important role. However, in spite of her love of music and her board memberships with both the symphony orchestra and the grand opera association, she said she is no musician.

"I grew up with the normal routine

of piano lessons which I used to play hymns on holidays," she said. "Gunnar loved to sing, and our boys (Lars, Olof and Carl Gunnar) all sang with the Cathedral of St. Paul choir."

"There was always music in our house. Most people played bridge after dinner parties, but our entertainment was good conversation and plenty of music. I really just love it when 10 or 12 people sit down for a good exchange of ideas and opinions."

Shortly after the announcement that Mrs. Karlstrom had been selected the Swedish American of 1980, the Swedish Ambassador to the U.S., Count Wilhelm Wachtmeister, voiced his opinion of the choice.

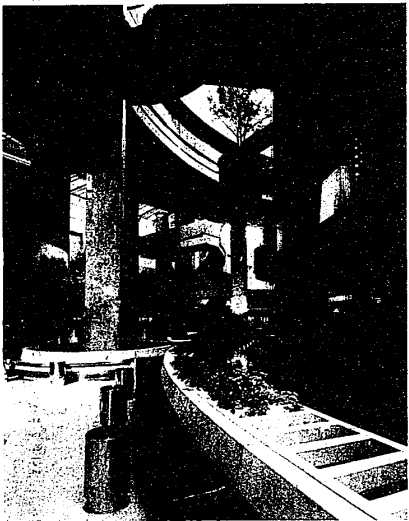
"A well-deserved honor," the ambassador noted, "is a recognition for her work on the grassroots level. She is a worthy representative for all the loyal people in the Swedish American vineyard."



In August Signe Karlstrom will be in Sweden to be named the Swedish American of the Year. (Staff Photo)

THERE WAS no symphony during World War II, she explained, not only because of a lack of manpower but because its former president, the late Dr. Fred T. Murphy, disbanded it during a labor contract disagreement.

Later, "When I was president of the



Renaissance tour

Farmington Community Center offers group rates for its organized tour called "Discover the World of the Renaissance Center," set for Wednesday, June 25. Fee of \$13 includes transportation, tour and lunch in Detroit Plaza Hotel with time allotted for browsing and shopping. Bus leaves Oakland Community College's parking lot at 9:30 a.m. and returns about 3 p.m. Reservations are being taken now by calling the center, 477-8404.

Madias will chair Glendi at Holy Cross

Nicholas Marcos Madias of Southfield takes the chairmanship of the steering committee for Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church's fourth Greek Glendi Festival.

The festival will be held on the grounds of the Farmington Hills church, 25225 Middlebelt Road Friday-Sunday, June 13-15. Festival hours will be 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday and from noon to 7 p.m. Sunday. There is no admission charge.

Madias is a founding member of the church, and a past president of the parish council. He has been active in the building and site committee and has helped raise the necessary funds to build the first phase of the first new Greek Orthodox Church complex in greater Detroit in the last 35 years.

Madias is a painting contractor with Madias Brothers Inc. of Detroit and father of three children.



NICHOLAS MADIAS

'You and Your Car' 4-session class set

James Okonowski comes to Farmington Community Center for a four-session class called "You And Your Car" that runs from 7-10 p.m. on Tuesdays beginning June 24.

He is a vocational automotive-safety instructor with Wayne State University's Adult Education Department and a former general service mechanic.

Essence of the class will be to learn how to drive and maintain automobiles efficiently, safely and economically by learning the workings of ignition, electrical, brake, steering, suspension, cooling and fuel systems.

Registrations are taken by calling the center, 477-8404.

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