

St. Andrew's Society of Detroit's History Project

My earliest memories of the St. Andrew's Society of Detroit are hearing references to "the Scottish picnic" from time to time in conversations older relatives had. When Scott and I had a young family we were given tickets by a client of Scott's to attend the Highland Games at Fort Wayne. We attended again later and on a more regular basis when they moved to Greenmead in Livonia because it was much closer to home. By then my Scottish grandmother was no longer with us and I wanted to be sure my children were aware of their Scottish heritage. When they were older I decided to pursue membership to the Society. I knew my Scottish heritage so I applied right after the Games in 2001. September 11th took place and it was such a sad time for so many Americans. It made me that much more determined to not only join the Society but to make the most of it personally and to give back to the community through the Society. I became a member in October of 2001. I immediately started searching for proof of my husband's Scottish lineage so that he too could join. He joined in January of 2002.

My husband and I jumped in feet first and got very involved very quickly. We started attending the monthly meetings right away and joining fellow members for "dinner out" about once a month at various restaurants in the area. I served on the benevolence committee, as Membership Secretary, Games Volunteer Chair and Social Chair. My husband has served as vendor chair for the Games as well as VP and President. I have very much enjoyed serving with him over the years.

Some of my most memorable moments have been organizing an outing for members to see the works of Robert Hopkin, being involved with our Military care package project, spearheading the campaign to have a very dear member's son secretly approved for membership so that we could surprise him, representing the Society at several Scottish American Leadership conferences, playing a role in assisting with having Katie Meek's State of Michigan tartan be proclaimed official, participating in a tour of the old St. Andrew's Hall with several members where we discovered the original interior doors and Scott later secured them for the Kilgour Scottish Centre, having the honor of planning and executing many successful dinners out and other events for the members, being instrumental in finding and obtaining the Kilgour Scottish Center as well as decorating it, but by far my proudest and most memorable moment was watching my husband being piped into the Michigan Senate by the St. Andrew's Pipe Band and hearing him give an amazing speech when the Society was honored for being the oldest benevolent organization in Michigan.

Having Scottish ancestry means everything to me. It was always very important to my grandmother that she was born and raised in Edinburgh. It was just a part of the fabric of our lives. We had bagpipes at weddings and funerals. We performed the grand march at family gatherings. My grandmother always believed that every little Scottish girl could do a Highland fling. Well, while I appreciate her confidence...a Fling is hard work! I am extremely proud of my Granddaughter Ivy that she has been taking Highland dance lessons for 4 ½ years now right here at the Kilgour Scottish Centre with Kate Degood. Ivy is only 4 stamps away from obtaining Premier level of Scottish Highland Dancing. I know my Grandmother is busting her buttons in heaven. I also know she is happy that we have a family luncheon here at the hall every year following the Kirking of the Tartans at Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church. We celebrate our heritage with bagpipes, dancing and good Scottish food and we support the Society by holding our celebration at the Kilgour.

While I'm not nearly as active with the Society now as I was in the past I am still very proud to be a member.