



HISTORY OF THE WOMEN OF THE MOOSE

The "Moose Legion" or "Degree of Service" was created by resolution during the annual convention of the Supreme Lodge in Cincinnati, Ohio, and adopted by the Supreme Council in 1913 as the Mooseheart Legion of the World". Initially, and continuing until 1931, women enjoyed full membership as an intricate part of the Mooseheart Legion of the World. Early issues of the Moose Magazine proclaimed this union of men and women with the headlines..... "Mooseheart Legion for Men and Women".

Rodney Brandon, the "Moose Legion" degree's first administrator carrying the title Grand Regent, devised the first emblem, which incorporated a moose head centered in a pyramid with the letters "F", "H", and "C" at its points superimposed over a heart, surrounded by a circle and containing the words "Alces" and "Machlis", all of which had individual meanings. The pyramid symbolized the core of our existence, Faith, Hope and Charity, while the heart symbolized heart of the fraternity, and the word "Alces" meaning moose or large beast and "Machlis" meaning leader. The emblem was used in conjunction with the Women of the Moose until 1991, when a change was made to give both the Moose Legion and the Women of the Moose specific logo identity.

Though the Women of the Moose (originally termed the Women of Mooseheart Legion) had received formal recognition as a Moose auxiliary in 1913, they at first had little structured program of their own beyond the Chapter level. That changed in 1921, when James J. Davis, (247th member of the Loyal Order of Moose and the founder of Mooseheart), met and hired a remarkable woman named Katherine Smith. When the 19th Amendment had granted women the right to vote in 1920, Smith, (from Indianapolis,) reasoned correctly, that women in politics would be a "growth market." She quit her secretarial job to go to work in Warren Harding's successful Presidential campaign--and, still in her 20s, she was rewarded with an appointment as Director of Public Employment in Washington. Labor Secretary, James J. Davis, was her boss, and he immediately recognized her talent and drive. It took him five years to convince her to quit her government job and go to work for him running the Women of the Moose. A stereotypical "women's program" held no interest for her, Smith argued. "So get out there and make a program," Davis retorted. She did exactly that, as the organization's first Grand Chancellor. The year 1931 brought the formal organization of the Women of the Moose, and produced an amicable split from the men, as a separate and distinct unit of the fraternity. Katherine Smith served as Grand Chancellor of the women of the Moose for 38 years until her retirement in 1964, at which point the Women of the Moose boasted 250,000 members. (It has since grown to more than 540,000, in approximately 1,600 Chapters.)

