



NEIGHBORHOOD STORIES

By Bette McDevitt

The Duquesne Club Downtown, Pittsburgh, Pa.

It is not a flight of fancy to consider downtown as a neighborhood according to my *Webster's Dictionary*. A neighborhood, says *Webster's*, “is a region or locality, often with reference to its character or inhabitants.” Our downtown is blooming with inhabitants and has never lacked for character, from earthy to elegant.

Let's go with elegance in this first column about downtown as a neighborhood and look at the Duquesne Club—once a second home to many industrialists and now to business and professional people. It seemed this way for Henry Haller, who greeted me graciously with words of praise for the Heinz History Center, as he relaxed in the Club's wood-paneled reading room. He looked very much at home seated in a comfortable chair, bathed in the light of a good lamp, reading a book.

The venerable brownstone designed by associates of H.H. Richardson, architect of the Allegheny County Court House, has been hunkered down, and soaring up—12 stories high—on Sixth Avenue for 127 years. It is an institution of some consequence, with a rich history, 2,600 members, and a ranking of the best private club in the country (three times running).



“Number 6” Luncheon Group of the Duquesne Club, 1892. Standing L to R: John W. Ricketson, A. W. Painter, General Fitzhugh, Judge Shiras, Albert Childs, Major Phipps, Charles Spang. Seated L to R: S. Schoyers, Jr., Campbell Herron, B. F. Jones, John W. Chalfont, Max Moorhead. HC L&A, GPC Box #4, Folder 14.

Charles Queenan, counsel for Kirkpatrick and Lockhart, a local law firm, and a Club member for 40 years was quick to give credit for the ranking to the 200 full-time staff members. “The wonderful staff is the backbone of the Club. The older staff does a good job mentoring the new staff members,” says Queenan, “giving them the sense of history, propriety, civility, and grace, which define the Club.”

The Club has an impressive art collection that would fill a mid-sized museum, including Frederic S. Remington bronzes and paintings by well-known artists Charles M. Russell, Aaron H. Gorson, and David Gilmour Blythe. One of Queenan's favorites, however, is a print, *The Legacy of Pittsburgh*, created by the Junior Achievement Club of Pittsburgh and displayed in the private suite of rooms owned by his law firm.



The Duquesne Club, August 2008. Bette McDevitt.

Queenan likes to give newcomers to the city, and to the Club, a quiz based on the print. “I find it fun, and it’s a good conversation starter that gives people a decent historical perspective on the city, because there is a mixture of sports, culture, labor, industry, and finance [in the print],” he says. “You’ll be surprised at the diversity of the group.” Queenan continues, naming every person in *The Legacy of Pittsburgh*, starting on the right-hand side in order to establish the time frame:

You can see, by the sketch of Richard Caliguiri as mayor, when the print was created [1978-1988]. Beside him is Dr. Jonas Salk in his white coat, Roberto Clemente, and a hockey player that we have named Mario Lemieux. Then there is Art Rooney, Willard Rockwell, Richard King Mellon, Terry Bradshaw, I.W. Abel and Phil Murray, David Lawrence, Bill Mazerowski, Henry Hillman, and George Westinghouse. Then comes the first publisher of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Robert Vaughn, Honus Wagner, and then Errol Garner.

“These,” he says pointing, “are three famous Pittsburgh Pirates, Pie Traynor, Paul Waner, and Kiki Cuyler. Then there’s the fellow who did *Singing in the Rain*, Gene Kelly, and Paul Benedum.” Reaching the far right of the print, Queenan continues with some early famous Pittsburghers:

Andrew W. Mellon, Andrew Carnegie, Stephen Foster, H.J. and Sarah Heinz, Colonel E.W.H. and Mary Croghan Schenley, Charles Martin Hall, and Ebenezer Denny, first mayor of Pittsburgh.

“Here in a group are the early members and founders of the Duquesne Club, George Shiras, Jr., who became a member of the Supreme Court, Harry Chalfont, Charles H. Spang, Solomon Schoyer, Jr., and,” he concludes, “James Moorehead, an early industrialist.”

Plaques on the exterior of the building affirm that in 1976 the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation accorded the building Landmark Status, and, in 1995 the U.S. Department of Interior added it to the National Register of Historic Places. Membership to the Club is by invitation from an existing member only. In its policies, the Duquesne Club affirms that it does not

discriminate in its selection of members on the basis of race, color, sex, or religion. “Women were admitted as members in 1980, when we realized that our policy in that regard was inappropriate,” said Queenan. “The only place they don’t go now is the men’s room.” The first Jewish members joined in 1968 and the first Black member was admitted in 1981.

Although the Duquesne Club is protective of the privacy of its members, General Manager Scott Neill offered a story about the visit of a noted public figure, George H. W. Bush:

When the former president came for a visit, he asked if there was a barber shop close by, and I told him we had a barber shop within the building, and offered to see if the barber could give him a haircut. I called the barbershop and said “Ed, I have President Bush here, and he’d like to get a haircut.” Ed said, “Oh yeah, right,” and I said “Really, I have President Bush here and he’d like to get a haircut.” Ed cut his hair. ☀

Duquesne Club
325 Sixth Avenue
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Bette McDevitt previously wrote the feature articles “Love Letters from a Chauffeur,” “The Thomas Merton Center: Changing Lives One at a Time,” and “Showstoppers” for this magazine. Her article on Buck McGovern appears in this issue.



Charles Queenan, counsel for Kirkpatrick and Lockhart, and a Duquesne Club member for 40 years. Courtesy Kirkpatrick and Lockhart.

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