

Collection #  
P 0833

**ALTRUSA CLUB OF SOUTH BEND PORTRAITS  
CA. 1940-1952**

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Processed by

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6 June 2022

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: One half-size OVB box of photographs

COLLECTION DATES: Ca. 1940–1952

PROVENANCE: Unknown

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 0000.0863

NOTES:

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

Altrusa International was founded in 1917 in Nashville, Tennessee, as Altrusa Institute. It soon became a service organization for women and was renamed as the National Association of Altrusa Clubs. In 1935, Altrusa established a club in Mexico and the organization's name was changed to International Association of Altrusa Clubs, Inc. The South Bend chapter of Altrusa was founded on 12 November 1940, with a focus on vocational development of out-of-school young women.

With millions of American men off to fight during the first world war, businesses began hiring more women. Around this time, Dr. Alfred Durham, a member of Kiwanis, had the idea to sponsor a national chain of clubs for business and professional women and call it the Altrusa Institute. He began organizing clubs in Nashville; Louisville, Kentucky; and Dayton, Ohio, before he moved on to Indianapolis where he met Mamie L. Bass.

Bass's professional career as superintendent of the Women's Division of the United States Employment Services as well as in private industry gave her insight as to the need of such an organization for women. While helping her brother organize a Rotary chapter in Indianapolis, she began to envision a similar club for women.

The Altrusa Institute held its first convention in Indianapolis in June 1918, with Bass serving as president. Forty members, representing six clubs, attended. The Altrusa Institute became a classified service organization for women. Since the clubs had evolved from Durham's original ideas, he relinquished his connection with the organization.

Bass created the "Principles of Altrusa," which defined Altrusa as "a builder of women" and an organization based on merit and accomplishment. These principles were officially adopted in 1921 along with a major club building effort. By 1922, Altrusa had twenty clubs.

The South Bend chapter of Altrusa was founded at a formal dinner at the Oliver Hotel, during which officers were elected. Genevieve B. Hardy, librarian at Central High School, was chosen as president. By that time, Altrusa had 170 clubs in the United States, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. Membership was limited to one representative from any vocational field in each club, and each member was required to be an executive in her field.

In 1946, Altrusa sent its first representative to the United Nations. The organization's name was changed again in June 1947, to Altrusa International, Inc. In 1962, the Altrusa International Foundation was established, dedicated to improving economic well-being and quality of life through a commitment to community services and literacy. In 1966, Altrusa initiated ASTRA (Ability, Service, Training, Responsibility, Achievement) service clubs to encourage young people to participate in community service.

The international object of the clubs was stated to be vocational guidance for all young people and for mature women, with each club determining its own projects. Altrusa eventually expanded into Chile, Ecuador, India, Korea, Russia, Ukraine, Ireland, Great Britain, Bermuda, Canada, and New Zealand.

In 1987, Altrusa opened its membership to men. In 1989 Altrusa expanded its projects by adopting a resolution to promote environmental concerns. The Altrusa Foundation adopted Camp Safe Haven for children with HIV/AIDS in 1997.

A new branding and marketing campaign to increase the association's image and reach out to an evolving membership was launched in 2011. As of June 2022, the Altrusa International website lists 237 of its clubs in 41 states and the District of Columbia, 21 clubs in Puerto Rico, 1 in Bermuda, 2 in Canada, and 19 in New Zealand, for a total of 280. This includes eleven clubs listed in Indiana, although none was listed for South Bend.

Sources:

Altrusa International. "ASTRA" <https://astra.altrusa.org> Accessed 6 June 2022.

Altrusa International. "Clubs" <https://www.altrusa.org/clubs> Accessed 6 June 2022.

Altrusa International. "History" <https://www.altrusa.org/about> Accessed 6 June 2022.

Contreras, Shirley. "Altrusa Institute held its first convention in June 1918." *Santa Maria Times* (California), 11 December 2016 (updated 15 January 2021)

[https://santamariatimes.com/lifestyles/columnist/shirley\\_contreras/altrusa-institute-held-its-first-convention-in-june-1918/article\\_df2d28ca-d9c0-5554-a103-3abf33ebb269.html](https://santamariatimes.com/lifestyles/columnist/shirley_contreras/altrusa-institute-held-its-first-convention-in-june-1918/article_df2d28ca-d9c0-5554-a103-3abf33ebb269.html)

Accessed 6 June 2022.

"Women Found Altrusa Club: Executives Form Service Group Here." *The South Bend Tribune*, 13 November 1940, p. 3.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of thirteen large portraits of individual women who were members of the Altrusa Club of South Bend, Indiana, during the 1940s and 1950s. Each portrait was labeled with the woman's name and occupation; a year appears after her name, which is believed to be the year that she became a member of the organization (and possibly the year the portrait was made). Any office the woman held within Altrusa is also indicated, along with the years served.

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Miss Nellie M. Boggs  
[joined Altrusa] 1949  
Business Service; Employment Service  
Owner and Manager, Billie Boggs Business Service  
[Altrusa office held] Recording Secretary: 1950-1952

Mrs. Richard C. (Serena) Currey  
[joined Altrusa] 1951  
Insurance; General  
Koehler Insurance Agency, Inc., Secretary  
[Altrusa office held] Vice-President: 1953-1954

Dr. Gladys (Mrs. L. G.) Frith  
1940 Charter Member [of Altrusa]  
Medical Sciences; Psychologist, clinical  
School City of South Bend  
[Altrusa offices held] Director: 1942; Vice-President:  
1945-1947; President: 1951-1953

Miss Virginia Guthrie  
[joined Altrusa] 1949  
Associations; Civic; Planning Commission  
South Bend Civic Planning Assn., Executive Secretary  
[Altrusa office held] Director: 1950-1952

Miss Monica Horka  
[joined Altrusa] 1942  
Restaurants; Refreshment Parlor  
Owner, Monnie's Goodie Shop  
[Altrusa office held] Secretary: 1945-1947

Miss Patricia Hunt  
[joined Altrusa] 1950  
Private Schools; Music  
Co-owner and Director, Northern Indiana  
Conservatory

Miss Bernice Maxwell  
[joined Altrusa] 1945  
Aeronautics; Equipment; Manufacturing  
Bendix Products Division of Bendix Aviation Corp.,  
Employment Manager  
[Altrusa office held] Treasurer: 1950-1952

### CONTAINER

OVB Box 1, Folder 1

OVB Box 1, Folder 2

OVB Box 1, Folder 3

OVB Box 1, Folder 4

OVB Box 1, Folder 5

OVB Box 1, Folder 6

OVB Box 1, Folder 7

Miss Eleanor Moore [joined Altrusa] 1949 Radio Industry; Radio Production and Script Service Station WSBT	OVB Box 1, Folder 8
Miss Inez Paul 1941 Charter Member [of Altrusa] Libraries; Municipal, branch Western Branch Library [Altrusa offices held] Director: 1945–1947; President: 1947–1949	OVB Box 1, Folder 9
Mrs. Frances McCarthy Stedman [joined Altrusa] 1949 Aeronautics; Aircraft Bendix Products Division of Bendix Aviation Corp., Chief Chemist and Assistant Chief Engineer [Altrusa office held] Treasurer: 1952–1954	OVB Box 1, Folder 10
Miss Marion Stouffer [joined Altrusa] 1948 Medicine; Research, medical analysis laboratory South Bend Medical Foundation, Inc., Executive Secretary [Altrusa office held] Secretary: 1949–1951	OVB Box 1, Folder 11
Mrs. Arthur C. (Ruth) Welsheimer [joined Altrusa] 1952 Burial; Mortuary Co-owner, Welsheimer Funeral Home	OVB Box 1, Folder 12
Dr. Agatha (Mrs. Joseph Lauber) Wilhelm 1941 Charter Member [of Altrusa] Medicine; Internal Medicine	OVB Box 1, Folder 13