

A NEW BEGINNING 1958

IN JULY, 1958 the MELODY BELLES of Providence, Rhode Island withdrew from Sweet Adelines, Inc., followed shortly by three Massachusetts chapters, the HARBORETTES of Scituate, THE HARMONETTES of North Attleboro and the SEA GALS of New Bedford. Although many Canadian chapters had been up in arms over the discriminatory clause, the only chapter to withdraw initially was the HARMONY BELLES of Orillia, Ontario. About 150 women from these five chapters met at the Round Top Congregational Church in Providence to pursue the idea of starting a new organization based on democratic principles and open to all women, regardless of race, creed or color.



Peggy Rigby, one of Harmony, Inc.'s founders and incorporators, served on the first Board of Directors as International President. Peggy's husband, Murray, was the author of our motto, "A Blend With Friendship."



Joanne Willett served on the first Board of Directors and became our 1960-1961 International President.

The founders of Harmony, Inc. believed that a more representative form of government was needed. They were determined that their new organization would be based upon democratic principles, with members encouraged to participate in all major decisions. They believed proper lines of communication between the members and those elected to govern must be established and kept open, and that freedom of expression must prevail so that members with ideas could gain support of other members. It was, indeed, an ambitious undertaking!

As in any heroic endeavor, there must be leaders to inspire. Among those gathered at the Congregational Church were some with impressive credentials in that area. Peggy Rigby had served on the International Board of Sweet Adelines, Inc. Joanne Willett was President of her chapter when it withdrew. Joan Chapman Stockwell had garnered remarkable publicity in the media in Canada. Although credit must be given to all the members of the five founding chapters, these three stand out for

the time and energy they expended in both organizations during the several years of controversy and starting anew, not to mention the personal funds expended.

In this recap of Harmony's beginnings, let us pay tribute to Peggy, Joanne and Joan, and to the members of the five chartering chapters who, by their inspiring action, set the stage for Harmony, Inc.



Joan Stockwell Chapman, one of Harmony, Inc.'s founders, served on the first Board of Directors.



Ruth Kresge, 1961-1962 International President.