

Nomination of our founding president Gerda Vedder for “We stand up for Women for 100 years - SIE celebrates 100 years – 100 Soroptimists”

When the appeal for nomination reached our Club, every single woman agreed to honor the work and achievements of our founding president Gerda Vedder (*1932 / +2019) by nominating her as one of the 100 Soroptimists. Our Club Duesseldorf – Pempelfort (Germany) – was not only influenced but shaped by her for 35 years. Her spirit and her commitment lingers with us.

Beside her accomplishments as business woman (running the family business), wife and mother of three children in 1983 she founded the 42. SI-Club and acted as the first president of Duesseldorf Pempelfort. She once said: “with Soroptimist I got involved in a large world of friendship that wonderfully connects with my other fields of life”. With this spirit, she devoted herself not only to the club but to Soroptimism itself. She always regarded the sisterhood as a great wide world of deep friendship.

As the first women's representative at RWTH Aachen in 1982 once told to Gerda: ‘Without hope of outweighing our sustained powers or at least a balance of burden and joy we would have to give up thinking, questioning, interpreting for the meaning of life in order to survive. So that hope is not just a wish, we should take steps to achieve it’. Gerda had developed and personified this view, the initiative and the strength of perseverance, throughout her life.

At the international stage during the 1980^s Gerda was participating at the Committee of the European Federation, responsible for several friendship-links to other clubs, such as Lahore, Pakistan or Haifa, Israel. Together with Gisela Freudenberg she supported Clubs during the process of their foundation in: Budapest, Sofia, Kiev, Bielsko-Biala and Tallin. In addition, Gerda was a proud founding patroness of the club Muensterland - Sued/Nordkirchen. During the reunion of Germany in 1989, she became the delegate of the extension-committee important for the meetings in Eisenach and Dresden, which supported the foundation of clubs in former East Germany.

The ties Gerda established lasted a lifetime. She was grateful for everyone trying to make the world a better place. For us she is a role model. She was not campaigning for Soroptimist out of a need for approval but for the cause of Soroptimism itself. She was a driving force in so many projects because it was important to her that this world becomes a *better* place for all of us to live in *well*. She was a giving, warm-hearted and open-minded person who was not afraid to stand for her believes.

In consideration of all her achievements significance within our community, we – of the Club Duesseldorf Pempelfort - consider Gerda Vedder one of the 100 most honorable Soroptimists.