

## HISTORY

In September 1959, seven local groups organized themselves into a Community Council of Garden Clubs. The over-all purpose of the new council was to unify the efforts of the various clubs towards beautifying Paducah and McCracken County.

Realizing that the original programs were limited in scope and recognizing the necessity to establish a city-wide program of beautification, plans were made to enlist the participation of the total community.

In May 1960, the Council became affiliated with Sear-Roebuck and Company HANDS program (Home and Neighborhood Development Sponsors). Through this program funds were made available to garden clubs in promoting a campaign of beautification, preservation, and rehabilitation of urban areas, such funds to be used at the discretion of the clubs.

The Board of Commissioners of the City of Paducah recognizing the success of the programs initiated and executed by our Board adopted, on July 5, 1960, an ordinance making the Board an Advisory Board to the city with a membership of 18. The original ordinance was amended on July 25, 1961, increasing the membership to 24; and again amended on January 13, 1970, further increasing the membership to 30. These amendments were necessary due to the increased demand of beautification programs.

Our creation as an Advisory Board of the city gave us the official authority we needed for our work, and our inclusion in the HANDS program gave us the trends and guide lines necessary to attain total involvement of the citizens in our work. The funds included in the city budget and the HANDS funds gave us the financial assistance to broaden our projects.

In the constantly increasing number of our programs in our 1973 year, we became successful in 100 percent community involvement. Based on the work and accomplishment of the Paducah Civic Beautification Board an application for a beautification grant was approved for \$150,000. This was the first such grant to be awarded in Kentucky.

For work accomplished by this Board there was presented to the Board the HANDS Award of Excellence on May 23, 1969; on May 13, 1971, we received an Award of Merit in Recognition of the Meritorious Accomplishments and Leadership Activities Relating to Conservation and Beautification through Garden Clubs in Paducah; and on May 25, 1973, we received the HANDS W Clyde Greenway Award of Excellence.

In 1970, at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Workshop of HANDS, Greensboro, NC, we received an Award of Merit at the HANDS Excellence Award Program.

Through our assistance, Paducah not only won All Kentucky City four times in five years, but also was placed permanently in the All Kentucky City Hall of Fame.

March 1974, a disastrous early morning fire destroyed much of the central section of the Market House, the museum, and caused extensive smoke and water damage to the theater and art gallery. The Market House was completely rebuilt and the last part, the museum, reopened June, 1976. An iron gated arcade in the center was opened to allow access to the museum from both sides of Second Street. A balcony was added to the museum to compensate for lost floor space.

In 1972, past Board chairman Dolly McNutt became mayor, having been Commissioner prior to that. In 1976, she was elected State Representative.

Also in 1976, Keep America Beautiful, Inc. certified the Board and Paducah to participate in the Clean Community System program in which the entire community joins together for a more beautiful Paducah.

In 1980, the Board nominated Dolly McNutt for the Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson National Award given by Keep America Beautiful. She was one of two women in the country proudly chosen for her work in environmental improvement and beautification.

Since 1980, the CBB has been a driving force in Paducah. From 1981 to 1984, it still affiliated with HANDS through its Awards program. In 1982, City Clean-up was begun and lasted until the City took it over as its own project. Christmas activities expanded in 1993, with the Festival of Lights downtown, a lighted tree in the Plaza, and Entertainment at City Hall. The CBB candlelight Trail was initiated in 1995 and Community Gardening in 1996. House of the month and a planting program have become an integral part of its activities. The Board is also in association with The Garden Club of Kentucky, Inc.

In 1997, Paul Gresham became the first man to serve as CBB Chairman.

2002 welcomed the continuation of the CBB's annual Dogwood Trail Celebration with the addition of some unique events and planting many your dogwood trees. We gave specific instructions about the care of the trees when we were directly involved in the planting. In 1997, The Dogwood celebration included photography and painting contests, which we coordinated with the Paducah Area Painters Alliance and the Camera Shop. In 2007, the photography contest was sponsored by Kentucky Publishing, Inc. Every other year CBB sponsors a poster contest for all the city schools. All art, photos, and posters are exhibited in City Hall and local galleries.

In 2002, "Leave it better than you found it" became Paducah Civic Beautification's newest slogan to encourage our community and its young people to think about making



everything we do and every place in Paducah better. Beautifying our community remains a priority for the Paducah's Civic Beautification Board. All city schools were involved in a poster contest to create the logo being used during this serious campaign.

The CBB House of the Month continues with citizens calling to nominate their neighbors and complimenting the improvements on homes and landscaping. The board divides the city into sections and alternated the areas to receive the awards. A letter to the editor in two of the local papers sparked lots of nominations by citizens confirming the slogan...beautification is contagious!

The Arbor Day celebration in 2002 was a big success. Paducah-McCracken County had over 400 "Trees are beautiful – inside and out" poster contest entries from 4<sup>th</sup> graders. CBB provided all the poster board and a creative basket of art supplies to all schools. The city CBB joined with the County Beautification and the Parks Department to sponsor the contest and exhibit. An awards ceremony complete with music, refreshment, "Tree Trot" Fun-Run, over one hundred awards, and lots of educational information was held at Bob Noble Park. The large attendance and general response were heart warming.

In the spring of 2002, an educational workshop hosted by the Paducah Garden Club and the CBB, was the site for the local power companies and City and County Street Department workers to learn more about the value of saving and shaping exiting trees. Tree trimming services sent not only their workers, but their supervisors and decision making personnel to the workshop taught by certified arborist Dave Leonard. This officially began the process of developing an enforceable tree ordinance for our city. The new city tree ordinance had been researched by the CBB and city's new public works director. We are hopeful that this ordinance, when adopted by our City Commission, will help save our valuable trees and insure proper maintenance of existing trees. Paducah's Tree Board and Civic Beautification Board will play a key role in enforcing the new Ordinance when adopted. CBB member spoke to several local garden clubs about the new tree ordinance and the impact it will have on planting of new trees. We accepted many suggestions from garden club members concerning the development of the new ordinance.

The CBB has sponsored an Annual Awards Luncheon for 46 years. Awards are given to business owners who have made major commitments of time and energy to improve and beautify their place of business. The format changed in 2007, the awards were announced in the Paducah Sun .

The Candlelight Christmas Trail was designed to "show off" Paducah by encouraging neighborhoods to "light up" and celebrate the season. Organized in conjunction with the Visitors Bureau, the CBB hosted a reception in Lower Town. Many of the residents of the restored Lower Town opened their homes and galleries to tours.

What an exciting time to be a member of the CBB as Downtown Paducah is being revitalized as a Kentucky Renaissance Gold community through the Streetscape programs. The CBB a Paducah Area Master Gardener's creation of the PADUCAH Adopt-a-Spot Program generated lots of publicity. In October our CBB hosted a Thankyou/Cook-Out to show the city's appreciation to the over 130 individuals and businesses who maintained their adopted spots. We worked with the Master Gardeners who provided specific information to each adoptee concerning the maintenance of the planted area. The City provided the original evergreens, trees, liriop and general landscape plan. The adoptees then "took over" with the maintenance and planting of annuals and perennials of their choice. Enormous improvements in beautification of our city happened quickly. Silver plastic engraved signs are posted in each spot identifying the individuals or business responsible for maintenance.

Paducah's Wall to Wall Floodwall Murals are some of the most inviting attractions in our community. The CBB supervised the transplanting of hundreds of liriop.

"Welcome to Paducah Signs" have been placed at two main entrances into the city (exit 4 and exit 7). CBB has a plan to add and improve the existing signs.

CBB with the support of many local Garden Clubs has replaced the existing tables in Dolly McNutt plaza with new tables and benches. Currently CBB has a plan to replace the older benches at the plaza to accommodate the public that wants to take advantage of the wireless internet available in the plaza.

Paducah has been blessed with over thirty-five monuments. It is the desire of the city to set guidelines for future monuments and the preservation of the old monuments. CBB is a major participant in the execution and facilitation of this project.



CBB and the Cooperative Extension Service is currently involved in a landscape competition called "Cities in Bloom". This is a national competition that would bring much notoriety to Paducah.

Putting the finishing touches on holiday and seasonal decorating and landscaping design plans for City Hall, Floodwall Mural areas, Historic Downtown, Historic Riverfront, Jefferson Street, Walter Jetton Blvd, City Parking lots, in ground and above ground planters, Noble Park and Market House Square keep the board members busy throughout each year. The CBB is a hands-on group.

While we have come a long way in the past years from "planting a tree" it does not detract from our origin if we will buy remember a quotation by Henry Van Dyke, "He that planteth a tree is a servant of God. He provideth a kindness for many generations, and faces that he has not seen shall bless him."