

January 12, 2003

TO: Jean Aills, President, Miami Valley Dance Council
FROM: The Miami Valley Folk Dancers
RE: 50 year Anniversary plaque

Dear Ms. Aills,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Miami Valley Folk Dancers who are long time members of the Miami Valley Dance Council and who dance every Thursday evening at the Michael Solomon Pavilion.

As you may know, the Miami Valley Folk Dancers are celebrating their 50th anniversary year. Our celebration began in November, 2002 with a Romanian workshop and the annual Tri-City Folk Dance Festival and will continue with various special activities throughout 2003. One of these activities will include a weekend 50th anniversary dance workshop on March 29th and 30th. The weekend activities will include a dinner at 5:30 PM on Saturday, March 29th. We would be honored if a representative of the Miami Valley Dance Council would make a formal presentation of the 50th anniversary wall plaque to the Miami Valley Folk Dancers at that dinner. Therefore, we are extending an invitation for that representative and guest to be our guests for the dinner and the dance party to follow.

Sincerely,

Dolores K. Brooks
Secretary
Miami Valley Folk Dancers

RSVP: Dolores Brooks
885-5170

A Brief History of Miami Valley Folk Dancers

International folk dancing started in Dayton in 1947 when Michael Solomon, a recreational employee for the City of Dayton, was introduced to folk dancing by a neighbor and formed the Dayton Folk Dance Club.

In the fall of 1952 members of a folk dance class sponsored by the City of Dayton Recreation Department started the Miami Valley Folk Dancers as an alternative to the more couples-oriented Dayton Folk Dance Club. Michael Solomon was the first leader. The group met on Thursday evenings for teaching and request dancing and also on the second Sunday of each month for teaching and dancing with a specific ethnic theme. Some of these dances were held at what is now the Michael Solomon Pavilion.

In 1955 the club sponsored its first workshop, bringing in John Williams and Maire Granahan to teach Scottish and Irish dances. Previously the club had participated in workshops sponsored by the Recreation Department. Ever since then the club has held one or two major workshops every year.. These workshops introduced us to the cultures of Africa, Armenia, Austria, the Balkans, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, England, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Romania, Poland, Russia, Scandinavia, Scotland, Slovenia, Turkey, and others.

In 1963 the first Tri-City workshop for folk dancers from Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton was held in Cincinnati. In 1964 MVFD hosted this event. Since then these workshops have since been held annually with the host club rotating among the three cities. Starting In 1998 this Tri-city has been held in Dayton, largely because of our fine facility. At that time the program format was changed to emphasize request dancing.

In the early 1970s a beginners class was added to the regular Thursday evening program.

Over the years MVFD has been very active in the greater Dayton community doing numerous demonstrations for nursing homes, schools, festivals, and community events. In the 1950s and 1960s members were instrumental in helping to develop significant folk dance programs for the Girl Scouts. Members have also helped local ethnic clubs such as the French, Italians, and South Slavs form their own dance groups and recapture dances of their own cultures.

(More information can be found on the internet at
www.geocities.com/mvfolkdancers/history/timeline.html)