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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

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City receives budget award

The City of Rochelle
received the Distinguished
Budget Award for the sixth
time. **Page 7**

WEATHER



SUNDAY

HIGH LOW

78 45



MONDAY

HIGH LOW

80 56



TUESDAY

HIGH LOW



WEDNESDAY

HIGH LOW

Rochelle DAR celebrates 125th anniversary

Chapter was established in May 1900: 'Our mission hasn't changed'

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

CRESTON — On May 3, the Rochelle Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution celebrated its 125th anniversary at the Creston Opera House.

The chapter was organized May 19, 1900 in Rochelle. Artifacts from different periods of the chapter's history were displayed including the chapter's charter from June 1900, early record books, and the original membership application of Organizing Regent Josephine Waite Barker from 1896.

The celebration began with an ice cream social, which was followed by a program presented by select chapter members in dress ranging from as early as the Revolutionary War period up to the present time. Presenters also wore attire from the early 1900s, 1920, the 1950s and the 1970s. A requirement of joining DAR is being able to trace your ancestry to a patriot of the American Revolution.

"We had some articles about what the DAR has been involved with in the past 125 years," Chapter Regent Debby Katzman said. "The organization has supported patriotism, historical preservation and education since its earliest days. That hasn't changed, and that was great to see. We read the names of all 284 Revolutionary War Patriots associated with the members of Rochelle Chapter. It was well received. It was a great day."

During the program, the chapter's history was presented in 25-year blocks by each speaker. The first told how the chapter served in its earliest days. The chapter's longtime gavel was made in 1902 from branches gathered at Mount Vernon.

"Early in our chapter's history, we had a group of women go to George Washington's Mount Vernon in Virginia," Katzman said. "They saw a



(COURTESY PHOTO)

On May 3, the Rochelle Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution celebrated its 125th anniversary at the Creston Opera House.

group cutting limbs off an oak tree and decided to get a piece of the wood and make a gavel out of it for the chapter. I still use that same gavel. It's been used for over 100 years. The tree was planted by George Washington."

From 1925-1950, the organization showed concern with the low percentage of women voting after the hard-fought effort for the right to vote, concern about the spread of communism in the 1930s, and provided support to schools. It presented its first DAR Good Citizen award in 1936, which continues to this day.

From 1950-1975, the chapter held pro-

grams on gun rights, Title IX, the Equal Rights Amendment, the Bill of Rights and the Monroe Doctrine. Members visited the families of soldiers fighting in Vietnam, and supported a variety of schools, conservation programs, and scholarships.

From 1975-2000, the chapter dedicated memorial markers at the graves of Revolutionary War soldiers Daniel Day, believed to be the first person buried at Daysville Cemetery near Oregon, and Rufus Perkins, buried at Buffalo Grove Cemetery near Polo.

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LOCAL NEWS



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

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ROCHELLE DAR: Local Chapter celebrates 125 years of service

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The chapter continues to seek direct descendants of Day and Perkins, as well as Rufus Phelps, who was buried at Lindenwood;

so they may be proven as DAR Patriots.

The chapter also marked the grave of Real Daughter Lydia Ransom Kridler in that era. While all DAR members are daughters,

the term Real Daughter is a special designation used to describe DAR members who are also the biological daughter of a Revolutionary War Patriot. Lydia Ransom's father,

George Palmer Ransom, served in his father Samuel Ransom's unit as an orderly sergeant beginning at 14 years of age. A Real Daughter plaque remains at Lydia's grave, at Fairmont Cemetery in Polo.

From 2000 to now, the chapter took on activities such as "Celebrate Rochelle" after the devastating 2015 EF-4 tornado near Rochelle, continued its efforts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and found new energy for additional service projects.

Today, the Rochelle DAR still supports literacy and scholarship programs, recently renewing a \$1,500 scholarship for female veterans as Sauk Valley Community College. The members honor active-duty military and other portions of the veteran community by commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, the Lee County Veterans Treatment Court, supporting the veterans at the LaSalle Veterans Home, and Quilts of Valor.

The chapter began its involvement with Wreaths Across America with a

humble donation for 31 wreaths in 2018. The program places wreaths at the graves of veterans locally in December and the work continues to grow, with the chapter sponsoring ceremonies at six cemeteries in four towns for 2025, with wreath sponsorships exceeding 4,000 to date. Chapter members also serve with various organizations for historical preservation, are involved in conservation efforts, and advocate for a strong national defense.

"There was a time many years ago when it was in question whether or not the chapter would continue," Katzman said. "I'm really proud that they pulled together to continue to serve. Service is what it's all about in DAR. Service to your community, education, historical preservation and patriotism. We lay 700 wreaths on graves of veterans in the area every December. I'm glad work like that never stopped."

Illinois State Registrar Laurie Carlin Perry wrote a book on the chapter to commemorate the 125th

anniversary, including a complete list of members from 1900 to present, associated Patriots and their qualifying service, a list of DAR Good Citizen award recipients from 1936 to present, and the chapter's history. Copies of the book will be donated to local libraries and genealogical/historical groups.

America will celebrate its 250th birthday next year, and the DAR has plans to hold multiple events in its honor.

"Our research into the chapter's history showed that we're not so different from the past DAR members," Katzman said. "They supported good citizens and past and current military members. It's good to know that the organization hasn't changed much and holds true to its original purpose. Our mission hasn't changed. We're ready to celebrate another milestone."

Visit <https://ildar.org/chapters/rochelle/index.html> for more information about the chapter, membership, activities, and contact information.