

WABASH VALLEY

P R O F I L E S

A series of tributes to hometown heroes who have made a difference.

Flora Gilman Gulick

Flora Gilman Gulick devoted much of her adult life and her modest earnings to establishing the Terre Haute Boys Club, now the Terre Haute Boys and Girls Club.

The youngest child of Timothy R. and Lucinda (Scott) Gilman, Flora was born in Terre Haute during May 1865. She had three older brothers. Her father was associated with his brother Elijah and James B. Reynolds in Gilman & Reynolds, manufacturer of barrel staves and coopers ware at 805 N. Second St. The Gilman family resided at 1026 S. Second St. Timothy died Nov. 30, 1881, when Flora was 16 years old.

Flora's life was marked by personal tragedy. In about 1883, she wed Andrew J. "Jack"

Gulick, clerk at Gulick & Berry Drug Store, 330 Wabash Ave., owned by his father John Francis Gulick and partner John H. Berry. The couple had three daughters: Marie, Frances and Florence. Marie died Jan. 19, 1889, at the age of four. A travel agent, Jack died in Uniontown, Mo., on Dec. 2, 1910, at age 48. Youngest daughter Florence died on Jan. 12, 1917, at 25. Frances, who married Notre Dame alumnus Dalton B. Shourds of Shourds, Stoner & Co., architects of Memorial Stadium, passed away at her residence on Aug. 2, 1924, at age 34.

A clerk at Havens & Geddes until a tragic fire destroyed the department store on Dec. 19, 1898, Flora secured a job a few months later in the post office money order department. While working in the government building at Seventh and Cherry streets, she often counseled underprivileged, uneducated and delinquent boys. One stormy night in January 1908, Gulick described her vision for a youth fellowship to a group of young men at the former Dr. Edward V. Ball residence, 24 N. First St., the compound used by the Terre Haute Social Settlement for many years. It served as her initial clubhouse. Soliciting one dollar a month each from 50 merchants and contributing her own earnings, Gulick located the club to a vacant building at 611 1/2 Ohio St. in 1910. With aid from Lewis J. Cox, Ben Blumberg, William K. Hamilton, Wilson Naylor Cox and the Rev. John E. Sulger, Gulick shifted its base in 1911 to the Alexander McGregor mansion (later Normal School YWCA) at Sixth and Chestnut streets. In 1913, after a reorganization, it was moved to the former courthouse (1866-1888) at 30 S. Third St., which had been converted into a vaudeville house called the Esquire Theater.

Gulick's resolve and the immense respect she stimulated allowed the club to prosper. Memberships skyrocketed. The Terre Haute chapter was among the largest boys clubs in the U.S. when it acquired the former Isaac Ball Funeral Home at 220 N. Third St. in 1922. With help from journalist Anna Bowes Wiley and the Terre Haute Lions Club, a gymnasium was added in 1925. Ted Moore replaced Gulick as executive director between 1928 and 1937 but she returned to duty when he accepted a job in Watertown, Conn. In 1939, however, illness forced her to relinquish daily duties and Moore was persuaded to return. Meanwhile, Chapman J. Root donated 72 acres in Parke County to the Boys Club for summer recreation; it was named "Camp Gulick" to honor Flora.

Credited with saving hundreds of wayward youths, Flora G. Gulick died at St. Anthony's Hospital on July 30, 1941, at age 76.



First Financial Bank

Always Close to Home

www.first-online.com • MEMBER FDIC

You'll find First Financial Bank in these and other cities and towns near you:

Terre Haute 238-6000 • Brazil 443-4481 • Rockville 765-569-3171 • Clinton 832-3504
Sullivan 268-3331 • Marshall, Illinois 217-826-6311 • Robinson, Illinois 618-544-8666