

Seventy-five Years of
The Economic Club of Chicago
History's Witnesses
1927-2002

THE ECONOMIC CLUB *of* CHICAGO

It is refreshing to note that, here in this new century, with all of its challenges and promises, institutions that played such an important role in the last century remain intact. The Economic Club of Chicago has been close to the heart of history since 1927, ardently pursuing a dual mission that called it to reflect on important current issues and to act as mentor for the next generation of business and civic leaders. That original mission has stood the test of time and is just as relevant today as it was when the club was founded.

The initial objective was to “aid in the creation and expression of an enlightened public opinion on the important economic and social questions of the day.” At the same time, it would bring together people of great experience and influence and those who would be the decision-makers of the future. Many generations of leaders have now passed through this organization, through depression, recession, good times, war and peace. Each one presented an intangible, valuable gift to those who would follow, the chance to reflect on a wide range of challenging questions in an atmosphere enhanced by the presence of a stunning collection of speakers.

It takes vision and foresight to create such a lasting institution. We owe a debt not only to the founders, but also to the long list of stalwarts who kept the organization vibrant for seven and a half decades. The Economic Club of Chicago’s continuing story is here in the accounts of the club’s speakers, in the list officers, directors, committee chairs, and club staff at the end of the book, and in the awareness that for 75 years, each generation has met its obligation to enlighten the generations which followed.



Michael H. Moskow
Chairman
The Economic Club of Chicago
December 12, 2002

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It took days for letters, the primary means of communication, to move from sender to receiver 75 years ago when The Economic Club of Chicago was formed. Most of the nation still ordered its goods by catalogue. Business was a relatively primitive American institution in 1927. Consumer credit was rare, although beginning to blossom. The Federal Government was tiny by today's standards. There were no legal drinks. And when gentlemen, who made just about all of the decisions, went out for an evening's entertainment, they dressed. On the eve of an economic catastrophe that ruined much of what it touched, The Economic Club of Chicago was formed. Remarkably, it survived The Great Depression, many recessions, wars hot and cold, the turmoil of Chicago politics and unparalleled social change.

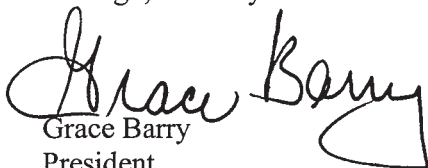
To this day, the men and women of The Economic Club of Chicago continue to dress up for our four black-tie dinner meetings. It is one of our important traditions, one that connects us to our beginnings. While much has changed since the Club's inception, its mission remains unchanged.

Where has the club been in the last seventy-five years?

The answer to that question is in this book, "History's Witnesses" which delivers the essence of selected messages carried to The Economic Club of Chicago by the most compelling public speakers, business and political leaders of their time. It is one measure of the club's record that nothing of any import went unnoticed. From the birth of big government to the icy chill of the Cold War to the collapse of communism and on to globalization, The Economic Club took due note.

It is another measure of this record that hundreds of members' planned each one of these meetings and thousands of members and their guests were there to participate in these moments of history.

The process, most happily, continues. Today's leaders meet with tomorrow's leaders for timely measures of the economy and discussions of the issues that define our era. These leaders, through the years, came together through the outstanding efforts of the hundreds of members of the Membership Committee. Books end, of course, but in the case of The Economic Club of Chicago, the story that created this one continues.



Grace Barry
President
The Economic Club of Chicago

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*Speeches transcribed from audiocassettes.