

About Widowed Men & Women of America

In the early 1980s, a few widows from the Denver area recognized a need to fulfill a void felt by surviving spouses and the need to help widows and widowers transition back into a social life. They began meeting in each other's homes. Then two of the widows (Madge Gilbo and Donna Reiber) decided to organize and applied for a Charter from the State of Colorado as a social non-profit organization named Widowed Men & Women of America (W.M.W.A.)

The Charter was granted; by-laws were written and registered with the State of Colorado. The by-laws specified that it would not be a singles group, dating service, grief group, or money-making organization. The motto adopted was "Chain of Unlimited Friends." The poem, "Golden Chain of Friendship" by Helen Steiner Rice inspired our founders to create friendship links.

The founders were determined that the organization would be for fun and friendship—a strictly social group. They began to advertise on radio, in newspapers, spoke to various groups, wrote letters to churches, and talked to anyone who would help spread the word about the organization.

As membership grew it was decided to break the large group into smaller groups called links (stemming from the motto) which would meet in geographic areas in which members lived.

Link 1 was formed in May 1980, quickly followed by others. Link 7 was formed in December 1980. At first, efforts were made to become national, and links were also formed in Iowa and Arizona. These links eventually became inactive, probably because of the distance from the main organization. Later other Links were formed in the North, East, West, and South areas of metro Denver. The goal as an organization is to continue to grow, forming additional Links so that widows and widowers can continue to be supported as they transition back to a social life.