



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

BY EACH GENERATION

The Story of YMCA Youth and Government

OUR STORY

When you share the story of Youth and Government, many people will be surprised to hear that the Y is home to one of the largest youth civic engagement and model government programs in the world.

How did the Y – birthplace of basketball and home to swimming lessons, fitness centers, summer camps, and childcare – give rise to Youth and Government?

The answer lies in 3 key elements of YMCA history:

Boys Work

The YMCA was originally founded in 1844 as an organization for young men at the start of their careers (age 20 and older). As the Y expanded, so did demand from younger boys (ages 12-18) to join. Boys Work Departments, administered by Boys Work Secretaries (staff directors), were established to provide this new generation with a space and voice in the Y movement.

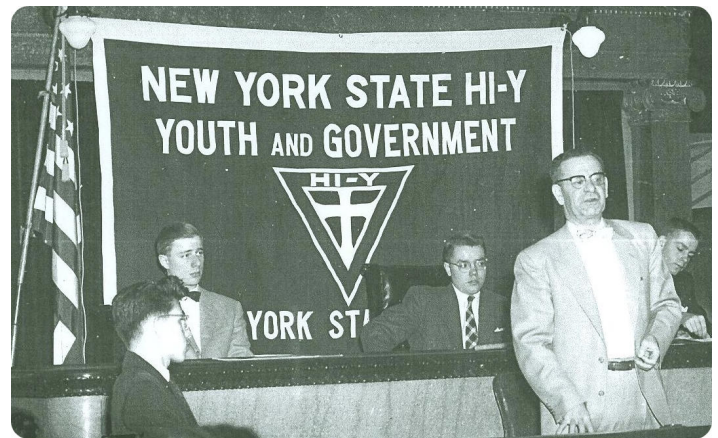
Older Boys Conferences

As boys became an increasingly larger portion of YMCA membership, Y leaders decided to give them their own forums for sharing their Y experience with other boys. These forums – Older Boys Conferences – grew into some of the largest youth gatherings in the country.

Hi-Y (High School YMCAs)

The massive growth of Boys Work programs led many participants to bring the Y to their schools, resulting in the formation of High School YMCAs, or Hi-Y Clubs, across the country. By the 1930's, Hi-Y was one of the largest student organizations in the United States. The transition to school-based YMCA clubs also brought about the creation of Tri-Hi-Y – the girls version of Hi-Y – and moved the Y away from its male-only roots.

OUR FOUNDER



In 1936, the stage was set for our founder, Clement A. "Pete" Duran, Boys Work Secretary for the Albany YMCA in New York, to bring together the 3 pieces of our story.

Boy leaders for the 1936 New York Older Boys Conference wanted the results of their conference discussions to be heard by "people who can do something about them."

William H. Burger, New York State Boys Work Secretary and a close colleague of Duran, described what happened next:

Pete and I were sitting in a car near the state capitol talking about ideas for the Older Boys Conference. Pete said, "how would it be if we held the conference in the State Capitol and centered our program around citizenship and the development of laws?"

"You would never get the capitol," I replied. But he did.

Governor Herbert Lehman enthusiastically approved Duran's request, inviting Hi-Y Clubs to select representatives for the Hi-Y Assembly at the Capitol. The rest, as they say, is history.

OUR MOTTO | Democracy must be learned by each generation

The motto of YMCA Youth and Government was adapted from a quote by Dr. Earle T. Hawkins, President of Towson State Teachers College and first Chairman of the Maryland Youth and Government program: "Democracy is more than being governed by a majority vote. It is a process in government that must be learned and earned by each succeeding generation. Youth cannot inherit democracy. They achieve it as adults provide them opportunities and leadership."

MAKING HISTORY

Historic Program Moments

The YMCA Youth and Government program was developed at a time when some of the defining questions of the 20th century were being answered. In many ways, Youth and Government not only served as a mirror of society, but also as a window into advances in diversity, equality, youth rights, and public policy that youth legislators would approve decades before their elected counterparts.

When youth legislator Barbara Striker called the Virginia YMCA Youth and Government Model General Assembly to order in April of 1948, it was the first time in state history that a woman had presided over the legislature. In 1949, Youth and Government delegates in Michigan elected Myron Wahls, an African American student from Detroit, as Youth Governor – over 40 years before the election of the first African American Governor since Reconstruction in 1990.

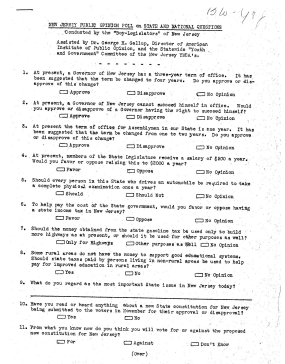
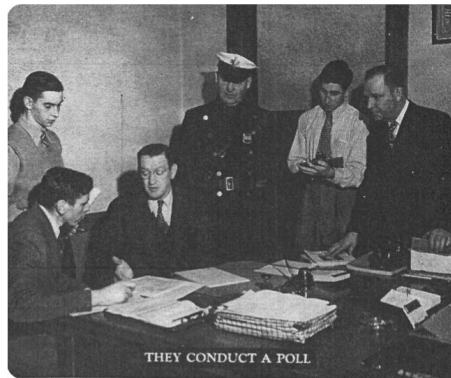
The YMCA Youth and Government program has not just been a part of history – it has and continues to make it:

George H. Gallup

When Princeton University Professor John F. Sly became Chairman of the first National Youth and Government Sponsoring Committee, he recruited one of his colleagues, Dr. George H. Gallup, to serve with him.

Dr. Gallup was the director of the American Institute for Public Opinion, and achieved notoriety for using his polling to accurately predict that Franklin Roosevelt would win the Presidency in 1936. The research firm that now bears his name, the Gallup Organization, has become one of the most recognized pollsters in the world.

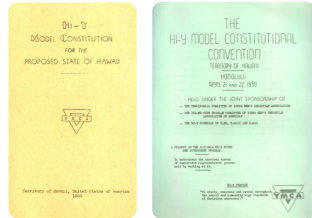
In addition to serving on Sly's Committee, Dr. Gallup used his American Institute for Public Opinion to help the YMCA Youth and Government programs in New Jersey, Maryland, and Pennsylvania conduct State Public Opinion Polls like the New Jersey Public Opinion Poll seen at right. The youth legislators in each program conducted the polls themselves, and used the findings to select bill topics for their Assembly legislation that were relevant to the needs of their communities and states.



Hawaiian Statehood



While every state program of YMCA Youth and Government has its own unique origin story, the story of the Hawaii program began before Hawaii was even a state. The program was founded during Hawaii's transition from territory to statehood in 1950. While the actual Constitutional Convention for Hawaii was being held, 71 delegates from 53 Hi-Y and Tri-Hi-Y Clubs gathered for their own Model Constitutional Convention in the throne room of the Royal Iolani Palace. Their task was the same as the actual convention – to issue a constitution for the new state of Hawaii.

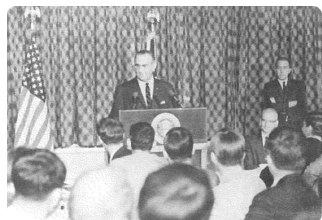


Although they were gathered in a royal palace that embodied Hawaii's monarchical past, their responsibility was to help transition Hawaii to representative democracy – a responsibility their generation would carry for years to come after the Model Constitutional Convention.

A decade later, Hawaii elected Eric Shinseki from Kauai High School as Youth Governor in 1960. Shinseki, a retired four-star general, serves as Secretary of Veterans Affairs for President Obama.



The 26th Amendment



At the 1968 Youth Governors Conference, President Lyndon B. Johnson surprised not only the Youth Governors but also the White House Press Corps when he chose the conference as the venue to announce his endorsement of the 26th Amendment to lower the national voting age to 18. President Johnson delivered the same message to Congress later that week, and sent each Youth Governor a copy of his speech along with a personal request that they support the amendment in their states.

It was no coincidence that the President chose the Youth Governors Conference to make his announcement. The original sponsor of the House Resolution calling for the 26th amendment was Senator Jennings Randolph of West Virginia. Randolph was an avid YMCA Youth and Government supporter who had helped host the Youth Governors Conference for over a decade.

At the 1971 Youth Governors Conference, 3 years to the day that President Johnson announced his endorsement, Senator Randolph was being honored for his service to the program when word came during the ceremony that Ohio had voted to become the 38th and final state needed to ratify the 26th Amendment. The Senator made the official announcement while accepting the award.

After decades of YMCA Youth and Government bills passed by youth legislature to lower the voting age, high school seniors in the program were now able to vote for the first time in history.





STATE TIMELINE

New York | December 11-12, 1936
www.rochesterymca.org/programs

Idaho | 1937
www.ymcatvidaho.org/programs

New Jersey | December 2-4, 1938
www.ymca.org

Maine | May 1-2, 1943
www.yiginme.org

Connecticut | April 28-29, 1944
www.ctyag.org

Maryland | May 5-6, 1944
www.mdvandg.org

Minnesota | April 26-27, 1946
www.mnyig.org

Georgia | 1946
www.yclub.org

Kentucky | 1946
www.kyymca.org

Michigan | 1946
www.myig.org

Tennessee | 1946
www.tennesseeyig.org

Texas | December 12-13, 1947
www.ymcatexasyg.org

Arizona | 1947
www.facebook.com/azyouthandgovernment

Kansas | 1947
www.kansascityymca.org/programs

Oregon | April 2-3, 1948
www.youry.org/salem-family-ymca

Pennsylvania | April 2-3, 1948
www.ymcapa.org

Virginia | April 9-10, 1948
www.vaymca.org

Washington | 1948
www.youthandgovernment.org

California | February 1949
www.calymca.org

Alabama | April 22-23, 1949
www.alygig.org

New Hampshire | April 22-23, 1949
www.nhyymcayag.org

Missouri | December 16-17, 1949
www.moyig.org

Hawaii | April 21-22, 1950
www.ymcahonolulu.org/youth_development

Illinois | April 24-25, 1950
www.ilymca.org

Oklahoma | January 25-27, 1952
www.ymcaokc.org/youthdevelopment

Wisconsin | December 5, 1952
www.ymcanecounty.org/yig

Ohio | 1952
www.ohioymca.org

Colorado | 1953
www.denverymca.org/programs-services

Florida | December 6-8, 1957
www.floridayig.net

Mississippi | 1960
www.msyag.org

New Mexico | April 6-8, 1961
www.nmyig.org

Louisiana | 1962
www.layouthandgovernment.org

Massachusetts | February 14-15, 1964
www.ssyymca.org

Indiana | April 2-4, 1965
www.facebook.com/inayg

Delaware | 1969
www.ymca.org/yig/yig.cfm

Montana | 1970
www.helenaymca.org/youth-gov

North Carolina | May 3-5, 1979
www.ncyag.org

South Carolina | 1988
www.scyymca.org

Washington, DC | 2001
www.dcyag.org

YMCA Model UN
www.ymca.org

OUR STORY

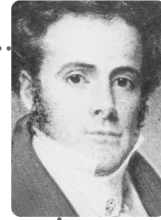
YMCA YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT

DEMOCRACY MUST BE LEARNED BY EACH GENERATION



The YMCA | 1844

The Young Men's Christian Association was founded on June 6, 1844 in London, England by 22-year old George Williams.



The YMCA in the US | 1851

The first YMCA in the United States was founded on December 29, 1851 at the Old South Church in Boston, MA by Retired Captain Thomas Valentine Sullivan.



YMCA Boys Work | 1869

To provide YMCA activities for boys ages 12-18, the first Boys Work Department was founded by William Horace Whipple in Salem, MA on April 26, 1869.



African American YMCA | 1853

The first YMCA for African Americans was founded in Washington, DC in 1853 by Anthony Bowen, a freed slave.



Boys Work Secretaries | 1886

Ellen Brown becomes the first employed Boys Work Secretary (Program Director), working for the YMCA in Buffalo, NY.



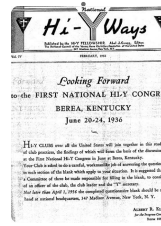
Hi-Y | 1889

Following earlier attempts at school-based YMCA clubs in Ionia and Ann Arbor, MI, the first High School YMCA was founded by D.F. Shirk at Dickinson County High School in Chapman, KS in 1889. The name "Hi-Y" was first used and adopted in 1911 by the High School YMCA in Pittsfield, MA.



Older Boys Conferences | 1891

As Boys Work grew, many asked if boys should be represented at State YMCA Conferences. W.F. Moore, Boys Work Secretary in Everett, MA, proposed a conference solely for boys, run by boys. On January 28, 1891 the 1st Older Boys Conference was held for YMCA boys in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.



National Hi-Y Fellowship | 1932

In 1932, the National Hi-Y Fellowship was created to help charter, register, and organize Hi-Y Clubs across the country.

National Hi-Y Congress | 1936

In 1936, the 1st National Hi-Y Congress was held in Berea, KY to allow Hi-Y members to propose and discuss policies, resources, and initiatives for the National Hi-Y Fellowship.



HI-Y ASSEMBLY

No. _____
Revised: _____
IN ASSEMBLY
Date: December 11, 1936

Resolved: That the existing Employment Law, the law be introduced in the House of Representatives, be amended to provide for the employment of boys, manual workers, domestic servants, and persons in other service work.

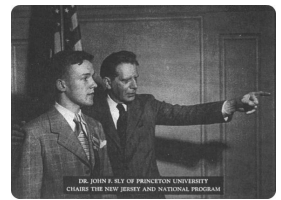
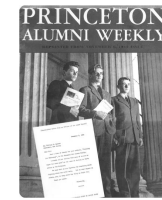
Hi-Y Assembly at New York Older Boys Conference | 1936

After meeting with boy leaders who wanted the results of their Older Boys Conference discussions to be heard by "people who can do something about them," Clement A. "Pete" Duran, Boys Work Secretary for the Albany YMCA, sought and received permission to hold the conference at the State Capitol from December 11-13, 1936. Hi-Y Clubs selected representatives to debate and pass bills as part of the Hi-Y Assembly – the first YMCA Youth and Government Assembly.



First Youth Governor | 1938

When Duran accepted a new position with the YMCA in New Jersey, his Hi-Y Assembly idea took hold quickly. New Jersey held its first Assembly in 1938, and elected the first-ever YMCA Youth Governor – Harry A. Faske of Trenton.



Princeton Extension Conference | 1944

Duran's idea gained national support at Princeton University, where Professor John F. Sly chaired the first National Youth and Government Committee, developed training resources, and held a National YMCA Youth and Government Extension Conference for new states from April 20-21, 1944.



National Conference of Boy Governors | 1949

The first YMCA National Conference of Boy Governors was held in Washington, DC from June 16-19, 1949, bringing together Youth Governors and leaders from 19 states. The agenda included sessions with Prof. Sly, Clement Duran, and President Harry Truman.

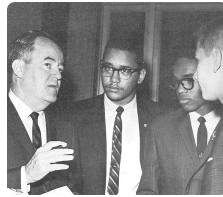
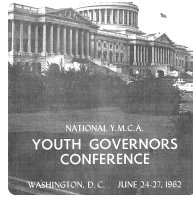
National Youth and Government Assembly | 1952

In 1952, the first National Youth and Government Assembly was held as part of the National Hi-Y & Tri-Hi-Y Council in Washington, DC.



YMCA Youth Governors Conference | 1962

A decade passed before the Reader's Digest Foundation helped sponsor the 2nd Youth Governors Conference in 1962 in Washington, DC, where the conference has been held each year since. 36 states were represented.



YMCA Conference on National Affairs | 1968

After Alabama delegate Michal Hart proposed a new national Youth and Government conference, William C. Chandler of the Montgomery YMCA established the Conference on National Affairs (CONA). 7 states sent delegations to the first conference in 1968 in Stone Mountain, GA.



CONA moved to its current home at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC in 1971.



YMCA College Youth In Government | 2012

In March of 2012, college students from across the country convened a Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, PA to found the YMCA College Youth In Government program.

YMCA National Judicial Competition | 2012

In July of 2012, the first YMCA National Judicial Competition was held in Chicago, IL.

