



50 Years of Beautifying Macomb 1972 – 2022

A Brief History of MBA

Our non-profit organization was established in 1972 with strong support from the City of Macomb administration. We are governed by a set of By- Laws and obtained federal tax-exempt status under IRS code as a 501 (c) (3) corporation in 2004. Officers are elected each November for: president, 1st and 2nd vice president, secretary and treasurer.

The purpose of MBA is to improve the beauty and livability of the Macomb area. Attention is focused on public and private cooperative efforts to improve community recreational and other open spaces. The Association does the following:

- * Encourages good landscape design
- * Stimulates appreciation of aesthetic values in the community environment
- * Promotes studies of environmental improvement projects
- * Grants financial support for the above projects with funds provided by dues, gifts, grants, and other contributions
- * Creates opportunities for general public participation in these projects
- * Supports preservation of historical areas and other beautification projects in the Macomb area

MBA meets for an hour and a half seven times a year – March through June, and September through November – on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Meetings are held at noon at the Old Dairy restaurant. A typical meeting includes lunch and a speaker followed by a business meeting. Speakers are selected for their expertise on a particular topic of interest to the membership.

Individual membership dues are \$15, family membership dues are \$20, and business dues are \$20. Lifetime membership dues are \$120 for individuals or families, and \$150 for businesses. Membership fluctuates between 70 and 80 individual members and over 50 business members each year. MBA is a member of the Macomb Area Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Development Corporation.

Attendance at our monthly meetings has held steady at about 25-30 members. Each member receives an email or telephone call prior to the meetings. Guests are encouraged and welcome.

MBA holds several fundraisers each year including card parties and a Holiday Cookie Walk. In recent years MBA has been named the beneficiary of several memorials. These memorial funds have enabled the organization to establish the following gardens:

The Rose Hermetet Memorial Garden was established in 2003. This garden is located on the southwest corner of the Amtrak Depot. Plantings include a variety of perennials. A large boulder honoring Mrs. Hermetet is part of the memorial garden. Rose Hermetet was a life-long Macomb resident and a very active MBA member.

In 2004 MBA received \$50,000 from the estate of Mary Lawrence Mabon, a former resident of Macomb and Western Illinois University graduate.

The Margaret Stover Memorial Garden was created in 2005. This garden is located on the west side of the Amtrak Depot and a large boulder marks the location. This garden includes a park bench, rose bushes, and urns filled with annuals. Margaret Stover is considered the "heart and soul" of MBA. She was a lifelong resident of Macomb and the moving force in establishing MBA. She will always be known for her unrelenting spirit for all MBA activities.

The Madge Howe Cooper Memorial Gardens were planted in 2006 in Chandler Park. There are two gardens located on the northeast and northwest corners of the Park. The gardens contain perennials, trees, and a variety of annuals. A large boulder is located in the northwest corner garden and appropriately inscribed. Madge Cooper was an active and enthusiastic member of MBA.

The Ann Mullen Renshaw Memorials were completed in 2009. Funds from her memorial were used to purchase two park benches and several trees in Chandler Park. Ann Renshaw was a retired WIU professor of art who appreciated MBA's activities.

The Joanne Findley Butterfly Garden was created in the spring of 2020 with memorial donations honoring the life of Joanne Findley. She was a driving force during the early years of MBA and is credited with many MBA projects. The garden was designed by MBA member, John Looman, and is located in Everly Park. It contains nearly 75 pollinator plantings and has the distinction of being named an official *Monarch Waystation*.

A significant beautification effort has taken place around the County Courthouse. The south side plantings are mostly perennials with some annuals. More recently the north side of the Courthouse has been landscaped with bushes and rhododendrons. All these gardens require seasonal maintenance, new plantings, etc.

A major project in the community is our **Annual Beautification Awards**. The Awards Committee each year selects several residential and commercial properties for their landscape/beautification efforts. Awards are presented to winners at the annual MBA reception held each September at the Macomb Art Center.

Other notable projects include:

- * Planting geraniums in the window boxes at the Amtrak Depot in the spring and winter greenery during the holiday season. Members volunteer to water these window boxes throughout the summer.
- * The Tree Project which encourages citizens to plant a tree in the front garden of their residence with a grant of 50% of the cost of the tree up to a maximum of \$50.
- * The sale of paintings and note cards designed by friends and members of MBA.
- * The lighting of the Amtrak Depot and Chandler Park during the year-end holidays.
- * Planters in front of the Western Illinois Museum and the Macomb Art Center.

A tri-fold brochure, stationary, and other materials are used for publicity of our organization. The McDonough County Voice/Choice has been most helpful in writing articles and reporting on the activities of MBA. MBA members are available to give presentations to local organizations.

MBA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/macombbeautiful/>

Website: <http://www.macombbeautiful.com>