

THE EVOLUTION OF THE FORT WORTH CLUB



Nestled in the heart of downtown Fort Worth, The Fort Worth Club stands as a historic landmark and a testament to the city's resilience and adaptability. Since its inception in 1885, this venerable institution has weathered changes, challenges, and societal shifts, evolving into a modern haven that caters to a diverse membership. From its early days as a men's club focused on literature and sports to its current status as a hub for business, socializing, health, and wellness, The Fort Worth Club's journey mirrors the dynamic growth of the city it calls home.

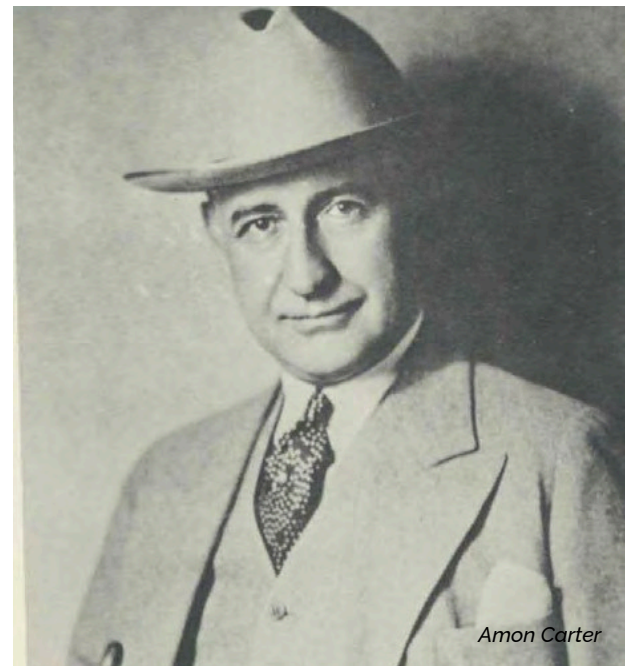
THE CLUB IS FORMED

In a frontier Texas town affectionately known as "the Queen City of the Prairie," a select group of 12 men applied for a charter to create a new social club that would, by nature of its name, promote business development in the city and "the support of any literary or scientific undertaking and the maintenance of a library." Originally founded as The Commercial Club of Fort Worth, the June 10, 1885 charter laid the foundation for the club's enduring legacy.



Rebranding as The Fort Worth Club in 1906, the membership also updated the purpose of the Club "to support and maintain bicycle clubs and other innocent sports," solidifying the importance of both business and leisure within club life.

Visionary leaders must lead visionary members. Arguably, the most visionary leader in club history was Amon Carter III, who became club president in 1920. As the president of the Fort Worth Star Telegram, the leading newspaper of the time, Carter was a local celebrity and a nationally recognized businessman with regular visits to Washington, DC. Under Carter's direction, the club voted to build a new clubhouse in 1926, which would stand 12 stories high and include retail and office space, overnight guest accommodations, and member dining and athletic space, which has remained the club's home.



While there may have been some skepticism about building a clubhouse nearly double the size of the current space, the club's momentum never faltered. Upon completion, the club reached capacity at 700 members, with member amenities including a barber shop, dining room and café, bowling alley, billiard room, swimming pool and a gymnasium.

Unfortunately, the Great Depression soon made its way into Carter's town, although he remained optimistic that the club was unaffected by the failing economy surrounding them. At the 1931 Annual Meeting, he even stated that he was "delighted to report that the wives and families of our members have patronized your club more generously than they have in the past. The management has striven through the dinner dances and other social activities to popularize the club with its membership, and we hope you will impress upon your entire family that it is the purpose of the club to cooperate in every way possible to the end that we may make the club more useful to all of the family." Carter was not blind to the idea that the club had to be an amenity and benefit for all family members to survive tough times.

TRANSFORMATIVE YEARS

Over the following decades, the club continued to anticipate and respond to the desires of its members. In the mid-seventies, Club members voiced dissatisfaction over available parking near the club. As downtown continued to grow and flourish, options became more limited. It was in 1971 that Club President Ed Collett was able to pen a deal with The Fort Worth Foundation to acquire and demolish the two buildings adjacent to the club and make plans to add improved parking facilities for the membership. The project would continue under the supervision of the following president, Jenkins Garrett, and would become a pivotal moment in the evolution of the Fort Worth Club. The new Tower Building included a 7-story parking garage, additional office space, proposed residential penthouses, and an expanded Athletic Center. Garrett saw an opportunity to expand member facilities and envisioned attracting a younger membership with a world-class athletic facility. With enhanced fitness and athletic space now available, the club opted to make the Athletic Center a fee-based amenity.

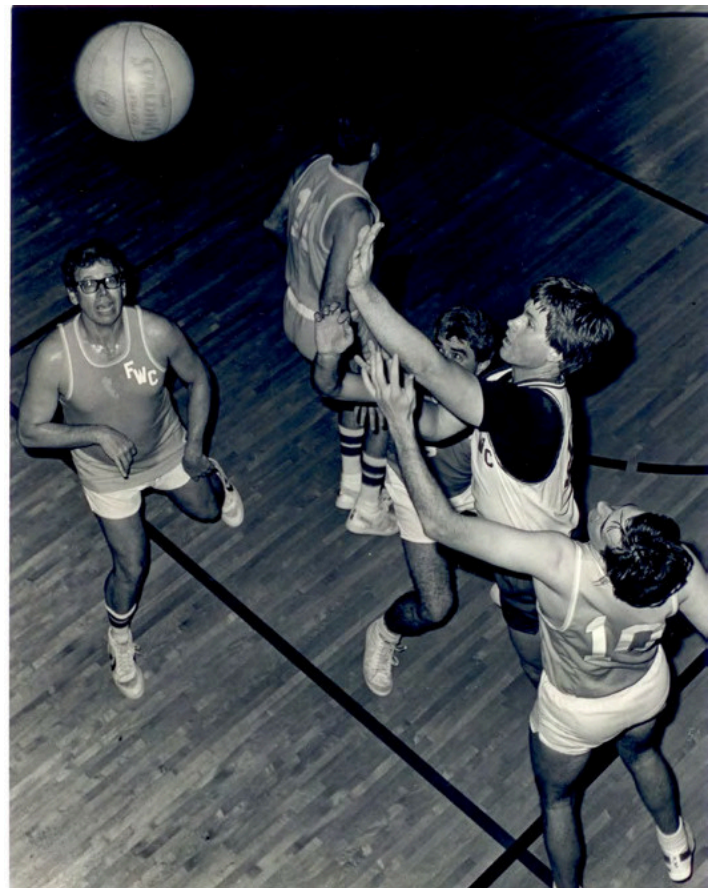


By 1982, the club was in seemingly great shape. Approaching their 100th Club Anniversary, they doubled their initiation fees, ranging up to \$5000 for some categories of membership, and by 1988, the club had hit a peak membership of 2100 members. Club leadership prided itself on not raising member dues for many years. Unfortunately, this short-sided vision would ultimately lead to changes in the Club dynamic that no one could have predicted.

THE CRASH & TURN

The club started accumulating more debt when it didn't raise membership fees or invest in its facilities. The aging building experienced failed infrastructure, and the club struggled financially to the point of not making payroll. Debt surmounted \$12.5M. What was once a point of pride in not raising dues was now a point of contention, as the Board had to decide to rebuild the club's financial stability.

In 1989, club leadership decided to assess the full membership to pay off debts. While amounts owed varied by membership category, the added expense caused an immediate loss of 403 members, with another 159 resigning



in fiscal year 1990, bringing the overall membership as low as 1538. The swift loss of members and subsequent loss of dues revenue sent the club into a spiral for the next decade. Various incentive programs were launched, including waiving initiation fees in an attempt to regain membership growth. The club needed to change in a significant way if it was going to survive another 100 years.

REBUILDING THE FUTURE

Losing nearly one-quarter of the membership took a toll on the already increasing debt and devastated member morale. The club was forced to make major operational changes to thrive again.

The first of those changes came in 1994, with the promotion of Walter Littlejohn to general manager. His tenure as director of club building operations made him the ideal visionary leader to help take the club into its next evolution phase.

Under Littlejohn's leadership, a significant change was promptly implemented: female members gained unrestricted access to all areas of the club without the need for a spousal counterpart. The "men only" reputation of the past was firmly in the rearview as the club was determined to move

forward and rebuild. In 1997, the Board of Governors adopted "The Tradition Continues- Building the Future Membership Development Program" in response to the downward membership trend. Through strategic member programming and targeted recruitment efforts, the program resulted in 200 new members per year. This initiative can be regarded as one of the landmark decisions in the club's history, turning the tide in a positive direction at The Fort Worth Club.

With member engagement on the mend, the next priority was addressing financial matters. Given the aging building, it was evident that ongoing maintenance and reinvestment in the facilities were imperative. But if the assessment of the last decade was any indication, and the fact that initiation fees still had not been reinstated, club leadership had to get creative in their ability to fund these necessary financial obligations. In 1999, under the leadership of club president Luther King, the Preservation & Restoration 115th Anniversary Campaign was initiated. Its primary objective was to secure funding for a new Master Plan, which encompassed addressing nearly \$6.7 million in deferred maintenance. This capital campaign marked the club's inaugural endeavor, which was the first of its kind but would certainly not be the last.



STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING

The first Master Plan Task Force, led by Luther King, was established to document and organize the club's goals moving forward. The Board agreed that real priorities needed to be identified, and in 2001, the Board authorized the development of the club's inaugural 9-Phase Master Plan. Initially, the decision was made to fund the Master Plan exclusively through a voluntary member pledge program. This initiative began in 2002 with a series of small presentations, leading to \$1.7M pledged by 155 members before being extended to the general membership.

The Master Plan, ultimately fully funded through the Capital Campaign, cash flow, and debt restructuring, addressed various areas of the club and building infrastructure, including the 11th Floor, Inn at the Club, and 12th Floor projects.

However, it wasn't just the physical building that required attention. Seeing a need to organize the club membership initiatives, a Task Force was formed to discuss ongoing recruitment, retention and attrition. The Task Force confirmed the importance of these issues and recommended a more comprehensive plan and vision be developed to address all aspects of the club's operation and direction for the future. Members of the Task Force included Board members, committee heads, and past presidents. The result of the Board evaluation was to direct the Task Force to work with management, under Board appointed chairman Luther King, to develop a five-year strategic business plan.

In 2005, the Board adopted its first five-year 2010 Strategic Plan. While the plan was more aspirational than measurable, it provided long-term goals and established a new Mission, Vision, and values to guide the club into the future. The primary initiatives of the 2010 Strategic Plan included funding the completion of infrastructure and capital requirements, maintaining building occupancy, sustaining membership levels, addressing attrition, sustaining operating profits, and developing employees.

A general manager with a strong business background and a motivated Board of Governors allowed the club to begin significantly improving the facilities and amenities offered to members. In 2007, renovations of the newly redesigned "Members' Floor" were completed, allowing members to have a dedicated space separate from banquet and catering events. The success of these improvements supported reinstating an initiation fee of \$500 for the first time since the tragic



BEFORE: The Library



AFTER: The Library

assessment of 1988. Continued success earned the club local recognition as "Small Business of the Year" with the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce.



125 YEARS BEHIND, LOOKING FORWARD

After the successful implementation of the first Master Plan and 2010 Strategic Plan, it was clear that having a defined vision and unified goal was paramount. The club was able to celebrate a strong 125th Anniversary in 2010 but understood the need for continued evaluation and planning.

A new task force was created to review the 2010 Strategic Plan and create the new 10-year 2020 Strategic Vision, this time to be chaired by current Club president Arnie Gachman. With this version, the goals were more measurable and direct. The focus of the 2020 Strategic Vision would be to:

1. Provide a membership experience that exceeds the Platinum Club principles;
2. Implement and complete the 2020 Master Plan to address non-routine maintenance and capital requirements of The Fort Worth Club;
3. Grow member dues revenue from \$3.1M to \$3.7M by 2020;
4. Sustain leasing revenues between \$3.7M and \$4.2M, with optimum occupancy levels;

5. Operating profits to exceed \$2M per year;

6. Satisfy the parking requirements of The Fort Worth Club and increase parking profitability.

A significant portion of the renovations to be completed were within the Athletic Center, which remained men only. Several phases of construction took place. The phases involved repurposing 5,200 square feet of storage to create six new group fitness studios, renovating the gymnasium and track, and adding the ladies' locker room and fitness and conditioning studio in 2015. This addition finally allowed for co-ed usage of the Athletic Center. However, it did not come without push-back or planning.

To secure sufficient initial financial and moral support from the members, charter memberships for ladies' fitness were pre-sold for both individual and family memberships. The target of 100 charter memberships was swiftly exceeded, with over 280 memberships committed. Once again, members demonstrated readiness for a new phase of facility evolution and enthusiastically embraced this historic change.



Davey O'Brien Sports Lounge

Another sign of changing times at the club was the popularity of the new “Members’ Floor.” Moving from a previously abandoned à la carte dining business to regularly filled dining rooms, the club leadership found it necessary to reevaluate how to make the best use of square footage to enhance member facilities. The Library, which had once been an under-utilized sitting room, was now a popular “Club Casual” dining option that members enjoyed regularly.

However, conflict arose when couples enjoying a quiet dinner were interrupted by boisterous young members enthusiastically watching a sports game at the bar. The opposing dynamics made it clear that an alternate option was needed, leading to the trendy Davey O'Brien Sports Lounge, named after the National Quarterback Award created at the club by members in 1977. “The Davey,” as members affectionately refer to it, opened in 2016 and quickly became the premier location for happy hours and business deals in downtown Fort Worth.

The final renovations of the Athletic Center brought the Master Plan to completion in 2018. More than \$20M was invested to complete the plan through various financial methods, but

none was more important or notable than the individual contributions of members through the Capital Campaign.

COVID-19 & BEYOND

Despite the 2020 Strategic Vision initially appearing to outline long-term goals for the club, leadership and management managed to achieve most of these goals much faster than expected. After completing both the Master and Strategic Plans, the next phase of planning commenced in 2019. During this phase, management collaborated with industry consultants and department heads to develop individualized mission statements and specific, dynamic strategic objectives, ensuring the longevity and effectiveness of this Strategic Plan. Despite delays due to COVID-19, the Board was able to adopt The Strategic Plan, est. 2021, with the intent to complete annual reviews of various departmental objectives and goals.

Despite the challenges and setbacks caused by COVID-19, the club remained proactive. When a partnership with a local cryotherapy studio was jeopardized due to the studio's closure,

the club invested in purchasing the studio's inventory and integrated the services in-house for its members. This decision marked a significant turning point in the ongoing transformation of the Athletic Center, evolving it from a conventional fitness center into a comprehensive health and wellness center. Subsequent additions of infrared saunas and various recovery therapy services further aligned with the club's mission to assist members in extending their health span to match their lifespan.

The One Club Membership was introduced on October 1, 2022, returning the club to a pre-1976 model where all members were granted access to the athletic facilities within their base membership. Existing members were permitted the option to remain in their current structure with separate Athletic Center dues or upgrade to the new model for one club and one dues amount.

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2024, the club's Performance + Longevity Center will launch, bringing world-class longevity resources and services into the private club environment. Services coming soon include photobiomodulation therapy, bioharmonic PEMF therapy, and assessment tools to measure body mass and bone density. These technologies are based upon the club's newly established 8 Pillars of Longevity:

THE 8 PILLARS OF LONGEVITY

Mindset

Focuses on positivity, habit formation, purpose, mindfulness, and goal setting.

Regenerative Health

Targets cell health and the core systems of the body.

Performance

Improves cardiovascular health, strength, body composition, bone density, and recovery.

Nutrition

Advocates for whole foods, gastrointestinal health, nutraceuticals, and fasting.

Lifestyle

Emphasizes diet, exercise, sleep quality, and effective stress management.

Cognitive Wellness

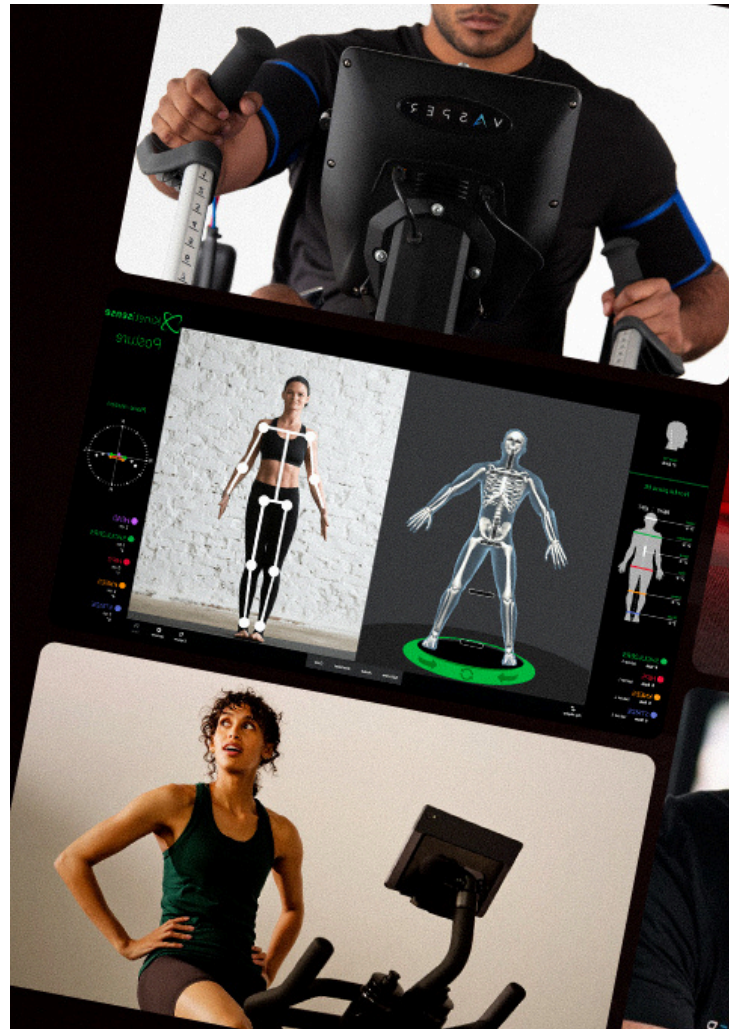
Enhances memory, mental and emotional health, and social connections.

Mobility

Develops stability, flexibility, balance, posture, and encourages pain-free movement.

Diagnostics

Focuses on proactive health screening, early detection, personalized assessment, wearable health technologies, and advanced medical screenings to optimize long-term health.





In addition, the club has partnered with Human Longevity Incorporated to provide precision diagnostics, including whole-body MRI, CT Scan, comprehensive blood work, DEXA scan, and complete genomic sequencing. This provides members with a proactive approach to healthcare instead of the traditional sick care model. Members will work with a concierge Human Longevity clinician and a club longevity specialist to formulate a personalized, comprehensive 12-month longevity plan. The Fort Worth Club believes that comprehensive longevity and wellness programming will be a cornerstone for the future of club membership. Assistant General Manager Michael Thackerson, who has been at the helm of the longevity initiatives, states, "business has always been the foundation of membership in a city club, while

social and athletic members come and go. If the club can impact the quality of our members' lives by increasing their healthspan to meet their lifespan, they'll be members for life."

In addition to added wellness initiatives, The Fort Worth Club of today celebrates a diverse membership with unique programming to uphold the interests of each key demographic: business, social, and health and wellness. Unique membership events help engage female members, junior members, family memberships, and corporate memberships. As Amon Carter expressed nearly 100 years ago, the importance of full family engagement to ensure the long-term success of the club cannot be understated.



Performance + Longevity Center Assessment

Evolve from Fitness to Wellness

Club Leaders Forum has been dedicated to evaluating advances in science, technology and equipment in the fast paced, advancing, Wellness, Performance + Longevity industries for the past six years.

A number of Clubs have requested support through consulting services provided by Club Leaders Forum, as they evolve from traditional Fitness and Athletic to Performance + Longevity.

In response to this demand, Club Leaders Forum has developed an Assessment Program for Private Clubs to analyze and evaluate the benefits of developing a Performance + Longevity Center.

The Assessment Site Visit will include:

- ▶ Comprehensive assessment and tour of fitness facilities
- ▶ Strategic meetings with General Manager, COO/CEO and Senior Staff
- ▶ Assessment of current fitness & wellness offerings
- ▶ Review of membership demographics
- ▶ Introduction to the 8 Pillars of Longevity
- ▶ Options for space planning
- ▶ Detailed equipment options
- ▶ Overview of staffing requirements
- ▶ Projection of construction and equipments costs
- ▶ Operating costs and revenue opportunities
- ▶ Introduction of the Club Leaders Forum Performance + Longevity Academy
- ▶ Discussion on diagnostic and regenerative medicine
- ▶ Presentation to the Board and Committees

Comprehensive Assessment Report within 30 days

- ▶ Proposed facility plan
- ▶ Equipment specifications
- ▶ Integration of existing facilities, programs and staff
- ▶ Capital investment required for improvements and equipment
- ▶ Timeline for execution
- ▶ Three year operating budget
- ▶ Communication initiatives
- ▶ Details of Club Leaders Forum Performance and Longevity Training Academy
- ▶ Program for diagnostic and regenerative medicine
- ▶ Architectural space plan design (supplemental fee)

Evolve from Fitness to Wellness

Create a state of the art
Performance + Longevity Center
in your Private Club

Book a discovery consultation.
Dennis Burns or Dafne Canales
longevity@clubleadersforum.com
818-851-3180

LEARN MORE AT
clubleadersforum.com/longevity

