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History of the Miss Davison Scholarship Pageant

The Miss Davison Pageant was first held in 1938. At that time, it was sponsored by the now-defunct Davison Rotary Club, a club dedicated to community service, friendship and networking for businessmen. Early organizers included Homer Hill, Chuck Rawson, Clare Bigger, and Oren Minto (whose wife was a former Miss Davison). The Miss Davison program is believed to be one of the oldest pageants in the state.

Lorraine Parr (Hudson, now Tolles), at the age of 14, was crowned the first Miss Davison in the fall of 1938. Her crown was a stovepipe covered in velvet and rhinestones. In 1995, she was honored at the pageant, at which time, she presented the Pageant with the royal velvet cape and rhinestone trim she wore during her reign. The cape and a few photos of her as Miss Davison were donated to the Davison Area Historical Society & Museum.

The pageant continued only periodically until 1948, due in part to World War II. In 1951 the newly formed Davison Chamber of Commerce took over running both the Pageant and the Homecoming Festival, now known as the Festival of Flags, held each summer. In fact, the pageant was one of the very first projects for the newly formed organization.

For many years, Pageant Candidates sold raffle tickets as a fundraiser for the Chamber and the amount of each candidate's sales was part of the basis on which Miss Davison was selected, in addition to an interview. It was thought, at that time, that a ticket sold equaled a vote of support from a community member for that candidate. The funds raised from the sale of those tickets supported many community projects including the tennis courts previously located behind Central Elementary and the Davison Community Pool (which was located at W. Clark Street and S. Dayton Street, where there is now a parking lot for Hahn Intermediate School).

In 1983, ticket sales ceased as part of the Pageant when the Miss Davison Committee changed the format to its current design. Miss Davison and Court are determined based upon four areas of competition (Interview, Street wear, Formal wear, and Final Question). The different portions of the Pageant are judged in six categories: Communication Skills, Personality, Poise, Overall Appearance, Community & Scholastic Achievement & Involvement, and Pageant Responsibility. Among other things, the Pageant encourages and supports scholastic achievement and community involvement and provides the community with a goodwill ambassador to promote Davison and the Festival of Flags.

In 1991, the Pageant fulfilled a longtime goal and began awarding \$1,000 a year in scholarships to Miss Davison and her Court.

In 2000, the Pageant became totally self-supporting financially and continues to be so today. Funds for the scholarships and the Pageant, as well as travel expenses for Miss Davison and her Court are now provided by Pageant revenue and donations from individuals, businesses, community groups and fundraisers. The Chamber continues to support the Pageant in other ways and works closely with the Pageant to promote the Davison Community.

In 2013, the Pageant celebrated its' 75th Anniversary and over 25 former Miss Davisons returned for the event as well as many former Court Members.

In 2016, the scholarships were increased to a total of \$2,000 annually, through the generosity of Miss Davison 1983 Michele McClain Munteer and her husband Bart, who underwrite half of the scholarships each year. To date, \$31,000 in scholarships has been awarded to young ladies in Davison.

In 2017, the Miss Davison Pageant expanded to include a Princess Program as a fundraiser for the Pageant. The Princess program is a non-competitive program for young girls ages 5-10 years old, designed to provide each young lady the opportunity to interact with positive role models, begin to build self-confidence, charisma and a sense of community involvement, while being able to shine on stage and fulfill their dream of becoming a princess. The Princess Program will help to grow the Miss Davison Scholarship Pageant even more, and will provide more exposure for our Pageant Sponsors.

In 2019 Jenna Holt, Miss Davison 2012 started the AccelerateHer Scholarship to be awarded to a candidate going into business. After giving up her title of Miss Davison, Jenna went on to compete in the Miss America Organization, holding several local titles and competing for both Miss Michigan and Miss California. She is currently a District Manager for General Motors.

Over the course of the Pageant, approximately 1,000 young ladies of Davison have participated in the program, competing for the title of Miss Davison. The Pageant currently has four co-directors, including Jaclyn Adams, Miss Davison 1998 and Jennifer Ragnone, a member of the 2003 Miss Davison Court, both of whom had volunteered with the Pageant for years and moving into Co-Director roles in 2018. Teresa Raysin has been involved with the pageant for the past 20 years and Lori Tallman Kendrick, also a former Miss Davison, has been involved in some capacity, primarily as a Director, for 42 years.