

AAUW Vision

of Virginia

Winter/Spring 2025


AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. AAUW, founded in 1881, is open to all graduates who hold an associate or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university.

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

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**AAUW of Virginia
 Conference
 Alexandria
 March 29, 2025**

1925-2025: 100 Years of Changing the Conversation

Almost 100 years ago — March 28, 1925, to be precise — trailblazing women from seven local branches of AAUW in Virginia at the time founded the Virginia Division of AAUW. In the century since then, we have all been members of a powerful army of AAUW members in Virginia who have changed the conversation on a myriad of issues critical to advancing equity for women and girls. Because we’ve all been a part of this herstory, the time has come to revel in our accomplishments and embark on another century of changing the conversation. Come join us in Alexandria for our centennial state conference and celebration on March 29, 2025. For those who arrive a day early, you’ll be able to take a tour and start the party early!!!

We are honored that **Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan (VA-04)** will be our keynote speaker. AAUW of Virginia has enjoyed a long and wonderful relationship with Congresswoman McClellan dating back to her days as a delegate and senator in the Virginia General Assembly. We could always count on her to champion our issues, meet with us on many occasions and graciously introduce and recognize us on our Lobby Days in the galleries of the Virginia General Assembly. Now as a Member of Congress, she continues to fight for our issues to a larger, national audience. Brava!

In addition to Congresswoman McClellan, the agenda is replete with engaging, mission-related speakers; several women-owned/managed vendors to patronize, raffle baskets to win; conference/centennial merchandise to purchase; and yes, even some surprises!

We look forward to seeing you in March! Safe travels.



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<http://aauw-va.aauw.net/>

VIRGINIA VISION

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From Your
President

As I wrote this in January, we were preparing for Lobby Day and a predicted blizzard. (Metaphor alert.) we put out advisories, warnings and alerts because when we blew into Richmond, we closed down the notion that women will ever go back.

Get ready for a very special state conference! I want to recognize the Fab Four Plus three. Northern District Representatives Sandy Lawrence and Sharon Zakula, and AAUW-VA Program VPs Susan Burk and Leslie Tourigny, plus Southeast Co-District Rep Tammie Mullins-Rice; webmaster Patsy Quick, and Bylaws Chair Suzanne Rothwell, have worked a crazy number of hours to give us a Centennial Celebration worthy of our foremothers. I can't wait to see you all there!

Here's what's new:

I'm pleased to announce that we now have a DONATE button on the [AAUW-VA webpage](#). Those funds will stay in our state. These donations are not tax deductible but so appreciated.

Did you know we now have a virtual statewide Great Decisions Group? Lynn O'Connell invites you to join us. She can be reached at lynnoconnellvaatgmail.com.

I'll end by welcoming our newest branch, Fredericksburg Area. Janet Hedrick is the driving force in birthing this baby. If you know anyone who lives in that area, please let them know that AAUW is in town. Janet can be reached at JHedrick815atgmail.com. Welcome!

*100 looks good on us,
Lane Stone*

District Representatives

Northern

Sandy Lawrence

Sharon Zackula

Northwest

Mary Anne Graham

Southeast

Tammie Mullins-Rice

Barbara Woodlee

Southwest

Susan McSarrow

Membership and Branch Development

Attention Vice Presidents of Membership of AAUW-VA 24 branches: plans will be forthcoming for a Zoom meeting in 2025. Branch representatives will be contacted by email with the date(s) and time for an introduction to AAUW -VA Branch Essentials. State board members, along with branch members and volunteers, recently launched Branch Essentials Notebook on the state website. Resources for membership vice presidents will be discussed as a 2025 goal with focus on membership retention and growth. All members are encouraged to utilize this resource for branch planning and leadership roles.

The Membership Matters newsletter continues to be another resource from National that keeps members updated on current program activities, changes in the Community Hub, deadlines for branch participation in programs, and much more. Branch leaders should ensure that every member's email is current and that the newsletter is reviewed and discussed during monthly meetings.

The official membership count which comes out on February 1, 2025 (this article was submitted in January) will be reflected in the next issue of the Vision. Branches will be celebrated for having retained 100% membership during FY24.

The **Fredericksburg Branch**, established in September 2024, with four members, now has eight members with Janet Hedrick as president. Other branch officers are Deborah Garrison-Secretary; Barbara Williams-Membership, and Marjorie Och-Finance. We hope to officially recognize them during the 100th Anniversary Conference in March.

We are hoping to add another affiliate in 2025! The planning discussion has begun, and updates will be in the next Vision.

Laura Browning Greenfield
Vice President for Membership and Branch Development

AAUW-VA Program Swap Shop

Branch programs are the best way to engage our members and others, and to spread the word about our great organization. The AAUW-VA Program Swap Shop, <https://aauw-va.aauw.net/aauw/directors/programs/> was created to provide a space for branches to share information about upcoming programs and highlight successful programs. The goal is to encourage branches to take advantage of programs in their district or virtually and collaborate with other branches where possible.

Information on successful, completed programs is a terrific resource for branches planning their program schedules. The Swap Shop forms are simple and easy to complete. This information benefits AAUW-VA tremendously. We encourage all branches to use this resource and add their program information. Any questions? Contact Susan Burk and/or Leslie Tourigny, Co-VPs for Program, AAUW-VA.

*Susan Burk
Co-VP for Program*



Voter Guide

Meet Your Candidates

The Nominating Committee has a complete slate of officers for 2025-2027. They are as follows: Recording Secretary - Paula Lichiello; Vice President for Finance - Virginia Kress; Vice President for Membership and Branch Development - Laura Browning Greenfield; Co-Vice Presidents for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Erica Brown-Meredith and Meg Tucillo.

Marsha Melkonian, Nominating Committee Chair

Paula C. Lichiello of the Lynchburg Branch has agreed to be nominated for Recording Secretary.



Paula C. Lichiello, EdD, has 25+ years of experience in education and has taught preschool, middle school math and pre-algebra, and graduate leadership courses on-campus, online, and abroad in St. Lucia. During her 16 years at the University of Lynchburg, she served in a variety of roles, including Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Admissions Coordinator of Graduate and Special Programs for CELC (College of Education, Leadership Studies, and Counseling), Associate Professor, Noyce Grant Pathway Coordinator, and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation Coordinator. She was also a Project Director/Coordinator for 17 grants, including an AAUW Grant, “Girls Go Green 4 S.T.E.M.” Dr. Lichiello is passionate about community engagement and has served on non-profit boards and held the office of Board President for the Friends of the Forest Library, Crisis Line of Central Virginia, and Women Education Leaders in Virginia. In addition, she has served on the Executive Committee and chaired the Membership Committee for the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools. She earned a BS in Journalism from West Virginia University plus a MEd in Educational Leadership and an EdD in Leadership Studies from the University of Lynchburg (formerly Lynchburg College). Her research interest is graduate student retention. Recently retired, Dr. Lichiello serves as Vice-President of Programs for the AAUW Lynchburg Affiliate, volunteers at Valor Farm, and is a member of The Piecemakers quilting group. She has been a member of AAUW since 2008 and continues to mentor several of her graduate students as they pursue their personal and professional goals.

Virginia Kress is running for re-election as VP for Finance.

Virginia Kress has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Massachusetts where she specialized in Latin American Studies. After graduating, Virginia worked in a law firm in New York City in its commercial real estate group for about two years. She left to earn a Master of Library Science from Simmons College in Boston. Most of her career has been in the commercial real estate finance field. Virginia earned a Master's in Real Estate from Johns Hopkins University. Before retiring in 2018, she was vice president and manager of loan administration at U.S. Bank in its commercial real estate division. Virginia joined AAUW in 2013 as an Alexandria Branch member. She served as branch treasurer, co-vice president for programs, and public policy coordinator. Virginia volunteers as a docent at the Anderson House, the national headquarters for the Society of Cincinnati in Washington DC. For several years, she has volunteered with ALIVE, a non-profit fighting hunger and poverty, as a warehouse coordinator for their furniture committee. Virginia also works part-time at the Kennedy Center as an usher in the concert hall. She plays doubles tennis with several local groups. As an associate member of At Home Alexandria, she participates in their various social activities and recently joined the Board of Directors.



Laura Browning Greenfield is running for re-election as VP for Membership.



Laura Browning Greenfield attended her first AAUW Virginia state conference in 2022 in Harrisonburg, VA. A presenter requested donations of clothing and other items for the female residents of the Gemeinschaft Home. Within a few months, the Hampton Branch members donated clothes and other items from a drive she sponsored. Laura is a retired educator from Newport News Public Schools where she served as a special education teacher and Title I coordinator of the No Child Left Behind program. Before starting her second career in the school system, she worked for over 20 years with the Newport News Department of Human Services as a supervisor. She graduated from Morgan State University (HBCU in Baltimore, MD) with a BS in Business Administration and earned credits from Old Dominion University to obtain her teacher's license. Laura's creative eye has been praised for her floral arrangements and gift baskets. She enjoys writing and has co-authored a book for caregivers with church members. Joining Hampton Branch in 2019, she has been involved in activities and volunteered to serve in vacant positions. She is currently the VP of membership and the finance officer with the branch. The joy of her life is her son Greg and daughter-in-love Sonja. Their three daughters keep her young as she simply enjoys being called Grandma!

Meg Tucillo is running for re-election as Co-VP for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Meg Tucillo is currently the co-vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion. She has been a member of the Arlington Branch since 2010. During this time, she has served three terms as branch co-president, three terms as vice president for program, and chair of the scholarship committee since 2014. She retired in 2012 as assistant superintendent for Arlington Public Schools, where she had previously served as an elementary school principal. In her work as assistant superintendent, she also served as the school system's Title IX coordinator and provided diversity training for school administrators. Meg received her BA in Education from Molloy College in New York and her Master's in Special Education from George Mason University. In addition to her professional career, Meg is also a founder of the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families, and continues as a board member of its Second Chance Program for youth involved in drugs or alcohol. She has also served for 25 years on the board of A-SPAN (now known as PathForward), a non-profit focused on the needs of those experiencing homelessness, and currently serves as chair of its Emeritus Council.



Erica Brown-Meredith, PhD, is running for re-election as Co-VP for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Erica Brown-Meredith, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work, Norfolk State University. Her scholarly and teaching interests include the impact of intersectional gender bias on women of Color leadership in higher education; multi-dimensions of racism on mental health on Black well-being; academic advising and equity in higher education for first-generation, limited-income, minoritized racial and ethnic, and transfer students; diversity, equity, and inclusive instructional and curricular pedagogical practices; and proactive advising practices in social work education programs. Dr. Brown-Meredith holds bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in Social Work and has served as a Certified School Social Worker. The Global Community for Academic Advisors (NACADA), named her an emerging leader honoree. Dr. Brown-Meredith has made profound influences on the practice of academic advising professionally, mental health in communities of Color, and high impact practices in higher education in the form of conference planning, local and national presentations, global webinars, and institutional consultation services. Dr. Brown-Meredith has earned several professional awards of distinction: Faculty Citizen Leadership Award and Advocate of the Year, Professional Excellence and Devoted Service to Students Award, and NACADA Outstanding Advising Program Award.

The Voting Process for the Election of State Officers Will Begin May 1

You must cast your online vote by the deadline of May 20, 2025, because we need a quorum of seven (7) percent of the membership for the election. If we don't have a quorum, the new state officers cannot take office on July 1, 2025.

Please take the time to vote as a responsible AAUW of Virginia member.

VOTING WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLINE TO ALL AAUW OF VIRGINIA MEMBERS WITH EMAIL ADDRESSES.

New members who have joined by April 15 will be eligible to vote in the 2025 election.

WATCH FOR YOUR VOTING INSTRUCTIONS IN EMAILS BETWEEN MARCH AND APRIL 2025.

Do not ignore emails from AAUW of Virginia during March and April! These will contain instructions and reminders about voting. This year again, we will use software from an outside vendor, ElectionBuddy, to conduct our election and tally the results. Therefore, individual votes cannot be seen by AAUW of Virginia members. We will let you know when the link to the electronic ballot is emailed to members so that, in case you do not receive the email, you can check your email junk or spam files. Questions concerning the election can be directed to Sandy Lawrence (sandyaauwatjuno.com).

HERE IS THE SCHEDULE OF 2025 VOTING:

February 10–April 20: Verify that your email address is correct in your AAUW online account (Community Hub Database)

May 1: Email ballots to members for voting until May 20

May 20: Voting ends at 11:45 p.m.

*Sandy Lawrence
Voting Chair*

College and University Partners



There are currently 12 college/university partners in Virginia; they're posted on the AAUW website. The number may change as this is the time of year institutions enroll in the College/University Partners Program. The institutions are as follows:

Virginia College/
University
Partners

Mary Baldwin University
Marymount University
Northern Virginia Community College
Randolph College
Roanoke College
Shenandoah University
Sweet Briar College
University of Lynchburg
University of Mary Washington
University of Virginia at Wise
Virginia State University
Washington and Lee University

The College/University program co-chairs, Barbara Woodlee and Marsha Melkonian, held a Zoom meeting for branch members interested in learning more about the College/University Partners Program on January 28.

At the Zoom session, they reminded attendees about the location and contents of the **C/U Toolkit** created by National, answered questions, and provided an opportunity for sharing experiences and ideas.

As Co-College/University Partners Program Chairs for the AAUW-VA-Board, they are available to assist you as you connect with higher education institutions. Please contact us at any point. Marsha can be reached at marshamelkaauwatgmail.com and Barbara at barbarawoodleeatgmail.com.

Sign in to the AAUW website and go to <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/leader-resources-tools/> then click on the headline to reach the documents provided.

College/University Member Toolkit

AAUW is pleased to share this toolkit designed to assist branches with the recruitment, renewal, and engagement of current and prospective college/university members. In addition to FAQs, there's a CU membership flyer, instructions on how to join and sign up student members, and flyers to encourage students, staff, and faculty on campus to access salary negotiation and financial literacy training.

*Barbara Woodlee
Marsha Melkonian
C/U Co-Chairs*

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)

Oftentimes, the edges of public policy and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging become blurry and blend into a common concern. That is certainly the case with the recent decision of Kentucky’s District Court to vacate the updated Title IX rules making it easier for schools to dismiss cases, harder to hold perpetrators of sexual harassment accountable, and more difficult for victims to get needed support. This happened as several colleges and universities dropped their DEI positions and eliminated their DEI programs. In several states, legislation has been introduced – or passed – reining in DEI programs, claiming the financial resources are ill-spent. In Virginia, Gov. Youngkin banned the teaching of “inherently divisive concepts,” and changed the name of Virginia’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by replacing Equity with Opportunity.

Does your branch have a relationship with a local college or university? Have you reached out to the director of their DEI program? Does your school district have a DEI office? Have you spoken with the Title IX coordinator at your local school district or university about the impacts of the Kentucky ruling? What can we do collectively and at the branch level to collaborate with others concerned about the future of DEIB programs and support in the coming years? Let’s work together!

Meg Tuccillo
Co-Vice President for DEIB

Legacy Circle



EMPOWER FUTURE GENERATIONS

Join the Legacy Circle to ensure AAUW's mission continues to advance gender equity through education, advocacy, and research.



SCAN TO LEARN
MORE

NEED MORE INFO?

Contact your state liaison or the national office at planned-giving@aauw.org.

DC, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV

Kristin Moyer

kcmoyer65@gmail.com

TOGETHER WE CAN SHAPE THE FUTURE

bit.ly/AAUWLegacy

Branches in Action

The **Alexandria Branch** participated in the Atlantic Regional Conference with branch Co-President Diane Schrier and former Co-President Danielle Beach co-chairing. AARP presented a seminar on fraud and scams to members. Then the branch co-sponsored with the Mt. Vernon Branch a discussion on the importance of music education with Grammy Award winner Annie Ray. In November, Deborah Todd of Voices for America led a panel discussion of women in media and what they face, and have faced, over the years. In December, members had a delicious holiday brunch at Belle Haven Country Club, and newly elected Mayor Alyia Gaskins gave an enthusiastic talk. In January, members discussed the challenges women face in science, including theft of work, sexism, and resulting loss of income.

*Diane Schrier
Co-President*

After an eventful fall, when the **Arlington Branch** celebrated its 80th birthday with cake and members sharing its history, it collected 100 books for the Women's Prison Book Project. Members ended the year with the holiday luncheon with branch member Dr. Emma Violand Sanchez, author of "Dreams and Shadows: An Immigrant's Journey," giving a moving preview of her memoir which is coming out in March.

The January and February monthly programs featured a speaker from the local food bank and a presentation on women in the military. The March program will be a panel discussion focusing on the Arlington women who stood up to massive resistance, the political campaign in Virginia in the 1950s to stop the integration of schools. The branch supports Arlington's annual Science Fair with judges and will recognize the winners in April.

The Arlington Community High School Lunch Bunch had about 15 young women attending the lunches, who identified the careers they would like information about and are keeping journals documenting goals for the year. One activity members had was sharing the origins of their names. Since the girls come from all over the world the discussion was a great way for everyone to know more about each other. The book club selections for the next few months include "Pachinko," "Only Street in Paris: Life on the Rue des Martyrs," and "The Women."

*Terry Bratt
President*

The **Fredericksburg Area Branch** is pleased to announce that all steps required for affiliation have been completed. The branch members and prospective members met in January to make plans for 2025. The branch's first educational program is scheduled for February 22 at 2 p.m. The presentation will be "Caesar's Wife Must Be Above Suspicion: Politics, Religion, Sex, and Drama in Ancient Rome." The speaker will be Liane Houghtalin, Professor Emerita of Classics at the University of Mary Washington, and the program will be held on the university campus. For more information, contact Janet Hedrick at jhedrick815atgmail.com or the branch's Facebook page.

*Janet Hedrick
President*

This year, the **Greater Manassas Branch** celebrates its 50th anniversary. Sadly, one of the founding members, Joyce Eagles, died suddenly last summer. Joyce was born in Massachusetts and went to school there. She graduated from the University of Massachusetts with a BA in zoology. She worked at



the Belchertown State School helping intellectually disabled children for six years before moving on to other pursuits. She and her family moved to Manassas in 1974 where Joyce became an AAUW life member and began her advocacy and

lobbying efforts from local to state government. Her family moved to Woodbridge where her legacy continued. Joyce served as a parliamentarian for the state board.

Members learned that a life member who moved to South Carolina is in the same zip code area as a recently resettled Woodbridge branch member. It's truly a small world!

*Susan Bardenhagen
Membership Vice President*

The **Greater Richmond Branch** had a wonderful holiday social in December at the home of Hortense Mitchell. It was a great opportunity to bond and recharge. The branch is looking forward to a productive and rewarding New Year. Members hosted a wine tasting at Gramophone Wine Bar in Richmond on February 15. Proceeds from the event support local scholarships for former foster children. The branch supports community partner, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Heartbeats, with the 100th-anniversary challenge by donating 100 items to this program whose goal is to reduce maternal deaths due to domestic violence and systemic racism. Virginia has one of the highest rates of maternal death in the nation. Once individuals are enrolled in the program, Heartbeats provides support throughout pregnancy and for up to two years after. Please check out more information about the program's work at vcuhealth.org.

*Lisa Scott
Co-President*

The **Hampton Branch** began its program year in September with a branch meeting and completing 250 postcards for Get Out the Vote/Reclaim Our Vote. The following week, the branch president and membership vice president attended the Atlantic Regional Conference in Glen Allen, VA.

In October, a branch member attended the voter registration drive held by the **Virginia Beach Branch** at Bryant and Stratton College. The following day, the Hampton Branch held its voter registration drive at the Hampton campus of Bryant and Stratton College.

Members gathered at Angelo's Restaurant for a holiday celebration and to recognize the branch's 75th birthday. After dinner, the history of the branch was shared. Following the history, a dramatic reading of "Ain't I A Woman," the speech Sojourner Truth gave at the Ohio Women's Conference in 1851, was enthusiastically received. A raffle of items donated by branch members provided additional entertainment for the evening. Proceeds benefited the branch scholarship fund.

The year ended on a high note with the branch receiving three stars from the Five Star Program for 2023-2024. The stars were in Advancement, Communication & External Relations, and Programming.

*Carolyn Stewart
President*

In keeping with promoting lifelong learning, the **Lynchburg Branch's** fall programs featured local educators who shared their expertise. In September, Dr. Neil Sumerlin presented "The Woman Who Measured the Stars," which detailed the life and work of Henrietta Swan Leavitt and her contributions to astronomy.

Lynchburg Branch continued...

This was followed by the November program which included lunch and an informative presentation, "Commitment to Education: Anne Spencer and the Teachers from Pierce Street," by Dr. Nina Salmon and one of her students. Members engaged in an interactive session that included reading and interpreting Anne Spencer's poems.

The book discussion group continues to meet on the third Tuesday of designated months to discuss selected books, and members are working on the 100th Anniversary 100 for 100 community projects and a theme basket for the raffle at the state conference. The remaining 2024-2025 programs will focus on history, women in municipal leadership, and recognition of the annual scholarship winners.

*Paula C. Lichiello
VP Programs*

The **McLean Area Branch's** program theme this year is Women Lead the Way. Members enjoyed programs on Women in Politics with a speaker from the National Democracy Institute (NDI) and a young woman who ran for the Iowa State legislature; Policy Options to support the health and well-being of healthcare workers with George Mason University's College of Public Health, and the documentary "Dark Side of the Full Moon" with writer and director Maureen Fura.

The public policy committee led the branch in writing 500 Get Out the Vote postcards this fall and it continues to inform and engage members. Work continues on the branch STEM recognition awards and work with Graham Road Elementary School. Several members enjoyed the opportunity to attend the regional conference in September and are looking forward to the state conference in March.

*Cheryl Williams
Co-President*

The **Northwest District** held its annual meeting on January 11th. The guest speakers were Christopher Kurtz and a student from the Shenandoah Valley Scholars Latino Initiative Inc (SLI). SLI is a community-based, not-for-profit organization built on partnerships with high schools, universities, communities, students, and parents, and dedicated to advancing Latinx students' post-high school educational opportunities. SLI advocates for Latinx opportunities and strives for social justice and equity. Mr. Kurtz was a dynamic speaker who highlighted SLI's success for students. Theresa Merkel, co-vice president for program for the Winchester Branch spearheaded the program.

Northwest District continued...

The **Greater Richmond Branch** will host the 2026 state conference. Carol Stephens has volunteered to be the conference chair. More details will be forthcoming.

*Mary Anne Graham
Northwest District Representative*

Reston-Herndon Area Branch members kicked off 2025 by participating in Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations at Reston Community Center by volunteering for activities and attending the Reston Symphony Orchestra concert in the evening to salute Dr. King.

The cultural arts committee scheduled informal monthly lunch meetings to keep members connected. The geography of the branch is becoming wider with members moving to senior housing options, so the lunches will be scheduled all over the area.

The branch will be inviting other local branches to join on Saturday, March 15, at 10 a.m. at the North County Government Center in Reston for an unforgettable event. We'll welcome Rev. Sherrie Quander, an amazing woman and extraordinary storyteller, whose family holds the distinction of being the oldest recorded African American family in the United States. The branch is planning other programs in the spring on local government issues and public education.

*Janine Greenwood
President*

The **Smith Mountain Branch** spent much of the summer and fall preparing for the annual fundraiser — the fashion show luncheon with silent auction: Ignite Your Style. The event drew a sold-out crowd of 270 women from the Smith Mountain Lake area. Funds raised during the event support college scholarships for women and girls in the three counties surrounding Smith Mountain Lake, summer science camps for elementary school girls, and other community activities supporting local women. This year, an additional college scholarship will be awarded by memorial donations to a 2025 STEM field scholarship honoring Toni Seidemann, past branch president and AAUW Virginia board member.

September and October brought a Southwest District meeting and the AAUW Atlantic Regional Conference for attendees to network with other AAUW members. Several members volunteered at the Virginia Women's Conference on November 23rd at the Hotel Roanoke Conference Center. AAUW of Virginia hosted a table at the event, sharing information about AAUW's mission and initiatives. Senator Mark R. Warner hosted this annual conference. The conference serves as a valuable venue for Virginia women of all ages to:

Smith Mountain Branch continued...

- Network with peers.
- Learn from experts on a variety of important topics.
- Access resources provided by federal, state, and local agencies.

December found participating members enjoying memorable holiday-themed outings in the region. These included:

- Attending "I'll Be Home for Christmas," a play based on a World War II radio show.
- Visiting Lynchburg for a holiday concert "A Dickens of a Christmas," which included a delightful handbell performance.

*Ann Johnson/Margaret Kauffman
Newsletter Co-Chairs*

The **Southeast District** meeting was held on February 2, at WHRO. The speaker was Tamara Allen, Program Director for UpVote Virginia. UpVote Virginia is a democracy reform organization that believes civic engagement doesn't end just because an election is over. The organization ensures that voters have the tools needed to become active participants as their elected officials govern. Among the topics Tamara explored was ranked choice voting, a presentation the **Virginia Beach Branch** especially enjoyed at a recent meeting. The faculty and students from the Women's and Gender Studies Department at Old Dominion University were invited.

*Tammie Mullins-Rice/Barbara Woodlee
Co-Southeast District Representatives*

Three **Southwest District** branch presidents attended Smith Mountain's annual scholarship fundraiser on November 13. They were joined by 10 additional members from their branches. We all enjoyed lunch, a fashion show, and silent auction shopping. I think it's safe to say a rousing, enjoyable time was had by all!

P. S. Invitations to special events are a wonderful way to encourage district unity, share ideas, and get to know each other better!



All Four SWVA District Branch Presidents at Smith Mountain's Gala Event. L to R: Betsy DeWeese, Smith Mountain; Carol Siler, Roanoke; Susan McSllarrow, District Representative; Anita Aymer, Wytheville; and Anitra Webster, Lynchburg.

*Susan McSllarrow
Southwest District Representative*

The **Springfield-Annandale Branch** scheduled two Zoom meetings for the winter months. In honor of Human Trafficking Awareness Month, the January 8 general meeting featured Deepa Patel, the co-founder of Trauma and Hope. She spoke on Empowering Women: Human Trafficking Awareness, Prevention, and Support Strategies. Ms. Patel's work has earned her awards and recognition. On February 7, the branch featured Mr. Jon White, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) expert on climate. He addressed concerns about the impact of people on nature and the future sustenance of its citizens. Members are planning for the annual spring fling and silent auction which will be held on May 9, 2025, at the Springfield Golf and Country Club. Please save the date!

*Cathleen Boivin
Co-President*

Winchester Branch continued...

At the August meeting, board members agreed to investigate celebrating the 100th anniversary of AAUW-VA by donating 100 children's Spanish language books to the Winchester Little Libraries (WLL) organization. In less than 24 hours, a member contacted the Hester J. Hodgdon Libraries for All (HJH) who agreed to donate not 100, but 300 books, if the branch would pay for shipping. One member's employer paid for the shipping and the branch received confirmation from WLL that they would gladly accept the donation. The initiative has resulted in HJH providing even more books to several other organizations that collaborate with the local Hispanic community.

*Pat Kadel
President*

Several **Vienna Area Branch's** programs are co-sponsored with the local public library. This partnership helps secure a room for meetings and helps with publicity.

A successful past program was on affordable housing in the Vienna area: Jerry Poje, a member of the Fairfax County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee and the non-partisan Campaign for Housing and Civic Engagement, was the speaker. His lecture highlighted shelter needs, implications for various demographic groups, and ongoing county efforts. Discussion focused on community roles in meeting the challenge.

At another meeting, Penny Gross, recently retired vice chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, discussed the best ways to raise issues with the board, how the county government works, political issues of concern to women, and ways to get involved with the community.

For a change of pace last spring, members had a field trip to the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial and Lucy Burns Workhouse Museum.

*Gail Rosner
Co-President*

In the **Woodbridge Branch's** 53rd year, members look forward to presenting the 33rd "SUCCESS!" STEAM Careers Conference in March with the **Greater Manassas Branch**. The branch lost two members who championed the event by presenting on gender equity: Joyce Eagles and Lillian Orlich. Both women were pillars of the community. Joyce was the first woman to chair the Prince William County (PWC) Service Authority. She was its longest-serving member, appointed by three successive supervisors. Joyce established the PWC Library Foundation which allocated neighborhood libraries for the community and Cooperative Extension projects which helped support families getting their first homes. Miss Orlich (as she was affectionately and respectfully known) was born, raised, and earned her college degree in New York City, came to Virginia to teach many high school subjects in 1950, and became the guidance director for 69 years. The Woodbridge Branch will again serve as organizational judges for the regional science fair, looking to empower future female STEM leaders.

*Susan Bardenhagen
SUCCESS! Conference Coordinator*

This past February, the **Winchester Branch** celebrated Black History and Women's History Months with the Winchester Chapter of the NAACP in a jointly sponsored public forum on Barrier's Broken, Barriers That Remain: Leadership. Building upon the event's success, the two organizations co-sponsored a second forum in October, Barriers Broken, Barriers That Remain: Women's Health. The program included viewing the documentary, "Below the Belt," followed by a panel of local healthcare professionals.



Lillian Orlich

The **Wytheville Branch** membership dinner in September was a success, bringing in six new members. Susan McSlarrow, the Southwest District representative, also attended.

The branch is proud to say it has received its first STAR from the National Five Star program! The branch attained the Communications & External Relations star.



The branch partnered with the Family Resource Center (a women's shelter) and has collected over \$100 in gift cards and supplied over 100 items to help furnish an apartment for the women. Members will be celebrating this connection at the conference for the 100th-anniversary activity.

The branch sent 100 postcards for the Reclaim Our Vote campaign and registered students to vote at Wytheville Community College.

In March, the branch will have its annual STEM event for middle school girls. Since 2014, the branch has successfully conducted its STEM program for 30 – 50 girls annually.

Above Photo:

Membership dinner, September 24, 2024, at the home of Alma Watson

Anita Aymer
President

Public Policy

2025 Lobby Day Recap

Lobby Day on January 15th and 16th was very successful. Thirty members met on Wednesday evening for a delicious dinner organized by Laura Wimmer. Alex Blocker of Fund Our Schools talked about important upcoming education bills in the General Assembly. Janine Greenwood then gave a pointer on lobbying techniques. Denise Murden spoke about the upcoming maternal health bills and Diane Schrier spoke about the marriage constitutional amendments and voting that had just passed the House. The next morning we met with the legislators. We visited over 46 offices and, most times, met with the legislator. Our gathering place was the cafeteria. Diane Schrier spoke at the Senate Education and Health Committee meeting on the importance of funding education and supporting SB 977. We were then introduced in the Senate by Senator Boysko and in the House by Delegate Bennett-Parker. Afterward, some headed home due to the impending storm, and others gathered for lunch and fellowship.



L to R: Diane Schrier, Nancy Kula, Senator Adam P. Ebbin, Leslie Tourigny, and Lane Stone.



L to R: Del Rip Sullivan, Betsy Schroeder, Carol Mourighan, Suzanne Rothwell, and Janet Taylor.



AAUW-VA members in the House of Delegates being introduced by Del Elizabeth Bennett Parker. In the forefront, Carolyn Stewart and Daisy Wilder.

AAUW-VA Bylaws

Call for Proposed State Bylaws Amendments and Proposed Resolutions

A call for the submission of proposed AAUW of Virginia Bylaws amendments and resolutions to be considered at the AAUW of Virginia Annual Business Meeting on April 26, 2025, was published in the fall issue of the AAUW of Virginia Vision, with a deadline of December 1. No submissions were received.

AAUW Proposed Bylaws, Governance, and Dues Proposals

On January 8, 2025, the AAUW Board of Directors posted to the AAUW website and distributed an email requesting membership comments on the following proposals to be voted on by the membership beginning in April 2025.

1. Dues [Click here](#)
2. Bylaws [Click here](#)
3. Public Policy Priorities for 2025 - 2027 [Click here](#)

Dues Changes: The Board of Directors advises that the Board will consider a \$5 per year increase in dues from 2025-2029 because member dues have not kept pace with the cost of supporting AAUW's membership and the national office. In 2029, the annual AAUW dues will rise to \$97 from the current \$72.

National Bylaws Changes: The Board of Directors recommended three changes to the AAUW National Bylaws, none of which require changes to branch or state bylaws. The proposed amendments would revise the language:

- Article V Section 2 allows the Board, at its discretion, to extend the Board term of a chair who has one year remaining in the two-year chair term.
- Articles VI, VIII, and IX provide, at the Board's discretion, for vice officers and vice committee and task force chair positions adding flexibility to leadership structures and succession planning.
- Article IX Section 4 provides for the removal of a specific date for the transition of committee chairs to allow for smoother transitions from term to term.

Public Policy Priorities Changes: The Board of Directors recommends changes to the Public Policy principles and priorities. While the principles would continue to emphasize core values regarding education, economic security, and social justice, the proposal would remove issues that, while valuable and important components to equity, go beyond the scope of AAUW's focus on higher education and are so broad as to not guide the types of policy approaches that would be in line with AAUW's mission.

The proposed policy priorities for federal advocacy focus on equity in higher education and were chosen based on critical need, political viability, and potential for distinctive AAUW contribution or leadership.

Branch Bylaws Amendments

Required Update to Branch Bylaws: Branch presidents and bylaws chairs should continue to update their bylaws by replacing the first seven articles with the 2023 AAUW Affiliate Model Bylaws text that is published by AAUW at [BYLAWS](#). That text reflects conforming changes to amendments adopted in 2023 to the AAUW Bylaws. Affiliates are required to make these bylaws changes by June 30, 2026. Branches that have not done so as yet, are encouraged to make the required changes early in 2025. Please submit the proposed revised bylaws before completion to me for review.

Branch Bylaws Changes and Governance Issues: Branches are required to contact me to discuss any proposed changes to their branch bylaws before approval by the branch board and members so that I can provide advice on such changes. I am also available to assist you with other bylaws and governance issues. I can be reached using <https://aauw-va.aauw.net/contact-us/>.

*Suzanne Rothwell
Bylaws and Resolutions Chair*

Five Star Program

What a wonderful way to end 2024! Tremayne Parquet, Deputy Director of Advancement, notified branch presidents of their FY 24 5-STAR AWARDS by email on December 31. Once emails were opened, AAUW-VA had **12** branches awarded STARS.

Alexandria, Springfield-Annandale, and Virginia Beach were each awarded **5 STARS**, which is an extraordinary accomplishment, earning stars in the five categories: Advancement, Communication, Programs, Governance, and Policy. Congratulations to other branches for outstanding dedication to advancing AAUW's missions of gender equality for women and girls by earning stars in various categories: **Reston-Herndon Area** was awarded **4 STARS**; **Hampton** and **Winchester** were awarded **3 STARS**; **Falls Church Area** and **Portsmouth** were awarded **2 STARS**; **Arlington, Greater Richmond, Vienna Area, and Wytheville** were awarded **1 STAR**. Congratulations again on this well-deserved honor!

A reminder, for any branch that has questions about **STARS not being awarded** in any specific category, please direct your questions to Tremayne at parquettataauw.org. Virtual office hours can also be utilized to resolve concerns. Click on aauw.org/membership; then click State & Branch Tools and scroll to Still Have Questions; register for either Tuesday (3:00 p.m.) or Thursday (3:30 p.m.).

We encourage branch members to start documentation early and tracking activities in the five categories so AAUW-VA can break the ceiling with 24/24 Branches participating in the **FIVE STAR PROGRAM**.

Laura Browning Greenfield
Membership and Branch Development Vice President

Mini-Grant Instructions 2025-2026

APPLICATION FOR BRANCH PUBLIC POLICY MINI-GRANT FOR 2025-2026 (Instructions)

The Board of Directors of AAUW of Virginia voted to allocate \$3,000 for the State Mini-Grant Program for the 2025-2026 program year.

- Branches interested in applying for a public policy mini-grant must complete and submit an application on-line by going to <https://aauw-va.aauw.net/mini-grant/mini-grants/>.
- **Applications are due no later than June 30, 2025. Decisions on mini-grants will be announced mid-August, 2025.**
- Planned activities for mini-grants must address an AAUW of Virginia or National AAUW public policy priority which appear on each of the respective websites: <https://aauw-va.net> and www.aauw.org. In addition, to the extent possible, each should reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion in their organization and objectives.
- By using mini-grants to support and advance public policy priorities, branches are able to address a wide variety of issues, including, but not limited to: economic security for women and families, including by closing the gender pay gap, and supporting paid family/medical leave; Title IX, including eliminating campus sexual violence; access to health care; voting rights; human trafficking; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); promoting STEM studies/careers; salary negotiation skills (Smart Start/Work Smart); ratification of the ERA.
- **Innovative, creative projects will be given preferential considerations.** Applicants will be asked to indicate what additional financial resources are available for the project from other sources, if any, or if the mini-grant is expected to fund the entire project.
- **Projects will not be renewed for more than two years.**
- We will review and judge all applications based on the above criteria as well as the following factors:
 - Public policy focus
 - Originality
 - Outcomes anticipated
 - Community outreach including contribution to DEI goals
 - Membership recruitment
 - Collaboration with other organizations
 - Financial need for the funds requested
- Applications must be for activities completed any time from July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026.
- Mini-grants will be awarded in amounts from \$50-\$500 and proposals may be approved for a mini-grant for less than the amount requested.
- In the event that a project funded by a mini-grant is canceled, there are two contingency plans:
 - The branch will be permitted to retain the grant if the branch has documentable expenditures associated with the cancelled project/event, or
 - If the branch did not have any expenditures, then AAUW of VA will retain the grant money.
- Mini-grant recipients will be required to submit a **short** report at the completion of their activity, along with paid receipts, or invoices if applicable. Instructions will be sent with the mini-grant award letter.
 - Branches awarded mini-grants must submit a Reimbursement Request Form and all receipts by June 30, 2026 to the AAUW-VA VP for Finance.
 - Branches awarded mini-grants will provide a brief report to the Mini-Grant Committee on the results of the project including goals achieved, level of participation, and any other information to document the activity. Pictures, if appropriate, are encouraged.

The AAUW Greatest Needs Fund Raffle Baskets Fundraiser is Back!

Due to popular demand, the AAUW Greatest Needs Fund Raffle Baskets Fundraiser will be returning during the 2025 AAUW-VA State Conference. This fundraiser provides a social venue, friendly competition, and an opportunity to raise funds to further AAUW's mission of promoting equality for women and girls. Baskets created by branches will be raffled, and the winners will be announced at the close of the conference on Saturday, March 29, 2025. A branch may submit one or more themed basket for the raffle. The rules to participate are simple: Prior registration is necessary for entry. Provide the number of baskets your branch will enter and their titles or themes. Please use the following link to register your basket information by the deadline: **FRIDAY, March 7, 2025**. Register baskets here!

- A 4"x 6" card should be attached to each basket with the title, a brief description, and the name of the contributing branch.
- All items must be in the Baskets Display Room at the Sheraton Suites by 7:00 p.m. on Friday, March 28, 2025.

Raffle tickets for the baskets will be available during the conference at \$7 for one ticket, \$15 for three tickets, or \$30 for seven tickets. Winners or a proxy must be present at the end of the conference to pick up their baskets. Please direct any questions to Phyllis Yoshida, pgyoshataol.com.

Why Contribute to the Greatest Needs Fund?

Every contribution to AAUW creates meaningful change — but your dollars have the greatest impact when directed to AAUW's Greatest Needs.

The Greatest Needs Fund is a cornerstone of unrestricted support, empowering AAUW to address emerging challenges and seize new opportunities swiftly and effectively. You enable AAUW to sustain its core operations, expand its programs, and advocate for gender equity on multiple fronts by contributing to this fund.

Your support fuels key initiatives such as economic empowerment programs, voter engagement campaigns, and policy advocacy efforts. These contributions ensure AAUW remains agile, responsive, and impactful, adapting to evolving needs while continuing to lead the fight for equity for women and girls.

Every dollar is managed to maximize its impact, helping AAUW drive meaningful, lasting change. Together, we can create a world of unrestricted possibilities for women and girls.

Ann Johnson
AAUW Funds Chair

AAUW-Virginia Board Calendar 2024-2025

March

1	Deadline for “early bird” registration for AAUW-VA Conf.	Conference Chairs
5	Equal Pay Day	
7	Deadline to reserve hotel room @ special rate for Conference	Conference Chair
8	International Women’s Day	Public Policy VP
10	Deadline for late registration for AAUW-VA Conf.	Conference Chairs
15	Deadline for additional nominees for state officers	Nominating Comm.
28	AAUW-VA Board Meeting, 1p	President
28	AAUW-VA State Conference, optional day (Alexandria)	Conference Co-Chairs
29	AAUW-VA State Conference, (Alexandria)	Conference Co-Chair
30	Deadline for members to verify email address in Community Hub	Voting/ Elections Ch.

April

15	Members by this date are eligible to vote in AAUW-VA election	Voting/ Elections Ch.
24	Virtual Public Policy Meeting, (6p)	Public Policy VP
26	(Virtual) Annual Business Meeting, (10a)	President

May

1	Online voting opens for AAUW-VA officers	Voting/ Elections Ch.
3	AAPI Equal Pay Day	
15	Deadline for Vision articles – Summer	Vision Copy Editor
20	Online voting for AAUW-VA officers closes at 11:45 p.m.	Voting/Elections Ch.
23	AAUW-VA voting results reported to recording secretary	Voting/Elections Ch.
28	Voting results reported to the board	Voting/Elections Ch.
TBD	NCCWSL, National Conf. for College Women Student Leaders	AAUW- National

June

1	Current branch presidents enter 2024-25 officers in Hub by July 1	Pres/Administrator
15	Vision distributed	Communications VP
26	Virtual Public Policy Meeting, (6p)	Public Policy VP
30	Last date for branch presidents to enter 2024-25 officers in Hub	President
30	Reports/receipts for mini-grant projects due to AAUW-VA VP, Finance	College/Univ Reps

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