

AAUW Vision

of Virginia

Summer 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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Save the Dates!

- The Northwest District will host the 2026 AAUW-VA Conference in Glen Allen, VA, April 18, 2026.
- AAUW-VA Annual Business Meeting will take place May 2, 2026, at 3:00 p.m., via Zoom.

Stay tuned for more details!



AAUW of Virginia Leaders

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Lane Stone

Co-Vice Presidents for Program

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Leslie Tourigny

Vice President for Membership & Branch

Development

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Laura Southall

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VIRGINIA VISION

Copy Editor:
Mary Anne Graham

Layout Editor:
Tess Evans



From Your President

What Matters Most and What Happens Next

There is a war on higher education. And that matters. Need I mention that the funding that is being cut is from our tax dollars? In my non-work and non-AAUW time, I type for my husband. Usually it's about the defense budget, nuclear threats, and treaties, but recently he co-wrote a piece on this war on higher ed, specifically on the misconceptions fueling it. Here's a [link](#) and a few takeaways:

- Political socialization (how people acquire their fundamental ideas about politics and public policy) doesn't happen in college. Research shows it's baked in between the ages of 7 and 17.
- Profs are not going to get far trying to radicalize Gen-Z students. "Most are [skeptical of politics and government](#), and many regard politicians as [corrupt or incompetent](#). National surveys show that [nearly half](#) of all eligible voters now identify as neither Republicans nor Democrats but as 'Independents.'"
- Universities have gone corporate. The proselytizing just isn't happening. "A management culture [on campuses] that was once dominated by academics, including deans and department heads, has been displaced by an [administrative model](#) driven by lawyers, financial officers, and human resources specialists."

What happens next is up to us. During the launch of AAUW's new strategic plan, CEO Gloria Blackwell highlighted how well-positioned our organization is to advance equity for women and girls through education. This success comes from the contributions each of us makes. If you know me, you know I prioritize grassroots efforts. Of course, the point of the strategic plan is to demonstrate how powerful we can be when AAUW National and the branches work in alignment. Indeed, AAUW's strength lies in our collective power.

I'll conclude by thanking you all for the high turnout for the Annual Business Meeting in April. It was wonderful to see you!

In solidarity and sisterhood,

Lane

District Representatives

Northern

Sandy Lawrence
Sharon Zackula

Northwest

Mary Anne Graham

Southeast

Tammie Mullins-Rice
Barbara Woodlee

Southwest

Susan McSarrow

Tribute to U.S. Representative Gerald Connolly

AAUW of Virginia joins the Commonwealth of Virginia and the nation in mourning the passing of U.S. Rep. Gerald E. “Gerry” Connolly.

Many of us originally connected with Congressman Connolly when he served on the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County from 1995 to 2008, including five years as chairman. During his time on the board, he championed open space preservation, public transit expansion, environmental protection and strong investments in education.

Congressman Connolly consistently scored 100% in the AAUW Action Fund Congressional Voting Record which provides information about elected federal legislators through the votes they cast on issues that are critical to the Action Fund’s mission. He was a consistent supporter of legislation such as the Paycheck Fairness Act, the Family Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, the ERA, and Title IX. He and his staff consistently made themselves available to AAUW branches and members to listen to our concerns and champion our causes.

AAUW of Virginia extends its deepest condolences to the Connolly family and his team on Capitol Hill. We will miss him.

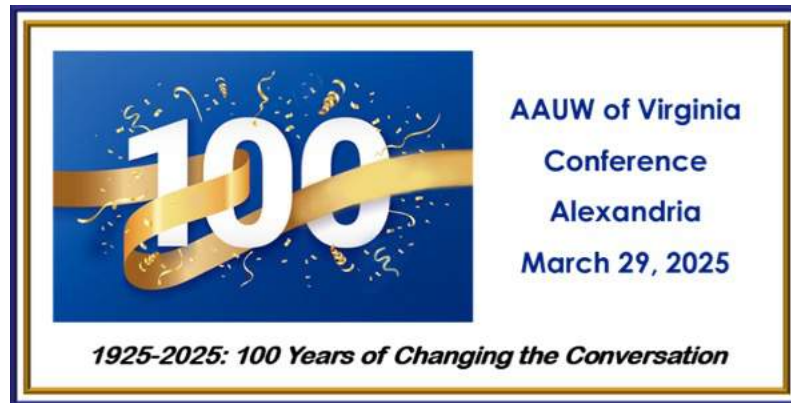
***Written by Janine Greenwood
Reston-Herndon Area Branch President***



Gerald Edward Connolly

AAUW-VA 100th Anniversary Conference

“Pictures Are Worth a Thousand Words”



Pre-Conference Activities

Conference attendees began arriving in Alexandria on the afternoon of Friday, March 28, 2025, to participate in pre-conference optional activities.

Eighteen attendees went on a tour of the **Freedom House Museum**. Run by the City of Alexandria in the building that at one time housed the largest firm in the United States trading enslaved Black people, the museum honors the lives and experiences of the enslaved and free Black people who lived in and were trafficked through Alexandria.



Visiting the Freedom House Museum

Another group of conference attendees went on a **Women’s History Walking Tour** guided by **Gayle Converse**, Co-Founder and Vice President of **Alexandria Celebrates Women**. One stop was the site of the former federal courthouse in Alexandria where, in 1917, the suffragists who were arrested for picketing in Washington, DC and then imprisoned in the DC Workhouse in Occoquan, were tried and released. The AAUW Alexandria Branch received a mini-grant from AAUW-VA to contribute to placing the historic marker at this site. Another stop was the site of the 1939 Alexandria Library Sit-In. Still another stop was for a gelato break!



Women's History Walking Tour Group
Tour leader Gayle Converse is at the far right in the picture.

Members gathered on the night of March 28 to celebrate our 100th anniversary with remarks and a toast led by AAUW-VA President Lane Stone (Alexandria), followed by the beautiful tones of the **A Cappella Collective**, **Metro Voices** women's chorus—the first of many “surprises” during the conference, i.e., presentations that were not included on the agenda.





Left to Right: Legacy Circle National Team Liaison Kristen Moyer (Vienna Area) recognized the newest member of Legacy Circle, Jane Newell (Greater Richmond)



Left to Right: Cheryl Spohnholtz (Mt. Vernon) and Sandy Lawrence (Springfield-Annandale)

The Main Event

“Oye. Oye. Oye.” At 8:30 a.m. on the 29th day of March in the year 2025, the 100th anniversary conference of the American Association of University Women of Virginia was called to order by **City of Alexandria Town Crier Ben Fiore-Walker** (another conference surprise).



Lane welcomes the 106 attendees from 18 of the 24 branches around the Commonwealth to the historic conference and celebration of our first 100 years!



City of Alexandria Mayor Alyia Gaskins welcomes conference attendees and presenters to the city and expresses her appreciation to the group for holding such a historic gathering in Alexandria.



We were honored to have **Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan (VA-04)** deliver the conference keynote, ***Beginning Another Century of Changing the Conversation***, and answer our questions. She brought down the house!





Lane and Rep. McClellan



Rep. McClellan and Tess Evans (Greater Richmond), AAUW-VA VP for Communications

AAUW Mini-Grants Change the Conversation in Your Community

Representatives from the McLean Area, Hampton, and Smith Mountain Branches described their very successful projects, which received AAUW-VA mini-grants, so other branches could come away with ideas for projects for their branches and perhaps apply for mini-grants. Applications are being accepted until June 30 for 2025-26 mini-grants.



Left to Right: Anita Booth and Sue Christie (McLean Area Branch), **“Establishing the Graham Road Elementary School Sensory Garden”**; Tonya Brown (Hampton Branch), **“A Day in the Life of STEM Women”**; and Linda Walters (Smith Mountain Branch), **“Can I Join Your Club?”**

The Changing Conversation About Title IX

A panel of experts from AAUW's coalition partners joined moderator Kalina Majercak, AAUW's Advocacy Manager, in discussing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. With the conversation about Title IX changing daily, they offered suggestions about what we should do as AAUW members.



Left to Right: Kalina; Shiwali Patel, Senior Director of Safe and Inclusive Schools, National Women's Law Center; and Emma Grasso Levine, Senior Manager, Title IX Policy and Programs, Know Your IX, a project of Advocates for Youth

Ceremonial 100th Anniversary Cake Cutting.

Top and bottom in pictures below: **Another conference surprise was when Northern District Co-Representative, CDR Sandy Lawrence, USN (Retired)**, equipped with her military sword, guided **Peggy Stotz** (McLean Area), conference attendee with the longest AAUW membership, and **Marge Mi** (Fredericksburg Area), conference attendee with the shortest AAUW membership, through the ceremonial cake cutting.



Delegate Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, representing the 5th Virginia House District in Alexandria where the conference was held, joined us for lunch and to make a special presentation, **which was another conference surprise**. She gave Lane a copy of HJ574 commending AAUW of Virginia on our 100th anniversary. Delegate Bennett-Parker had introduced this resolution, which was then passed by both Houses of the Virginia General Assembly.



As another conference surprise, Lane announced and thanked **Congressman Gerry Connolly (VA-11)**, (see page 3), for recognizing our 100th anniversary in the March 27, 2025, Congressional Record. (**Virginia State Senator Jennifer Boysko** also introduced a commending resolution (SJ420) recognizing our 100th anniversary, which was passed by the Virginia State Senate and House.)

Preventing People From Reading Books Changes the Conversation

Two giants in the library field addressed this topic. **Rose Dawson, Executive Director of the Alexandria Libraries**, discussed how the 1939 Alexandria Library sit-in still changes the conversation, and **Lisa Varga, Executive Director of the Virginia Library Association**, talked about how the threat of censorship in schools and public libraries changes the conversation.



Left to right: Lisa Varga; Leslie Tourigny (Alexandria and Virginia Beach), AAUW-VA Co-Vice President for Program; and Rose Dawson

Breaking Barriers: Trailblazing Innovators Who Are Changing the Conversation

Ashley Giordano, Manager of Program Management at the National Inventors Hall of Fame, spoke about how throughout history women have been championing change by innovating and solving problems. She highlighted some of these women and their inventions, including the women who invented the sports bra.



Left to right: Susan Burk (Springfield-Annandale), AAUW-VA Co-Vice President for Program, introducing Ashley Giordano

And a Gasps Was Heard in the Ballroom!

This next surprise was emotional for the audience and the presenter. Zeina Azzam, Poet Laureate of the City of Alexandria, unveiled and read the poem she wrote on commission for AAUW of Virginia to celebrate and memorialize our 100th anniversary. Members who were in attendance received a copy of the poem, which now appears on our AAUW of Virginia website and on page 15 of this *Vision* issue.



City of Alexandria Poet Laureate Zeina Azzam



Lane and Zeina Azzam

Announcing Two of the State Named Honorees for 2025

Another surprise! Every year AAUW of Virginia is able to name one state named honoree for every \$500 AAUW-VA donates to AAUW Funds. For 2025, AAUW-VA was able to designate four state named honorees.

The AAUW-VA State Board selected four individuals who have made an extraordinary impact on AAUW-Virginia beyond a single branch and/or community. Two were present at the conference. Ann Johnson (Smith Mountain), AAUW-VA Funds Chair, announced those two 2025 honorees: Denise Murden (Portsmouth) and Peggy Stotz (McLean Area). A third named honoree, Janine Greenwood (Reston-Herndon Area), was recognized at the Annual Business Meeting. The fourth state named honoree, Mary Lou Melley (McLean Area), will be recognized at a future date to be determined. (See pages 20-21).



Left to right: Denise Murden and Ann Johnson



Left to right: Ann Johnson and Peggy Stotz

Former AAUW-VA Presidents Still Smiling After All of These Years!



Enjoying Sisterhood



Left to right: Kris Hill and Linda Walters (Smith Mountain), Kate MacLeod and Gail Rosner (Vienna Area), and Ann Johnson and Laura Southall (Smith Mountain)



Left to right: Cheryl Spohnholtz (Mt. Vernon), Anita Aymer (Wytheville), Marsha Melkonian (Smith Mountain), Paula Lichiello (Lynchburg), and Denise Murden (Portsmouth)

The End of This Year's Conference!



Article prepared by Susan Burk and Leslie Tourigny, Co-VPs for Program

“There is no limit to what we,
as *women*, can accomplish.”

- Michelle Obama

Membership and Branch Development

Being inspired during the activities of the 100th AAUW-VA Anniversary celebration, I had a recurring thought of membership retention with the current idiom of boots on the ground. This phrase identifies people physically present in a place working to achieve common goals. Members of our state have been dealing with inequalities toward women and girls since 1925. Our determination to promote equity for all women and girls has guided and sustained us through our first 100 years. Our accomplishments over the years have assured us that we have and will continue doing worthwhile programs that will fuel the future of AAUW-VA.

The decrease in membership has been partially attributed to busy lives, dues increases, inactive members, and the disbandment of branches. Burnout occurs, and when the mantle cannot be passed, disbandment occurs.

Fairfax City was founded on July 23, 1973, and Harrisonburg was founded on May 9, 1929. These branches have a total of 148 years of joining campaigns, promoting programs, and participating in the goals of achieving equity for women and girls. Their decision to file forms for disbandment was not an easy one. We hope members from these branches will join another branch near their homes and consider branches that offer hybrid meetings.

We are proud to honor the eight branches that achieved 100% membership retention as of January 31, 2025. These branches are: Alexandria, Falls Church Area, Lynchburg, Greater Richmond, Virginia Beach, Woodbridge, Greater Manassas, and Vienna Area.

Let us continue to use the Branch Essentials Notebook on the AAUW-VA website to stay connected to branch development tools.

Thanks for all the energy and commitment during FY25. We are moving forward to new wins as we fuel the future of AAUW-VA.

Laura Browning Greenfield
Membership and Branch Development VP
New email: aauwvalauragatgmail.com

Lessons from the Moon

On the celebration of AAUW of Virginia's centennial year, March 2025

From Alexandria to Wytheville
we are 24 branches of the AAUW tree
planted in Virginia a century ago.
The state chapter came alive in 1925
under a waxing crescent moon,
the lunar phase that tells of intentionality and growth,
clarity and change.

For 100 years we have struggled and aspired,
untiring, to amplify the W in our logo—
the oversized letter that stands for
Women and their rights.
Women's Well-being.
Women's Work and Worth.
Women's Words of Wisdom
for our imperfect World.
We, the Women.

We are changing the conversation,
redirecting the thinking,
illuminating the territory,
advancing what's fair.

We believe in the melding of science
and hard work and intuition, research and caring,
the art of knowing and the skill of doing.
Like the moon's nurturing light,
Women embrace the world to change it,
to birth goodness, new beauty, new life
with the power of a strong and persistent
Women-led movement.

We, the Women of Virginia's AAUW
continue to fight for teachers' rights
and for funding free public schools.
We advocate for the civil liberties of Women and girls of color.
We champion access to STEM programs.
We promote women's reproductive rights.
We ensure equity and inclusivity in the workplace.
We uphold the noble principles of Title IX:
no sex-based discrimination in education.
We affirm that the ERA must become
the 28th Amendment of the US Constitution.

We are changing the conversation,
redirecting the thinking,
illuminating the territory,
advancing what's fair.

We applaud all—
the conversation trail-blazers and cutting-edgers,
the conversation sowers and spreaders,
the conversation modelers and engagers,
the conversation leaders and motivators,
the conversation changers.
We recognize all—in AAUW and in the
community—
proudly, lift up their work.

How lovely and meaningful
that tonight we have a new moon
modeling new beginnings,
reminding that our work for a new century is
before us.
We cannot see the shadowed moon
but we feel its promise.
As the coming crescent thickens each night
we grow with it and welcome its glow and gleam.
The moon will become more and more luminous
like our shared hopes,
our bright, essential mission.

© Zeina Azzam, March 2025
City of Alexandria Poet Laureate

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Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)

Our branches are all involved in addressing DEIB issues in their community, in Virginia, and nationally. This year, we've heard from our DEIB representatives about how branches are reaching out to local school districts and universities on equity issues, Title IX action, and inclusive curriculum. We've heard that branches are partnering with like-minded organizations to learn from each other and to join forces to do good in their community.

AAUW is committed to equity for women across our country. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are all intertwined in that goal, and we are all working to realize that goal for women.

Lately, we have seen and read a great deal about actions related to the future of the Department of Education and, specifically, the impact of those actions on equity for women in education. Threats to Title IX impact the protection of women and girls across educational levels from harassment and discriminatory acts. Limits to an inclusive curriculum restrict the opportunity to gain experience from the past and understand the needs of all. These are examples of the impact, particularly on women and girls, that recent actions can and will have on the future. Our branch DEIB representatives are a committed group who have worked with other organizations to have the voices of those women and girls heard. We look forward to continuing to work with these AAUW members on DEIB-related issues for the good of all!

***Erica Brown-Meredith/Meg Tuccillo
Co-VPs for DEIB***

Voting Results

The results are in!

Thank you to the 185 AAUW of Virginia members who voted in the recent One Member One Vote State Election; that is a voting rate of 21%, which meets the 7% quorum we needed for the election.

Each candidate was elected with 98% or more of the vote. The AAUW of Virginia 2025-27 officers for the following positions are:

- ***Vice President for Finance - Virginia Kress***
- ***Vice President for Membership and Branch Development - Laura Greenfield***
- ***Co-Vice Presidents for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Erica Brown Meredith and Meg Tuccillo***
- ***Recording Secretary - Paula C. Lichiello***

Congratulations and thank you to these members!! We look forward to working with them in 2025-27.

Additionally, the bylaws amendment on exempting college/university partner representatives from paying state dues was approved by 91% of the votes.

Sandy Lawrence
Voting and Elections Chair

Legacy Circle of Virginia News

The Legacy Circle of Virginia welcomes our newest member, **Jane Newell** of the **Greater Richmond Branch**. Jane had been thinking of joining the Legacy Circle and did it just in time to be welcomed into the Circle at Virginia AAUW's celebratory reception for our 100th anniversary. Jane is the finance officer of her branch.

We mourn the passing of Legacy Circle member **Jennie Sue Murdock**, whose warm smile was a part of Virginia AAUW gatherings. Jennie Sue passed away on November 23, 2024. She was a very active life member of the **Roanoke Branch**. She was recognized for her community work in literacy promotion. We will miss Jennie Sue.

Hats off to a new member of the Legacy Circle, **Janet Hedrick**! Janet moved from the **Mt. Vernon Branch** to the **Fredericksburg Area Branch** and, seeing the lack of an AAUW branch there, promptly organized one!

Kudos to **Marcy Leverenz (Springfield-Annandale)**, who, as part of the March 4th National AAUW's Legacy and Impact Report, spoke eloquently about her work as a volunteer with the AAUW Lobby Corps on Capitol Hill and the value of the Legacy Circle.

A big thank you to the Legacy Circle members recognized for their Above and Beyond contributions for the 2025 state conference: **Tammie Mullins-Rice (Virginia Beach)**, **Patsy Quick (Mt. Vernon)**, and **Suzanne Rothwell (Vienna Area)**.

Our Virginia Legacy Circle members make a difference every day in the work they do in our branches and Virginia AAUW, and by their planned gifts to AAUW, they will make a difference for women and girls far into the future. Please join these friends and be part of the Legacy Circle. Joining the Legacy Circle helps your branch earn a star in the Advancement area of the Five Star program! Contact me with questions.

Kristin Moyer
Legacy Circle Liaison
kcmoyer65atgmail.com

AAUW Funds

Celebrating Our 2025 State Named Honorees

In 2020, the State Board created a special honor to recognize individuals in Virginia whose actions have had a broad impact in furthering AAUW of Virginia's mission and priorities, and who have provided exceptional service at the state level beyond their branch or local community. We are thrilled to recognize our four honorees for 2025, marking the fifth year of this special recognition. Congratulations to Denise Murden (Portsmouth Branch), Janine Greenwood (Reston-Herndon Area Branch), and Peggy Stotz and Mary Lou Melley (McLean Area Branch)!

Denise Murden

In her six years as a member of AAUW-VA, Denise Murden has served in a variety of leadership roles, consistently demonstrating creativity, energy, and initiative. In 2019, she captivated attendees at the AAUW-VA State Conference in Vinton, Virginia, with an interactive discussion on unconscious bias that sparked AAUW-VA's expanded focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As president of the Suffolk Branch, Denise worked tirelessly to boost member participation and revitalize the branch. Even when faced with the challenging task of disbanding the branch, she managed the transition with grace and integrity, ensuring the preservation of a cherished scholarship and guiding members to the Portsmouth Branch.

When she became state co-vice president for public policy at the start of the pandemic, Denise met the challenge of shifting Virginia's advocacy efforts into an effective virtual campaign. Under her leadership, AAUW-VA lobbied for voting rights, pay equity, and paid sick leave, while raising AAUW-VA's profile in Richmond through strong relationships with legislators and collaborations with like-minded organizations.

Denise's powerful public voice—through letters to the editor and opinion pieces—amplified AAUW-VA's mission across the Commonwealth. She also meticulously organized State Lobby Days, inspiring members to advocate for equity and justice.

A true champion of civic engagement, Denise revolutionized Get Out the Vote efforts by partnering with the Center for Common Ground's Reclaim Our Vote campaign, helping branches send thousands of postcards to underrepresented voters.

Denise's legacy is one of passion, perseverance, and purpose. She has strengthened AAUW-VA and inspired us to continue fighting for equity and empowerment.

Janine Greenwood

For 11 years, Janine Greenwood has been a driving force within AAUW, embodying the spirit of advocacy that defines our mission.

Even without an official title, her influence was always present. From 2022 to 2024, as co-vice president for public policy alongside Denise Murden, she took our advocacy to new heights with intelligence, diligence, and unwavering commitment. Her leadership earned widespread respect from AAUW National, AAUW-VA members, the Virginia General Assembly, and allied organizations.

Janine's extraordinary accomplishments include:

- Co-developing the AAUW-VA Public Policy Priorities for 2024–2026 and guiding them through the approval process;
- Crafting detailed action plans and taking decisive legislative action, including testifying at hearings, and writing op-eds;
- Organizing successful State Lobby Days in 2023 and 2024;

AAUW Funds Continued...

- Expanding AAUW-VA's reach by joining the Fund Our Schools Coalition;
- Leading nonpartisan voter education efforts through issue-based voter guides;
- Co-chairing the mini-grant committee to support branch projects in public policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Even after her term ended in June 2024, Janine continued to contribute, playing a pivotal role in planning the 2025 Lobby Day.

Her impact goes beyond Virginia: Since 2016, she has been a member of AAUW National's Lobby Corps and serves on the governance and public policy committees, ensuring Virginia stays connected to national policy developments.

Janine Greenwood's legacy of leadership, advocacy, and dedication to AAUW's mission is outstanding.

Peggy Stotz and Mary Lou Melley

For more than 30 years, Peggy Stotz and Mary Lou Melley have walked similar paths, leaving an indelible mark through their tireless commitment as members and chairs of the AAUW Lobby Corps.

Both joined the Lobby Corps in the late 1980s and dedicated countless hours to advocating for national legislation that has shaped the future, not just on Capitol Hill, but across Virginia. Their work influenced state branches and public policy chairs, fortifying our efforts to advance equity and education for women and girls.

Peggy first became chair of the Lobby Corps in 1998, after serving as state co-president. Her leadership and strategic vision laid a solid foundation. After six years, she passed the baton to Mary Lou, who carried the legacy forward with equal passion and dedication. Together, they collaborated closely with AAUW staff, crafting compelling messaging and handouts to deliver to senators and representatives, ensuring each visit was impactful and mission driven.

Their influence didn't stop there. Peggy and Mary Lou were steadfast supporters of Virginia's State Lobby Day, contributing their expertise and enthusiasm to local advocacy efforts. Their dedication has significantly strengthened AAUW-Virginia's public policy work and inspired many to act.

Thanks to their leadership, the future of AAUW advocacy is stronger, and we are all empowered to continue the fight for equity.

Article submitted by the State Named Honoree Committee: Deborah Dodd (Springfield-Annandale Branch, past State Board member); Leslie Tourigny (Alexandria/Virginia Beach Branches, Past State Co-President, Current VP for Program VA State Board); Caroline Pickens (McLean Area Branch, prior VA State President); Lane Stone (Alexandria Branch, current VA State President); and Ann Johnson (Smith Mountain Branch, AAUW Funds Chair, and Chair of the State Named Honorees Committee).

Branches in Action

The **Alexandria Branch** had a busy 2025. Members learned about ranked choice voting in February with Liz White of Upvote Virginia. In March, the U.S. Army Museum presented a program on the Hello Girls, the WWI telephone operators who went to France and helped win the war. In April, we had one of the original organizers of Head Start, Rossie Kelly, speak, along with her associate, a present-day Head Start administrator. The branch also had a Broadway producer, Pat Addis, speak with us. The branch co-sponsored a talk with the Mt. Vernon Branch on Eliza Scidmore, by her biographer, Diana Parsell. In May, the branch celebrated its 80th anniversary at Elaine's Restaurant in Alexandria and listened to an interesting talk on the Sister City program in Alexandria.

Diane Schrier
Co-President

The **Arlington Branch** celebrated Women's History Month with the Arlington and Alexandria City League of Women Voters in March with a presentation by longtime branch member and former branch president Vivian Kallen. Her fascinating talk focused on Kathryn Stone, the co-founder and first president of the League. Mrs. Stone, the first woman from Northern Virginia to be elected to the Virginia General Assembly, was a leading voice who stood up to massive resistance, the political campaign in Virginia in the 1950s to stop the integration of schools. She was also influential in establishing the Virginia community college system.

The branch supported Arlington's annual science fair with judges and invited the winners to present their projects at the April meeting. In May, the branch awarded scholarships to the top high-achieving Arlington high school science, arts, and Lunch Bunch scholars. During the spring, the Arlington Community High School Lunch Bunch group enjoyed great discussions with two successful immigrant women. After a great book talk, each girl received a copy of branch member Emma Violand-Sanchez's memoir, "Dreams and Shadows." Business owner Naoual Benjelloun described how she worked at entry-level positions while

Arlington Branch continued...

attending school and completing her license requirements in cosmetology. Members still found time to read. Book club selections included "Horse," "The New Dominion," "James," and "Lula Dean's Little Library of Banned Books."

To recruit more members, branch members also attended community joining activities, including a picnic in late May sponsored by the Arlington Public Library.

Terry Bratt
President

The **Fredericksburg Area Branch** visited the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial in Lorton, VA, on May 20. Thirteen members and guests visited the memorial, which honors the millions of suffragists who fought for more than seven decades to win the vote for women.

On May 27, members and friends gathered at the Salem Church Branch Library to write and address 100 postcards to encourage voting in the Virginia primary election. The group also plans to send postcards in the fall before the general election.

The branch will host its first fundraising event at Harry's Alehouse, which will donate 10% of food sales on July 15 to the branch, whose members will distribute information about AAUW that evening.

The branch has 25 members, including three students active in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program at the University of Mary Washington, an AAUW University Partner.

Janet Hedrick
President

In January, the **Hampton Branch** met to review upcoming programs and activities, including scholarship fundraising, and materials/reports requiring submission

Hampton Branch continued...

to state and national governments.

On February 16, branch members were treated to a Zoom program with Dr. Erica Brown-Meredith, state co-vice president for DEI, and Dr. Breshell Jackson-Nevels, a professor at Norfolk State University. The title of their presentation was "Microaggressions Are Like a Mosquito Bite."

Branch members attended the spring district meeting in February. After the meeting, the **Newport News Branch** extended an invitation to hold a joint meeting in April 2025.

March was busy, filled with Zoom programs, webinars, attending local events on women's history, and the Virginia State Conference. The branch was honored to have STEM Chair Dr. Tonya Brown share highlights with conference attendees from the 2024 STEM Workshop, "STEM Into the Future," which was partially funded by an AAUW-VA mini-grant.

This year's STEM workshop was held in April. The theme was "UNCI MAKI [Mother Earth]: IT IS OUR DUTY," an Interactive STEMinar on protecting our planet.

Carolyn Stewart
President

The **Lynchburg Branch** began 2025 with a tea in early February, which was well attended and featured a variety of foods provided by members. Donations to the Free Clinic of Central Virginia were collected and yielded \$250. A gift card was delivered to the Free Clinic supporting the AAUW-VA initiative, 100 items for 100 years. These funds will replenish the clinic's office supplies as they rebuild after a fire in December 2024.

At a visit to the Maier Museum of Art at Randolph College in March, the museum's educational coordinator, Laura McManus, provided a tour of current artwork on display, followed by a behind-the-scenes tour that explored the secret history of the Maier Museum of Art and its Cold War storage room.

A gift basket was donated to support the AAUW Greatest Needs fundraiser for the raffle at the state conference. The gift basket theme was Girls Night In, featuring products from Scratch Pasta in Lynchburg.

Lynchburg Branch continued...

The annual scholarship competition took place in April, and two scholarship winners were selected to receive a \$3,000 scholarship. Katie Martin received the branch's annual scholarship, and Aliyah Blair received the first Norma Jean Rist Scholarship established in 2025 by Norma Jean's daughter, Emily Glover. The two scholarship winners and their mothers were recognized at the May meeting, which featured a luncheon and a program by Bonnie Svrcek, the executive director of the Virginia Women's Municipal Leadership Institute. Bonnie discussed the goals, hurdles, and future of the program, which launched its fourth cohort this spring.

Paula C. Lichiello
VP Programs

The **McLean Area Branch** continued the Women Lead the Way theme with branch programs and community outreach. The March program highlighted the middle school STEM essay contest winners and featured a presentation by Ferah Murshi, assistant professor in astrophysics at George Mason University, on her career path and current work.

The branch continued to support Graham Road Elementary School, donating 170 books for its library and, with the assistance of the AAUW-VA mini-grant, a field trip for students to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum at Dulles Airport. The Graham Road project was also on the state conference program. The annual spring luncheon speaker, Elizabeth Becker, journalist and author, shared her experiences that led to her book, "You Don't Belong Here," which chronicles women covering the war in Vietnam.

Cheryl Williams
Co-President

The **Mount Vernon Branch** is delighted to share that we had a great program year that included learning about ranked-choice voting, estate planning, recognizing and contesting micro-aggressions, and hearing about the amazing woman who was instrumental in bringing cherry trees to DC. Members wrote postcards to help Get Out the Vote at a postcard party and as individuals at home. Seven branch

Mount Vernon continued...

members enjoyed attending the 100th-anniversary conference in Old Town, and more contributed time and resources to creating beautiful conference swag bags. The dining out, game night, and book groups continued to be popular member activities.

Members looked forward to the annual May potluck dinner and June Little Theater fundraiser with the **Alexandria Branch**. In June, a planning meeting will round out the year to prepare for 2025-26.

***Elaine Kolish/Patsy Quick
Co-Presidents***

In support of AAUW initiatives, the **Portsmouth Branch** meeting on March 13 included a tour of a new venue in Portsmouth, The Mustard Seed Place. It was exciting to learn more about programs and resources to support female entrepreneurs in the area.

Branch members gathered on May 4 for the annual picnic.

The branch is pleased to announce that the recipient of the Fran Allwood Scholarship is Anyia Woods, a senior graduating from Nansemond River High School. The branch will have a luncheon in June to present the scholarship to Anyia.

The branch book group continues to be active, selecting and reading fiction and nonfiction titles that typically focus on major social issues and concerns.

Portsmouth Branch does not schedule branch meetings in the summer, but members stay in contact and will use their voices to support AAUW initiatives and policy goals.

***Phyllis Shannon
President***

Reston-Herndon Area Branch members are all fired up and lobbying against the current administration's attacks on higher education and democracy. Members continue to be active in AAUW Lobby Corps, and members who are also members of the League of Women Voters (LWV) were in Washington on April 30 with the LWV to lobby. This follows up on the participation of members in the event on the Mall on April 5.

We are looking forward to the annual branch meeting in June and are gearing up for postcard

Reston-Herndon Area Branch continued...

writing for the Virginia election.

***Janine Greenwood
President***

Twelve members of the **Smith Mountain Branch** traveled to Alexandria, VA, to attend the state conference, which commemorated the 100th anniversary of the founding of AAUW-VA. The conference theme, "1925-2025: 100 Years of Changing the Conversation," celebrated a century of progress and advocacy. To mark the occasion, the branch donated over 250 women's undergarments to the Agape and Family Crisis Centers of Bedford and Franklin Counties, supporting women in need within their local communities.

The branch continues its annual book project for Women's History Month, a tradition since 2018. This year's featured book was "Turning Pages," the autobiography of Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. The book highlights her journey and love of reading as the foundation for her success as the first Latina Supreme Court justice. Members of the branch purchased and donated enough copies to supply every elementary school in Bedford, Franklin, and Pittsylvania Counties. Additional copies were also sent to local public library branches.

Thanks to successful fundraising efforts, six girls will attend the Building the Future summer camp at the Science Museum of Western Virginia. Three students from Moneta Elementary and Windy Gap Elementary were selected to participate in this exciting week-long educational experience.

For relaxation and camaraderie, branch members hosted a game day at the local library. Members played games, including the perennial favorite Apples to Apples, and enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon of play. There were, of course, snacks!

***Ann Johnson/Margee Kauffman
Newsletter Co-Chairs***

At the end of April, the **Springfield-Annandale Branch** gave five scholarships to high school juniors for their incredible projects in support of Inclusion.

Springfield-Annandale Branch continued...

On May 9, the annual luncheon and fundraiser was held at the Springfield Golf and Country Club featuring speaker NBC4 and Telemundo reporter, Juliana Valencia, who gave an inside look at news reporting. This event also included a silent auction of donated gift certificates, baskets, and other quality items, which raised funds for programs and scholarships.

The branch's last program for 2024-25 will be a picnic in Occoquan, giving a chance to share a boxed lunch with other members and guests and install officers for 2025-2027. Kudos to Ann Sauberman, Debbie Gilligan, Judy Baldwin, Irene McGhee, Amy Crolus, Beth Boivin, and branch members who worked diligently to make these programs successful!



Juliana Valencia, News4 Reporter

Cathleen Boivin
Co-President

Highlights among the **Vienna Area Branch** programs:

Local author Lisa Munoz discussed her book, "Women in Science Now," which documents the obstacles faced by women working in science. The book also offers perspectives on how to make science more equitable and inclusive for all. Ms. Munoz's book won a silver medal in the Social Change and Social Justice Category at the 2024 Nautilus Book Awards.

For another program, state delegate Holly M. Seibold, representing Virginia's 12th House District, previewed the then-upcoming legislative priorities. She also discussed the work of her non-profit organization, Bringing Resources to Aid Women's Shelters (BRAWS), which collects necessary feminine hygiene supplies and undergarments to be distributed to women and girls in schools, shelters, and prisons/jails. The

Vienna Area Branch continued...

branch presented Delegate Seibold's organization with 100 pairs of underwear as part of AAUW-VA's 100th anniversary celebration.

Gail Rosner
Co-President

In early March, **Virginia Beach Branch** members attended a production of "Top Girls" at the Little Theater of Norfolk as a fundraiser for scholarships, and had a registered dietitian and nutritionist from the Sentara Brock Cancer Center speak at a meeting about her health journey following breast cancer.

Five members attended the state conference. The branch donated two baskets for the raffle.

At the April meeting, members celebrated the anniversary with a cake while writing postcards congratulating businesses for maintaining DEI initiatives and encouraging lapsed voters to return to the polls. Two members presented a wage gap demonstration to students at Virginia Wesleyan University using popcorn.

Branch members gathered in May to honor scholarship recipients and plan for the upcoming year.

Jeanette Olson
President

The **Wytheville Branch** enjoyed a successful year. Six new members joined last fall, and all are contributing!

The STEM event for middle school girls boasted 43 registrants for workshops, including physical therapy, 3-D designing, creating fidget spinners, and bioengineering. The middle schools helped with recruiting, and Wytheville Community College provided AV and free classrooms on the campus.

The branch's annual international dinner took members to French Polynesia with branch member Nancy Wills. The menu included sweet & sour chicken, kailua pork, pineapple coleslaw, and banana fritters for dessert. Quite exotic!

Wytheville Branch continued...

The branch's collaboration with the local women's shelter, Family Resource Center, continues to evolve. This year, members used conference guidelines of 100 items/services to help furnish an apartment.

The branch is looking ahead to an exciting year with mission-based programming and goals aligning with the Five Star Program.

Anita Aymer
President



Bioengineering

Watching the medical instrument they created to remove an object from the artificial stomach

Managing Branch Archives

Your AAUW records are valuable! They are your branch's institutional memory. They document specific achievements of your branch and branch members. Historians have long been aware of the importance of AAUW's contributions to women's history. The records we preserve link us to that history and to the future.

This article will focus on how to gather, prepare, and organize branch archives. AAUW of Virginia is fortunate to have archives at the University of Virginia. Since all Virginia branches are invited to store their records there as well, a third section tells how to store your archives at UVA. Details I give here pertain to UVA's requirements. If your branch has already secured a repository, feel free to use it, but note any small differences in what is provided.

First, every branch should designate someone to be responsible for collecting items, usually the historian, but it could be anyone willing to do it. Ask all branch members to contribute items they have acquired (and probably want to get rid of) to the designee. The items should be stored in a cool, dry place, not a basement or attic until they are placed in a permanent location. It is helpful to historians and others using these items, if documents are signed and dated.

What to gather

- Articles of incorporation, for incorporated branches, and charters
- Bylaws, policies, and handbooks
- Correspondence of officers and others, if of historical value
- Descriptions, programs, photographs, and publicity for branch events and projects
- Directories of members and lists of officers
- Budgets and year-end financial reports
- Artifacts and memorabilia (such as pins, badges, gavels)
- Branch publications (histories, newsletters, and brochures)
- Minutes of branch and board meetings
- Press releases and newspaper articles about branch
- Important speeches to branch and state members
- Scrapbook contents, not the books
- State convention program books if they contain branch information

Managing Branch Archives

How to prepare your items for archives

- Remove materials that do not belong in the archives, such as duplicates (retain no more than three copies of an item), receipts, canceled checks, post-its, AAUW national publications
- Remove metal paper clips and metal staples (plastic is okay)
- Copy or scan newspaper articles onto acid-free paper, then discard newsprint
- Insert fragile articles and photographs into Mylar sleeves
- Use pencil, not pen, to label archival papers, folders, and backs of photographs
- Carefully remove cardstock frames on photographs

There is no prescribed order for your materials, but the list above may provide you with some ideas. Since UVA provides its own archival materials, you may file your materials in previously used folders.

Cross out labels that don't apply and write specific names for the contents, maybe using a Sharpie. Avoid vague labels, like Miscellaneous. Arrange the folders in the order you want in any sturdy boxes. Don't crowd the material. When your collection is complete, inventory each box, keep one copy for your branch, and place one in the box. Label each box on the outside with AAUW of Virginia, branch name, and the number (1 of 4, etc.). Be sure to include the name and contact information of a branch member so UVA can send its own inventory to you.

How to store your branch archives at UVA

AAUW of Virginia has archived its records, circa 1930-2010, in the Special Collections Library of University of Virginia's Alderman Library. Virginia branches are encouraged to donate their archives to this same collection. Librarians at the Special Collections Library will repack your items into archival folders and boxes. There is NO charge for the materials or storage. This is your tax dollars at work.

Call the UVA Special Collections Library (434-924-3082) to make arrangements to deliver your materials. Contact me if you have questions, or if I may help you.

Neola Waller, Past AAUW-VA Historian
Wallerwn1atgmail.com
757-217-2356

**“The success of every woman should
be the inspiration to another. We
should raise each other up.”**

- Serena Williams

Public Policy

This year's Virginia legislative session has ended. However, there may be an emergency session in the fall due to the financial issues created by the cutback in grants and the removal of personnel in the federal government. The governor has finished vetoing and signing bills into law for this year. Some maternal health bills passed; the cap that severely hurt education was raised; special education received help; and public-school funding was protected from attempts to spend taxpayer money on private schools. The attempt to remove standards from homeschooling was repelled, as was a bill to allow professionals to receive a provisional teaching license for certain subjects. School construction funding was reduced; restorative student behavior programs failed; and lottery funding supplanted general K-12 funds. Additional funding for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) mostly failed. DEI was removed from schools; sports teams had to remove any trans students or face the lack of federal funding. There were only seven kids in Virginia who requested to play on a team other than their birth gender. The minimum wage was not raised. The paid sick days bill passed. Many one-time financial bills were passed, like a \$1,000 bonus for most educational personnel, but long-term funding was not increased due to financial insecurities.

On the national level, the focus is placed on 5-Star acquisition to have branches feel more included with National. Lobby Corps will now take place twice a month when Congress is in session. There are also two new AAUW funds: Defending Higher Education and Supporting Public Policy.

The Department of Education has lost half its personnel, which has caused a serious delay in activities, especially in civil rights cases. As of now, the only cases being managed are disability issues. Many words are no longer being used, such as women, female, racism, gay, minority, etc. Pell Grants are being restructured, which will harm women. There is a desire to increase the number of credits that must be taken. Combined with the loss of financial resources, this will make it difficult for women to attain college degrees.

A judge has stated that Head Start must be refunded after severe cuts. However, it is not in next year's presidential budget. Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security are all being affected by budget cuts and personnel reductions. There are new Social Security rules, and the minimum age has been raised. The upcoming budget contains severe cuts to Medicaid, which will cause many Virginians to be removed, and Virginia is not able to fully fund them. FEMA and FAA have also been severely cut. All departments in the federal government are in the process of creating a DOGE workgroup. The Voice of America still exists, but with reduced personnel and funding.

A 60-foot-wide strip of land along three states on the southern border with a length of 170 miles has been designated a military installation, called the New Mexico National Defense Area. Deportation cases have been court-ordered to provide a reasonable time and information before deportation for immigrants to appeal their cases.

Diane Schrier
VP for Public Policy

Five Star Program

The FY25 Annual Branch Survey is now available for branch leaders to review. This survey covers branch activities and programs from July 2024 through June 2025. The survey will be open for completion from April 1- June 30.

Branch leaders should use the preparation checklist to familiarize themselves with the requirements for qualifying for the Five-Star Program. Please review the following activities to earn stars. It would be an accomplishment for all branches to earn at least one star! This is taken from the checklist (*Membership Matters*, April 2025):

ADVANCEMENT STAR (Achieve 3 out of 5):

- Raise \$30 per member in FY 25 towards the Greatest Needs Fund.
- Increase contributions to the Greatest Needs Fund by 15% from the last fiscal year.
- Retain at least 80% of the branch membership.
The branch does not have to retain the same 80% of the membership. The number only needs to be 80% of the previous year's membership.
- Make a branch contribution or support a registrant's attendance at NCCWSL. There is no set amount for the branch contribution.
- Recruit at least one Legacy Circle member from your branch in FY25. There are key resources for additional information concerning these criteria.

FY26 survey criteria will appear in an upcoming issue of *Membership Matters*.

Laura Browning Greenfield
Membership & Branch Development VP
Contact: aauwvalauragatgmail.com

We Hold True

AAUW, we hold true,
Each and every one of us – she and you.
We fight for equality, over a century strong;
Through words and actions, we right the wrong.

From grassroots to the national stage,
We ban together, no matter our age.
For women and girls, we've risked our necks –
Never are we the lesser sex.

Opportunities from coast to coast,
Are offered as we play host
To the land of lobbying and campaigning
For which we're never waning.

We are a voice for the oppressed,
As they deserve nothing but the best,
Like equal pay and Title IX.
They should never have to walk the line.

We heed the call with pride in our breast,
And though weary, we never rest.
For America, we give our due
To AAUW, we hold true.


Tess Evans
VP for Communications

100 For 100: Changing the Conversation By Showing Up for Our Communities

For the last century AAUW-VA branches all around the Commonwealth have shown up for their communities in so many ways. It's just who we are. This year, in recognition of our centennial, we went one step further by providing *100 for 100*—donating 100 of a needed item to worthy community groups and activities throughout Virginia. The picture below captures the variety of contributions that helped change the conversation. Brava!!

In Honor of the AAUW of Virginia Centennial 1925 – 2025



100 FOR 100




AAUW of Virginia Conference Alexandria March 29, 2025

Virginia Branch Donations To Charities of One Hundred Needed Items



AAUW ALEXANDRIA BRANCH
Food and Supplies for Families in Need
Donated to **ALIVE!**
Preventing Food and Housing Insecurity in Alexandria


AAUW ARLINGTON BRANCH
100 New/Gently-used Books Donated to
WOMEN'S PRISON BOOK PROJECT




AAUW FALLS CHURCH AREA BRANCH
100 Pairs Kids' Underwear & Amazon Wish List
DONATED TO **HOMESTRETCH**



AAUW FREDERICKSBURG AREA BRANCH
100 Packages of Feminine Care Pads for
Grades 5 – 12 Students Donated to
THE INTERFAITH COMMUNITY COUNCIL





AAUW GREATER RICHMOND BRANCH
300 Mother and Baby Care Items
DONATED TO VCU "HEARTBEATS" PROGRAM




AAUW HAMPTON BRANCH
100 Jars of Grape and Strawberry Jelly
DONATED TO **THRIVE PENINSULA**
A free grocery store with fresh and healthy foods



AAUW LYNCHBURG BRANCH
250 Staples Gift Card for Fire Damage Recovery
THE FREE CLINIC OF CENTRAL VIRGINIA



AAUW MCLEAN AREA BRANCH
170 Books Donated to a Title I School
GRAHAM ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
5th grade students & their teacher celebrate the AAUW book donation!





AAUW MT. VERNON BRANCH
232 Food Items & Other Supplies for Homebound Clients
DONATED TO **UNITED COMMUNITY**



AAUW PORTSMOUTH BRANCH
100 Rolls of Toilet Paper Plus Feminine Hygiene Items
For Victims of Domestic & Sexual Violence
DONATED TO **HELP AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE**



AAUW RESTON-HERNDON BRANCH
200+ Items of Clothing for Women in Crisis
DONATED TO **WOMEN GIVING BACK**



AAUW ROANOKE VALLEY BRANCH
257 Items for Victims of Sexual and Domestic Violence
DONATED TO THE **SASASHION ABUSE TURNING POINT**



AAUW SMITH MOUNTAIN BRANCH
100+ Women's Undergarments Donated to
Family Resource Center of Franklin County and Domestic Violence Services of Bedford County



AAUW SPRINGFIELD-ANNANDALE BRANCH
100 Pairs of Men's & Women's Socks Donated to
ELEANOR U. KENNEDY SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS



AAUW VIENNA AREA BRANCH
100 Ladies Panties Donated to
BRINGING RESOURCES TO AID WOMEN'S SHELTERS



AAUW VIRGINIA BEACH BRANCH
100 Books Donated to
READING ENRICHES ALL CHILDREN

AAUW WINCHESTER BRANCH
200 Spanish Language Children's Books
DONATED TO **WINCHESTER LITTLE LIBRARIES**

AAUW WYTHEVILLE BRANCH
230 Household Supplies & \$300+ Gift Cards for Apartments for Persons in Need
DONATED TO **FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**

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connect@aauw.org

