



ATLANTA BRANCH NEWS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN
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2016-2017 Leadership

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Co-President's Message

Mary Lynn Merkle

EQUITY: MY "AHA!" MOMENT

Our AAUW mission statement reads, "Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research." So, what is "equity?" Webster says that it is "justice according to natural law or right; free from bias or favoritism."

It seems to me that "equity" is easier said than done.

First a little personal background information. It won't surprise many of you that I consider myself a social progressive or liberal. I hasten to say that hasn't always been the case.

I grew up in an extended family that was firmly and solidly conservative. During my social studies and political science courses it could be said that "I Loved Ike." And it caused quite a stir when my father found out that his oldest grandson was employed by the Democratic National Committee during the 1984 election.

Through the years I wavered between "parties" always trying to look at the issues and individual candidates. Being a moderate "whatever" made it easy to do that. Of course, I revered and reflected on the words and writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. But I wasn't enamored with the Black Panthers. However, I didn't live in a world where either of those were actually part of my life.

And then the liberal/conservative issue got personal. You see, our oldest son "came out" as a gay man. We couldn't have been more shocked or less knowledgeable. But we knew we loved him and always would. That's when we began to listen (not just hear) to the hate speech directed toward our son and others. We became aware of the "inequities" experienced by our son and his gay friends. We could no longer be "middle-of-the-roaders."

As we worked toward equity for the GLBT (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender population, we found out about other minorities (Native Americans, migrant workers, immigrants, religions). We joined forces with local and national organizations whose primary goals were equity for all people.

We were so sure that we knew what was right and who were doing the right thing!

And then came the "AHA" moment.

Is it equity when a low-income family receives aid to dependent children and food stamps and Medicaid because one parent prefers to stay home with her/his young children? We have all heard the stories, but we have not heard all the stories. AAUW advocates for equity! So who is right, the mother who chooses to work or the mother who chooses to stay at home. Which is free from bias or favoritism?

What about the women who want to be subservient? Is that not their choice?

(continued on next page)

Co-President's Message Cont.

Then there's immigration. We think of the families who are trying to escape civil war, or economic desperation, or despotic governments and wish to come to America. Let me share with you the experience of our son, Chris, who teaches English as a Second Language in a middle school outside Washington, D.C. School personnel there are not allowed to ask if a child is documented or undocumented. Equity, right? Recently there was a bomb threat at his school. The school was locked down. And many police cars, ambulances, and fire trucks were on their way with sirens blaring and lights flashing. When the "false alarm" was over two of Chris' students (age 12) were nowhere to be found. When finally discovered huddling in a custodian's closet, they said they were afraid they'd be taken away. And our children and grandchildren (yours and mine) worry about winning a soccer match or a swim meet.

But, then, how about the immigrants who come for a "better" life which centers on crime, drugs, and victimization? For every "yin" there seems to be a "yang."

Our political parties, our government itself at every level, seem to be in opposition on equity issues—with little compromise. Is it time to listen to one another with compassion, with efforts to understand, with an open mind toward solving some very difficult problems?

Is "equity" in all its splendor really possible?

If you have a long history with AAUW, you know that our organization has consistently advocated for equity in all dimensions, through their literature, their research, and their political activities. Answers don't come easy, but the necessary discussions (and marches and letters to the editor) are essential.

Thanks to our members who went to the Capitol on January 21st. And thanks to AAUW who keeps pushing and pulling for equity when the need is apparent.

SAVE THE DATE: 2017 Bookfair

By: Sharon Bevis-Hoover

The 2017 Bookfair will be held September 24 - October 1 in the Dillard's wing of Perimeter Mall. **We will setup on September 24 - 25 and open the evening of Monday, September 25, with the sale continuing through Sunday, October 1.** The 2017 Bookfair marks the 58th year that we have held our flagship fundraising event. We hope to see you in the Bookroom and at the sale!

Contemporary Literature

By: Kay Collins

We will meet at 10:30 AM, Monday, May 1, at the home of Mary Hanson, 3875 W. Nancy Creek Court, Atlanta. The discussion of "The Muralist" by B. A. Shapiro will follow refreshments. Call Kay Collins with questions.

Travel Group

By: Betty Arden

The AAUW Travel Group will meet on Thursday, May 11th in the morning to tour The Battery Atlanta, which is adjacent to SunTrust Park, the new Cobb County stadium for the Atlanta Braves. Lunch will follow at one of the exciting new restaurants.

The specific place and time to meet will be determined in early May after Betty visits the site. If you are not a regular member of the group call Betty Arden for car pool information.

Note: The Travel Group meets October through May every year. The next meeting is October 12, 2017.

Renew Your Membership

By: Kay Collins

Continue your support of AAUW. You may bring your renewal checks to the May branch meeting, Contemporary Lit. or mail to Kay Collins, 34 Ivy Parkway. Make check out to AAUW-Atlanta Branch. For most of you, your dues are the same as last year, \$77.00. There are exceptions for students, Honorary members, Life members and past presidents. If you have a question, please contact Kay.

“Support Her” AAUW of Georgia State Convention

By: Amira Saleh

AAUW branches from all over the state of Georgia came together on Friday April 21st and Saturday April 22nd at the Hilton Atlanta Perimeter Suites for our annual state convention. The theme of the convention was “Support Her,” and the attendance and energy reflected this well. At the start of the meeting on Saturday, Betty Slater introduced the students in attendance representing some of our College and University partner schools and many members of their school’s AAUW student chapters.

The first guest speaker was Dr. Traci Jensen, a member of the AAUW Board of Directors. Traci spoke on the impact that AAUW has made in the lives of women and girls, and she encouraged attendees to become involved at a national level by applying for national committees. Our second guest speaker, Amanda Hammett, known as “The Millennial Translator,” presented on the power of “two-way” mentorships. Amanda explained that impactful mentors not only share their knowledge with a mentee but genuinely learn from their mentees as well. Our last guest speaker for the day was Gail Buckner, Chair of Ratify ERA, a non-partisan organization dedicated to getting the Equal Rights Amendment legislation passed in Georgia. Gail informed the group of her steady work to build support for the Equal Rights Amendment, which states that equality of rights under the law can’t be denied based on gender. She encouraged members when a bill is created to contact their legislators to express their support of the ERA.



The State Convention concluded with a business meeting. During the review of AAUW Funds, the Atlanta branch brought home four awards:

2016 Highest Contribution, All Funds - \$14,273

2016 Highest Per Capita Contribution, All Funds - \$250

Highest Contribution, Legal Advocacy Fund - \$3,548

Highest Per Capita Contribution, Legal Advocacy Fund - \$62

Special thanks to Georgia AAUW Co-Presidents, Yetta McMillan and Myra Carmon for all their hard work to bring this meeting together.

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Calendar

Annual Branch Meeting—May 6 at 11am at Cross Creek Cafe

Summer Board Meeting—Aug 12 (Tentative)