



Atlanta Branch News

December Newsletter: Volume 69, Issue 5

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DECEMBER BRANCH MEETING: HOLIDAY PARTY

By: Dana Gordon

HOLIDAY PARTY: “It’s a time to be jolly with the mistletoe and holly”

We will gather at the lovely home of Mary and Darwin Womack on **Sunday, December 9th from 3 pm to 5 pm** to commune and enjoy delicious refreshments. All are invited! AAUW scholarship winners will be in attendance to inspire us with some of their accomplishments. A highlight will be the **annual silent auction**. We are looking forward to the amazing treasures donated by our members. It’s a great way to start your holiday shopping! Funds raised from the auction will again be donated to AAUW Legal Advocacy. Another highlight of this event is the announcement of Branch’s Named Grant Honorees. Lastly, you will meet College/University representatives from Georgia Tech and Oglethorpe University.

You won’t want to miss this very special meeting, so mark your calendars now! Hope to see you there!

Please **RSVP to** Billie Collier programs@aauwatlanta.org

Leadership continued

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CO-PRESIDENT'S ARTICLE: NOVEMBER UPDATE

By: Diana Witt and Huiping Du

Hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. The Atlanta Branch certainly has much to be thankful for this year. We look forward to ending 2018 with a lovely holiday party and branch meeting at the home of Mary and Darwin Womack on December 9. Please bring items for the silent auction!

We also had a wonderful Bookfair celebration at Marlow's Tavern in Dunwoody on November 4th. The Atlanta Branch did very well this year. We have \$27,460.82 in proceeds to disburse to our various projects. In addition to the scholarships that will be awarded, we have two signature projects, Dresden Elementary School and the Kopila Valley Project. You will hear more about these projects as we proceed through the year.

We look forward to seeing all of you December 9th, and hope you have a restful and peaceful holiday season. We'll begin 2019 with some very strong programs, starting February 9th. Please let us know any thoughts you might have about programming and projects going forward. Lastly, apologies to the branch for a president-free meeting November 10.

REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR OUT-GOING CO-PRESIDENT

By: Blondie Chitunya-Wilson

The past two years as your Branch Co-President went by very quickly! It was the highlight of my membership in the Atlanta Branch, where over the past seven and a half years I served as Branch Secretary, Board Secretary, Diversity Chair, and Co-President. During these years, I have learned many valuable lessons and developed many personal relationships through my unique experiences at AAUW. Atlanta Branch members supported me with grace and mercy, for which I am truly grateful.

The things we accomplished over these years will continue into the future. We continue to need enthusiastic, strong leaders whose goal is to make a positive impact in our community and are willing to roll up their sleeves to be part of that impact.

I want to especially thank the 2016-2018 board members. Through their talents and hard work, made sure that our Branch continued to remain financially sound, increased our membership, planned thought-provoking programs, and kept us informed. Each and every one helped make these past few years very good.

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Our committee chairs and their committee members gave new meaning to the words “leadership”, “dedication”, and “volunteerism.”

Lastly, I want to thank our members. You are the lifeblood of AAUW Atlanta Branch. Thanks for letting us know how we can best serve your needs...and for letting us do that. I know the 2018-2020 board is anxious to dig into the results of our membership survey to devise new programs and fine tune existing ones.

Our mission is to empower women. Here are some lessons I have learned from my leadership experience which were personally transformative:

* I learned that everyone has some to offer; their unique experiences allowed our branch to shine brighter and accomplish our goals.

* I learned that mentors are invaluable, and their words of wisdom boosted my spirit. Which helped me to try harder and become a better leader.

* I learned that it's OK to thank everyone for everything, even the little things.

* Lastly, I learned not to take myself so seriously, to laugh, to enjoy the process, and to invite everyone else to laugh with me.

As your out-going co-president, I congratulate the new co-presidents. Your leadership is essential to move our branch forward. I will certainly do everything I can to help make that happen.

AND—thank you so much for the gift card. I planned to use it on my wedding anniversary this past August. Unfortunately, I had to go to my home country, Zimbabwe. It will joyfully be used in the very near future as I reminisce about those years as a grateful co-president.

A VIEW OF RACISM AND AFFIRMITIVE ACTION

By: Mary Lynn Merkle

As I reflect on the Atlanta Branch, I honestly don't see or feel racism. Although we have too few people of color among our membership, I think we sincerely welcome all women as equals without attention to their color or ethnicity. However, when I read, watch, or hear the news, it seems like our Atlanta Branch does not reflect the reactions of our state or much of our country.

In his book *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America*, Jim Wallis defines affirmative action in new parameters. The growth of the American middle class developed after World War II with two new aspects of the GI Bill. One aspect of this bill allowed veterans a free college education. While the bill did not discriminate on the basis of race, many colleges (particularly in the South) were not open to people of color (think University of Mississippi in the 60's). Therefore, our white veterans had a much easier time of getting an education, finding well-paying occupations, and a solid place in the middle class. The other aspect of the bill allowed our veterans to buy homes with low interest loans. Again, while the bill didn't discriminate, realtors across our nation (north and south, east and west) did! The result was the establishment of safe neighborhoods with very nice homes, high-achieving and parent-supported schools with, again, very few people of color.

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Affirmative action in today's world might be considered an opportunity for women and for people of color to experience justice in order to atone for unjust practices in past generations. If it is widely accepted and applied without bias, it offers hope. If it is challenged, change will be slow!

As AAUW members who have had the good fortune of advanced educations but may have in the past experienced some "fair sex" discrimination, we should well understand how important opportunities for success are.

Jim Wallis said, "Talking is not the same as being heard," but it's a start! Speak up! And speak out!

*Interested in finding out more about your "implicit preferences" on racism? There's a quick and easy test you can take. Go to <http://implicit.harvard.edu>.

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE NOVEMBER MEETING

By: Kay Collins

We will meet 11:00 AM, Monday, December 3 at the home of Mary Hanson to discuss "The Stars Are Fire" by Anita Shreve. All are welcome. We will have our holiday gift exchange and potluck lunch/brunch celebration!

For additional information call Kay Collins contemporaryliterature@aauwatlanta.org.

TRAVEL GROUP

By: Betty Arden

The AAUW Travel Group will meet 10:15 a.m. on Thursday, December 13th at the Ansley Mall Kroger store. We will then drive in carpools to tour the Atlanta Christkindl Market located on Tower Street NW, in Atlantic Station. There will be a presentation at 11:00 a.m. followed by holiday gift shopping and a lunch of authentic German food. This German American Cultural Foundation's official holiday event is also Atlanta's first and largest German Christmas market festival.

Learn further details by visiting christkindlmarket.org

For further travel group information contact Betty Arden: Travel@AAUWAtlanta.org

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

By: Mary Lynn Merkle

Those of you who have visited the bookroom may have met Joyce Cohrs, our doyenne, the most senior and one of the most experienced and respected members of our group. She has trained most of us and has been here to assist with her vast knowledge of books in almost every field of endeavor.

Joyce has recently been honored by the Road Scholar and the DeKalb History Center. She is a long-standing member of both organizations.

In their Fall 2018 Alumni Magazine, the Road Scholar devoted a whole page to Joyce with a detailed biography titled "International Librarian, Solo Traveler and Road Scholar Cheerleader". The DeKalb History Center has

also singled out Joyce to thank her for all the volunteer work she has done over the years in developing their archives.

Go Joyce! We are all very proud of you.

MEMBER UPDATE

Sally Byers (Honorary Life Member of the Atlanta Branch) has developed Alzheimer's disease and is now living in Augusta at University Kentwood. The Byers (Donald and Sally) have been married for nearly 60 years. Sally received a BA from Denison University and a MSW from the University of Buffalo. She served the Branch as President and Bookfair chair over her years of membership.

Quote of the month

You get in life what you have the courage to ask for

-Oprah Winfrey

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