



Atlanta Affiliate News

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Co-President’s Message

By Karen Ludwig

“Without volunteers, we’d be a nation without a soul.”

-- Roslyn Carter

American writer, activist, humanitarian and former first lady of the United States

There may be some of us who—after hearing a morning’s worth of news—might think we have already arrived at the point of becoming a nation without a soul. It is so easy to lose sight of what is good around us when bad news seems to dominate the headlines.

I was having one of those moments myself recently. It was shortly before I attended our annual September Membership Tea and Scholarship Celebration. I left that gathering re-energized and inspired by what I heard about our scholarship recipients’ plans for their future, which we as an organization were helping make a reality. We could not have provided this funding support to these deserving individuals without the efforts of our AAUW Affiliate volunteers.

So ... I want to say a big ‘thank you’ to all our AAUW Affiliate volunteers who make our philanthropic giving possible. According to several reputable sources, > 25% of the adult population in the US willingly contributes time, skills, and resources to support organizations that align with their personal beliefs. We are part of that percentage – and the one billion people who volunteer globally. Why is volunteerism significant? I cannot say it better than what I found on Donorbox.org¹ (link provided in the footnote – check it out!):

1. It fosters social cohesion by bringing people together.
2. It empowers individuals to act and make a difference in their communities.
3. It plays a crucial role in addressing social inequality and injustice.
4. It contributes to building resilient communities.
5. It promotes civic engagement.
6. It transcends borders and promotes global solidarity and cooperation.

¹ [Volunteerism: Key Roles, Significance & How It Impacts Communities](#)

Leadership continued

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I was surprised to find out just how many people in our nation and around the world are actively taking part in volunteerism. We are surrounded by more people wanting to ‘do good’ than we know. I cannot wait to see what our volunteers are able to do in the coming year. I am sure we will have our work cut out for us – and can always use more help when it comes to our fund-raising activities!



Save the Date: AAUW Atlanta Holiday Party

Mark your calendars! On Saturday, December 7th at 11:30 a.m., we’ll have our annual AAUW Atlanta holiday gathering with a change this year to Roshambo Restaurant for lunch. Roshambo is in the Peachtree Battle Shopping Center and thanks to Betty Slater, home to our most successful book drop. Kristie Scruggs, Peachtree Battle Shopping Center Senior Property Manager, will be our guest.

This year we are providing gift donations of new underwear to the residents of My Sister’s House, a residential facility for women and children, and a part of the Atlanta Mission. If you’d like to participate, please bring unopened packages of ANY size women’s underpants and/or stretchy sports bras to the luncheon, or to the Bookroom. My Sister’s House also urgently needs clean, used women’s winter clothing in good condition for all sizes. We’ll be happy to collect any items you might have and deliver them.

Be on the lookout for the Holiday Party EVITE and be sure to RSVP as space is limited.



AAUW Atlanta's Fall Tea!

AAUW Atlanta's annual September membership Tea is our first meeting of the new year and celebrates the students who have received our scholarships. This year we awarded six scholarships. And as all six of the recipients are from the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at Emory University, retired Emory Professor Rose Cannon arranged for our Tea to be held in the Emory School of Nursing building. The recipients, as well as their guests, were invited and each student prepared a short presentation of her educational journey and future goals.



Due to Hurricane Helene passing through Atlanta the day before the Tea, only four of the six students were able to attend. Co-chair of the Scholarship Committee, Rose Cannon, introduced the attending recipients: Darlesia Ferguson, Alexis Copes, Samantha Hodge, and Fabiane Sencion. Their programs varied: baccalaureate, masters, and DNP (Doctor of Nursing Practice). One student is in a dual program, working toward master's degrees in both nursing and public health. They all spoke eloquently and with passion about their journeys and were grateful for the help given to them by our organization. The audience is always in awe of the young women who speak and of their many accomplishments. This year was no exception.

Our Scholarship Winners, Left to Right: Alexis Copes, Samantha Hodge, Fabiane Sencion, Darlesia Ferguson. Two of the scholarship recipients were unable to be present due to storm damage on their properties from Helene.

Co-chair of the Scholarship Committee, Betty Slater, then introduced Staphea Campbell, Foundation Director for Institutional Advancement at Atlanta Technical College. AAUW Atlanta distributes scholarship funds to the Foundation and the Foundation chooses their women recipients based on similar criteria to that utilized for the college programs. Ms. Campbell's description of the accomplishments of these students was heartwarming. Many are coming out of poverty or have worked at jobs for only minimum wage. They have goals for a better life for themselves and their families through the education they receive and the scholarship funds available to them.

Rose Cannon briefly explained the process in raising funds for our philanthropy from collecting books, processing them, then listing, selling, packaging and mailing them, to maintaining the Westside Market booth and sidewalk sales. She thanked all those who volunteer in this endeavor. The diligent work of the Scholarship

Committee (co-chairs Betty Slater and Rose Cannon; members Mary Hanson, Susan Diffenderfer, Cecilia Cantrell, and Velma Tilley, ex officio) was also acknowledged.

The presentations were followed with an opportunity for our members to meet, mix and mingle with our scholarship winners and their delightful guests.



Our four attending scholarship winners; plus seated is Staphea Campbell from Atlanta Technical College and Director of Institutional Advancement. This is the office that chooses the students for our scholarship donation to the Atlanta Technical College.

Philanthropy Allocation Proposal

The Philanthropy Committee met and chose how to allocate \$37,000.00. Scholarships received \$25,000.00, AAUW Funds received \$2,000.00 and community giving received \$10,000.00.

Below is the proposed allocations made by the Committee. The proposal is pending approval by the Board and then approval by Membership.

Scholarships	20,000.00	
Atlanta Area Technical College Foundation	5,000.00	
AAUW Funds	2,000.00	\$500 each for Funds 4449, 4450, 4451, 9110
Helping Mamas	1,000.00	
Our House	2,000.00	
CASA	2,000.00	
Books for Africa	1,000.00	
Blink Now	500.00	
YWCA	1,500.00	
Equality Foundation of Georgia	2,000.00	
Total	37,000.00	



Mary Womack

Remembering Mary Womack

By Betty Slater

I met Mary Womack straightening books at our Lenox Square Bookfair in the Poetry, Humor, and Drama area many years ago. She shared that she enjoys buying some humor books for her family who visited her and husband Darwin in their Atlanta home. I was so impressed with her kindness to me as a new AAUW member. Mary was proud of her Tennessee background. She loved watching and cheering for the University of Tennessee's Women Basketball team!

While in Atlanta, Mary was a Physical Education teacher and later Supervisor for the Atlanta Public Schools. Mary was proud of her female students who worked hard to accomplish whatever they decided to undertake.

Mary and Darwin welcomed our Atlanta Branch members into their home for several Holiday meetings. She made sure the tables were out for our money-making auctions and for our tasty goodies and special punch. When the Atlanta Branch hosted the state convention, she made pound cake for all to enjoy in the hospitality room! Whenever the Atlanta Branch members went with Betty Arden's travel group, she was always interested in learning about the special places we were visiting. Mary even met us at the Heartis location on Peachtree Street where she had moved after Darwin's death.

In the bookroom, Mary was a steady packer of our books in boxes while Darwin picked up boxes for our group at several locations. She worked in the bookroom until she was not able to load all of those books. Being the friendly person and believing in supporting women and girls, Mary brought in many members to the Atlanta Branch. She gave her time and love to many. She will be missed.



Mary Womack working in the Bookroom with co-workers Linda Logsdon, Daphne Su, Betty Slater, and Mary Womack.



Westside Market Booth

AAUW Marks Three Years at Westside Market

By Wendy Venet

In October 2021, AAUW opened a booth at Westside Market in the Toco Hill shopping center. In the past three years we have sold thousands of books, record albums, artworks, and other decorative items. Each year happy customers tell us how much they appreciate our efforts in bringing quality books to eager readers. Much of the profit we make from Westside comes from sidewalk sales. Our September sale raised \$1,650. Our next sale will be December 14-15.

Empowering Future Leaders: My Journey at NCCWSL 2024

By Aparna Ravi

Hello AAUW members! As the spring semester concluded this year, I had the incredible privilege of attending the American Association of University Women's National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) at the University of Maryland. As a full scholarship recipient, I joined hundreds of ambitious young women for three days of learning, connection, and inspiration.

The conference featured an engaging series of workshops and sessions covering crucial topics from salary negotiation to breaking barriers in male-dominated fields. Success stories from diverse, accomplished leaders helped us think from different perspectives and develop practical solutions tailored to our careers.

One of the most impactful sessions focused on intersectional feminism and its role in modern leadership. We engaged in thoughtful discussions about how different aspects of identity shape our experiences and leadership styles while exploring ways to work toward collective progress in gender equity!

The networking opportunities proved invaluable. I connected with fellow students who shared my passion for social justice and leadership, forming bonds that will last well beyond the conference. During breaks, we exchanged ideas and discussed ways to implement what we learned at our respective institutions.

The Women of Distinction Awards ceremony celebrated trailblazers who have significantly contributed to their fields while advancing opportunities for women and girls. Their stories reminded us that leadership comes in many forms and that each of us has the potential to create meaningful change.

Throughout the conference, the support from both AAUW's national organization and the Atlanta chapter was remarkable. Their investment in developing the next generation of women leaders reflects a deep commitment to advancing equity and opportunity. The scholarship they provided made it possible for me to participate in this extraordinary event, and for that, I am profoundly grateful.

As I reflect on my NCCWSL experience, I am energized and more committed than ever to pursuing leadership roles and advocating for gender equity. I return to our community with new skills, broader perspectives, and a strengthened network of fellow change-makers.

I encourage other AAUW members to support NCCWSL opportunities for young leaders in our community. To my fellow students: watch for applications for NCCWSL 2025 – it's an experience you won't want to miss. The lessons learned and connections made during those three days in Maryland will continue to influence my leadership journey for years. Thank you, AAUW, for making this transformative experience possible!

Membership Article

Membership growth is something we all can help with... think of the women you know who might appreciate a personal invitation to join you at a meeting, book discussion or helping at the bookroom. Let them also know about our book sales. While we all would like to see young members join us, it is probably more likely that our retired friends will be more interested in (and available for) our activities. Think about your neighbors and people from church or other groups.

But be clear that we also welcome those who simply want to support the goals of AAUW. The March meeting will include a recognition of sponsor members as well as a prize drawing for them. So, start thinking and talking about AAUW!

Diversity Article

By Mary Lynn Merkle

Where Did We All Come From?!

I just found out that there are Native Americans on my family tree. Now I can add that to the Welsh, English, Spanish and Canadian genes.

I'm guessing that many of us have been checking our ancestry with enthusiasm and pride. Most of us are mainly derived from a long line of nationalities, and it's great fun and sometimes good information to find out from whence we came. And we all, excepting those of pure Native American ancestry, are comprised of a family with immigrant roots.

In my case "we" immigrated in the late 1800's—families who saw an opportunity for a better life; safer, healthier, and improved job possibilities. So it is that I am, 150 years later, a proud American without a single concern or fear about citizenship.

Now we come to those many people today who come to seek healthier, safer lives including better work in our country. It's really messed up, isn't it? "There are too many!" "It takes too long!" Can our wonderful United States provide all the government assistance programs that so many newly arrived might need? Then there are the "bad" guys who manage to get in. And there's no way to provide humane conditions for those who wait with such hope of a new start in the Land of the Free.

I do not have any answers. I don't even have ideas to suggest. And, I'm way too "busy" to get involved.

What I know for sure is that we have a serious problem that needs to be solved.

Let us hope that once we quit demonizing those who are different or those who are new to our land, our leaders in authority will find a path that is wise and compassionate for all!

It's time!

Contemporary Literature

The group will meet on December 2, 11:00 AM for a potluck brunch/lunch meeting to celebrate the holidays. The book discussion will be on *Lady Tan's Circle of Women* by Lisa See. Please bring a dish to share. It may be an entrée, salad, appetizer or dessert. The meeting will be held at the home of Mary Hanson. Please contact Kay Collins with questions.

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