

History of the Atlanta Affiliate, AAUW

In 2024 the national AAUW designated in mandated bylaws that local AAUW organizations previously known as Branches hereby will be known as Affiliates. The Atlanta Branch AAUW celebrated its 100th anniversary on March 5, 2005. Our branch was organized as a branch of the Southern Association of College Women (SACW), which had been founded at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in July 1903. The Atlanta Branch organizers had been unsuccessful at becoming a branch of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), which had been founded in 1881. In 1921, ACA and SACW were united, the name was changed to American Association of University Women, and Atlanta became a member of the new Association.

From the beginning, the work of the Branch has centered on projects promoting either social welfare or education. In addition to regular contributions to the Educational Foundation, the Legal Advocacy Fund, and funding of local scholarships, the following are selected accomplishments of the Atlanta Branch:

1910 Presented a paper on child labor that attracted attention throughout the South.

1943–44 Petitioned the General Council of Atlanta to increase the appropriation for more or larger

playgrounds staffed with trained personnel.

1946 Held an all-day Health Conference at the Biltmore Hotel. Members of the State Department of Health were the speakers, reporting their services and stating future plans and aims.

1948–49 Sponsored a forum on civil rights.

1953–54 Monitored radio programs for content and quality.

1954–55 Offered study groups. The International Relations group met monthly with the United Nations Forum. The committees on Education, Legislation, International Affairs, and Social Studies sponsored workshops and exhibits for nursery school operators.

1955–56 Sponsored the second workshop for nursery school and kindergarten teachers and administrators.

1960 Began a Book Fair as fund raising activity.

1963–71 Produced nine annual community conferences, ranging from “Dropouts—Social Dynamite” to “The Law and the Citizen.”

1969–70 Served as the catalyst for the formation of a consortium “Georgians for Quality Education.” Hearings were held to set educational priorities; four committees were chaired by AAUW members.

1972 Gave \$2,500 to Reading is Fundamental (RIF) and set up a local pilot project of the national effort.

1976 Researched, wrote and published Georgia Women: A Celebration. The book was distributed to schools and libraries statewide.

1978 Founded Educational Information and Referral Service, Inc. to provide assessment, educational information and educational referral services for individuals.

1980 Hosted two African educators, part of an exchange group through the Association.

1983–84 Worked closely with other women's organizations in the "Women's Vote Project." Fostered the beginning of the Women's Advocacy Network, a coalition which addressed statewide social issues.

1990–91 Brought the American Fellowships Endowment for the Southeast to stipend-bearing status. It was created by designated contributions of over \$100,000 to the Educational Foundation.

1994 Co-sponsored workshops "Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America: A Call to Action in Georgia". Met requirements for Association designation as a Five Star Branch.

1996 Sponsored Political Candidate Forum, which was televised on Atlanta

cable TV. This event helped educate the community on the issues facing voters in the November election.

1998 Brought our own Research and Projects Endowment, originally established in 1973, up to \$35,000, to meet increased current Educational Foundation guidelines.

1999 Held our first Sister-to-Sister Summit at the Georgia Institute of Technology for 47 middle-grades girls.

2002 Held our first Woman-to-Woman Summit, a public forum on eldercare, childcare, health care, and social security, at The Loudermilk Center.

2003 Presented an Educational Forum entitled "Religion and Women: Impact of Fundamentalist Factions in the Abrahamic Religions," at the Carter Center.

2004 Presented an Educational Forum entitled, "Public Education: Does Education Have a Fourth R?" which was open to the public and recorded at the GPTV studios.

2005 Celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the AAUW Atlanta Branch, with a day-long series of events held at the Atlanta History Center.

2006–07 Held a Legislative Program in partnership with National Coalition of 100 Black Women.

2009 AAUW Atlanta Bookfair celebrated its fiftieth anniversary.

2011 Georgia State University established a Student Affiliate Group with the support of the Atlanta Branch.

2012 Initiated signature project Cool Scholars.

Georgia State University became the archival repository for Branch archives. Four scrapbooks are digitized and can be viewed via the Georgia State University Library's Digital Collections, Archives for Research on Women and Gender page.

2019 AAUW Atlanta Bookfair celebrates its sixtieth anniversary.

2020 Bookfair is suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic. During pandemic lockdown several Branch meetings took place by Zoom, including a program about women's heart health.

2021 AAUW Atlanta Bookfair began selling used books in a booth at Westside Market, Toco Hill Shopping Center, with periodic sidewalk sales held each year to supplement our booth sales. AAUW intensified a relationship with Books for Africa, making regular donations from excess books as well as monetary support from our Philanthropy funds.

2022–24 Speakers at Branch meetings addressed political and philanthropic interests of our members including issues involving homelessness, immigration, and judicial reform. In 2023, we heard from a representative of Books for Africa.