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**AAUW FL
2021
VIRTUAL
Leadership
Conference**



April 16, 17, 18

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What's Inside

State Board	2
Leadership Conference	3
Schedule	4
Voter guide: Bylaws	5
Candidates	6-7
State news	
Lobby Days	8
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	9
Tech Trek	9
Philanthropy	10
Women's vote	11
Branch news	
Weston	12
Sarasota, Flagler	13

Methods change, but not mission

By Patricia DeWitt, AAUW FL President

During my term as president so far, I have been inspired by the efforts of our state officers and of some branches in fulfilling the mission of AAUW – despite a pandemic that has dramatically changed the way we have conducted our programs and activities.



Patricia DeWitt
President, AAUW FL

Finding ways to meet. Many branches took advantage of the options offered by modern technology and brought their meetings online, often inviting noteworthy speakers, and better yet, inviting nonmembers as well as members from other branches around the state.

The Lake Sumter branch, many of whose members live in The Villages, established a committee on diversity and inclusion and has been conducting online discussions of racism for six months. These discussions have attracted both community members and interested parties from out of state.

Other branches have taken creative steps to let their members be present at social distance with one another, from beach gatherings to meetings in parks.

Reimagining Lobby Days. Our director for public policy, Kay Lee-Smith, is promoting Lobby Days Reimagined, a new concept in advocating for AAUW's mission with the Florida Legislature. While perhaps not as exciting as a trip to Tallahassee, this method will eliminate many of the reasons not to participate that AAUW members have mentioned in the past: the long trip to Tallahassee, the expense of the hotel, the necessity to work, or other conflicts. I fully expect to have at least a thousand AAUW members participate from their homes this year.

Virtual camps and conference. Likewise, both Tech Trek and the AAUW Florida Leadership Conference will be held online, accepting the limitations and taking advantage of the opportunities available in this format. One of the opportunities is a drastic reduction in cost. The leadership conference will be offered free of charge this year, and the Tech Trek fee will be reduced.

Another opportunity is the broadening of participation: Tech Trek will need more group leaders able to function online, and, of course, more of our membership should be able to participate in the leadership conference, which, as always, is open to all members.

Bea Holt, our director for program, envisions a series of follow-up sessions online to explore further the topics in the two major sessions. This opportunity to deepen our knowledge is only possible because of the ease of online gathering.

Continued on page 2

State News

President's Message (Continued from page 1)

Becoming Zoomers.

Congratulations to all AAUW members who stepped out of their comfort zones to become proficient in Zoom participation. This shows that our love of learning of all kinds is not dead. For those who have not yet participated, I urge you to have confidence in yourself.

Membership changes. I also urge you to have an open mind regarding the proposed AAUW membership requirement change. The National board and the AAUW

Governance Committee recommend that the degree requirement for membership be eliminated. You can read the [rationale and the bylaws changes](#) on the National website.

The comment period is now closed, and we will vote on this and other matters between April 7 and May 17, 2021. As you prepare to vote, do yourself a favor and look over the [Open Membership Toolkit](#) on the National website.

You may be surprised by some

of the reasons the National board is asking us to vote to open the membership to anyone who supports the mission.

Strategic plan. While you're at it, take a look at the way the mission is operationalized in the new [Strategic Plan 2.0](#).

It's a vision to "advance gender equity through research, education and advocacy." Part of this advancement and education has to be our own. ■

2020-21 AAUW FL Officers and Appointees

Elected Officers

President – *Patricia DeWitt*
 Director for Program – *Bea Holt*
 Director for Membership – *Rose Llanos-Almeida*
 Director for Finance – *Kathy VanderVliet*
 Director for Development – *Ellen Roche*
 Co-Directors for Communications – *Patricia Ross and Carol MacDonald*
 Director for Public Policy – *Kay Lee-Smith*
 Secretary – *Susan Baird*

Did you know?

180,102 women have been trained in salary negotiation skills through Work Smart and Start Smart to date. For more fast facts about AAUW, go to [page 10](#).

Appointed Officers

Bylaws, Policies, Resolutions – *Virginia Farace*
 Historian – *Open*
 Parliamentarian – *Virginia Farace*
 Administrative Assistant – *Susan Baird*

Other Appointees

C/U Partner Liaison – *Shawnreca Campbell*
 Web Manager – *Theresa Owen*
 floriVision Editor - *Carol MacDonald*
 Tech Trek Coordinator – *Sue Slone*
 Voting and Elections Co-Chairs – *Patricia Ross, Virginia Farace*
 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chair– *Jonnie Mae Perry*
 Nominating Committee Chair – *Jacqueline D'Alessio*
 Women's Vote Centennial Committee Chair – *Kimble Medley*



Founded in 1881, the American Association of University Women is the nation's leading voice promoting equity and education for women and girls.

- **Our mission:** Advancing gender equity through research, education and advocacy.
- **Our vision:** Equity for all.
- **Our values:** Nonpartisan. Fact-based. Principled. Inclusive and Intersectional.

2021 Leadership Conference/Annual Meeting

Join us online!

Women Together in the Sunshine State

By Bea Holt, AAUW FL Director for Program



Logo: Kimble Medley

AAUW members across the Sunshine State will be coming together April 16, 17 and 18 under unusual circumstances. We'll most likely be home in front of a bright screen, logged in to Zoom and ready to engage with fellow leaders for our biennial leadership conference.

Learning virtually. The state board and Leadership Conference Planning Committee have planned five 1-hour virtual sessions over three days, with the annual meeting on the third. Sessions will be recorded; questions are encouraged.

- Branch successes in 2020 will be highlighted in video and photos.
- Our keynote speaker will inspire members to continue to lead the way forward.
- The panel on diversity, equity

and inclusion will focus on the online resources developed by AAUW National and implemented locally.

- The economic security session will explore how to address the current financial situations women face, along with programs and policies designed to address them.
- Presentations submitted by branches and compiled in a video will show innovative ideas used during the pandemic.

Taking care of business. Sunday, April 18, we'll fill four board positions at our annual meeting, and learn about proposed amendments to our state bylaws. (See *Voter Guide* on pages 5- 7.)

We'll also review the pros and cons of the [change in membership](#)

that all AAUW members will decide in an online vote. The change recommended by AAUW National would eliminate the degree requirement for membership.

Register here now! There's no fee for this year's virtual conference, but registration is required.

Conference sessions will be held via Zoom webinar on April 16, 17 and 18. You can attend any or all. [Click here](#) to register and make your selections.

Since the annual meeting on April 18 is for AAUW Florida members only, a separate registration is required. [Click here](#) to register for the annual meeting.

You'll get a confirmation email after registering. ■

NASA official to give keynote speech



conference. She'll join us online at 5 p.m. on the first day of the con-

Janet E. Petro, deputy director of NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, is keynote speaker for this year's leadership

ference, Friday, April 16, to discuss "Adapting to New Challenges."

Petro began her career as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army after graduating in 1981 from the U.S. Military Academy West Point with a bachelor of science degree in engineering. She served in the U.S. Army's aviation branch with various assignments in Germany. She also holds a master of science in business administration from Boston

University's Metropolitan College.

Appointed to her current position in April 2007, she shares responsibility with the space center's director in managing the space center's team of approximately 9,000 civil service and contractor employees.

Her latest initiative was the implementation of a diversity and inclusion program for the space center. ■

2021 Leadership Conference: Schedule

Women Together in the Sunshine State

Friday, April 16

4 pm to 4:30 pm	Zoom Sign-in Zoom rules reviewed. Social time
4:30 pm to 5 pm	Time to Share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: View a medley of statewide branch contributions of photos and accomplishments to demonstrate how women came together to overcome the many hurdles of 2020 and COVID-19. • Named Gift Awards: <i>Ellen Roche, AAUW FL Director for Development</i> Presentation of awards to honorees selected by their branches. Branches earn this privilege based on the level of financial contributions made by the branch to AAUW National.
5 pm to 6 pm	Keynote Speaker: Janet E. Petro <i>Deputy Director, NASA, Kennedy Space Center. Graduate, U.S. Military Academy West Point</i> Topic: "Adapting to New Challenges"
<h3>Saturday, April 17</h3>	
9:30 am to 10:30 am	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Moderator: <i>Jonnie Mae Perry, Chair, AAUW FL Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key elements of AAUW National's DEI Toolkit will be explored, including the 16 dimensions of diversity and the meaning of "intersectionality." – <i>Erin Conn, Member, AAUW DEI Committee, and Melissa Ingram, Member, AAUW DEI Committee, DEI Toolkit Developer.</i> <i>(You're encouraged to check out DEI resources and the toolkit before the conference.)</i> • How the Lake Sumter branch used DEI resources for a series of programs, including "How to Start Difficult Conversations." – <i>Linda Carpenter, Co-chair DEI Committee, Lake Sumter</i>
11 am to Noon	Economic Security Moderators: <i>Ellen Roche, AAUW FL Director for Development and Kay Lee-Smith, AAUW FL Director for Public Policy</i> <i>The essentials of women's economic security:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women face economic downturn during COVID-19 pandemic. – <i>Barbara Ritter, Dean, Davis College of Business, Jacksonville University.</i> • Important elements in defining financial literacy for women today. – <i>Laura Mattia, Certified Financial Planner.</i> • Review of current policy issues before the Florida Legislature. – <i>Lori Berman, State Senator, Florida's 31st District.</i>
<h3>Sunday, April 18</h3>	
9:30 am to 10:30 am	Shared 2020 Successes Moderator: <i>Bea Holt, AAUW FL Director for Program</i> View a compilation of 5-minute video presentations created by branches to demonstrate how they used leadership skills and innovative ideas to overcome the obstacles presented in 2020 amidst the worldwide pandemic.
11 am to Noon	Annual Meeting Presiding Officer: <i>Patricia DeWitt, President, AAUW Florida</i> Meet nominated slate of officers; review proposed bylaws changes; hear pros and cons of proposed changes in membership requirements.

Voter Guide: Introduction/ByLaw Changes

Bylaws changes, board openings on ballot

Filling four positions on the state board of directors and discussing bylaws amendments are on the agenda for the annual meeting part of our 2021 AAUW Leadership Conference, Sunday, April 18.

Details on the bylaws proposals are in the article, *below*, and for candidates, on *pages 6 and 7*.

In keeping with the One Member, One Vote initiative, you don't have to attend the virtual conference to have your preferences count. The annual meeting opens April 18, but won't close until votes are tallied. All AAUW Florida members as of March 30, 2021, can vote online or, for those without email, by paper ballot.

The results of the vote will be announced in an email to branch

presidents and on our state website.

Accurate addresses

A private company will handle the balloting process this year, using email addresses and postal mailing addresses recorded in the Membership Services Database. Anyone whose email address isn't in the database gets a paper ballot.

It's crucial that contact information entered in the database is correct and complete. To be sure, it's a good idea to check both your email and postal addresses on the [National website](#).

Branch presidents can help by making certain that members' addresses have been entered correctly and that everyone knows how important it is.

When to vote

The annual meeting isn't closed until votes are tallied and results announced. This year, online voting begins May 15 and ends June 15 at 9 p.m. EDT. Paper ballots must be postmarked by 11:59 p.m. EDT, June 13.

The nominating committee proposed candidates to fill the four open board positions – president-elect and directors for program, finance and public policy. Those running unopposed may be elected by acclamation at the annual meeting.

Nominations may also be made from the floor with the nominee's consent. Any contested offices will be on the OMOV ballot, along with the proposed bylaws amendments.

– Voting and Elections Committee. ■

What to know about proposed bylaws amendments

By Virginia Farace, Bylaws Committee Chair

1. Insert a new ARTICLE XVII. ELECTRONIC MEETINGS as follows, and renumber the remaining Articles:

Any meeting of the membership, board, committees, task forces or other AAUW Florida groups may be conducted in whole or part by electronic means as long as all persons participating, whether in person or electronically, may hear each other and communicate in real time. Participation in an electronic meeting constitutes attendance and any official actions shall be recorded in minutes.

RATIONALE:

Codifies the emergency action that was necessary due to the pandemic. These meetings were very successful and this amendment to the bylaws complies with the latest Robert's Rules of Order and allows all future meetings the ability to be held electronically.

2. Reword ARTICLE X. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. Duties of Elected Officers.

c. Directors

(4) Director for Development. The director for development shall implement AAUW's Fellowship,

~~Grants and Research Programs and Legal Advocacy Programs and such other fundraising programs as may be established by AAUW or AAUW Florida.~~

TO READ:

(4) Director for Development. The director for development shall implement *Fundraising Programs of AAUW and AAUW Florida.*

RATIONALE:

By not listing specific programs, it is a more general charge and thus more inclusive of any current or future fundraising programs instituted by AAUW or AAUW Florida. ■

Voter Guide: Candidates

Learn more about who's on the ballot

We'll vote for president-elect and directors for finance, program and public policy at our annual meeting, April 18. Qualifications statements from the candidates selected by the nominating committee are *below* and on *page 7*. Nominations can be made from the floor with the nominee's consent.

Editor's note: Statements from candidates were lightly edited for spacing and adherence to style guides for such elements as abbreviations and capitalization. ■

Bea Casey Holt Candidate - President-Elect



Bea Holt

I consider myself a community volunteer, supporter of the arts, champion of women's rights and I encourage the pursuit of higher education for women at all stages of their lives. For the past two years I have been the AAUW FL Director for Program and since 2015 enrolled in the AAUW Legacy Circle.

As a member of the Venice branch since 2010, I have served in many capacities including – three years as co-chair of our major fundraiser for re-entry scholarships; on the board as program director and director of development; liaison with two local community foundations; and I chaired various branch committees including endowment and nominating.

Professionally, I earned my bachelor's degree from St Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at age 32, and I went on to become vice president of a mutual insurance company until I retired in 2010 after 25 years.

As president-elect, I will be serving an apprenticeship for the position of President, AAUW FL in 2022. This transitional post allows for a smooth change in leadership. I promise to utilize the year ahead to become familiar with all aspects of the state operations, identify candidates for future board and committee positions, and establish relationships with the branches and the officers and staff at AAUW National. ■

Linda Russell Candidate – Director for Finance



Linda Russell

I grew up and spent most of my life in Rochester, New York. As a child I remember my mother going to AAUW meetings and I thought they must be doing important work because my mother and her friends talked about helping other women.

I graduated from Heidelberg College in Tiffin, Ohio, with a degree in sociology and went on to have a 33-year career with the Monroe County Department of Social Services, where I worked as a social worker and later as an administrator.

Following retirement in 2002, my husband and I retired to Palm Coast, Florida. I joined the Flagler branch of AAUW in 2014 and have held the positions of secretary and treasurer over these years. If elected to the director for finance position, I hope to continue the sound management practices that have been developed for AAUW in Florida.

Additionally, I would hope to develop some extra revenue sources that would enable AAUW Florida to provide further leadership programs for the branches as well as to provide additional support to young women. ■

Voter Guide: Candidates (Continued)

Diana Sells Candidate, Director for Program



Diana Sells

I was born and raised in Washington, D.C., and graduated with a degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. My husband and I moved to Canada in 1970 and over my years there I served on the boards of the Junior League of Calgary, the Calgary French School and the Friends of the White Rock Library.

I joined AAUW Sarasota after moving here in 2014, and am currently past president and public policy chair.

I was previously a member of the Canadian Federation of University Women, holding many board positions in the White Rock/Surrey branch, including co-president. When I moved back to the U.S., I also joined Women Graduates-USA, which is a national affiliate of GWI– Graduate Women International. These organizations have the same mission as AAUW but work internationally.

The current pandemic has created challenges for branches, closing the door to in-person meetings, but opening the door through technology to the possibility of previously unattainable speakers and sharing of programs with other branches. This will most likely continue for awhile, so I hope to help branches take advantage of these new opportunities. ■

Kay Lee-Smith Candidate, Director for Public Policy



Kay Lee-Smith

Kay Lee-Smith currently serves as the AAUW Florida Director for Public Policy. She is a member of the Tampa branch where she has served as newsletter chair and director for communications.

She joined AAUW because of its vision: Bringing together individuals with a common goal of breaking through education and economic barriers for all women. Her goal as director for public policy is to identify and advocate for the removal of barriers and biases to equity in the state of Florida.

She is a member of the Tampa Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., where she serves as chair of economic development. She is also a member of Pi Sigma Alpha and Phi Gamma Mu honor societies, the American Society of Public Administrators, and the Conference of Minority Public Administrators.

She is a public servant, retired military spouse, and advocate against environmental, economic, healthcare and educational disparities. She has earned a doctorate of philosophy in public policy and administration, and believes success equals a trained mind and a heart inspired by God. ■

State News: Lobby Days

Help us ensure legislators understand AAUW issues

By Kay Lee-Smith, Director for Public Policy

This year it will be easy for you to let Florida legislators know where AAUW stands on important issues.

You won't have to travel to Tallahassee for our annual Lobby Days event. You'll just have to log in to Zoom on Wednesday, March 17, because Lobby Day has been reimagined due to the pandemic.

You'll need to register in advance using this link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMkcumoqj0uE9ICUIVJxPxoSDT20gmsDeki](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMkcumoqj0uE9ICUIVJxPxoSDT20gmsDeki)

After registering, you'll receive a confirmation email with the information needed to join the meeting.

Plans for the day

- From 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., you'll hear speakers on our 2021 legislative agenda; participate in a short workshop on bill tracking; an information session on bills and the impact of their related committees;

and get tips for virtual lobbying.

- We'll distribute a state Action Alert for the priority bills on our legislative agenda. Be sure to sign up as a [Two-Minute Activist](#) so you'll get the alert.

- For the rest of the day, branch members will meet with their legislators to discuss our legislative agenda. Talking points will be available.

How to prepare

What will it mean to engage in virtual lobbying? What preparations should you make?

- Identify your [legislators](#) and call or email them or their legislative aides early to arrange meetings.
- Identify your [county legislative delegation](#) by AAUW branch.
- Provide information about AAUW. The state public policy



Florida State Capitol, Tallahassee.

committee will provide guidance.

- Review the top priority bills on our legislative agenda that we're tracking and plan talking points. (*See article, below.*)

- Sign up to be a [Two-Minute Activist](#).

- Review [AAUW Quick Facts](#).

- Some branches may decide to meet with their legislators prior to or after Lobby Day. Contact the public policy committee if resources are needed. ■

Learn about the bills we're tracking

- Discrimination in Labor and Employment:** [HB107/SB256](#)

Prohibits employer from providing less favorable employment opportunities to employees based on their sex; provides civil penalties; prohibits employer from taking employment actions against employees; prohibits employer from engaging in certain activities relating to wages and benefits, and from requiring employees to sign certain waivers and documents; authorizes employer to confirm wage or salary history under certain conditions.

- Human Trafficking Education in Schools:** [HB 519/SB 554](#)

Revising required health education in public schools to include information about dangers and signs of human trafficking; specifies minimum requirements in curriculum.

- Medicaid Coverage:** [SJR 276](#)

Proposes new section in state constitution to require amendment of state Medicaid plan to provide Medicaid to those under age 65 with incomes equal to or below 138 percent of federal poverty level.

- Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** [HB 275/SB180](#)

Establishes office within the Executive Office of the Governor; provides for appointment of chief diversity officer; assigns duties and responsibilities.

- Intelligence-led Policing:** [HB 875/SB808](#)

Provides requirements for intelligence-led policing and law enforcement agencies that use it; requires certain information be provided to a targeted individual. ■

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

New DEI committee chair appointed

Jonnie Mae Perry is the new chair of our state Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

She also serves on the AAUW National DEI committee and is currently president of the Vero Beach branch.

Providing resources and information about [DEI](#) on our website has been one of her first tasks. Perry has already established a [knowledge base](#) with suggested readings, films and facts, and wants suggestions for additions. The site also includes links to the AAUW National Diversity Toolkit.

A graduate of Vero Senior High School, Perry received a bachelor of science degree in business/office administration from Morris Brown College in Atlanta. Over a period of

39 years, she worked for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Airborne Express, Professional Creative Consultants, and J. Brown & Associates.

Since returning to Indian River County in 2011, Perry has been active in many community organizations. She is currently CEO of the Gifford Community Cultural and Resource Center, a nonprofit, volunteer organization for mentoring and providing cultural and leadership programs for underserved youth.

She is also executive director of the [Gifford Historical Museum and Cultural Center](#) and led the transformation of the historic Macedonia Colored Church into the museum. The church was built in 1908 by Black laborers who had nowhere to worship.



Jonnie Mae Perry stands before a picture of the historic Black church she helped transform to a museum and cultural

Perry has been a member of the community's Social Justice and Coalition for Racial Justice Committee since 2015 and of the Justice and Honor Task Force of Vero.

A graduate of the 2019 Indian River County Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class, she has held dozens of other community leadership roles related to education, history, housing, social justice, and diversity. ■

Tech Trek 2021

Volunteers needed for virtual camps

By Sue Slone, Tech Trek Coordinator

Florida Tech Trek is going virtual this year, with two camps in July that will mirror the kinds of experiences the girls have had at our in-person camps.

Both camps will be held July 19 to July 23, serving about 60 girls each for a total of about 120 attendees.

We've received 180 nominations from teachers across the state. Applications have been sent to the nominees. We'll also invite the girls chosen to attend the 2020 camps that had to be canceled due to the pandemic.

We're still looking for



teachers for our workshops. If you or someone you know might be interested in teaching, send a proposal for a one-and-a-half hour virtual, hands-on workshop to fltechtrekjones@gmail.com

Core courses to be offered virtually will be Computer Science Discoveries; Thinkabit Lab (a robotics class in conjunction with Qualcomm); Marine Biology; Engineering (bridge building); and Neuroscience.

Since materials will be sent to the

campers, we also need a very organized person to handle the ordering, packing and mailing of these materials. Email Sue Slone at techtrekfl16@gmail.com if you're interested.

The cost will be \$750 per student this year compared to the \$1,100 cost of in-person camps. Families will only need to pay a \$25 registration fee.

Tax-deductible donations to the AAUW Florida Supporting Foundation make the camps possible and are always welcome.

The [Florida Tech Trek site](#) has more information about the camps and donating. ■

State News: Philanthropy

Nominations for Named Gift Awards due March 15

By Ellen Roche, AAUW FL Director for Development

Many of our members and branches were able to generously contribute to AAUW funds such as the Greatest Needs Fund in 2020.

Last year members and branches of AAUW Florida contributed \$57,135 to AAUW funds. While this is down slightly from 2019, your contributions have helped to support AAUW during a very difficult economic time for many members and the organization as a whole.

Each branch president and development officer has received a report detailing the amounts contributed by the branch and its members. Seventeen branches are eligible to nominate up to 60 members.

We recognize these contributions with our Named Gift

Awards. For every contribution of \$750 to AAUW funds, your branch may nominate one member to receive a Branch Named Gift Award.

The member is not necessarily the largest financial contributor. This is an opportunity for the branch to recognize the contributions of its members to branch activities and AAUW in general.

Any member nominated for the Branch Named Gift Award can also be considered for the AAUW Florida Named Gift award – the highest award given by AAUW Florida.

This award is given to recognize one member of AAUW Florida who has done outstanding work to

promote the programs, goals and mission of AAUW and/or AAUW Florida.

Forms to nominate members for Branch Named Gift Awards and the AAUW Florida Named Gift award were included with the donations report.

Submit the completed forms to me by March 15 by email or regular mail. If you did not receive your report or have other questions about the program, please [contact me](#).

The recipients of all these awards will be recognized during the virtual AAUW Florida Leadership Conference and Annual Meeting April 16, 17 and 18, 2021.

A commemorative certificate will be mailed after the meeting. ■

Fast facts about AAUW accomplishments in 2020

180,167 Women trained in salary-negotiation skills through our Work Smart and Start Smart programs to date.

30,000 People reached by our 35 free webinars featuring career tips, advice on activism, interviews with thought leaders and other educational offerings.

\$3.6 million Awarded to more than 200 recipients for the 2020-21 academic year with the goal of advancing educational opportunities for women around the globe.

29 Minority-serving institutions including 18 historical Black colleges and universities, that now offer AAUW's Start Smart training, bringing the number of colleges and universities hosting the program to 142.

62,400 Letters sent to elected officials urging immediate action on COVID relief, paid leave benefits, voter access and other key AAUW public policy priorities.

5 Cases that AAUW is supporting to help women fight workplace discrimination, Title IX violations and pay inequity.

227 Media outlets have featured AAUW's work in 2020, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report, NBC News and more.

1 New learning community launched: AAUW's Equity Network offers leadership training to early- and mid-career participants who are committed to social justice. Members and supporters bolstering our mission of advancing gender equity for women and girls through research education and advocacy.

Source: [AAUW 2020 by the Numbers](#).

State News: Women's Vote Centennial

Stronger Together Is Our Legacy

By Kimble Medley, Women's Vote Centennial Chair

More than a century ago, the Spanish flu engulfed the globe and threatened to thwart woman's suffrage. Carrie Chapman Catt penned, "These are sad times for the whole world, grown unexpectedly sadder by the sudden and sweeping epidemic of influenza... We must therefore be prepared for failure."

As suffragists regrouped and reimaged their strategies, tenacity and leadership were key for success. Maud Wood Park described the fight as "trying to swim in a whirlpool," requiring "every ounce of thought and energy" to reach a breakthrough.

Any one of us could easily express that very same sentiment today. Just as the Spanish flu nearly upended final passage of the 19th Amendment, COVID-19 upended and sidelined suffrage centennial celebrations. Whether by coincidence or design, lessons from 1918 and 2020 form, in part, the very basis of this year's leadership conference.

Spanish flu silver linings

A "[Smithsonian Magazine](#)" article from 2018 argues disasters like the Spanish flu and COVID-19 offer silver linings because change is realized.

The Spanish flu caused 50 million people worldwide to die, with 675,000 deaths in the United States. While the economy was significantly impacted, the ensuing worker shortage opened the doors to the workforce for women, and they answered the call in record numbers.

With more women moving into jobs once dominated by men, advocacy for equal pay and the right to vote increased.

Increased workforce participation led to more social and financial inde-



Logo: Kimble Medley

pendence for women. Leadership opportunities for women increased and by 1923, a woman governor had been elected. Women could no longer be ignored.

Facing COVID-19

Similarly, COVID-19 caused women to step up and face the frontlines. There were almost 113 million cases around the globe with more than 2.5 million deaths as of the end of February and more than 28 million cases in the U.S. and more than 510,000 deaths.

Unlike 1918, women now account for nearly 80 percent of health care workers. Silver linings from 2020, gleaned from two articles, [Women and the Frontlines of COVID-19](#) and [5 Ways to Cut Long-Term Impact of COVID-19 on Women Physicians](#), include increased use of telemedicine giving doctors greater flexibility in seeing patients.

Rather than penalizing women who take time from a career to be with family, the value of family time in an era where self-isolation is the new normal is viewed as a positive.

School and daycare closings have had a negative impact, especially with single mothers. However, because many women who now work from home must also master

online classrooms and provide full-time childcare, employers are finally recognizing acute childcare needs of their workers.

Such observations have led to more video conferencing capabilities and a greater embrace of technology. Social distancing does not equal socially distant.

Year of the Woman

2020 proved to be the Year of the Woman. The 117th Congress includes 120 women as U.S. Representatives and 24 women as Senators. The first woman, the first Black American, and the first South Asian American was elected as vice president. Three women serve as justices of the U.S. Supreme Court.

But, perhaps the most shining silver lining comes from those first steps taken by women in 1918, along with the advancement of STEM for subsequent generations of women. Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett realized at any early age that her passion was science: She is the 34-year-old African American, viral immunologist woman who developed the COVID-19 vaccine.

Together at the conference

Is there more to do? Absolutely! Just as suffragists regrouped, women in 2020 mastered online classrooms, tackled childcare, and most certainly found creative alternatives to the "she shed." AAUW Florida women paused, regrouped, reorganized, and found ways to pursue our mission.

Our virtual leadership conference April 16 -18 is the perfect venue for "Women Together in the Sunshine State" to not only bid 2020 adieu, but to come together, reflect, and go forward with a plan. Join us! ■

Branch News: Weston

Collaboration, promotion make public event a hit

By Kamala Anandam, President/Administrator, AAUW Weston

In 2007 as I recruited members to start a branch of AAUW in Weston, I discovered a startling fact: No one I contacted had heard of AAUW.

That made me realize we needed to find ways to make the branch visible to the general public. One of the most successful has been a public event on a timely topic held every year on a Saturday afternoon at the Weston Branch Library or the Weston YMCA.

For several years, it was International Women's Day, when we honored women and girls for their service to local, national and international communities.

Then, we held a series of events on human trafficking and the opioid epidemic. We also held a debate among high school students on the "good and bad" of cell phones

COVID-19 modifications

In 2020, it was to be the centennial celebration of women's suffrage. Planning for a weeklong event began early February 2020 in collaboration with the Weston Branch Library.

But when COVID-19 put an end to in-person events, the library's Karen Gelover suggested we celebrate virtually and work with the main Broward County Library's regional technical group to organize a virtual meeting.

Loria Tillman, library specialist supervisor, joined Karen and I to collaborate on what became a successful online meeting, Wednesday, August 19, 2020.



Speakers, library helped branch promote event.

Developing the program

The branch's role was to develop the program and find the speakers. The program consisted of:

- **Three speakers on the 19th Amendment** and how they are celebrating and educating the public – U.S. Rep. Debbie Wassermann-Schultz; Rita Craig, chair, Florida Commission on the Status of Women; and Jennifer Herrera, vice president, external affairs, National Women's History Museum.

- **Two speakers on the importance of voting** who urged the audience to register and vote – Nan Rich, Broward County Commissioner, and Monica Elliott, president, League of Women Voters of Broward County.

- **Reading of two winning essays in a statewide competition** for middle school students organized by the Florida Commission on the Status of Women. The essays, read by a librarian, were on the topic "What does Amendment 19 mean to you and explain why everyone should vote."

- **Reading of a proclamation on the 100th anniversary of Amendment 19** by Daniel Stermer, then City of Weston mayor.

Promoting the project

Developing a program is only half the effort in any successful project; the other half is promoting it.

As a virtual event, individuals around the country and even the world could be part of the audience.

The library had its own list of clients and publicity channels for promoting the event.

AAUW Weston targeted its members, AAUW Florida board members and branch presidents, and members of organizations such as the League of Women Voters, Broward International Women's Club and Weston Democratic Club.

The speakers from the Florida Commission on Status of Women and National Women's History Museum posted the information on their websites.

As a result, 136 individuals, including some from Canada and India, registered for the event. The day-before reminder to all the registrants resulted in 85 participants in the virtual meeting.

The program ran smoothly without any technical glitches and was well received. On hindsight, if it had been on a Saturday, we could have had more participants.

Plugging AAUW

In my welcome speech, I gave a plug for AAUW, telling the audience what the abbreviation stands for and describing our mission. I also encouraged emails be sent to me by those interested in joining, promising to make sure they got to the right branch. ■

Branch News: Sarasota and Flagler

Sarasota branch gets county legislators' attention

By Lois A. Fisch, President, Sarasota Branch

Making a presentation before your county's legislative delegation is an effective way to get your message to elected officials.

The delegations comprise all state legislators representing your county and typically hold public hearings to learn about important issues from their constituents.

I represented AAUW Sarasota before the Sarasota County Legislative Delegation in a public hearing held Dec. 18, 2020.

Ellen Roche, branch past president and chair of our economic security committee, and Diana Sells, past president and branch director for public policy, worked with me on the comments that would be presented to our legislators.

We were allotted a mere 2.5 minutes to present our message, so we wanted to be sure that the presentation would be clear and concise.

Our goal was twofold:

1. **To inform our legislators about the recently released study, "Aging, Women and Economic Insecurity In Sarasota County, Florida."**

The research was conducted by Mary Gatta, associate professor of sociology at The City University of New York, and Jessica Horning, MSSW. Funding was provided by the Margaret L. Bates Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and by members of AAUW Sarasota.

2. **To recommend the following policies based on the findings of the report:**

*** Florida should address labor market inequities that lead to insecure retirement.**

–Address gender and racial inequity in the labor market.

–Eliminate the gender and race pay gaps through pay transparency and eliminating the use of salary history in setting wages.

–Fully implement the recently increased minimum wage which will help move workers to economic security.

–Legislate paid leave and sick days for all Florida workers.

*** Florida should secure retirement.**

–Increase statewide savings opportunities for workers. Central to these plans is automatic enrollment and a simplified savings program.

–Increase supports/public assistance for seniors including ways to help subsidize utility costs for seniors, along with an investment in the public transportation system that can minimize costs for travel to doctors and grocery stores.

The presentation went well. I was able to deliver our message within the allotted time frame and the legislators were interested and attentive. Electronic versions of the full report and an executive summary were sent to each legislator as well. ■

Flagler's nominee chosen for Women's Hall of Fame

The Flagler County branch's efforts to add suffragist Alice Scott Abbott of Bunnell to the Florida Women's Hall of Fame found success.

Abbott was one of three nominees chosen to be inducted to the hall of fame in January in a virtual ceremony in Tallahassee.

The branch learned of Abbott's work as an early suffragist in research to identify the first women in the

county to vote. Flagler's women's vote centennial committee nominated Abbott to the hall of fame in March last year. In August, the Florida Commission on the Status of Women announced that she had been selected as a finalist from 70 applications.

Alice Scott Abbott was an adept and dedicated woman who never stopped. For more than twenty

years, she worked to protect wages for women and girls, bring an end to the legal sale of liquor, enforce moral laws, stop trafficking of women and girls, and secure the vote for women.

According to newspaper accounts, she traveled more than 17,000 miles to advance suffrage for women. Ironically, her health failed and she died days before the November 1920 election. ■



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What's new in your branch?

Don't be shy! Let everyone know. Send articles (100 to 300 words) and photos (jpegs) to [Carol MacDonald](#), Editor, *floriVision*. ■

AAUW-FL
1900 N. Atlantic Ave #602
Daytona Beach FL 32118