



AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITY
WOMEN

IOWA *initiative*

Volume 77, Summer 2005

The American Association of University Women promotes education and equity for all women and girls, life-long education and positive societal change.

AAUW-IA State Conference Held in Cedar Rapids, April 23rd

by Sue Jorgensen

The 16th floor of the Crowne Plaza Hotel was a beautiful setting for the 2005 annual meeting and conference which was attended by 70 members and guests.

The day began with a lively interactive workshop, "The Many Faces of Leadership" facilitated by Scarlett Lunning. Participants identified their leadership styles, strengths, and preferences. It was enlightening to see how varying perspectives bring depth to a leadership team which has the potential to increase the effectiveness of every team.

"Showcasing Branch Achievements" a power point presentation celebrated every branch's accomplishments, successful projects and activities. It emphasized AAUW's mission and the impact of action projects happening in communities all across Iowa. (See the president's message which summarizes achievements.)

At the Annual Business Meeting the revision of state bylaws was passed unanimously. The nominations committee presented Dr. Janet Heinicke, candidate for President Elect. There were no nominations from the floor and Dr. Heinicke was unanimously elected. The nominations committee is commended for recruiting qualified candidates for positions on the board and committees. Regional Director Florine Swanson reported on changes at the Association level.

"Our Common Destiny: Local and Global Perspectives" was a panel presentation which included: Jane Nettleton; Moderator, Janet Heinicke; President Elect, Jeanne Warning; ISU Extension, Kathleen Wood Laurila; Vice President of the International Federation of University Women, and Florine Swanson; Board Member of Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund. It was interesting to learn about opportunities to improve conditions for women and girls in Iowa and in other countries.

Jeanne Warning reported that the statewide project, "Quality Child Care Lasts a Lifetime", is moving into the dissemination phase. Several branches have already indicated that they will apply to host a forum in their community. This partnership between AAUW branches and ISU Extension will get the information out to legislators, educators and parents. The goal is that the project will ultimately improve child care in Iowa.

Break out sessions included the following topics: increasing your effectiveness as a branch leader, using the internet to access AAUW information and tools, what to do about bullying and a session about the spirit of women as mentors and how to take care of yourself.

The vision for the future of AAUW in Iowa is promising!

Iowa AAUW Delegates Go To Washington, D.C.

The Iowa delegation to the Association Convention, June 24-27, includes: President Elect Jan Heinicke, Membership Vice President Norma Coret, Regional Director Florine Swanson, Communications Director Joan Thompson, Waterloo branch President Shiela Bullock, Cedar Rapids branch President Kathy Kittredge, and from the Davenport-Bettendorf branch, Alice West.



50 Yr. Members:
Dorothy Meyerhoff,
Evelyn Wood,
Norma Coret,
Membership VP
Irene Dodder

50-Year Members Receive Awards at Annual Meeting

Norma Coret of Denison area branch, and Dorothy Meyerhoff and Evelyn Wood of Cedar Falls branch were presented with certificates and gifts to honor their 50 years of membership and dedication to AAUW. Five additional women were recognized by their individual branches with the awards. They were: Julie Bailey of Cedar Falls branch, Beth Long of Denison area branch, Henrietta Madsen of Cedar Falls branch, Carol Sovern of Ottumwa area branch and Alice Wataje of the Denison area branch. Leone M. Evans, member-at-large and state member was also honored.

These Honorary Life Members are recognized by the Association as well. In addition to a certificate from the Association all future Association dues are waived. Thus they can be members by paying only the state and local membership dues. Many local branches are eager to waive the local membership as well.

These women continue to be vital leaders of their communities and are an inspiration to AAUW members of Iowa.

Visions for the Future of AAUW...

by Dr. Janet Heinicke

Editor's Note: This was the President-Elect's presentation at the town meeting at the AAUW Iowa Annual Meeting. The message was so important, it is included in the *initiative* for all AAUW members to read. It has been edited by the author for publication.

This is a time when AAUW women are asking questions, isn't it? It is a time when members are asking themselves, when you perhaps have asked yourself,

"What in the world are we doing here?"

"What is an organization of women college graduates in business for?"

"Is such an organization relevant?"

"Will such an organization be relevant in the future?"

Like many other organizations the American Association of University Women has had to adjust to new realities in this biennium. The current Association president, Nancy Rustad has issued a call for what we might call a "reality check". To respond to such a call we need to be clear about the realities we know, the realities we remember, and the realities we dream of.

For many of us the AAUW realities we remember may include images of a different kind of AAUW; images of a beautiful silver tea service, a lovely home in which women gathered; realities of hats and gloves, of time to "dress up" to "go out"; and whether we admitted it or not, there was the reality associated with an aura of affluence connected to obtaining a collegiate degree. There are harsher realities to remember from that era; an elderly grandparent, or an unemployed father; a brand new program of public welfare (a program which my father protested would mean destruction of family values, especially those in which the family took care of its own with fierce and often silent pride.) In that remembered reality, community was important, nearby and immediate. Identity was linked to family, as it is in some small Iowa towns today. You were (are) known not by your name but by whose son or daughter you may be. The address where you live is recognized not by number but by the owners of previous generations. (i.e. I live in Doc Porter's old house.)

Many of these realities have changed today. **The elderly grandparent living with grown children is a rarity.** Statistics today point toward the need for legislation to protect elders from elder abuse. HF259 has been considered in committee in this session of the legislature. The welfare system has become a bloated dinosaur, a source of widespread criticism and occasional effort at reform. **The numbers of abandoned and neglected children has soared.**

Cases of child abuse and the horrors associated with sexual abuse have become part of the daily news beat.

The number of women employed outside the home stands near 70 percent; the two-income family is the norm; both incomes needed to provide for shrinking family numbers and exploding family costs. **Divorce figures stand at one out of two marriages; families are spread, not across the county but across the country.**

The commitment to a free public education (a commitment that AAUW has consistently supported) has been silently and dramatically altered so that the expenditure increases are for charter schools and home schooling, not improved public schools.

A collegiate degree does not insure affluence. Indeed with the average graduate's exit from college a debt of nearly \$50,000 trails behind the degree.

This is our current reality OUT THERE!

Silver tea services, planning progressive dinners, and occasionally

asking a speaker to describe this reality lacks relevance to our new century.

We all probably dream of an AAUW that is relevant close to home. WE dream that AAUW will mean something of value in our town, in our county, perhaps in our state.

I think AAUW members in Iowa dream that in the future the contributions they make of time, of self, or financial contributions will matter directly to the quality of life where they live.

We dream of a larger membership.

We hope, somewhat wistfully, for relevance without extreme expense.

But you know what.....

We can't be relevant locally without knowing what is relevant globally. Because what we do has affect across a shrinking and increasingly interdependent world.

We inhabit this small sphere called earth together.

What vision can we have of this sphere we live in that are relevant?

FIRST, I believe this vision must validate the authenticity of each person. In particular, I believe that the future must validate leadership in each branch, regardless of the age, ethnicity, or economic status of each leader.

To say "We can't get anybody except the older members to accept responsibility" is but an excuse for opting out of the challenge to be relevant!"

SECOND, I believe that this vision must be authenticated by consensus. We need to listen attentively to one another, else we become like the camel put together by a committee.

THIRD, I believe that the future must give respect to and use these tools of investigation, of research and data gathering we learned to use as part of our education more aggressively, and with greater involvement and less passivity on the part of all our members.

AAUW exists, and has, for more than 100 years, to provide an opportunity for women for the kind of women that have learned that intellectual vigor is as important as physical vigor and stamina for tough-minded women.

Our challenge today is not so much one of declining membership as of declining relevance...of being sharp enough to remain connected to our rapidly changing world...of learning enough to learn to live, to survive and succeed in that rapidly changing world. Definitions of self by age, by occupation, even by economic status are not pertinent.

The future will be stronger if it is strengthened by meaningful programmatic activity that is not solely passive. If it is marked by collaboration with others, all the better. If it seeks honestly to understand and know the issues of our times.

If we work with international organizations to learn of our connectedness, we will come to know and respect and, indeed love this planet earth, and its people.

New Board Members:



Sandra Keist

Programs V.P.

Sandra Keist was appointed as Program Vice President to complete the term of Vicki Hibbert, who resigned on May 1, 2005. Sandra had been serving as Legal Advocacy Director on the Board of Directors.

Sandy says her first contact with AAUW was at a High School Honors Assembly when the Lansing Michigan AAUW branch awarded her a tuition scholarship for Michigan State University for either one term or one year. Years later, when she was in Colorado, she was invited to a membership tea and she met some interesting women with whom she had a prior connection and decided to join. When she decided to pursue her Masters degree, she applied and received help from AAUW for women seeking advanced degrees. She has served many offices locally, including President of Salinas, KS branch.

Keist has four adult children and four grandchildren out of state. Her short range plans are to add a Mrs. back to her name in the near future. Most hours of the day, she wears a librarian hat as the library director at Grand View College. She belongs to the Des Moines AAUW branch.



Norma Coret

Membership V.P.

The AAUW President and Board has accepted Irene Dodder's resignation with gratitude for all she has done for AAUW-IA. Irene has travelled many miles to attend workshops, board meetings and conferences at both state and Association levels. We wish her the best. No one deserves it more!

Norma Coret, Denison branch, has been appointed to complete Irene's term of Membership Vice President. Norma is returning to the board for this one year term after a few years away. She previously served as Education/Gender Equity Chair. At the Annual conference this year, Norma was presented her 50-year Honorary Life Membership in AAUW.

AAUW became an important part of Norma's life when she joined the Santa Ana, CA branch in 1950. She has been the President of the Denison area branch three times, one just ending. Norma's education includes a B.S., Iowa State University, Applied Art; M.A. University of Iowa, Art History and Ph.D, University of NE, Lincoln, Curriculum and Instruction. She is an adjunct faculty member, Iowa Western Community College, Council Bluffs.

She believes membership, for AAUW, must take priority. "Each member must turn personal effort and attention to acquiring new members and new branches as well as supporting existing ones" she says.

A Message from the President...



Sue Jorgensen

There aren't enough words to express my amazement and gratitude for all of the work you are doing to further the mission of AAUW! The power point presentation, "Showcasing Branch Achievements", became a project that taught me so much about the contributions of each branch to changing the world right where we live. When the pictures and scripts began to arrive it was absolutely overwhelming~not only the volume of information, but the immensity of what is happening!

Viewing the slide show is truly a celebration! Each community has unique needs and AAUW branches are helping to fill those needs. Collaboration with organizations that share our values has enabled branches to increase their effectiveness and visibility. Networking with community colleges, Universities and private colleges, the YWCA, Planned Parenthood, League of Women Voters and Business and Professional Women, just to name a few, make it possible to co-sponsor events that wouldn't be feasible for a branch. It really proves that together we can!

View the wide variety of ways that branches raise funds for the Educational Foundation, the Legal Advocacy Fund, and local projects. Examples of charitable activities include: book sales, garage sales, plant sales, grant writing, garden tours, history tours, plays, soup dinners, auctions, trips to a Cub's game, cookbooks, gift wrapping, selling garlands and requesting contributions from businesses.

Endowment and financial gifts make it possible for the Educational Foundation to award international fellowships, studies and research grants. Several branches received gifts for community-based projects such as establishing a Discovery Garden for Children, sending students to Washington D.C., music and academic camps, and cross generational programs that nurture toddlers, preschoolers, children, teens, young women and mature women.

Many branches support shelters, transitional housing programs, UNICEF and other programs for the needy through child care, tutoring, financial contributions, clothing, household goods, handmade sleeping bags and classes that teach practical skills like how to become a realtor.

Valuing our heritage and achievements of women are demonstrated through programs and projects such as: readers' theater(s), events that honor girls who strive, ceremonies for women of distinction, scholarships, conferences for young women in science, math and technology and conferences for mature women in transition.

Shaping public policy is central to citizenship and AAUW is visible: sponsoring legislative forums, doing studies on the implementation of Title IX, joining rallies and peace walks, and co-sponsoring "Quality Child Care Lasts a Lifetime" with the Iowa State University's Extension Program.

AAUW makes our communities more welcoming for diverse newcomers through projects such as an orientation for Hispanics, donations of books about diversity to classrooms, instruction in English as a second language and child care for parents while they attend classes.

When you move to a new community in Iowa look up a local AAUW branch and you will find sisterhood, programs with stimulating discussions, meaningful projects and lifelong friendships! I felt the heartwarming assurance that AAUW is there to help us endure the ups and downs that we all experience in our lives.

Sue Jorgensen



Summertime and the Season is Busy!

I used to think that AAUW didn't meet in the summer. Wrong! It can be the most important time of the year for AAUW.

What a perfect time to invest in yourself personally as well as AAUW. Hopefully I will see as many of you as possible at the Association Convention in Washington, D.C. It is an exciting time for us as Nancy Rustad completes her second term as the Association President, which means the Upper Midwest gets to sit in the front section for business meetings. In addition a number of candidates are running from the floor for the Association Board. We have seldom had candidates nominated from the floor, so imagine the excitement this will create.

When I joined AAUW, Maxine Bailey, of my branch at Clarion, was the Regional Director. She would come back from Convention and tell about her experiences. I thought, why are you telling us this, we'll never go to Convention. But after attending my first one in Minneapolis in 1977, I have attended almost everyone since. Those first years I went to every workshop I could possibly attend so I could bring back the information for my branch and the state. Now the opportunity to network and see friends is as important as the educational experience.

If you can't get to Convention mark off your calendar for the Regional Conference next June 9-11 at Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Summertime is also the time to re-invent or revitalize your branch. The Oskaloosa Branch had a series of membership events last summer including an afternoon tea, a Saturday morning brunch, and an evening family picnic that included children and spouses. When September came they had doubled their membership instead of folding.

Or think about how you might involve perspective members. Or maybe you can begin a student affiliate group with a college in your community. Student memberships are \$17.00 each. What a great graduation gift from either high school or a full membership for those graduating from college this spring or summer.

As you work on branch programs, remember that the mission of AAUW is the emphasis. Program for education and equity for all women and girls, life long education, and positive societal change! Make a difference for you and your community.

Florine Swanson
Upper Midwest Regional Director

New Board Members:



Mary Ann Ahrens

Nominating Chair

Mary Ann Ahrens was nominated by the President and approved by the AAUW-IA Board at the January, 2005 meeting to join them as Nominating Committee Chair.

Mary Ann has a long history of positions she has held: Waverly branch President, 1983-84; Training and Development Director, AAUW-IA, 1990-92; Iowa AAUW President, 1992-94; Upper Midwest Regional Director/member national AAUW Board, 1995-1999, AAUW Leader-on-Loan, 1984-Present; and more. Ahrens is the owner/management trainer, Ahrens & Affiliates, management & development company. She is married to Duane, a high school guidance counselor. They have two college educated daughters. She says, "AAUW...gave me my voice to advocate for other women and girls on important issues."

Website Manager

Jan Huss, our previous State President, has accepted the position of Website Manager for Iowa! Jan is a dual member in Missouri and Iowa. Qualifications for this job are: technical skills, an artistic flair, editing and writing talents and a background in AAUW--and Jan will be able to do this from the comfort of her home in Missouri. She has done an excellent job of updating aauwia.org. Check it out! Members may send brief articles and photos to submit to the website at any time to ejorg04@juno.com.

Baskets Popular with Bidders At Annual Meeting

'A Few of Our Favorite Things' proved to be favorites of the bidders at the silent basket auction at the annual meeting. Creative branches provided very attractive baskets with themes of golf, travel, chocolate, bees/honey, and other inviting creations. The total money raised by the auction was \$468.00, with \$279.00 going to EF and \$189.00 going to LAF. Thank you to everyone who participated in the fun of the auction!

The basket income per donating branch were as follows:

Algona	\$42.00	Council Bluffs	\$30.00	Oskaloosa	\$15.00
Ames	\$41.00	Davenport	\$30.00	Ottumwa	\$34.00
Calhoun Co.	\$15.00	Dennison	\$13.00	Tipton	\$10.00
Cedar Falls	\$91.00	Indianola	\$34.00	Waterloo	\$113.00

Marlene Reynolds, Education Foundation Director
Sandy Keist, Legal Advocacy Fund Director

Making Leadership Work For You

The following ten tips will help make leadership work for you.

1. Understand and use technology to gain and share information and to create and store information.
2. Understand the organization you represent and its mission. Access www.aauw.org to gain up-to-date information and resources. Read the publications, leader resources, ask questions, and attend meetings and conferences.
3. Keep your values and commitment in sync. This will ensure your involvement and follow through as the spokesperson for our organization.
4. Plan mission-driven programming to distinguish us from other organizations. Programming is the collective activities of your branch NOT just filling in monthly program slots.
5. Know your membership, their interests, skills, and needs.
6. Become familiar with the local/area burning issues that match our mission.
7. Establish a plan for programming that is realistic and uses member skills to pursue branch goals, build leadership, and sustain involvement.
8. Schedule regular board meetings to share information, discuss issues, make decisions and socialize.
9. Delegate tasks, share responsibilities, follow-up to assure success, and recognize members for their achievement.
10. Network with others to gain new information, skills, and enthusiasm at area, state, regional or national meetings. Insist on setting up a time to share your report at your local meeting or via the electronic newsletter, etc.

Mary Ann Ahrens
Workshop Facilitator

Membership Moments

Money for state membership is to be mailed to Leora Thomas, AAUWIA Treasurer by July 1.

Affiliate membership forms and membership can be made on line. This \$17 membership in AAUW is a wonderful gift for the young woman going off to college in the fall. It is a valuable networking tool for her in the future.

All branch membership vice presidents please know that you can find the membership forms on line.

Recruit members. There are women who look for active, involved branches.

Irene Dodder, Membership V.P.

Meet Our Guests at the AAUW-IA Conference, April 23, 2005...

by Sandra Keist

Juliette Murekeyisoni as a young adult worked for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the American Refugee Committee in Rwanda during this time. She assisted in coordinating refugees needs for food, shelter, and coordinated the management and funding of the first farming program for widows of the genocide. She has a BS degree in Business from Post University and a MA in Diplomacy and International Relations with a Focus on Africa from Seton Hall University, John C. Whitehead School of Diplomacy and International Relations, May, 2004. She is currently working with the Lutheran Services of Iowa as a Refugee Case Manager. Her passion is for a foundation she initiated and is President of, Inyana, League for Rwandan Children and Youth, (www.inyana.org). The purpose is to secure funds for the education of 61 selected children orphaned by the genocide or AIDS. Juliette is the recipient of awards for leadership and scholarship. She is fluent in English, French, Kinyarwanda, Swahili, and Kirundi and is currently studying Chinese.



Left to Right: Juliette Murekeyisoni, from Rwanda and Asgdish Fellake, from Sudan visited the Iowa AAUW Conference as guests of the Des Moines AAUW branch.

Asgdish Fellake has been in the United States for four and a half years. She came to Des Moines as she had a brother living here. She also works for the Lutheran Services of Iowa since September 2002 beginning as a Case Manager and after six months was given a position working in a high need African women's program. She works with women who have high barriers to employment and self sufficiency. She finished three years at the University of Sudan for Science and Technology studying electrical engineering. She quit her studies when the opportunity to emigrate came about. Asgdish is very interested in completing her university education but now wants to major in social services.

2005 Distinguished Faculty Award Presented at Annual Meeting



*Dr. Wendy Bashant Receives Award
from Jan Heinicke*

Dr. Wendy Bashant, Associate Professor of English at Coe College, has been selected as the recipient of the American Association of University Women in Iowa. She received her award April 23rd at the Crowne Plaza Hotel during the annual meeting of the AAUW.

Dr. Bashant has been a faculty member at Coe College, located in Cedar Rapids, since 1990. In 1993, Dr. Bashant worked with another Coe colleague to establish the first chair for the Gender Studies program at Coe. She continues to teach in the program in addition to her duties in the English department. For several years she has served as advisor to three student campus organizations with female membership. Bashant frequently lectures outside her classroom, providing information and insight about feminist perspectives. She is "consistent in

her efforts to maintain gender equity on campus", and has been described as the "single most important advocate for young women at Coe College."

Bashant is a graduate of Middlebury College where she graduated magna cum laude, and obtained her doctoral degree at the University of Rochester in upper New York State. As a faculty member she has taught more than 25 courses at Coe. She is an active scholar, writing several peer reviewed articles, publishing poetry and making many presentations at professional meetings. Dr. Bashant was considered for promotion this year and beginning in the fall of 2005 will hold the rank of full professor at Coe as well as continuing to Chair the English Department.

In her speech after accepting the award, she talks about Virginia Woolf's invention of a fictional sister of Shakespeare and how she uses it in her classes. "I always say to my students, that this was written almost a hundred years ago. Woolf forecasts that in a hundred years, a great woman writer--a woman of Shakespeare's caliber will be born and write. And I look at them as I look at you and say: "So which of you is she?"

Mission Possible: Attracting Younger Members

One of the major issues revealed in a current survey of Iowa branch leaders in preparation for the state leadership workshop, was how to attract younger members (25-40). Perhaps the following insights gained from AAUW resources, workshop participants, and my experience as a mother of two daughters, who are young professionals, may prove helpful:

1. The educational backgrounds of young people include cooperative learning techniques, problem solving and thinking of things in new ways. Younger participants emphasized the importance of being truly welcomed (not just on the surface) and accepting and using their ideas (instead of we've always done it this way).
2. Younger members are very active and seek action-oriented, hands on activities to hold their interest, use their skills, and make a difference in the community. Programming needs to match young member interests and include a community action component.

Younger participants indicated a need to get together in the branch and create their own vision and activities to keep them engaged. They also indicated that programming should emphasize their development, empowering women, and career advancement/transitions along with common concerns such as issues with children, school, etc.

3. Young people grew up with technology and use it easily. Branches who are struggling with the use of technology can seek the help of those who use it every day in their work.
4. Young people may accept employment in a community and out of necessity may be transferred or move within 2-5 years. Thus they are interested in specific-short-term assignments instead of accepting an officer role or having to jump through all the leadership hoops before they are given responsibility.
5. Today's work expectations are overwhelming in terms of time spent at work and the energy it takes. It is not uncommon for

young people to work 50-70 hour weeks, leaving little time for relaxation and organizational involvement. They will make time for the things that are important to them.

6. Be where young people congregate. Set up an AAUW information table at campus events, fairs, in student unions. Help students develop a voter registration program on campus to register students to vote or an issue forum, etc.
7. Contact campus women's groups, sororities, and women's studies departments. They have their pulse on the heart of the campus and can help you connect with students. Invite students to a branch event...or better yet invite them to be the branch event speaking about a program or project they are involved with.
8. Hold a campus informational meeting and invite students, faculty and local MALs as well as branch members. Discuss AAUW's mission, membership options, and community action projects. Tell them about the Legal Advocacy Fund and the support given in sex discrimination cases. Provide information on Educational Foundation opportunities for graduate study...the groundbreaking research, etc. Let's not hide our light under a bushel.
9. Set up a mentoring program: pair students with professional branch members or contact children's organizations and set up a student mentoring program.
10. Have a branch member who is a faculty or staff member at the college serve as a liaison and advisor to your student efforts. Gain campus support to send young women to the National Conference of College Women Student Leaders. Organize a young leaders conference on campus in coalition with other groups.

Our mission is to attract, compel and enlighten those who are the future of AAUW and who will serve as a support system for women and girls in the 21st century. We can do it!

Mary Ann Ahrens
Workshop Facilitator

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Highlights of Minutes/Annual Meeting

- Approved budget of \$11,950 for 2005-2006, based on 900 Iowa members.
- Revised Iowa ByLaws approved.
- President Elect Janet Heinicke elected.
- Board appointments for the following resignations were approved: Program V.P., Sandra Keist; Membership V.P., Norma Coret; E.F. Director, Dr. Kathy Kremer; L.A.F. Director, Carol Cooper; ByLaws Director, Jo Treadwell.
- Committee members were approved for E.F., Membership and Public Policy.
- Jan Huss, former State President, dual member Iowa and Missouri, appointed IA Website Manager.
- Regional Director Florine Swanson says Association has new interim Exec. Director, Patrick Nichols. Fiscal reorganization is in place--\$600,000 has been cut from the budget, floor space has been cut in half, though total membership is up, branches are down.
- Retreat will be July 22 and 23rd at Wesley Woods, Indianola with Board, July 22, Committees included on July 23.

In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

Membership is open to all graduates who hold the baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university.

IOWA *initiative* is published three times a year. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Let us know how we can serve you better, what information or features you would like to see included?

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AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund Still Needs Member Support

I was recently invited to attend the Graduate Commencement at University of Minnesota. It was a three hour event so as I watched the graduates walk across the stage, it occurred to me that I seemed to be seeing far more women than men. I decided to take an un-scientific poll by gender using the names printed in the program. My results were that 172 women and 121 men received their doctoral degrees. There are a number of international names that I cannot determine the gender so those names were not counted. It does show that women are succeeding in getting the terminal academic degree in equal to greater numbers than men at this one degree granting public university. I suspect that the University of Minnesota is not unusual in this regard for public institutions. Yet with this large number of female doctoral graduates they represent a minority of tenured faculty in the academy.

Of the faculty at colleges and universities offering four-year degrees, only 27 percent of those awarded tenure are women. Women have made remarkable strides in education during the past three decades, but these gains have yet to translate into full equity in pay – even for a college-educated woman who work full time. A typical college-educated women working full time earns \$44,200 a year compared to \$61,800 for college-educated male workers – a difference of \$17,600!*

As noted above, there is still a need to work for equity between genders in the academy. This is why AAUW's Legal Advocacy Fund is worthy of your support. LAF is the nation's largest legal fund focused solely on sex discrimination in higher education. The state wide goal is to contribute \$5 per member each year to support LAF. I hope each branch will work towards this goal for 2005. You have until December 31, 2005 to make it.

*Data copied from the AAUW webpages under response to Harvard President.

- Sandra Keist, LAF Director

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