



Carletta Knox-Seymour
 AAUW Iowa President 2020-2022

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From the President

Happy Black History Month to all!

This year, Black History month is taking on a very different look. This nation has gone through a most challenging time, and there is more to come. Who would have thought that we would be going through a second impeachment trial for now former President Donald Trump? And we are in our first year anniversary of experiencing a horrifying pandemic that has created such loss that it is hard to fathom by way of death from COVID-19 and suicide, family separations, depression, and loss of income. Yet humans always find a silver lining through it all. We still forge ahead to get the job done. We find the way to get through, to make it all mean something. Finding a way, making it through, is what we do to change the courses of our lives and by doing so, we help change the world. History has shown us that perseverance is the only way through. And women have always kept the movement of life going forward, even when it's the toughest thing to do.

As a Black woman, I can definitely say that Black women have always made it through one way or another even when our experiences have cost us our very lives, loss of

our children, and our dignity. This Black History month marks a very different celebration for me personally because Kamala Harris, an African-American, South Asian woman has been elected as Vice President of these United States. In her victory speech, she acknowledged that she stands on the shoulders of Black women in general who came before her. And she stands on the shoulders of Black women Suffragists. For without those Suffragists who forged ahead and took a most dangerous stand for voting rights, Vice President Kamala Harris would not be in this power position today.

The History Channel website has a great article by Lakshmi Gandhi, called "[5 Black Suffragists Who Fought for the 19th Amendment-And Much More.](#)" I highly recommend this article, and I encourage you to follow the link.

Carletta Knox-Seymour



AAUW Iowa Virtual Gathering

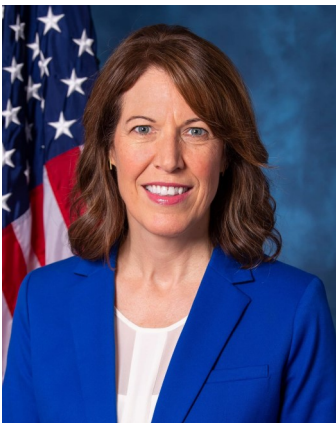
Ann Henninger Trax and Katherine Farris, Program Co-Vice Presidents

Planning is underway for this year's state conference, which will be held via Zoom on Saturday, May 8, from 9:00 a.m. — 11:30. Highlights will include Representative Cindy Axne reflecting on her time in the U.S. House of Representatives, and Jessica Crawford from Self Help International, who will do a presentation about Empowering Women programs in Ghana and Nicaragua. A third speaker is to be determined. We will also have the AAUW Iowa business meeting.

There is no charge for attending.

However, we expect members to register for the event. Those attending will not only learn information from our speakers and participate in chat rooms, but also may win an attractive rug made by state treasurer Pat Higby. It is a 25 x 34-inch rag rug made from denim jeans. It is easy to care for, machine washable and line dry.

So, mark your calendar now and plan to join us May 8, 2021. You'll never save more gas and registration money attending an AAUW-Iowa state convention!



Representative Cindy Axne



Jessica Crawford



Hand-loomed door prize

Mark Your Calendars! Annual Spring Conference

Saturday, May 8
9:00 a.m.—11:30

- Representative Cindy Axne on serving in the US House of Representatives
- Jessica Crawford on Empowering Women in Ghana and Nicaragua with Self Help International
- Annual Business Meeting
- Hand-loomed rug door prize
- No registration fee



Ready To Run Iowa at Carrie Chapman Catt Center

Ready to Run Iowa is a nonpartisan campaign training program offered by the Carrie Chapman Catt Center at Iowa State University to encourage women to run for elective office, position themselves for appointive office, work on a campaign or become involved in public life as leaders in their communities.

More information is available on the [Ready to Run website](#).



2021 Ready to Run Iowa

Save the dates:

Feb. 26, March 26, and April 30

Location: Virtual event

[Click here to register for the Feb. 26 workshops](#)

Registration for the March and April workshops will open one month before each workshop date.

February 26 Topics

Getting Started in Iowa Politics
Launching Your Campaign

March 26 Topics

Funding Your Campaign
Online Strategy

April 30 Topics

Working with the Media
Running as a Woman

Sharing Our Immigrant Family Stories

Renee Jedlicka, eNetwork Branch

“Everyone around you has a story the world needs to hear,” said David Isay, the founder of StoryCorps. Five AAUW e-Network branch members shared a story about their immigrant families on January 21. Not so different from what many immigrants face today, these women told remarkable stories of strong immigrant women battling difficult circumstances.

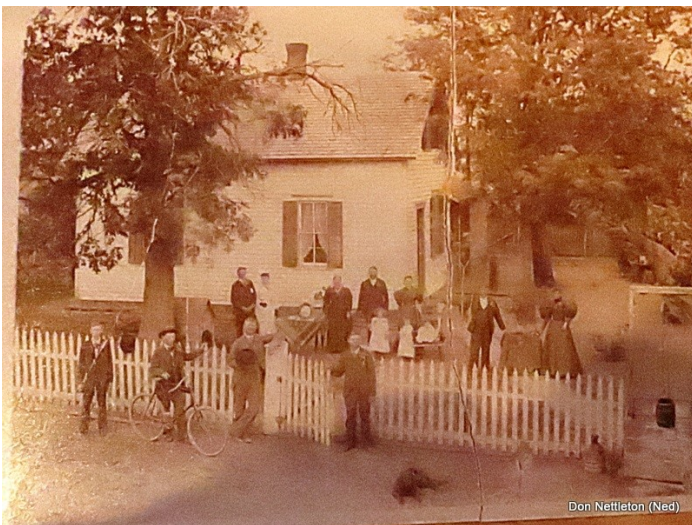
Jan Mitchell kicked off by speaking about her “famous” relative, Mayflower passenger and first Thanksgiving participant Elizabeth Tilley. Born in 1607 of Separatists in



Elizabeth Tilley, whose descendants 13 generations later include Jan Mitchell.

Bedfordshire, England, she was only 13 when she obtained passage with her parents and aunt and uncle on the ship that landed at Cape Cod. Soon after arrival, all of her relatives died and at 16 she was married to fellow Mayflower passenger John Howland.

Jane Nettleton told members the story of her Great-Great Grandmother Trentje Kappal Goken. Her husband John



Jane Nettleton’s Great Great Grandmother Trentje Kappal Goken experienced a better life in her last years with family in Illinois. Trentje is in the middle, with a window shutter in the background. She is standing with her son, Christian (Jane’s great grandfather), and his wife Effie (Jane’s great grandmother). Baby Dora (Jane’s grandmother) is in the rocking chair.

traveled from Emden, Germany, to the U.S. for better prospects for employment. Three years later he sent money for her to take a Dutch ship and bring their sons to the U.S. However, he never showed up to meet her at the port in New York City. She waited for some time with several friends for word of him, but no one knows what happened to John. Speaking no English and with two boys aged 3 and 7, she traveled with others from her ship to Illinois. Trentje married again and lived in a sod house in southeast Nebraska, where they faced difficult farming conditions. She ran a boarding house for men harvesting wheat for many years. Fortunately, her young sons thrived growing up on the plains of Nebraska and later prospered as businessmen in Illinois.

Mary Ann Ahrens introduced members to her “Serbian Shero,” her paternal grandmother Sophia Bogic Painovich (1880-1974). Born in Croatia, she married Eli Louis Painovich in 1906 and they settled in Hibbing, MN where he worked as a pit foreman. Speaking little English, they lived in tent camps near the mines where she raised the first five of her ten children. She cooked for 51 miners and was a midwife. Later, they moved around the Midwest for work, at times living with all these children in a boxcar. Her father recalls they each had two sets of clothing if they were lucky. Finally settling in Valley Junction in 1920 (now West Des Moines), they found a home in the city limits but without running water. Eli passed in 1932, leaving her with eight living children. She sought citizenship, but the person absconded with her money. Mary Ann concluded, “Sophia was a simple woman not needing much to be happy. Her later years were not even easy, as she was taking care of sick relatives.” She finally received a small pension from the government in her 70s. She lived to 94 years.



Sophia Bogic Painovich surrounded by her family.

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Jane Goldsmith told a story called "Marriage and Church." Two of her great-grandmothers and her grandmothers kept or chose their church; three married men of different faiths. Her paternal great grandmother Anna was Catholic but married a Seventh-day Adventist. Their daughter, Jane's grandmother, chose the church of her father; however, her husband attended a different Protestant church. Jane's maternal great-grandmother, Flora, was raised Catholic and married a Catholic man, yet they were married in a Protestant church. When he died, a priest came to the house and asked for money. Flora sent him out the door and buried her husband in a protestant cemetery. Jane ended by saying, "my grandmother chose the Protestant church, and married a Protestant, perhaps under the influence of her mother Flora."

Mary Helen Stefaniak told members the story of her paternal grandmother, Agnes Illyasics (1883-1958) and her Aunt Madeline (1905-1988). Mother and daughter traveled in 1910 from their Croatian village to

join Mary Helen's grandfather Josef, who had gone to Milwaukee before them. At the entry port on Ellis Island, five-year-old Madeline's coat was marked with an X in chalk and she was separated from her mother. Speaking only Hungarian and Croatian, Agnes was terrified, not knowing why her daughter had been taken from her. She was finally able to navigate this frightening situation and learned that her daughter had the measles. They were quarantined together before they could go on to Milwaukee. Just three years later, Agnes took Madeline and a new baby back to their Croatian village in the Austro-Hungarian Empire because of a family crisis there. World War I broke out, and for the next eight years Agnes and her two children had to remain in their Croatian village, while her husband Josef remained in Milwaukee. When the U.S. entered the war, he faced restrictions and prejudice as "an enemy alien." In 1921, Agnes and her children finally returned to the U.S. and rejoined Josef in Milwaukee, where Mary Helen's father was born in 1923—the only one of his siblings born and raised entirely in the United States. Mary Helen's first novel, *The Turk and My Mother* (W.W.

Norton, 2004), was inspired by the adventures of her immigrant family, both in Milwaukee and in the old country.

Maxine Lampe served as moderator for the program.



Mary Helen's grandmother Agnes (the older woman) and her aunt Madeline (holding a child) with other family members on the front porch of their house in Milwaukee, circa 1945.



AAUW Dues Increase

Pat Higby, AAUW Iowa Treasurer

The national AAUW Board of Directors has voted to increase dues by \$3 for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, \$5 for 2022-2023, and \$5 for 2023-2024. Thus the total national dues will be \$62, \$67, and \$72 respectively. Considering a life membership? Doing that before July 1, 2021, will save you money! The increased dues work out to an additional 25 cents per month, so not a really bad impact on our budgets!

Equal Pay Day at the Capitol

Ann Gale, AAUW Iowa Capitol Corps

The next Equal Pay Day is Wednesday, March 24, 2021, marking the date when women's average wages "catch up" to what men earned during 2020.

AAUW Iowa has reserved a table in the Iowa State Capitol rotunda to mark Equal Pay Day on April 6 from 9:00 – 1:00. However, because of the lack of a mask requirement in the capitol, this year we will probably

either rely on email messages to legislators about the gender pay gap, or set up a table with brochures without greeting the public. Please watch for further information as we get closer to that date. In the future, we hope to have a greater presence in the capitol to mark Equal Pay Day. We will welcome your involvement in helping to draw attention to Equal Pay Day in person when it is safe to do so.

Go to NCCWSL Courtesy of AAUW Iowa

Elaine Kresse, AAUW Iowa College/ University Director

The National College Conference of Women Student Leaders will be a virtual two-day conference May 25-26. Featured speakers are Brittney Cooper, Rachel Willis, and Morgan Jerkins.

Iowa AAUW scholarships are available for 20 student or college professional applicants. Please go to the AAUW website <https://www.aauw.org/resources/events/nccws> to learn more and to register. We are happy to announce that some have already applied.

Past attendees have raved that it was a life-changing experience. One returned to start an award-winning student group; another said it was key in getting her dream job. Many Iowa branches have sent students.

Men and women, students and professionals attend NCCWSL. It is a chance to learn from and share ideas with peers, discuss changes on today's campuses, and take advantage of career development programming designed specifically for colleges.

There are two ways for Iowa AAUW to help you to attend.

Students: Early registration is \$95. Scholarship deadline Feb. 28th. Please apply for the National scholarship and send a copy of that to Elaine Kresse at elainekresse2@gmail.com. You might receive a full or partial National scholarship. If not, when you are notified of your status, our treasurer will pay the remainder for you. You will be notified by March 12th and the early bird fee will still apply.

College professionals: Please register and pay the early bird registration fee by Feb. 28th. Then forward your registration to Elaine Kresse and to Pat Higby at patricia.a.higby@gmail.com. Pat will reimburse you or your school a.s.a.p.

Please look at the website and see all that is available at the NCCWSL conference. Publicize it to staff and students. Do contact me if you have any questions.

[Get more information about NCCWSL here.](#)

Elaine Kresse, Iowa AAUW College/University Director
elainekresse2@gmail.com



Cedar Falls-Waterloo Branch News

Karen Agee, AAUW Cedar Falls-Waterloo President

On February 1, the Cedar Falls-Waterloo Branch board voted unanimously to **go on record as supporting the amendment to the AAUW Bylaws to eliminate the degree requirement for AAUW membership**.

National voting begins April 7th, and it is this branch board's hope that the amendment will pass.



The Cedar Falls-Waterloo Branch provides textbook scholarships to women in the local United Nations refugee and immigrant communities to purchase textbooks and other academic materials for college-level courses at Cedar Valley postsecondary institutions. This year's Textbook Scholarship recipients, **Joslyne Mulimbi and Afi Toumey**, will speak at the February 27 meeting about their experiences with diversity since coming to the US to pursue education. The CF-W Branch is focusing its programs this year on diversity and equity.

Both Joslyne and Afi were nominated for the textbook scholarship by Marisa Thornton, a transition specialist at the new Hawkeye Community College Van G. Miller Adult Learning Center.

Marisa wrote that "when Joslyne first came to the US from the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2014, she did not speak a word of English," but now she has graduated from HCC's ELL program and is enrolled in the evening Business Administration program.

Afi, originally from Togo, also graduated from the ELL program and is now a student in HCC's Resource Management program while working full time.

One of the scholarship recipients has requested that her photo not be used for press releases, so to see these two lovely students, please Zoom into the program on **Saturday, February 27, at 10:00 a.m.** The meeting will be hosted by Iowa AAUW at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2017201809?pwd=WXcyREhjcjI0ZlNQMUtmZjIjCU0RQQT09>

Sit in on Davenport-Bettendorf Programs

- Feb. 16, 6:00 p.m. "What is Our Legacy?" Maxine Lampe on the benefits to you and your branch of joining the Legacy Circle
- March 16, 6:00 p.m. "Pay Equity." Attorneys Dorothy O'Brian and Kelsey Marquard

Both programs will be on Zoom.

Public Policy Priorities

Maureen White, AAUW Iowa Public Policy Director

In reviewing Public Policy revisions, you'll note there is increased emphasis on diversity, equity, racism and bias, and also access to public education, including early childhood education and student debt.

PUBLIC POLICY RESOURCES

AAUW Action Network and Two-Minute Activist Tool:

The cornerstone of AAUW's e-advocacy efforts, Action Network sends subscribers urgent email notices when their advocacy is needed most. With our Two-Minute Activist online tool, it takes no time to contact your elected officials and make your voice heard. Anyone with an email address can subscribe and take action by visiting <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>. You can also join our Two-Minute Activist Mobile program to receive timely, targeted communication straight to your cell phone via text message. To subscribe, text "AAUW" to phone number 21333. **We encourage all members to sign up to be a Two-Minute Activist.** You will not receive Two-Minute Activist emails unless you are a subscriber.

Washington Update: This weekly email bulletin for AAUW members offers an insider's view on the public policy process, the latest federal policy news and updates from the national public policy team. *This is sent to all members and Action Network participants.*

Quick Facts: AAUW Quick Facts are one-page overviews that provide concise snapshots of key AAUW policy positions to distribute at events, share with legislators, and easily reference for talking points on key issues. Quick Facts can be viewed online at <https://www.aauw.org/act/policy-center/>

The Quick Facts include documents about the Paycheck Fairness Act, paid leave, private school vouchers, and Title IX, among other topics.

Letters, Comments, Testimony and Legal Briefs: AAUW writes letters, testimony and comments, and signs on to coalition letters and amicus briefs. These documents are a great way to familiarize yourself with positions AAUW has taken on specific legislation or issues within the Public Policy Priorities. To view letters, comments, testimony and legal briefs, visit <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/documents>.

Here you will find items such as the coalition letter to the members of the 117th Congress authored by **AAUW's Kate Nielsen** and Emily Martin of the National Women's Law Center regarding the Paycheck Fairness Act, the letter outlining AAUW priorities for the 117th Congress, and a letter to the Biden-Harris transition team outlining economic security and education priorities.

Vote Yes on Bylaws Change

Janie Montang, AAUW Iowa Membership Vice President

From a Membership point-of-view, AAUW Iowa members will want to vote YES to change the Bylaw concerning membership qualifications. The change, if adopted, will make AAUW available to ALL women who believe in our Mission.

I admit, I voted against it the last time it was proposed. I felt we could not be called AAUW and permit members who did not have some kind of post-secondary degree. However, after an 11-State Regional meeting on Saturday, January, 30, 2021, I changed my mind. During that meeting, Melinda, a co-chair for Bylaws Revision, made the following points. We are not just American, we have international members; we are no longer an association, we are a foundation; we are no longer completely a female organization, we allow and have male members. Therefore, she sees no problem with keeping our name, even though not all members will have a university degree.

In order for this important bylaw change to occur, two-

thirds of the members must vote for it to be enacted. Voting begins April 7 online. Please, consider the facts, and vote for the change. Think of the people you know who support equity and education for women, people who may not have had these opportunities themselves.

Iowa Board members have stressed concerns about diminishing Branch membership. This bylaws change could be an answer to reversing that momentum. While we know COVID 19 has been an important factor contributing to those concerns, no matter what, we need to "grow" our membership and lower our average age. (Nationally, it appears ZOOM meetings have been increasing the attendance, as well as the membership, although this is not currently true for Iowa. We can hope the national webinars will continue to soar in viewers and grow membership, even as we return to in-person meetings and events.)

Please VOTE, beginning April 7, to pass this crucial bylaw for AAUW's future.

AAUW Bylaws Amendment – An Affirmative Vote for Equity

Maureen White, AAUW Iowa Public Policy Director

The AAUW board of directors and the AAUW Iowa board of directors support the proposed bylaws amendment removing the degree requirement for membership in AAUW. The amendment says: ***An individual who supports the AAUW mission and pays annual AAUW dues shall be eligible to be an individual member with all rights and responsibilities of AAUW membership.***

AAUW has revised membership requirements several times. At the June 1949 national convention in Seattle, AAUW delegates voted to revise bylaws so that the only requirement for membership was a college degree. This was done because some branches excluded members based on race. In 1987 AAUW voted to admit male college graduates. Qualification for membership was expanded to include an associates degree.

In the past decade, proposals to amend bylaws by eliminating the degree requirement failed to pass, but each time more members voted to make the change.

The reason for eliminating the degree requirement now is a simple one – equity. AAUW’s Diversity Statement says, “AAUW values and seeks diversity. There shall be no barriers to full participation in the organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.” Even though we say we value and seek diversity, by requiring a degree AAUW creates a barrier for those who do not hold a degree, a form of discrimination against a large segment of Americans. The high cost of tuition, the student debt load, and the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women all make it even harder right now for large numbers of women to pursue higher education.

AAUW members are predominantly older, white women.

There are people of color, young persons, and so many others who support AAUW’s mission, initiatives and activities, but do not see themselves as welcome members. AAUW cannot say it supports equity for all when it has an exclusionary membership requirement. Times have changed, society has changed, and AAUW needs to change. AAUW is stronger when all are welcome.

In addition to equity, there’s also a very practical reason to vote for the bylaws proposal. In the past few years a number of funds or corporations that were interested in giving money to support major AAUW projects were unable to do so because their governance guidelines prevented them from donating to organizations that discriminate. Our degree requirement is seen as a form of discrimination, thereby eliminating our organization from consideration for funding. Our work is not, and cannot be, supported solely by dues or gifts from members, we need additional financial support to survive and thrive.

This bylaws proposal does not lessen the value of the degree(s) you have earned, does not lessen AAUW’s commitment to access and equity in education, and doesn’t end our awarding fellowships and grants or any of our other programs.

Voting opens on April 7 and will close at 5 PM ET on May 17. Closer to that time, every member will receive instructions and a unique link for voting. Bylaws amendments require a two-thirds affirmative (yes) vote of the required number of votes in order to pass. The required number for a quorum is five percent of those eligible to vote (all members may vote).

AAUW Iowa members are encouraged to vote “yes” on the bylaws amendment.



Carrie Chapman Catt Center Hosts Katie Porter Presentation

U.S. Rep. Katie Porter is an Iowa native who represents California’s 45th Congressional District and has earned a reputation for her tough questioning and use of visual aids during congressional hearings. She will give a virtual presentation on Feb. 26 as the Spring 2021 Mary Louise Smith Chair in Women and Politics.

Rep. Porter will present “Truth to Power” at 7:00 p.m. Central time. The lecture, which is free and open to the public, is sponsored by the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics through the generous support of donors. The lecture will be shared via WebEx at iastate.webex.com/jastate/onstage/g.php?MTID=e8a253ba519be3363ba6da790be03a55b



Rep. Katie Porter