



Carletta Knox-Seymour
 AAUW Iowa President 2020-2022

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From the President

Greetings,

What a year 2021 was. Part of the country was and still is fighting to demolish democracy as we have come to know it, and the other half is working to hold on to it. The markets were up and down due to Covid-19 and Omicron, supply chain problems due to worker shortage and high demand for merchandise, virus variants holding air flights hostage as well by causing delays and cancellations, states changing a nearly 50-year policy of Roe vs Wade, voting rights that hang in the balance, and racist attacks against many continue to be at the forefront of our civil divide. What a year! And yet, with all of that, we have so much to be grateful for. There is much to be grateful for in our personal lives, our businesses, our careers, our educational aspirations, and more. Our branches worked hard last year to accomplish so much. Each month the newsletter was full of great articles of programs, wonderful and engaging speakers who informed us in so many ways on so many topics. Along with the monthly branch presidents’ meetings, a monthly **Leaders Boot Camp** was added last year with the help of Maxine Lampe. And many branches did exciting things to stay active, thereby creating an inviting environment to bring in new members. We’ve learned new ways through DE&I webinars, and through the United Way 21-Day Challenge to be more knowledgeable and empathetic, and to communicate more effectively. Many of us learned to go outside our comfort zones to make sure people are feeling like they belong whether in our branches or at our places

of employment. Belonging is such a keen word. Although it has a sense of being warm and fuzzy, I believe it has a much stronger meaning to it.

Allow me to share a personal experience of what the word belonging means to me. It takes me back to when I was a Camp Fire Girl at around nine or ten years of age. Some of you may have been in Girl Scouts. Growing up in Cedar Rapids, the population of African Americans was about 1%. Of course, I did not understand percentages of race populations at the time. But what I remember is that one day in school some White girls were talking about joining Camp Fire and asked if I wanted to join. I said yes, and my mother said yes. I was pretty much the only African American girl who joined. Immediately I felt as though I belonged. I remember going over to a lot of the White girls’ homes and having great fun, going camping and outings to earn badges and beads to sew on my vest. My mother also served as a den mother. These were good times, but it was only possible because they made me feel as though I belonged with them. This is what we must do in every way possible, not only bring new members into our branches but make sure those in our midst feel like they belong. We must make sure we foster belonging. We must be cognizant of the words we choose to use when speaking with various people. We must understand that we each have our own biases; be aware of them and how they may play havoc in the most innocent of situations.

Continued on p. 2

Conference Preview: Sheritta Stokes, Co-Director, 1619 Freedom School

Sheritta is a veteran teacher with the Waterloo Community School District with more than 20 years of teaching experience with a diverse range of students and grades. She has years of experience showing successful growth in students' reading scores. She is currently a 3rd grade teacher at Dr. Walter Cunningham School for Excellence, teaching all subjects to elementary students.

She has also served as the grade-level team leader for the past five years. She has a reading endorsement and is Title One/Reading Recovery trained. She has worked for both the Jessie Cosby Center and UNI's Talent Search reading programs. Sheritta is



Sheritta Stokes

the creator of the Black Men Read program in which African-American men volunteers come to the school and read to students. Sheritta has instilled her love of books and reading in many children over the years.

Sheritta is the co-director of the 1619 Freedom School, an after-school program dedicated to delivering intensive literacy instruction and a culturally responsive curriculum to bridge the academic opportunity gap among low-income public school students in Waterloo, Iowa. The 1619 Freedom School was founded by Nikole Hannah-Jones, the Pulitzer Prize-winning creator of The 1619 Project.



President's Letter, continued from page 1

We must pay attention to things like microaggression and ask ourselves, what does that really mean, and have we participated in that behavior without realizing it? Let's try to find ways to celebrate one another and others in our communities, rather than tolerate, or ignore. Let's find ways to engage in conversations with people different from ourselves, so that we are open to new possibilities perhaps even new friendships. Our world is getting smaller.

As we step into this new year, let us be mindful of the work that is ahead of us. Much has been accomplished, but there's much more work to be done. As branches are going through an analysis process in evaluating their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) it is an appropriate time to have a picture in mind as to what you are looking for in the future. The more each branch can look with very clear eyes at their evaluation of SWOT, the better your focus can and will be regarding your strategic planning process.

And speaking of planning, we have a wonderful spring conference happening on April 8th and 9th. What an amazing time that will be. Program VP Pat Newman and her program committee are hard at work to make this a memorable event. It is our sincere hope that we can come together in person and enjoy one another's company after such a dreadful long spell of viruses. We need to come

together and give each other hugs, smiles, and hearty laughter. We need it. For those long-distance members who have been meeting by way of eNetwork and the monthly branch president's meetings, you've only seen each other virtually. This will give you the opportunity to come face-to-face. What a joy it will be.

I am totally excited about our brand-new year. It will be challenging. We must be focused and keep our mission in front of us so that we are constantly advancing equity for women and girls. And, I would like to add the word belonging. Though the last national vote we took showed that we are not ready to change our educational policy to become a member, let us still find ways beyond our national policy to do things that help women and girls have a sense of belonging in this world. Whether that comes in the form of mentoring, creating a sewing or knitting club, or creating after school coding clubs, science, and math labs if none exist in your communities. Also, the words, "**Hard won, not done,**" are not over because we've moved past the commemorative year. No, our work continues. As part of our public policy efforts, let us roll up our sleeves and get to work for all women. **Let us push the voting rights national agenda until this work gets done.**

Have a wonderful, prosperous, safe, and healthy new year. May it bring you peace and joy in your comings and goings, and let laughter and love abound. Happy New Year!

AAUW Iowa Spring Conference, April 8-9, 2022

Striving-Thriving-Moving Forward

Hilton Garden Inn-Des Moines/Urbandale
8600 Northpark Drive, Johnston, Iowa 50131

The Hotel

We have arranged for a block of rooms for AAUW members. Some may want to come early or stay an extra night in the Des Moines area, so we have arranged for a block of rooms at a reduced rate of \$109 plus tax for April 7, 8, and 9. The rate is based on one member per room, but you may share a room for the same cost. You may reserve a room online or by phone. Your credit card will be charged at the time of your stay. Breakfast is not included in this rate. However, there is a restaurant on-site, and coffee, juice, and rolls are available during registration and during the morning sessions on April 9. Snacks and lunch are also included in your registration fee. Room reservations must be made by March 18. After that date rooms will be released for general sale.

Check in time is 3:00 p.m. Check out by noon.

To Reserve a Room Online

The hotel has provided an AAUW Guest Attendee Link for making room reservations. (Please read the directions below before clicking on the link.)

Directions: The reservation link is designed for making a reservation for Thursday, April 7; Friday, April 8; and (or) Saturday, April 9. After clicking on the link, click on **Book a Room**. Then you must click on **“edit stay” (right of center at top)** to indicate which night(s) you will be staying. Most of our members will be staying on Friday night in order to be on site for the 8:30 meeting on Saturday. Be sure to edit your stay to avoid being charged for all three nights.



AAUW Iowa - State Conference - April 8 & 9, 2022

Our attendee website is: www.my-event.hilton.com/dsmuhgi-aaw-36a9e469-932b-447f-8780-9e48e30a20f2/

To Reserve a Room by Phone

If you prefer to make your reservation by phone, call 515-270-8890 and ask for the group date and group block (AAUW).

Cancellations: Call 515-270-8890 if you need to cancel your reservation. Cancellations are allowed up until 6:00 pm the day of arrival.



Things to See and Do in the Des Moines Area

Perhaps you would like to attend the conference and also spend some leisure time in the Des Moines area. Below are some links featuring things to see and do! Explore these opportunities as you consider enjoying the weekend in the area.

Top Attractions in Des Moines

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g37835-Activities-Des_Moines_Iowa.html

Top Ten Tourist Attractions in Des Moines

<https://www.attractionsofamerica.com/attractions/des-moines-iowa-top-10-attractions.php>

27 Best & Fun Things To Do In Des Moines - Busy Tourist

<https://www.busytourist.com/things-to-do-in-des-moines-iowa/>

AAUW Public Policy—Advocacy in Action Needs You

Diane Kearns and Dev Kiedaisch, AAUW Iowa Public Policy Co-Directors

When we speak as a group, we have power. The work of AAUW Public Policy and the branches will begin in earnest in January. There are several issues of importance which will be coming before the State Legislature when they convene January 10, 2022. We will be sharing information with the branches and in particular the Branch Public Policy Directors. We invite you to join in on a zoom meeting January 31 at 7:00 p.m. to look at legislation and share tips for effective communication with legislators. Use this link to join the Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2017201809?pwd=WXcyREhjcjI0ZlNQMUMtZjIjCU0RQQT09>

You are also invited to come to Lobby Day at the Iowa State Capitol on February 9. Watch for more information from us about that day in the near future.



There are several methods of interacting with the Senators and Representatives which include emails, phone calls and personal letters. A major resource is use of the Iowa Legislature Website at www.legis.iowa.gov. This site provides information about legislation, bills, Iowa law and rules, the legislative process and much more. We will be sharing information with the branches in more detail later. We have email addresses for some of the branches Public Policy Directors but not all. Please provide that information to us as soon as possible.

Diane Kearns: diane_kearns@hotmail.com
Dev Kiedaisch: devkiedaisch@mac.com



Sharon Quinsa, AAUW Grant Recipient

Ann Gale, Iowa Initiative Editor

Sharon Quinsa is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Grinnell College. I met with Dr. Sharon Quinsa over zoom on November 12. She is in Amsterdam doing research while on a sabbatical from Grinnell College. Sharon is from the Philippines, and she is a scholar of social movements and migration. She received her PhD in sociology from the University of Pittsburgh. She is interested in the study of activism of immigrants and refugees and how they become mobilized. Her current research in Amsterdam has to do with comparing

activism of immigrants in the United States and the Netherlands.



Sharon says Amsterdam is very expensive, and the AAUW grant helps to cover living costs. When her sabbatical ends, she will return to Grinnell. She has a book coming out from the University of Chicago Press in 2023, with a tentative title of *Contentious Migrants: How Transnational Protests Create a Diaspora*. When she returns, she plans to continue research on social origins of political conservatives in migrant groups.

Get Involved:

- Find out whether your branch has a public policy contact. If not, please volunteer to be that person for your branch.
- Join the AAUW Iowa Capitol Corps, for updates about issues at the state level. Make contacts with legislators on your own time.
- Sit in on a Zoom meeting January 31st at 7:00 p.m. for a legislative update and tips for being an effective advocate.
- Come to Lobby Day at the Iowa State Capitol on February 9th to meet with other AAUW members and legislators.

Cedar Rapids Member Featured in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Webinar

Linda Armitage, of the Cedar Rapids AAUW Branch, was one of four guest panelists in an AAUW webinar on "Creating Inclusive Spaces" that was presented on December 2nd. The webinar was part of a series of programs designed to make our membership better prepared for an inclusive society and encouraging our businesses and communities give a sense of "belonging" to its members. Carletta Knox Seymour hosted a President's meeting in November in which she introduced two of her guests: Cyndi Shanahan from the AAUW Inclusion and Equity Committee, and Linda Armitage of Cedar Rapids. Cyndi was very appreciative of Carletta being proactive

in promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in her meeting. Linda and several local (CR) branch members had participated in local United Way study groups. The "Equity Conversation series" hosted by the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission and the United Way of East Central Iowa and the "21 Day Challenge" by the United Way were extraordinary discussion groups and resources for increased understanding of the world we live in.



Linda Armitage

DEI Tools for You

Watch the AAUW DEI webinar here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zFKQ33aWq4&t=35s>

The 21 Day Challenge through United Way can be found here: <https://www.unitedwaydm.org/equity-challenge>

The Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission has a wealth of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging resources. Find them here:

<https://www.cedar-rapids.org/local-government/city-boards-and-commissions/civil-rights-commission.php>



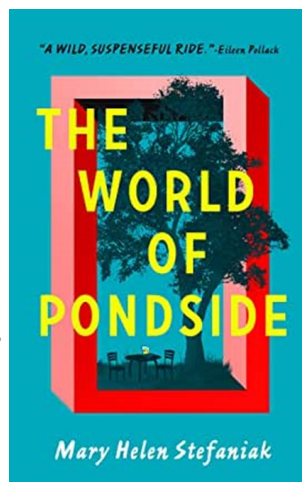
Conference Preview: Mary Helen Stefaniak Researches Long Term Care for Women

Mary Helen Stefaniak, a charter member of AAUW Iowa's eNetwork branch, will offer a break-out session at the state conference in April. Her presentation about "Women in the World of Long-term Care" will draw on research she did for her novel, *The World of Pondsides*, a mystery that takes place in a nursing home.

Nationally, women comprise 70% of residents in nursing homes, which tend to be staffed by caregivers who are mostly women, including many women of color. The dignity and well-being of the women who reside in nursing homes and the women who work there are often threatened by inadequate staffing and inadequate pay. Mary Helen will weave together her research—including personal experiences when her mother was a nursing home resident—with brief passages from the novel, in order to spark discussion about equity, dignity, and economic security for women living and working in long-term care.



Mary Helen Stefaniak



Copies of her novel will be available for sale and signing at the conference, in advance of its national release date later in April.

A graduate of Marquette University and the Iowa Writers' Workshop, Mary Helen is professor emerita of English/Creative Writing at Creighton University in Omaha. She currently teaches in the MFA in Writing program at Pacific University. She is the author of a short story collection and two previous novels: *The Turk and My Mother*, which was translated into seven languages, and *The Cailiffs of Baghdad, Georgia*, winner of the 2011 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for Fiction. Anisfield-Wolf awards honor books that make a significant contribution to our understanding of racism and our appreciation for a diversity of cultures.

Mary Helen and her husband John live in Iowa City in a 165-year-old former stagecoach inn that they restored. Her latest book, *The Six-Minute Memoir*, is forthcoming from the University of Iowa Press in the fall.



What Is Your Gift? Lend it to AAUW Iowa

Kathie Farris, AAUW Iowa Nominations Committee



Leadership is the key component for growth for any organization, and AAUW is no exception. Being on the AAUW Iowa board is a gift for our organization, and it is a gift for you as a terrific way to network and learn about the inner workings of AAUW.

This year the nominating committee is putting together the slate for election in April 2022. We need a candidate for **secretary**. Three nominating committee members from around the state are also needed.

Appointed members needed are directors of **diversity** and **bylaws**.

Board terms are for two years, 2022-2024. Commitment includes a summer board meeting, Zoom meetings throughout the year, and the board meeting/state conference. Members also write an annual report and occasional newsletter articles. Of course, the specific job

needs to be completed. Mileage and 1/2 of room cost is paid for in-person meetings.

If you are willing to play an active role at the state AAUW level or you wish to nominate someone for a position, contact one of the following nominations committee members:

- Janie Montang (515-395-2992 or janiem@netamumail.com)
- Linda Morgan (319-215-0373 or linda47@cfu.net)
- Jo Richey (515-554-4223 or jorichey2@gmail.com)
- Elaine Kresse (563-391-3455 or elainekresse2@gmail.com)

You may also contact co-presidents-elect Karen Agee (karen.agee@uni.edu or 319-429-3080) or Kathie Farris (katfarris5@gmail.com or 515-961-7647).

Please join us on the state board. We cannot do it without you!

Palo Alto Branch Gathers for the Holidays

Roberta Hersom, Palo Alto Branch Co-President

The Palo Alto County Branch met on December 9th at the home of Jamie Christensen to celebrate the holidays. Eight members were able to enjoy pot luck appetizers and beverages. Everyone was in the holiday spirit, donning appropriate accessories for our picture.

*Back row: Angie Beem, Sharon Hobart, Anne Johnson, Sue Brown.
Front row: Marcia Beatty, Mary Lou Morrison, Roberta Hersom, Jamie Christensen*



You Are Invited – Reaching Out to Diverse Groups

The Des Moines branch of AAUW invites you to participate in a program on “Reaching Out to Diverse Groups” in a virtual meeting on January 19 at 7:00 p.m. Presenters will include Carletta Knox-Seymour, AAUW Iowa President; Dev Kiedaisch, former AAUW Iowa gender equity director and current public policy co-director; and Jane Goldsmith, AAUW Iowa gender equity director. To join the zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2017201809?pwd=WXCyREhjcjI0ZlNQMUtmZjI0U0RQQT09>



Carletta Knox-Seymour



Jane Goldsmith



Dev Kiedaisch

AAUW Iowa Distinguished Faculty Award

Elaine Kresse, AAUW Iowa College/University Director

We need your help in two ways:

Each year AAUW-Iowa recognizes distinguished faculty members at the annual state conference. This year the state conference will be April 9th 2022 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 8600 Northpark Drive in Johnston, Iowa. The application forms are available on the state website or from Elaine Kresse. Please nominate an outstanding educator.

Next, the c/u director needs a committee to review the nominations and select the awardees. If you would like to review the nominations online and be part of this honor at our conference, please contact Elaine Kresse at elainekresse2@gmail.com or 563-320-3325.



Elaine Kresse

This only works well with your help!



Waverly Branch Does Community Outreach

The Waverly Branch was excited to resume our annual outreach to Bremwood Residential Treatment Center in Waverly after having to cancel it in 2020. This was our 10th year of serving an early Thanksgiving dinner to and playing bingo with 13-18 year olds. We shared AAUW's mission of "equity for all," had good conversation during dinner and bingo, and made sure that everyone got to go to the "prize table" at least once!

This month we are sharing AAUW's message with the Waverly and Wartburg communities by participating in the Festival of Trees. Our tree features AAUW's mission and key issues. The festival

attracts close to 5,000 guests, including those visiting the community for events like Christmas with Wartburg, Waverly's Christmas Greetings on Main, Wartburg's December Commencement, and the Wartburg Community Symphony Holiday Concert.

We have a great schedule of programs coming up in 2022 on the immigrant experience in Iowa; equity and inclusion for those with differing abilities; The Road Scholar program (formerly Elderhostel); women in politics; and the role of technology in K-12 education during the pandemic.



Cedar Rapids Branch Annual Holiday Brunch

The Cedar Rapids branch held their annual Holiday Brunch. It was held at our Elmcrest Country Club on December 11. They had a good group turn out, which included the Leadership Team of Deanna Howard, Trudy Sundermann, Carole Bernard, Gwen Randall, Barbara Goings, Sue Jorgensen, and Linda Armitage. The program reflected our branch efforts at understanding, and encouraging a sense of belonging with every member, doing this with a long reflective poem and music. Good food and good times were had by all!!!



American Association of University Women-Iowa Nomination for Faculty Excellence Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize women faculty's exemplary contributions toward creating a climate of gender equity in education in the state of Iowa. This may be accomplished through:

- Excellence in teaching, advising, scholarship and service to the college/university and community
- Continual efforts to develop new understandings and competencies in her discipline of expertise
- Outstanding leadership in service, which addresses the needs of female students

NAME OF NOMINEE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____

INSTITUTION & POSITION:

Degrees:

Attach supportive information and three letters of recommendation for this award. A current resume may be substituted in place of items 2-8.

1. Provide a short summary of each of the important aspects of the candidate's career as a faculty member that qualifies her for this award. Specifically note contributions related to education equity for females.
2. The candidate must also have demonstrated competence in the following areas: a) research/professional development (e.g. publications, papers presented, and professional development), b) teaching/advising (e.g. teaching excellence and out of class work with students), c) service/outreach (e.g. university, community, professional, state, national, international).
3. Faculty position held.
4. Service on department, college, and/or university committees.
5. Publications and/or other accomplishments used to measure continued expertise in one's discipline (summary of publication record and statement of significance is preferable to extensive lists of publications, etc.).
6. Professional societies (offices, committees, awards).
7. State, national, international activities or recognition.
8. Honorary societies, other recognition and awards.

NOMINATOR _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL _____

Submit the nomination packet via e-mail by March 1, 2022 to elainekresse2@gmail.com

Elaine Kresse
C/U Director
AAUW Iowa
563-32-3325