

October 2024

Celebrating 99 Years of AAUW in Monmouth!

Presidents' Report

Carolyn Weber

AAUW TURNS 100! PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS – **MAYOR TO SIGN PROCLAMATION** Monday, November 4, 5:45 p.m. City Council. Mayor Davies will sign the proclamation celebrating next week as the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the Monmouth Area Illinois Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Our founding date was November 6, 1924.

BEFORE YOU VOTE NEXT TUESDAY CHECK THESE JUDICIAL EVALUATIONS FROM THE ILLINOIS STATE BAR ASSOCIATION <https://www.isba.org/judicial-elections/counties> Voting for Judges can be confusing. Here is a link to a guide from the Illinois State Bar Association that may be helpful. It provides evaluations of the qualifications of judge candidates in each county. **Please be sure to vote.**

Judicial Evaluations and Advisory Polls by County | Illinois State Bar Association [Sent by AAUW-IL Public Policy Co-Chair Ken Olson to AAUWIL Branch Leaders]

News on the ERA front from latest AAUW IL Connections

One of the longstanding priorities of AAUW is assuring equality for all. Legislatively a needed action is inclusion of the Equal Rights Amendment in the Constitution. We always appreciate having other well-respected organizations join in this effort. Recently the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (“ACOG”), along with the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, American Urogynecologic Maternal-Fetal Medicine, and the Society for Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, issued a Statement acknowledging the Equal Rights Amendment (“ERA”) must be published as the 28th Amendment to the US Constitution to ensure “exceptional and respectful obstetric and gynecologic care is accessible to all.” In doing so, these organizations, who represent OB-GYNs and fertility experts across the country, urged the

Holiday Brunch

The Holiday Brunch has been rescheduled to Saturday November 30. It will be a potluck and we're asking for a \$10 donation to AAUW. We hope you'll bring a guest.

This is another opportunity for new members to join as well as those whose memberships have lapsed for 2 or more years. Both types of new members will receive the \$36 discount off their membership cost if the check or charge is made November 30th for the new rate of \$55.00.

Biden/Harris Administration "to do everything in their power to finalize the Equal Rights Amendment so that the promise of equal rights under the law, including the right to access comprehensive reproductive health care such as abortion, may be realized."

Illinois State Board of Elections - <https://www.elections.il.gov> you are registered to vote, register if needed and find important election dates.

AAUW Policy Center - <https://www.aauw.org/act/policy-center> Here you can find information on AAUW priorities, the Two – Minute Activist and an Advocacy Toolkit.

AAUW Action Fund - <https://aauwaction.org> Here you can find Voter Guides, Voting records of members of Congress and the another link to the Two-Minute Activist.

Embracing Our Third Act: Menopause & Longevity - Virtual Nov. 12, 2024 by Invitation from the Naperville Area IL Branch – Register and share this with anyone interested.

Menopause affects everyone. Either you or someone important to you will experience this life change. Join us for a thoughtful conversation and presentation **led by Dr. Jennifer Skrabutenas** about menopause and how to live a longer and healthier life.

Women and their allies are welcome to attend this free virtual community program at 7 PM CST on Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2024. Registration is requested.

Among the topics we'll cover:

- Keys to longevity: How to live longer, healthier years
- Menopause: Your body is changing, how should you change in response?
- HRT: Is it right for me?
- Hot flashes and more: Reducing menopause symptoms

Register Now

Dr. Jennifer Skrabutenas, D.C., Fox Valley Chiropractic Physicians, is a compassionate and dedicated physician, renowned for her expertise in functional medicine. With a deep commitment to holistic healthcare, Dr. Jennifer approaches each patient with a personalized and empathetic approach, aiming to uncover the root causes of the health issues rather than simply addressing the symptoms.

AAUW Naperville Area advances gender equity through research, education and advocacy



**TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 5 VOTE!**



¡Adelante! Book Group
Marilyn Van Ausdall

We're going to be discussing Stacy Cordery's latest book, Becoming Elizabeth Arden: the Woman Behind the Global Beauty Empire on Thursday, Nov 21, at 10 am. I'll send out Zoom links closer to the time.



Lilly Ledbetter, Whose Fight for Equal Pay Changed U.S. Law, Dies at 86

Oct. 14, 2024

Lilly Ledbetter had worked for 19 years at a tire plant in Alabama when she was sent an anonymous note: her pay was as much as \$2,000 a month less than what men were receiving in the same supervisory job.

Ms. Ledbetter sued for sex discrimination in 1999 in federal court in Alabama, and a jury awarded her more than \$3 million in back pay and damages. But the decision was reversed on appeal.

Undeterred, she pursued the case to the United States Supreme Court, which in 2007 also ruled against her, saying that she was too late — that she should have filed her claim within 180 days of receiving her first unequal paycheck, citing a narrow interpretation of the law.

In a vigorous dissent [Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg](#) said it was all but impossible for Ms. Ledbetter to have known of her unfair pay in such a time period.

To close this loophole, Congress passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2009, which was the first piece of legislation that President Barack Obama signed into law, shortly after his inauguration. It effectively eliminates the statute of limitations on fair-pay claims.

At the [signing ceremony](#) in the White House, Ms. Ledbetter, who had retired by then from her job at a Goodyear tire and rubber factory, stood behind Mr. Obama shaking her head and wringing her hands in seeming disbelief.

Ms. Ledbetter, who became a national symbol of unequal treatment of women in the workplace and a hero to many for her yearslong persistence in fighting against the status quo in court, in Congress and on the political campaign trail, died on Saturday in Alabama. She was 86.

The cause was respiratory failure, her family said in a statement, which did not specify where in Alabama she died.

Ms. Ledbetter came to fully embrace her role in the women's rights movement.

She became a public speaker, addressing the 2008 and 2012 Democratic National Conventions; worked closely with the

National Women's Law Center; and wrote a memoir, "Grace and Grit." A movie inspired by her life, "Lilly," premiered at the Hamptons Film Festival this month, with Patricia Clarkson in the title role.



President Barack Obama signing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2009, with Ms. Ledbetter standing behind him.

"Lilly Ledbetter never set out to be a trailblazer or a household name," Mr. Obama said in a statement on Sunday. "She just wanted to be paid the same as a man for her hard work."

Ms. Ledbetter, who married the same year that she graduated from high school, 1956, and raised two children, was hired in 1979 as a supervisor by Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company in Gadsden, Ala. She was one of the few women in her role.

Early on she was the target of sexual harassment, she [wrote](#) in an opinion column in The New York Times in 2018. When she complained to a human resources official about harassing statements that a male supervisor had made to her — "You're going to be my next woman at Goodyear" and "Oh, you didn't wear your bra today" — she was told to stay home while an investigation was conducted.

Ms. Ledbetter refused, since the man involved was not required also to stay home.

"If he stays, I stay," she recalled insisting.

In 1998, as she neared retirement, Ms. Ledbetter received an unsigned note saying that she was being underpaid compared

with men in the same job. She was earning \$3,727 per month, while 14 men in the same position, including those with less seniority, were making \$4,286 to \$5,236 per month.

Over nearly 20 years, the pay disparity had added up to [more than \\$200,000](#), as well as lowering her pension and Social Security benefits.

“I was devastated,” Ms. Ledbetter said in 2021 [at a Forbes Magazine women’s summit](#). “We needed that money to pay college tuition and the mortgage and the other necessities of life.”

In early 1999, she filed suit in Federal District Court in Birmingham, Ala., claiming wage discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Although her pay when she was hired had been the same as that of male colleagues, over the years she received smaller raises; that was because her supervisors had given her negative job evaluations based on her sex, she claimed.

Over time, some men in the same job were earning 40 percent more than she was, she contended. And all along, she later said, she was in the dark because Goodyear employees stood to be fired if they disclosed their salaries.

The jury in Birmingham awarded Ms. Ledbetter \$3.8 million in back pay and damages, which the judge reduced to \$360,000. The United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit, in Atlanta, overturned the verdict entirely.

The Supreme Court, in [Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.](#), [upheld the appeals court](#) in 2007, citing a provision of the Civil Rights Act that required claims to be filed within 180 days of a discriminatory action. The ruling was 5-4, with the majority decision written by Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., who said Ms. Ledbetter had waited too long to seek redress in the courts.

In dissent, Justice Ginsburg argued that the 180-day window was unfair: Salaries are usually secret, [she wrote](#), and in the case of small wage differences, a woman or a member of a minority group trying to get ahead might choose to avoid “making waves” by complaining. But eventually, over a career, small differences become magnified as raises build from a lower base.

Justice Ginsburg urged Congress to fix the law to address the 180-day time frame. That same day, Hillary Rodham Clinton, then a senator from New York who was seeking the 2008

Democratic presidential nomination, announced that she would file such a bill.

Ms. Ledbetter became a political activist, lobbying members of Congress and appearing with the eventual 2008 Democratic nominee, Mr. Obama, on the campaign trail.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 reset the clock for filing claims to 180 days from an employee’s latest paycheck, not just the first one deemed to be discriminatory. Justice Ginsburg, who considered the act one of her proudest achievements, [hung a framed copy](#) of it in her Supreme Court chambers.

Lilly McDaniel was born on April 14, 1938, in Jacksonville, Ala., to J.C. and Edna McDaniel. Her father was a mechanic at Anniston Army Depot, and her mother oversaw the home. Lilly graduated from Jacksonville High School in 1956 and married Charles Ledbetter. He died in 2008. Her survivors include their two children, Vickie Ledbetter Saxon and Phillip Ledbetter, and several grandchildren.

Before Goodyear hired her, Ms. Ledbetter was a financial-aid officer at Jacksonville State College.

Because Ms. Ledbetter’s two decades of discriminatory pay took place before the law named for her was enacted, she never received back salary or other financial compensation.

“Goodyear will never have to pay me what it cheated me out of,” she recalled saying after the 2009 signing ceremony at the White House. “In fact, I will never see a cent. But with the president’s signature today I have an even richer reward.”

[Trip Gabriel](#) is a Times reporter on the Obituaries desk. [More about Trip Gabriel](#)

[Claire Moses](#) is a Times reporter in London, focused on coverage of breaking and trending news.

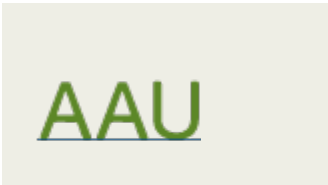
Public Policy news



The AAUW-IL Public Policy folks made this available from the National Women’s Law Center that shares their analysis of the impact of Project 2025 on women, families and gender justice. Read it before voting.



Project-2025-Full-Report.pdf



Mission Statement: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

Vision Statement: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

Value Promise: By joining AAUW, we belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

Association Web site: www.aauw.org

AAUW-Illinois Web site:

<http://aauw-il.aauw.net/>

Monmouth Branch Web site:

<http://monmoutharea-il.aauw.net/>

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Open to apply for membership