

December 2024

Celebrating 100 Years of AAUW in Monmouth!

Presidents' Report

Carolyn Weber

Dear Friends, in my November 24, 2024, President's Letter sent out as an email, I gave thanks for much to which we then hoisted our mugs at the November 30th Holiday Brunch. If you were not present that day, hoist your glass or mug right now and let your cheers ring forth!

*For our founding foremothers who courageously gathered together November 6, 1924, to light the torch that created the branch.

*Cheers, too, to each and every member and student member and the many ways they have served this branch through each of those one hundred years!

*Cheers to all one hundred years that the light from the torch has been passed on to thousands of women, girls, men and boys who have participated in/or supported AAUW's projects and persons in this Monmouth area and in IL communities, households, and classrooms, rippling out across America to many other nations around the world.

*We gave thanks and honored the memory of the many who have passed during these past 100 years, especially Kathy Lowe-Arthur on December 13, 2023 whose obituary and tribute slides may be referenced at www.mcguireanddaviesfuneralhome.com and Shirley Daddona who passed on February 24, 2024 whose obituary may be referenced at www.watsonthomas.com Shirley's family recalled that her "one true passion was her involvement in the American Association of University Women . . . at both the local and state level – and their mission of advancing equity for woman's rights."

*We gave thanks that our Branch voted June 19, 2024, to honor each of these women in a special way: five hundred dollars were given to the

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BREAKING NEWS! As of Sat. evening, Shirley Daddona's Estate Has Gifted \$881,083.33 to AAUW's Greatest Needs Fund!

To former, current, and perhaps future branch members: (Of course, I would love it if some of you would come back or join for the first time. Supporting organizations that fight for women's rights are certainly important right now.) We want you to know that Shirley Daddona, who served as our branch finance officer has to date gifted \$881,083.33 to AAUW's Greatest Needs Fund.

Shirley was a dedicated member of AAUW for over 50 years, serving on both the local and state levels. She obviously believed strongly in AAUW's mission. I always enjoyed traveling to conferences and conventions with Shirley. (See photo and memories on p. 2)

My membership in AAUW has allowed me to meet so many wonderful like-minded women. As of this year, I now have dual branch membership - having joined the Aurora Branch, too. Attending conferences and conventions through the years allowed me to already know some of the Aurora members. Now I'm getting to meet even more great women. Let's continue this trend of generosity in the Monmouth Area IL AAUW Branch past its

*Marilyn Van Ausdall Current Finance Officer
Monmouth Area Branch*





Shirley with Monmouth AAUW Officers [Left to Right: Sharon Jenkins, Marilyn Van Ausdall, Ronda Willhardt Hall, Lila Blum, Shirley Daddona, Jan DeYoung, and Amy Zesbaugh] Photo found in Monmouth College Hewes Library AAUW Archives.

Memories of Shirley - - - From Marilyn Van Ausdall:

Shirley often rode with me to conventions and fall conferences, even to one in St. Louis with Jan and my daughter, Carissa. Shirley was very unassuming and didn't talk a lot about herself. She obviously was very devoted to AAUW and served at the local level in the Kewanee and Galesburg branches before they disbanded, and she joined Monmouth.

She was our faithful treasurer for many years, when it was a much more time-consuming position than it is now. She dealt with a lot of paperwork, whereas now I can easily handle everything online and with a debit card.

Shirley loved cats. From how she talked about her pet kitties, I knew they were lucky to have ended up as her pets. I'm a cat-lover, too, so we also had that in common.

From Lila Blum:

Shirley's quiet and unassuming manner did not reveal her fierce support for women's rights and causes, particularly in the work of AAUW. For some of our younger members who lacked financial

resources, Shirley paid their dues. Her generosity was unmatched.

From Jan DeYoung:

I have many memories of Shirley because we spent a lot of time together travelling to state meetings-- Fall Conferences, Summer Board meetings, and, of course, state conventions. We were on the AAUW Illinois board together for many years and roomed together frequently. We had lots of "windshield time" as we travelled around the state for meetings. We also attended at least three national conventions together. I can remember particularly the ones in Toledo, Ohio; Columbus, Ohio; after which we both became Life Members of AAUW, and one in Minneapolis, but there may have been another one or two.

We were together at least once in Washington, DC, for a national convention, but we didn't drive together for that one. When she was Regional Director, I believe, she joined the Kewanee branch to try to help them survive, and when the Galesburg branch folded, she joined our branch and helped it become the Monmouth Area branch. Actually, she may have joined our branch as a dual member before that.

Shirley was a dedicated AAUW member. She served on the state board as Treasurer for a couple of terms, and at least one term as Regional Director. I believe she made some significant contributions to AAUW Funds, and I was not surprised to learn that she had left part of her estate to AAUW

Shirley and her husband, Jack, loved to travel. Before I met her, Shirley had been a high school math teacher, both in Ohio and in Galesburg. And she was devoted to her cats. Since she and Jack had no children, her cats became her babies.



(President's Letter cont. from p. 1)

Buchanan Center for the Arts to sponsor the Town & Country Kathy Lowe-Arthur Best in Show Award for the next five years and sixty-five dollars were given to plant a pecan tree at the Monmouth College farm in honor of Shirley Daddona.

*We cheered national AAUW's 143 years; AAUW-IL's 100 years; and all officers from branches on up who are leading the way to hear, acknowledge, and manage many feelings that are constantly emerging since the election.

Anne Mamary, our host at Weeks House on Nov. 30, showed us through her office which contains lots of clues and interesting details about her childhood and growing up years and her favs. Weather, distance, and health concerns kept a number of our members away; however, the variety of brunch dishes and their aromas provided a warm and welcoming atmosphere for all who attended. Members: Marilyn Van Ausdall, Anne, Carol Bowman, Joanie Larsen, Carolyn Weber plus Guests: Janis Penn, Angelica Penn, and Jessica Vivian. We celebrated 50-year member Ruth Wright in absentia and planned to send her birthday cards to celebrate her special December birthday.



Public Policy Updates

Great news from the National Education Association! Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced today that the Senate will vote to repeal the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision (GPO and WEP)—the unfair penalties that take away Social Security from millions of educators, first responders, and other public service workers. *

Scheduling a vote by the Senate before the end of 2024 is a major step towards fixing this injustice. The House already passed it by an overwhelming bipartisan vote, 327 to 75. Please call Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin right now and urge them to call for a vote and vote yes on HR 82

the Social Security Fairness Act, which would repeal GPO (the Government Pension Offset) and WEP (Windfall Elimination Provision).

Dial 1-844-912-1779 and ask for Senator Tammy Duckworth's office. Tell your name, hometown, and phone number Mon-Fri 9 am-5 pm Eastern Standard Time. Vote yes on HR 82 the Social Security Fairness Act!

For Senator Dick Durbin, dial 1-844-912-1779 Mon-Friday 9 am-6 pm Eastern Standard Time. Tell your name, hometown, and phone number. Vote yes on HR 82 the Social Security Fairness Act

Repealing these unjust penalties is not just about giving retirees their full Social Security—benefits they earned. It's also about current and future educators who want to stay in the profession they love and retire with dignity. Urge Biden and Harris to publish the ERA!

In 1923 Alice Paul and Phyllis Eastman co-sponsored the Equal Rights Amendment. In 1972 two-thirds of both houses passed it. When 2/3 of both houses and 34 states ratify a constitutional amendment, it is statutorily ready to be published by the U.S. Archivist (Colleen Shogun who was appointed by Biden) who certifies all ratifications in the US. The Archivist must act when the U.S. President tells them to publish an amendment.

The Equal Rights Amendment is currently the 28th Amendment, but it only becomes official when the President asks the U.S. Archivist for it to be published and then it is published.



TAKE ACTION NOW!

Text President Biden at 302-404-0880 and Vice President Harris at 310-861-2977 daily, telling them to publish the Equal Rights Amendment. President Biden is interested in leaving an important legacy for the American people. This is an extremely important and actually quite simple act for him to carry out and it will have a far-reaching effect on protecting so many people, including. The ERA not

only guarantees equality for all, but it also saves reproductive rights, bodily autonomy, contraception, same sex marriage, interracial marriage and so much more, all of which are at risk after the Supreme Court's decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization. We cannot afford to wait any longer. It is time for President Biden to get it done. Our nation's most vulnerable are counting on us to act. Now! Visit Shattering Glass.org for more information.



January Meeting



We look forward to our January meeting, a unique time with Carey Jones, fitness instructor at the Warren County YMCA who is legally blind, and her best friend - her Leader/Guide dog. Photo of Carey and her Leader/Guide dog

More details will be shared in the January 2025 Initiative and on posters around town.



May our holidays bring peace and harmony to our spirit and the New Year bring many opportunities to strengthen our resolve to empower women and girls, especially during this 100th year of the AAUW Monmouth Area IL Branch.

Carolyn Weber Monmouth Area Branch President



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/>

AAUW Initiative Editor: Sharon Gilbert,
sharon711gilbert@comcast.net