

Presidents' Report

Carolyn Weber

Convention Report



AAUW-IL, INC. 2025 Convention Report



Left to right Mary Ann Sturek, AAUW-IL Monmouth Branch Member and Past President of AAUW-NE; Current AAUW-IL, INC. President Laura Desmarais; National AAUW CEO Gloria L. Blackwell; AAUW-IL Monmouth Area Branch President Carolyn Weber (Rev Dr.); and AAUW-IL Monmouth Area Branch Director of Finance and Webmaster Marilyn Van Ausdall.

Notes from Branch member Mary Ann Sturek:

I had forgotten the rewards of attending a state convention: renewed energy and commitment to the values and goals of AAUW plus the growing and enriched enthusiasm of the members throughout the convention. Add to that the 100 year celebration not only of our branch, Monmouth, but also of the 100th convention of AAUW-IL, with Gloria L. Blackwell, AAUW CEO and AAUW's main representative to the United Nations, as our privileged key speaker and, you can see, I was thrilled to attend and glean guidance from our AAUW leaders!

Gloria L. Blackwell is superior in her leadership position in my estimation. Throughout her speech through her many points and specific examples, she helped us clearly understand that THE WORK IS NOT DONE and urged every member to KEEP FIGHTING WITH US in this perilous time in American history, especially for higher education. She stressed that AAUW cannot spearhead every female cause. AAUW has joined coalitions on such issues to leave AAUW (and our resources) to focus on our core issue, higher education, and the current setbacks in the areas being attacked such as civil rights, elimination of DEI faculty and courses in colleges and universities, cuts to science research, even attacking groups like AAUW, which receives no funds from the federal government.

She said we must “double down” on our mission via grant making, fellowships and advocacy; build on our critical funding, fellowships and grants; remove systemic barriers on education and the workplace; reinforce branch alliances/branch alignments with Title IX. She emphasized AAUW has the research, the community action, the funding, the advocacy for policy change. “If AAUW doesn’t, we fail in our stated mission and goals,” she adamantly stated, as well as “funding women’s education via our fellowships and grants, advocating for policy changes”. She stressed we have a history of 140 plus years fighting for gender equality and so, raising funds to continue our mission and long term goals is crucial — and every single member has a stake in helping with this.

Another speaker, Charlotte Warren, PhD, who is president of Lincoln Land Community College with other leadership roles on national, state, and local levels, presented the status and necessary role community colleges play in promoting life-long learning, not only for individuals but also for necessary workforce skills - seen now as new skills needed every three to four years. AAUW members need to understand and support community colleges for their vital roles in our society today because, they too, are being attacked at the federal level, especially in terms of accreditation. Most importantly, our membership includes those with associate degrees from community colleges.

Besides the two of the three key speakers, members also participated in breakout sessions: Recognizing Real vs AI Images-Harnessing Technology (which Marilyn attended); Using Social Media to Promote AAUW; Dignity Index Community Outreach (which Carolyn attended); and AAUW Five Star Program - Get National Recognition (which I attended). AAUW-IL State President Laura Desmarais and Sue Topp, Branch Liaison clarified the Five-Star Program, citing the areas of this program, Advancement, Public Policy, Governance & Sustainability, Programming, Communications & External Relations. For each area criteria and resources were outlined and explained. I will prepare a more expansive report on each area for Carolyn and Marilyn. Today, I will generalize. Laura and Sue stressed that too often branches see these areas too narrowly, when, in reality, branches have met more areas than they realize. For example, under Public Policy, participating in a Lobby Day with other Lobby Days related to education, economic security, civil rights counts as well as AAUW Lobby Day. Another example under Programming joining a march can count if its purpose coincides with AAUW’s mission. Also, Public Policy/advocacy and DEI programs count towards this star. As I reviewed the bulletins of our branch this year, I realized how many of the specific criteria under each star the branch has incorporated. Living in Omaha restricts some of my involvement in the branch. However, I could oversee the Five-Star Program for the branch this coming year. I would like to play this role for the branch. I am so pleased that I could attend this convention. Because of my attendance, I feel connected with the state and the Monmouth Area AAUW Branch. These have been part of my life in Nebraska for nearly fifty years. I want to make a better impact on its mission and goals for the Monmouth Branch in the new year beginning in July 2025.

Notes from Branch member Marilyn Van Ausdall

I always enjoy going to convention. I love getting to visit with members from around the state whom I’ve met through the years by attending convention and by serving on the state board and doing the state newsletter for a time. I always look forward to meeting NEW people at convention, too. This 100th state convention for AAUW-IL did not disappoint.

The LGBTQ+ presentation on Friday evening was very informative. I learned that it’s not uncommon for members of the younger generation these days to state their preferred pronouns, along with their name, when meeting someone new.

AAUW CEO Gloria Blackman generously spent the whole convention with us in Springfield. Her address on Saturday morning served to remind us of what we’re about in AAUW and informed us of why our main focus now is being directed specifically toward higher education. “Together, we can defend the rights of all women and ensure that education remains a powerful path to equity and opportunity.” Branch member Mary Ann Sturek did an excellent

job of summarizing the main points of Gloria's address in her convention report above. AAUW operates primarily with money received through dues, donations, and grants. No funds are received from the federal government. It was mentioned at convention that only 17% of AAUW members donate to national. So far, I personally have only given a little bit here and there. Joining the Legacy Circle is on my to-do list, however. More information about planned giving can be found here: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/ways-to-give-aauw/leave-a-legacy/>.

The breakout session I chose to attend was "Recognizing Real vs AI Images." For me, it was not easy to tell the difference, especially at first. I did learn about things to watch for: inconsistencies in details, pattern & texture irregularities, proportional errors, background differences, inaccuracies in the text in captions. Zooming in on details in a picture can often help, too. A quiz to help you practice identifying Real vs AI images can be found at britannicaeducation.com. Just search for: real vs ai.



Left to right: Lori Switzer, Lori's mother Jeane Lindeke Monmouth College grad and our newest Branch member, Carolyn Weber, Monmouth Area Branch President, Marilyn Van Ausdall, Monmouth Area Branch Director of Finance and Communications/Social Media, and Mary Ann Sturek, Monmouth Area Branch Member and former AAUW-NE State President

Membership

Marilyn VanAusdall

The Shape the Future Campaign that has been going on for several years continues. It's a tool that branches can use to recruit and retain members. With this campaign, our branch can offer 50% off national dues when prospective members (those who are entirely new to AAUW or who are rejoining after two or more years) join AAUW at an event or meeting.

Branches also earn one free national membership for every two new members they recruit, with a maximum of three free memberships annually. Our state District Liaison allowed us to count book group sessions as meetings, and that earned us one of the 3 stars that our branch was awarded, thanks to Carolyn Weber's diligence in completing AAUW's annual survey. So new members could join at book group!

Last program year we earned a free national membership because 2 new branch members were gained through the Shape the Future Campaign. We have until October 31 to submit the appropriate form to national with a new member's name on it. So go out and find a new or lapsed member who would like to join for free (except for state \$10 and branch \$9) before October 31.

As in previous years, college students can join AAUW for \$18.81 (since our organization originated in 1881.) If they choose to join our branch, then they would also pay \$9 for branch and \$10 for state. If they're going to a college that happens to be a College/University member of AAUW, then their national dues are free. Paid Life membership is always 20 times the current national dues, so this year that would be 20 x \$74, or \$1480. Life members still pay state and branch dues.

Treasurer's Report

Marilyn Van Ausdall

We paid \$200 in August for liability insurance with a company called Acord. Acord is part of the Baldwin Group out of Leesburg, VA. I know that Naperville, Aurora, and Batavia-Geneva-St Charles branches have had insurance with them for several years. They're recommended by AAUW in D.C and AAUW has its name on the policy. Stanton Insurance would have cost \$317 this year, up from \$293 a year ago.

I had received checks from Rada in January and August totaling \$157.45. It did not occur to me until early this month that I was supposed to send all fundraising proceeds to national. After paying the \$200, we had \$141.67 in the checking account. Thanks to very generous donations from branch members Mary Anne Sturek and Anne Mamary, we were able to cover the \$157.45 and currently have a balance of \$418.22 in our checking account. Thank you SO much, Mary Anne and Anne! [And tonight (9/20) I'm attending my 8 th grade St. Anne reunion. There's something special about that name. ☺]

All of our branch members have renewed their membership for 2025-2026. About half renew automatically because of being paid life members or honorary life members. Honorary life members pay no dues. Paid Life members only pay state and branch dues. Any donations made to our branch are NOT tax deductible. Donations made to national ARE tax deductible. I receive a monthly report from national regarding donations from our branch members. Our members have donated a total of \$475 so far since January. Thank you, members! Donations can be made by logging in to aauw.org or by mailing a check to AAUW at P.O. Box 98045, Washington DC 20090-8045. I can also submit a donation online for anyone through a transfer from our checking account in Monmouth.

SAVE THE DATE! ALL MEMBERS

INVITED TO AAUW-IL FALL CONFERENCE

(VIRTUAL and FREE)

**This Saturday, September 27, 2025 9:00 – 11:00 am Central Time
2025 AAUW-IL Fall Conference (Virtual)
Policy Impacts on Women and Higher Education**

Learn, Plan, Act!

Join us for the online AAUW-IL Fall Conference! We'll examine policies that impact women and higher education, and plan how we can advocate to ensure that women have the educational and career opportunities they need and deserve.

Speakers:

~Isabel McMullen, PhD candidate in Political Science. She'll discuss the recent polarization of leadership in higher education, share key examples of governing board in/action, and show recent research and data that helps contextual recent debates. Her research explores how state politics influence higher ed and the dynamics of public university governing boards.

~Meghan Kissell is the Senior Director of Policy and Member Advocacy at AAUW. She leads federal policy and grassroots advocacy efforts. She holds a Master's in Social Work from Howard U. and a Bachelor's in Political Science from Allegheny College. Passionate about activism, she helps AAUW members turn frustration into action, ensuring their voices shape policies that advance equity and opportunity.

~Dr. Ken Olson currently serves on the AAUW Illinois board as Co-Director of Public Policy and on the Schaumburg Area AAUW board as Policy Director. He is Principal of KEO Consulting, working in dairy and research policy. A native of Wisconsin, he has a PhD in Dairy Cattle Breeding (Genetics) from UW-Madison, was a professor on the faculty of the Animal Science Dept. at the U of KY.

Register for

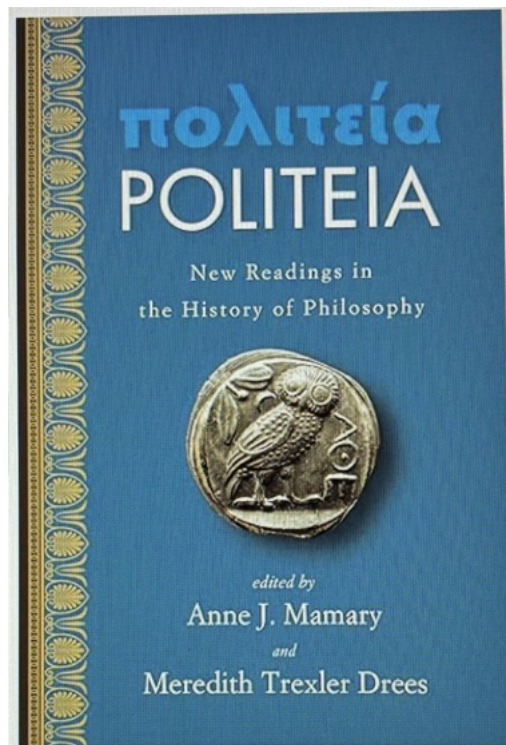
Conference: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/7GWxLd2zRF2AJGm41hKfUw#/registration>

Berklee Williams

winner of the Kathy Lowe Arthur Best of Show Award last March at the BCA.

During the early summer I met with her and her Grandma at the Maple City Family Restaurant to present her with an 11" x 14" framed collage photo that I created and we included in our April Initiative plus a note from the Branch encouraging her to continue building on her wonderful gift of art. I told her that our Branch hopes she'll become an AAUW member when the time is right. Then I photographed her with her grandma Cherry and the subject of her winning artwork, her beloved Cooper.





*Branch member Anne J. Mamary is Professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies at Monmouth College. She is the editor of *The Alchemical Harry Potter: Transfigurations in Rowling's Novels* and coeditor, with Gertrude James Gonzalez, of *Cultural Activisms: Poetic Voices, Political Voices*. Meredith Trexler Drees is Associate Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Kansas Wesleyan University. She is the author of *Aesthetic Experience and Moral Vision in Plato, Kant, and Murdoch: Looking Good/Being Good*.*

Description :

Innovative readings and creative reinterpretations of significant works in the field of ancient philosophy.

In classical Greece, the word *politeia* in its largest sense meant the citizens' engagement with the shared project that is the lived life of their *polis*, city, civic society. Ancient philosophers, poets, historians, and orators constantly reflected on what this shared project should be and how citizens could participate in it. The chapters in this collection, inspired by the work of Anthony Preus, examine some of the products of their reflections, both the written works themselves and the variety of comparative contexts into which they can be put, from the Greeks' neighboring Asian polities to contemporary philosophical engagements with similar issues. The essays in *Politeia* hope to inspire readers to think about their own lives in conversation with the lives of the many communities to which we belong to not only demonstrate the idea of *politeia* but to bring to life *politeia*'s connection of the individual to the collective, something that seems to be of central importance in a world of division and to be the beating heart of the discipline of philosophy.

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