



# Bulletin

Volume 100, Number 2 Newton, Kansas June 2023

## From the President's Desk



Liz Rempel  
2022-23 AAUW of Kansas President

### A Meaningful 2023 Conference

I was re-energized by the Kansas AAUW Annual Meeting, *Being Native/Being Kansan!* Manhattan graciously hosted us, our presenters were personable and informative, and a number of new faces joined the crowd. We also had a mildly chaotic but fruitful state board election; two brand new board members were elected (Ruth Mbah and Andrea Ring - additional details later in this newsletter) and Linda Ball became President-Elect. AAUW of Kansas might have our struggles, but we aren't done yet! We can continue to work together to support women in our communities, state, and nation.

Melinda Williamson, member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation and founder of Morning Light Kombucha, spoke on "From Academia to Entrepreneurship: An Indigenous Woman's Journey." Kombucha is a fermented (probiotic) tea and Melinda's business started in an effort to take care of her health after an autoimmune disease diagnosis. Melinda shared about her family's history of entrepreneurship and her journey to business ownership. Morning Light Kombucha now employs six people and donates 10% of sales to support Native American causes. I learned that the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation is one of four federally-recognized tribes in Kansas. Their Nation originates in the Great Lakes region and was forcibly relocated to Kansas.

Audrey Swartz spoke on "Being Indigenous in the Now: How Modern Natives are Combating the Past Tense." She is a librarian at the Manhattan Public Library. She is part of the Miami Nation, also a Great Lakes region tribe that was forcibly moved to Kansas (put on boats at gunpoint), and then again to Oklahoma. She traced her personal family heritage with the Miami tribe, shared about traumas indigenous people have faced and continue to face (forced relocation, sexual assault, domestic violence), and also talked about initiatives to preserve indigenous culture and language, as well as efforts like removing mascots that promote racist stereotypes. Audrey has since announced that she is running for election to the Manhattan USD 383 school board. Her platform includes greater access to mental health services and removing the district's "Indians" mascot.



(Photo courtesy of Barbara Gatewood)

Unplanned, Audrey (left above) and Melinda (right) both wore ribbon skirts. This was an opportunity for us to learn about traditional clothing. Ribbon skirts are made from fabric with ribbons sewn horizontally around the skirt and are often worn for special occasions. The color of the ribbons can have special meaning to the wearer. Ribbon skirts symbolize indigenous pride, culture, strength, and

connection as women. A beautiful symbol in our time gathering together.

### The Year Ahead

I continue to think about what the future can hold for Kansas AAUW. I am excited about our new board members and the ideas and energy they will bring. Here is some encouragement as we look ahead to the summer and our 2023-24 programming year.

- I strongly encourage all of us to put our mission - **To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy** - at the forefront of our programming and initiatives.
- We have all heard civic participation is declining. However, I think there are many women who have never been invited to step into volunteer leadership in organizations like AAUW, and who have new ideas and initiatives. Who has never been invited to the table in your communities and how can they be welcomed? I speak from experience in saying leadership in AAUW is a wonderful learning opportunity and can be foundational in teaching skills that can be used through a woman's career.
- Instead of focusing on our membership challenges, I encourage us to enjoy the time we have now, the fascinating people who comprise our organization, and to try to make a meaningful impact for women and girls in 2023-24.
- Let's also keep in mind the wonderful programs that AAUW has to offer: First of all, AAUW continues its many educational grants, most of which have deadlines in fall/early winter. AAUW just launched a financial literacy workshop, *Money Smart*, and the *Work Smart* salary negotiation web training is still available online. *STEMEd for Girls* is back. The National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) is another opportunity to support young women's advancement. Let's spread the word on these impactful opportunities!

Be well, and thank you for your contribution to Kansas AAUW!

**Liz Rempel, 2022-2023 President, AAUW KS**

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## ANNUAL MEETING RECAP



President Liz Rempel signed the collaborative Suffragist Memorial Committee agreement to partner with League of Women Voters of Kansas and the Kansas Capitol Preservation Committee. See update on page 4.

## 2022-23 STAR BRANCHES



**Manhattan Branch**—Usha Reddi (pictured on left), Manhattan Branch President, said membership increased from 52 to 62 members. The hosted International Women's Day. Meetings were held both in person and online.

**Newton Area Branch**—Liz Rempel (pictured on right) noted programs were planned around Being Native/ Being Kansas theme. A joint meeting with the Wichita Branch was planned in March.

## 2022-23 KANSAS SUNFLOWER GARDEN



The Newton Area branch honored outstanding branch member Donna Becker and remembered members Cay Siebert and Gwen Claassen with contributions to the Kansas Sunflower Garden. Ruth Holzschuh was remembered with a donation from the Shawnee Mission branch. The Wichita branch donated to the Garden in memory of branch members Barbara Baker, Kathryn Compton.

## LEAVE A LEGACY

A unique way to support AAUW is to join the AAUW Legacy Circle by making a planned gift to AAUW's general fund or directed to your preferred program. There are many ways to make a planned gift. You can establish a charitable gift annuity or name AAUW as a beneficiary in your will, trust, insurance policy, or individual retirement account, among other options. Let me know if you have an interest in becoming an AAUW Legacy Circle member.

Thank you for your support of AAUW Funds! These gifts allow AAUW to create and expand our renowned research, mission-based programs, and advocacy initiatives that tackle challenges facing women and girls.

**Tresa Landis, AAUW Funds Chair**

## Many Thanks to Carolyn Dwire



Carolyn Dwire started as the AAUW of Kansas Treasurer in 2009, and has served with vivacity and consistency over the past 14 years. Carolyn has enjoyed spending time with the smart and connected women who comprise AAUW, and has enjoyed helping put together such valuable state meetings over the years. She plans to continue her membership with the El Dorado branch. She says the future of AAUW will depend on us and a plan to increase membership and she believes, "It can be done!" One of the things she is most proud of with AAUW is the El Dorado branch's continuing commitment to sending girls to the K-State GROW program, focused on increasing girls' interest in STEM. Thank you, Carolyn, for your many years of service to AAUW!



## After the Annual Meeting...

We're coming down from the "high" of the state meeting and eager to launch into a new program year. Speaking of the state meeting, be watching for surveys – one to the meeting attendees and one to all of you – as we seek your feedback and input about future planning. We apologize in advance for some of you getting two surveys but we promise they will be short and easy to complete. Hearing from you is the best way to know how AAUW of Kansas can fulfill what you want from our state organization. You'll hear more from us as we focus on a theme that can guide your program planning for the year. Enjoy the summer!

**Donna Becker and Marjean Harris,  
Program Co-Vice presidents**



## Encourage College Women to Attend NCCWSL 2024

For more than three decades, National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) has been the premiere leadership, advocacy, and equity event for college women. This national event takes place each spring and is an exciting weekend packed with training, inspiration, and networking for future leaders.

The diversity of backgrounds and ideas at NCCWSL is part of what makes it such a transformative experience. The workshops, panels, speakers and activities provide opportunities to learn from experts, while peer networking allows participants to learn from one another and make lifelong connections.

As chapters plan for the 2023-2024 Academic year, think about sending one or more college women from Kansas to NCCWSL in the Spring of 2024. National Scholarships are available to attend. There will also be an AAUW of Kansas Scholarship available to help with expenses. More information on applying for these scholarships will be sent out as we receive information about NCCWSL 2024.

**Linda Ball, College/University Rep**



Louise Ehmke shows off the KS Suffrage Memorial items at the Annual Meeting. Photo courtesy of Barbara Gatewood.

### Kansas Suffrage Memorial Update

Kansas Suffrage Memorial Committee has been working this spring. The first step to invite artists to create proposals was to send out a Request for Qualifications. About 20 artists sent their qualifications and photos of their work to the committee. After assessing these resumes and visions, the committee selected 6 artists to submit proposals to fit one of two spaces in the Capitol as designated by the Capitol Preservation Committee. These artists have accepted the invites and now have until September to submit their proposals.

Fundraising for this Kansas Suffrage memorial is now the next step. As a partner in this great project AAUW Kansas has committed to aid in fund raising. The easiest path to donate is to go to the [kssuffragist.org](http://kssuffragist.org) website. On that site, print the form then mail it to the address on the form. And you can send a check or donate by way of submitting your credit card information and then send to the Department of Administration Kansas Suffrage Memorial Fund. All the details are on the form. In addition to the form, you can also select the level of donation.

Your dollars go directly to the memorial fund which will pay the artist and the actual creation for the capitol site. We will need our AAUW Kansas members/branches to complete this great addition to our Kansas Capitol. As the committee states, "It is our wish that this public art inspire and educate people about Kansas women suffragists to pass our values to present and future ." Please consider all kinds of fundraising plans in your communities to get this memorial done. Kansas suffragists were creative, bold, and challenged the status quo to be among the first to vote! I can see tea parties to champaign breakfasts to ....well what is your creative idea to build the Kansas Suffrage Memorial?

Louise Ehmke, Public Policy, Kansas Suffrage Memorial Committee

### 2023 AAUW of KS Annual Meeting Attendees





JOIN YOUR FELLOW AAUW MEMBERS FROM 11 CENTRAL STATES FOR 3 DAYS OF EDUCATION, INSPIRATION, GREAT IDEAS, FUN AND FRIENDSHIP IN EXCITING ST. LOUIS!

**“REACHING NEW HEIGHTS – TOGETHER”**

WHEN: OCTOBER 19-21 2023

WHERE: DRURY PLAZA HOTEL, ST. LOUIS (at the Arch)

For more information go to this link: <https://aauw-mo.aauw.net/aauw-midwest-regional-conference/>

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**Date to Remember:**

**June 30 2023-2024 Officer Reports due to National**

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**2023 Annual Meeting Breakout Session**



After hearing from the speakers, breakout groups dug deeper into indigenous cultures and current events. Photo courtesy of Barbara Gatewood.



## **NEW KS BOARD LIST 2023-2024**

[aauwks@gmail.com](mailto:aauwks@gmail.com)

### **President**

Elizabeth Rempel

[liz.rempel@gmail.com](mailto:liz.rempel@gmail.com)

### **President -Elect & College/University Partnership**

Linda Ball

[lball@bethanylb.edu](mailto:lball@bethanylb.edu)

### **Membership Vice President**

Andrea Ring

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### **Co-Program Vice Presidents**

Marjean Harris

[marjean@mtelco.net](mailto:marjean@mtelco.net)

Donna Becker

[beckerdonna2@gmail.com](mailto:beckerdonna2@gmail.com)

### **Secretary and Branch Services**

Paula Shields

[paula.shields051@gmail.com](mailto:paula.shields051@gmail.com)

### **Treasurer**

Ruth Mbah

[endamruth@yahoo.com](mailto:endamruth@yahoo.com)

### **AAUW Funds Chair**

Tresa Landis

[tilandis00@gmail.com](mailto:tilandis00@gmail.com)

### **Public Policy**

Louise Ehmke

[vlehmke@st-tel.net](mailto:vlehmke@st-tel.net)

### **Communications/IT**

Lynnette Redington

[lredington12@gmail.com](mailto:lredington12@gmail.com)

Find AAUW news for Kansas at our website -

<https://aauw-ks.aauw.net/>

## **MEET OUR NEW STATE OFFICERS**



### **Andrea Ring, MA – 2023-24 Membership Vice President**

Andrea received her Bachelors of Science in Psychology in 2002 from Fort Hays State University and her Masters of Science in Clinical Psychology in 2005, also from

Fort Hays State University.

Andrea began her career as a Licensed Clinical Psychotherapist at Salina Regional Health Center.

In 2009, she began working as an adjunct professor at Bethany College and as of fall 2009, she joined the faculty full-time. Recently, she took on the administrative role of Director of Faculty Development.

She continues to maintain her professional license and work in the field of mental health part time.



### **Ruth Mbah, PhD – 2023-24 Treasurer**

Dr. Ruth Mbah is an African from Cameroon. She obtained a Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy Analysis and Urban Affairs from Southern University and A & M College, Louisiana

(2020). Ruth also holds a Master's in Business Administration in International Business from Amity University, Uttar Pradesh- India (2016), and a Bachelor of Sciences in Accounting from the University of Buea, Cameroon (2012). She recently attained a Certificate in Business Analytics from Harvard Business School Online (2023).

She has worked as an accountant, budget controller, and accounting supervisor for over seven years abroad. Currently, she works as an Assistant Professor of Business in the Department of Business and Economics at Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas. Ruth hopes to leave an impactful legacy during her tenure on the AAUW of KS board.

## MORE PHOTOS FROM 2023 ANNUAL MEETING



Marjean Harris, Co-Program VP, reads a land acknowledgment.



2023-24 AAUW of Kansas Officers (l to r): Andrea Ring, Linda Ball, Marjean Harris, Louise Ehmke, Paula Shields, Donna Becker, Liz Rempel, Lynnette Redington. Missing is Ruth Mbah. Photo courtesy of Barbara Gatewood.

### AAUW Action Fund Mission

The AAUW Action Fund advances equity for women and girls through member activism and voter mobilization.

Since 1881, AAUW has been the nation's leading voice promoting education and equity for women and girls.

The AAUW Action Fund was established July 1, 2009, following a strategic restructuring of AAUW, the AAUW Educational Foundation, and the AAUW Leadership and Training Institute. The AAUW Action Fund supports AAUW's continuing goal of breaking through barriers for women and girls, and it does so through member activism and voter mobilization. Both organizations have a nationwide network of nearly 100,000 members, 1,000 branches, and 600 college/university institution partners.

**AAUW Action Fund**  
1310 L St. NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20005  
800/326-AAUW (2289)  
[connect@aauw.org](mailto:connect@aauw.org)



### June 2023 Bulletin

AAUW - Advancing gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.

Stay on top of AAUW Public Policy issues by subscribing to the AAUW Action Network.

<http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/two-minute-activist/>

AAUW of Kansas:

website - <http://aauw-ks.aauw.net/>

email - [aauwks@gmail.com](mailto:aauwks@gmail.com)

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