

"PARADE OF PAST PRESIDENTS"

Emcee Sunny Strong: A team interviewed a number of our Branch Past Presidents and asked each to reflect on two questions:

1. What was significant during your time as the President of the Edmonds AAUW branch?
2. What has AAUW meant to you personally?

Our "Parade of Presidents" begins with thoughts shared by Sharon McGinnis and Debby Smith.

READER ONE (Sharon McGinness)

SUSAN VUKICH: 1977-79

1. "We were still small enough to meet in members' homes. We gained visibility through the juried Young Musicians' Program, providing a venue for outstanding South County musicians. We formed a Couples Group, six couples getting together monthly to eat. Other small groups emerged reflecting member interest (theater goers, walkers, readers, investors, etc.) My tenure was most memorable for me when Carmen Johnson and I flew to St. Paul for National, joined there by my mother from the Providence Branch and my only cousin from the Starkville, Mississippi Branch. How special to share that experience. In the early years, most of our programming was centered in the arts. That was before the days of STEM."

2. "When I move into a new community, I search out a church home, a physician, a dentist, and an AAUW branch. My original membership in 1948 satisfied my craving for adult conversation and stimulation, a relief from diaper talk. Although I outgrew my original craving, I have not ceased to have a need for growth, and AAUW provided that opportunity.

What an honor it was for me to be named in the first gift our branch made to the Education Foundation. I support our Mission, nationally and locally, but

not as actively as I did in my earlier years. This branch has provided immeasurable support during my recent months of chemo and radiation. I am so proud to be a member of this branch as I watch its present surge in membership and its innovative leadership style.”

READER TWO (Debby Smith)

JOYCE MANSFIELD: 1983-85

1. “With the help of Board members, many of whom attended the National Convention in San Francisco, we focused on two big issues: membership and increasing support for the Educational Foundation Fund . We increased our membership from 54 to 85 and voted to send \$500 to the Educational Foundation Fund instead of the previous \$50.”
2. “The goal of AAUW to increase the participation of girls and women in math and science were the same as my professional goals as a college mathematics instructor. Board members’ support for good programs to help our new members understand AAUW was very encouraging. I personally appreciated the good friendships that followed as a result of our working together. These friendships have lasted a lifetime.”

READER ONE (Sharon McGinness)

SHEILA COON: 1985 – 87

1. “The most significant events during my presidency were the beginning of ‘Expanding Your Horizons’ and a significant increase in AAUW membership.”
2. “Personally, I appreciated the friendships and intellectual stimulation of the membership.”

READER TWO (Debby Smith)

NORMA KRUGER: 1987 - 89

1. “During my presidency, we continued ‘Expanding Your Horizons,’ which introduced girls to a wide variety of professional women they would not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet.”
2. “AAUW has always kept me connected to my community.”

READER ONE (Sharon McGinness)

VERA KELLER: 1989 – 91

1. “Our ‘Expanding Your Horizons’ project (1989-1991) began with a small group posting ideas on butcher paper all over my basement. The result was gratifying. Middle school and high school girls attended our workshops where professional women told of their less traditional careers. We had a vet, an MD, an auto mechanic, for example. We then offered small scholarships to help them with their education.”
2. “My attendance at the national AAUW conference in D.C. brought it all together. I learned so much. AAUW introduced me to active, articulate and contributing members of the community.”

READER TWO (Debby Smith)

MARY JO BEVAN: 1993-95

1. Mary Jo, who was a strong supporter of the arts in the Edmonds area, oversaw the branch’s *one and only garage sale* in a local bank’s parking lot. (Let’s just say that it wasn’t all that successful.)
The 90s were a time of change as evidenced in a sampling of the branch programs that included: “Introduction to Computers,” “Diversity in College Education,” and “Restructuring a High School for the 21st Century.”
2. Personally, Mary Jo remembers being engaged in the learning process because of the good programs. Talking with intelligent people was a real benefit to her.

READER ONE (Sharon McGinness)

ELLEN WILLIAMS: 1995-97

1. “During my term there was a horrible storm that caused the Edmonds Marina to go down. There was a lot of flooding. Our branch meetings could not be held in the Port of Edmonds Board meeting room. We found other places—like the Methodist Church—where we could meet for no charge. Norma Kruger started the project of our members helping with the SAT tests at Edmonds Community College. This was both a service project and a fundraiser.” (Ellen continued to chair this project for several years after her presidency.)

2. “I joined AAUW to promote women doing many significant jobs besides teaching and nursing, although these are most important yet today. Women can do all kinds of jobs and we need to support this —like honoring those in the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and math.”

READER TWO (Debby Smith)

PAULETTE (POLLY) JOHNSON: 1997 – 99

1. Polly felt that working on local high school scholarships was most important – especially the fact that we give these out each year. Polly continued to work on these while a member because she enjoyed working with the girls and getting to know them and their families.

2. Polly enjoyed the friendships she made with women in our branch of different ages and different interests.

READER ONE (Sharon McGinness)

BARBARA WILSON: 1999 – 2001

“It’s the people. As soon as I met an AAUW member, I felt as if I’d known her for years. We were family! The Book Club’s discussion of *The Feminine Mystique* changed me and stimulated me for the rest of my life.”

READER TWO (Debby Smith)

JUDITH ZOELLICK: 2001-03

1. During the two years of my term, we started having five or so meetings a year at Edmonds Community College, where now we meet. We donated to the Foundation College Fund, which helps with scholarships, and also gave a generous donation to the National Educational Foundation Fund in honor of the Washington State Chapter's 75th Anniversary in 2002. In May 2003, we celebrated our Branch's 30th Anniversary at a luncheon held at Café de Paris in Edmonds. We now meet there every December for our auction to raise funds for our scholarships.
2. I joined as a member-at-large several years before becoming a Branch member in order to support women and girls with their educational goals and gender issues. I found that joining a Branch enabled me to support this goal more directly by assuming leadership positions. I have also benefited from the branch educational programs.

READER ONE (Sharon McGinness)

LORI CROSS: 2003 – 07

1. “During my time as president, I was able to attend two national AAUW conventions with financial support from the branch. It was a challenging time for the national association because membership had taken a significant downward turn. I was part of the voting body in 2005 that approved allowing women with a college associates degree to join our organization.

When I joined the Edmonds Branch of AAUW, there seemed to be a lot of focus on the social activities of the branch. Under President Judith Zoellick, the focus began to shift a little more to the mission of the organization and this continued during my tenure. In addition to holding our regular meetings at Edmonds Community College, we also partnered with them to host a women's conference. Instead of awarding two scholarships to high school senior girls, we decided to offer one of the scholarships to a deserving young woman from the college.”

2. “One of the things that I am most proud of happened before I became the branch president. I chaired the planning committee for a Puget Sound District conference focused on the plight of women and children in times of war. The U.S. had just invaded Iraq, and the subject was most timely. The conference title was ‘Caught in the Conflict.’ About 70 women from throughout the Puget Sound attended. It was a great joint effort of four different AAUW branches.”

READER TWO (Debby Smith)

JANICE HOLSBO AND JO PARKENING: 2007-09

1. “The most significant aspect during my term of office was the partnership with co-president, Jo Parkening. We saw the need for leadership and as we were both previous presidents in our old California branches we stepped up. We pushed the idea of co-officers to share the work of the branch. Jo promoted the idea of establishing teams to get the work of the branch accomplished. We both were strong believers in the mission of AAUW and tried to expand interest in supporting it. The first Branch brochure was developed during our years.”

2. “I feel myself lucky to have had a fulfilling career and found AAUW as a great way to pay it forward. A personal goal for me is to help other women gain that which I had found.”

READER ONE (Sharon McGinness)

HELEN BEHAN: 2010 - 11

1. “The branch seemed to start moving ahead as more members became involved by volunteering to assist with various activities. The President of EDCC met with us and a partnership with the college started to take shape. There was also a renewed interest in STEM. We had the first fundraiser in many years to support Branch activities (‘Tea at Trinity’), which gave the Branch more funds with which to operate.”

2. I joined AAUW because of the mission. I was convinced I would be able to volunteer my time and money in an effective way to promote equity and

educational opportunity for women. I have received straightforward information on legislative issues so I believe I am much better informed when I contact our legislators. I am proud of our national leaders and their courage to speak out and take action in such an effective way on issues like pay equity, voter rights, bullying, and rape in the military. It has been inspiring to meet and get to know the many talented women and men in the AAUW national, state and branch organizations - especially the dedicated, amazing women in our Edmonds SnoKing Branch.”

READER TWO (Debby Smith)

PHYLLIS KEILEY-TYLER: 2011 – 13

1. “Membership growth was the most significant event during my presidency. At nearly every monthly branch meeting, one or two new members were introduced - over 20 in the two years I was president. Membership VP, Mary Beth Walsh, assigned a mentor from the Membership Team to each new member to help her get ‘settled in.’ We have not lost a single new member during this time and many have quickly become active, involved members of the branch.

Another important event has been Edmonds Community College joining as an institutional member of AAUW. As a result, a college representative, Anne Penny, has become an appointed member to the board. Anne is a great asset, helping us explore our partnership opportunities with the college.”

2. “Personally, I have grown in leadership skills and had many opportunities to apply them. By gaining knowledge about AAUW at both the state and national levels, I deepened my belief and my commitment to our mission. As important to me, has been building lasting friendships with women. How to describe AAUW women? The adjectives are many! Most of all they share my values of making this a better world for women and girls.”