



AAUW Gaithersburg Branch

Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

Business Name

April 2022

April 2022

VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING AND PROGRAM

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

Log in to Zoom meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Annual Meeting begins: 7:15 p.m.

Presentation begins: 7:30 p.m.

ANNUAL MEETING:

The program will be preceded by a short business meeting, where members will vote on branch officer candidates and on the budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

WHO IS PAULI MURRAY AND WHY YOU SHOULD KNOW AND CELEBRATE HER!

Presented by Heather Reichardt and Maria Roberts

Gaithersburg AAUW Members

We will present an expanded view on the life and career of an extraordinary woman that most people do not know. A black woman who grew up in the South, she was involved in legal challenges to the “separate but equal” doctrine determined in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, as well as fights to allow black people and women to attend elite universities. After many years of activism, academic and legal work, she changed careers to become an Episcopal priest. Join us to hear this fascinating story!

BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, April 12 - 7 p.m.

The AAUW Gaithersburg Branch Board of Directors will next meet on April 12 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. The Zoom code will be sent by email. These meetings are open to all branch members.

MEETING INFORMATION AND MORE IS ON THE BRANCH WEBSITE

Go to <http://gaithersburg-md.aauw.net> for information about upcoming meetings, other events, and current and past newsletters.

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Presidents Message: Why I am an AAUW Member

- Edie Allison

I joined AAUW 25 years ago, when I moved to Maryland and a work colleague invited me to participate in a branch program for minority middle-school girls. Since then, I have enjoyed being involved at the local, state, and national level. Being part of a large community, currently 170,000-members strong, amplifies my efforts to improve educational equity for women and girls. These are the things that I value in AAUW Gaithersburg.

Community. The social isolation necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic has made us aware of the value of being with family and friends. The Gaithersburg branch is a source of friendship and shared experiences, including working on the book sale and in-person meetings, that all of us have missed during the pandemic, but are sure to return.

Action in support of Gender Equity. Major areas where women and girls are making strides toward career equality include employment in non-traditional occupations, especially STEM fields, and in achieving more leadership positions. Among AAUW's programs supporting this are:

- STEMEd - In 2021, 950 high-school girls participated in the pilot for this program that encourages them to pursue careers in science, engineering and math.
- StartSmart and WorkSmart - Almost 190,000 people took the in-person or online training to negotiate their salaries. Research has shown that gender disparities in salary start with women's first jobs, and one of the major reasons is that women are less successful at negotiating higher salaries than men.

Research: The Foundation for Remedying Inequality. Each year AAUW produces research reports that inform and encourage action by educators, government officials, legislators and corporate leaders. In 2021 and early 2022 AAUW published 5 reports; all can be downloaded from www.AAUW.org at no cost:

- The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap, 2018, with a 2021 update
- Pandemic Inequality: Latinas and the COVID-19 Experience
- Factory Flaw: The Attrition and Retention of Women in Manufacturing

- Deeper in Debt: Women and Student Loans
- The Women's Power Gap at Elite Universities: Scaling the Ivory Towers.



Helping Women's Educational Efforts. AAUW is one of the world's leading funders of graduate women's education: Since 1888, it has provided more than \$115 million in fellowships, grants and awards to 13,000 women from 150 countries. Gaithersburg branch and its members annually contribute to several of the grant and fellowship funds. In 2021, \$5 million in grants and fellowships was awarded.

Where your dues go:

- By virtue of a vote by the AAUW-National Board of Directors, starting in the fiscal year beginning July 1st, national dues will be \$67. This represents a \$5 increase from last year. Of that amount, \$64 is a charitable deduction that supports research, training, and middle-school through graduate level education activities. The remaining \$3 is not tax deductible because it funds advocacy efforts and the Legal Advocacy Fund, which supports plaintiffs seeking redress for Title IX, sexual harassment and tenure denial violations.
- The Maryland AAUW receives \$10 of your dues. The state organization coordinates Maryland branch efforts such as public policy advocacy, assists branch officers with membership and governance questions, and provides informative and inspirational programs open to all.
- Gaithersburg branch receives \$18 of your dues. This is used to pay for meeting and Zoom fees, and insurance providing protection from unexpected events such as injuries at meetings and theft of branch assets.
- State and branch dues have not increased so the total dues are \$95 this coming year.

Did You Know: Discounts and Perks for Members

Many companies support AAUW's mission and goals, and also offer discounts to members. Your use of these perks saves you money and provides a small royalty to AAUW.

Among the many companies that offer discounts to AAUW members are: Geico Insurance; LTC Global, providers of long-term care insurance; and multiple companies offering savings on cruises, hotel bookings, and car rentals. A long-time favorite of branch members is the free dis-

count card from Office Depot/Office Max. Discounts on computer supplies and printing are always welcome.

Details about how to quickly access these benefits are on the AAUW website by clicking Membership, then Discounts and Perks.



BRANCH OFFICER NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee presents the following nominees for Gaithersburg Branch officers for the next operating year beginning July 1, 2022:

- President: Edie Allison
- Vice President for Programs: Vacant
- Vice President for Membership: Heather Reichardt
- Treasurer: Ellen Teague
- Secretary: Vacant

Current officers will rotate the vacant positions until we can fill them. The current nominees are all incumbents, and we thank them for continuing their dedicated service to the branch.

Members will vote on the nominations at the April branch meeting, with additional nominations accepted from the floor.

The Nominating Committee: Heather Reichardt.

SPRING LUNCHEON

- Liz Hessel

Branch members gathered for lunch on Wednesday, March 16 to celebrate the coming of Spring and St. Patrick's Day. Two AAUW members from Frederick and two husbands joined us for lively conversation and good food. We enjoyed Italian cuisine at Carrabba's Grill in Germantown. It was a lovely day and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a long overdue social outing. We will have more luncheons in coming months, and all are welcome.



LETTERS FROM TWO 2021 BRANCH SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

This month we are sharing letters from two Montgomery College students who received scholarships from the Gaithersburg branch in fall 2021. These have been edited for length.

Dear AAUW Gaithersburg,

I am writing this letter to thank you for your generous donation. I am happy and honored to be one of the recipients of the AAUW Gaithersburg Scholarship.

A little bit about myself, my name is Khar Aminata Casse. I am a sophomore (fall semester 2021 represents my last semester before I graduate) at Montgomery College, majoring in computer science. I changed my major from biology to computer science because of the enjoyment I get from transforming and creating great stuff out of just a paragraph of ideas. It is always fun and engaging to learn new lessons to deepen my knowledge in computer science.

Receiving this scholarship means a lot to me. With my parents unable to help me pay for tuition, I am very grateful for this opportunity. Being selected for this scholarship will push me to work hard in school and life in general to be able to help the next generation of students just as you are. It will also remind me that other people have gone out of their way for me to pursue my education, so the least I must do in return is to not disappoint them.

I hope to get my associate degree this fall and transfer to the University of Maryland (UMD) or Minerva University, a school where students get to travel each semester to a new country to learn about the culture, socialize and of course study. I really hope that I will get accepted in both schools.

Thank you again so much for investing in my education!

Sincerely,

Khar Aminata Casse

Dear AAUW Gaithersburg,

I write this to express my extreme gratitude and thankfulness for your generous donation, and for being selected for the scholarship. My notification of receiving the scholarship came during a time when I very much needed a source of light, and this opportunity gave me that.

Throughout my life my mother has worked hard as a head charge nurse and single mother to raise me and my three siblings. During my middle school years, my mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, one year before graduating nursing school. This hit us hard as a family, and it required numerous doctor's

visits for her. This meant that I had to step up and help take care of my younger siblings, sacrificing my own grades and extra-curriculars. It also meant that we had to move to find better doctors, so between the diagnosis and now we have moved four times. While it was hard, it helped round me as a person and give me a better understanding of the differences of people. The COVID-19 pandemic has been especially hard because my mother's immune system is weakened. She is also the head nurse for the COVID unit, so we are all at a heightened risk for contracting the virus. This meant that I had to transition to online school for my last year of high school and first year in college. Due to these combined factors, I missed out on a lot of important scholarship opportunities, and was unable to take sports or join clubs.

This year, I am a college sophomore studying Computer Science. Although I have not been able to enjoy a traditional college experience, but I am not letting that weigh me down. I've become extremely close with my family and friends, and I have used this time to expand my own knowledge. I've become better prepared for my own future, working at Home Depot, and quickly setting myself up for promotions. While I've not been able to enjoy many of the normal college experiences, I have become extremely dedicated to my own future and my education. I plan to transfer to Townson University after just two more semesters at Montgomery College, and with this chapter of my life coming quickly to a close I get more excited for my future. Both for my educational future, and my career.

My educational and career goals are very closely linked to the fact I am an LGBTQ+ woman pursuing a career in a mainly male dominated field -- I am one of two women in a class with twenty males. My goal is to raise awareness to other females, and other LGBTQ people that we can excel in a difficult field, and that our differences actually make us stronger. By utilizing unique perspectives that being an LGBTQ woman gives me, I can bring new ideas and outlooks to any career I chose. I hope to graduate after completing challenging classes: and to inspire others around me to also try the difficult classes.

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LETTERS FROM TWO 2021 BRANCH SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

By receiving this scholarship, I am able to continue my education without having to take on large loans. I had been worried about how I was going to be able to afford my next semester because I know that my federal student aid might not cover it all. Receiving this scholarship is making me hopeful for next semester, and I

truly cannot state enough how much I appreciate it.

Sincerely,
Katherine McGuire

NEWS FROM OUT-OF-STATE MEMBERS

Mary Wykes recently sent a note to Amra Slakovic-McClanen, a former member of the Gaithersburg branch, and wanted to share Amra's reply.

Dear Mary,

Thank you for your email. You made my day. I have smile on my face every time I think of you. And you were recently in my thoughts: there was an article about an AAUW Delaware branch in the local newspaper.

My husband and I decided to move to my favorite place, Lewes, DE, small charming beach town and "the first town in the first state," founded by Dutch settlers in 1631. As I probably mentioned in my last communication I had been working for the Johnson and Johnson-Janssen vaccine program as a Director, Safety Surveillance Physician, assuring safety of infectious-disease drugs and vaccines. My office was located in the outskirts of Philadelphia, and was commuting home every 2nd week for weekends. It was quite challenging, and then came the COVID. I was assigned to the COVID-19 vaccine program, which required almost 24/7 work. Luckily at that time I had started working from home. It was exhausting, draining, and I had no way to relax. For years relaxation for me was coming to Lewes on rare occasions and sitting or walking on the beach. From this came the idea to use the

opportunity of work from home and move here. My husband retired in early 2020, and we were lucky to find a house immediately and moved here in June 2020. That saved my life. We have since been able to walk on the beach regularly, and I have been able to maintain my strength and continue working. The last 3.5 years were quite a journey: work without much time for anything else. Things are now calming down a bit and I am trying to gain back control of my life.



I watched the documentary "Greta," about the life of Greta Ferusic Weinfeld of Sarajevo. What a life story! Amazing women. My aunt, was a professor of mathematics at the same university, and was a colleague of her and her husband.

Thank you for being a warm and caring person, and a real inspiration. Stay well. The world needs more people like you.

Warmest regards,

Amra Slakovic-McClanen

A LOOK BACK: MEMORIES OF THE BRANCH IN 1972

- *Mina Parsont, Gaithersburg branch charter member*

My name is Mina Parsont, née Mina Rainès-Lambé.

Upon graduating from Sacramento Junior College in June 1954, I was the recipient of two scholarships which made it possible for me to continue my studies at the University of California at Berkeley. My scholarship from AAUW was very meaningful because I knew then that the organization supported women. My other scholarship was from the University of California and it was also for the year 1954-1955. After much searching, I found the amount of the Berkeley scholarship which was for \$300, and I think that the AAUW scholarship was for about the same amount.

While in Berkeley, I studied French literature and Spanish, and took courses in education. I lived at the International House where I met my husband. Without these two scholarships for my junior year and one scholarship from UC-Berkeley for my senior year I would not have been able to attend the University of California and live at the International House.

After my marriage in Paris in 1959, we traveled through France and returned to the United States in 1960. We moved to Berkeley where my first son was born, and later my husband Michael was offered a great scholarship at Colorado State University (in Fort Collins) for his master and PhD in radiation biology and health physics. I received my Master's degree in teaching languages at CSU in 1966 and taught French there. Our second son was born in Fort Collins in 1967. We left Colorado in 1968, going to Albuquerque and then to Washington D.C.

My husband was with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Bethesda and that is why we moved to Gaithersburg.

I think that I read something in the Gaithersburg Gazette about AAUW branch starting in Gaithersburg, and I had never forgotten what those letters had



meant to me personally. I knew then that the organization encourages women to pursue their education. I had also hoped to meet people with the same interests. I was still new in town and could step out in the evening once in a while. I joined in 1972, becoming a charter member

In 1972 I was very busy as a mom, with two very active boys, five- and twelve-years old. I also joined the University of California Alumni Association, another very active group, and was introduced to their theater programs. I love the theater and the Kennedy Center!

I started teaching night school for Montgomery County one night a week in 1973 and did not attend many meetings then. I started teaching full time in 1975 because my sister and I had to financially help our elderly parents, who were originally from Lithuania.

GREAT DECISIONS

- Mary Wykes, Coordinator



The Great Decisions interest group will meet via Zoom on Friday, April 25 at 2:30. We will consider topic #5 in our FPA Study Guide, "Xi's China

Takes on the Quad" as author Kevin Rudd, President and CEO of the Asia Society, has written on this timely topic. Averill Farrelly will be the discussion

leader. New members are always welcome. Contact Mary Wykes, Coordinator, at 301-717-1040 or Mary.Wykes[at]aol[dot]com, for the Zoom link and for a Study Guide if you have interest.

SNAPSHOTS

- Maria Roberts

In 1944, a student, the only woman in her law school class, joined a class discussion about ways in which the Plessy v. Ferguson "separate but equal" doctrine could be overturned. Until then, the doctrine had been challenged only by trying to prove that educational facilities for Blacks were not equal. The woman stood up and said it was time to challenge the "separate" part of the doctrine, charging that it violated the 13th and 14th amendments to the Constitution. Classmates and professor all laughed at her, saying that will never work. In front of the class, she bet the professor \$10 (a lot of money in those days) that the separate but equal doctrine would be overturned within 25 years. In her senior paper

she spelled out in detail the ways in which separate but equal violated the Constitution. In 1954, that same professor referenced her exact arguments when he helped Thurgood Marshall challenge Brown v. Board of Education before the Supreme Court. As we know, they succeeded in overturning "separate but equal" by that court in that year. The student won her bet and began a career of challenges to laws limiting opportunity for Black people and women. This woman, Pauli Murray, was the subject of Maria Roberts' presentation to the HerStory group on March 12.



HERSTORY INTEREST GROUP

- Maria Roberts

AAUW's April HerStory meeting will feature Anna Fraker and her presentation about physicist Mildred Dresselhaus. A trailblazing winner of many awards, Dr. Dresselhaus studied structures and materials on an ultra-small scale, making advances in medical care and other fields possible. Please

come and enjoy this presentation. at 2 pm on Saturday, April 9 in Asbury's Park View Club Room. Questions: 301-987-6986.



AAUW GAITHERSBURG BRANCH

Website: gaithersburg-md.aauw.net

Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.

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President

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AAUW GAITHERSBURG CALENDAR OF EVENTS

HerStory – In person

Saturday, April 9, 2:00 p.m.

Board Meeting - Zoom

Tuesday, April 12 - 7:00 p.m.

Great Decisions – Zoom

Friday, April 15 - 2:30 p.m.

Branch Meeting – Zoom

Tuesday, April 19, 7:00 p.m.

The American Association of University Women
Gaithersburg Branch
437 Fellowship Circle
Gaithersburg, MD 20877