



Orange, Durham, Chatham
Counties (NC) Branch

AAUW-ODC Newsletter April 2021

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President's message

We will probably never forget the challenges of 2020 but now some of us are starting to feel the palpable stirrings of optimism in 2021: three vaccines in place to combat the virus, a fresh attitude of hopefulness out of D.C., a rescue package to help families and businesses that are hurting, and the attention nationally on race and social justice long overdue. We are the lucky ones who are still standing and who still have our homes and our jobs. Many others still need our help. Many of our friends and family have not fared so well. Let us not forget them.

On the micro-organizational level (our ODC branch), we have started two new scholarships in as many years--one at North Carolina Central University and one at Durham Technical Community College (thanks to Donna Wilson) which join our longstanding one at UNC-CH. We have also increased membership, put on five exciting programs on issues of race, research and projects by all of the national AAUW Fellows, and an original play about Black Suffragettes in NC, as well as public policy programs on the election and the Equal Rights Amendment this Fall (2020). We have also renewed the College-University Partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill, through which the energetic leadership of Gloria Thomas has spread the word about AAUW to many spheres and particularly to students at UNC-CH. All in all, we have had a good year. And we have the great fortune to have Cindy Parks as our next President. What a dynamo!! She has already brought enormous energy and marketing savvy to our organization.

We hope you can attend our (only) fundraiser on **April 29 at 7 pm**. Our speaker is Professor [Deondra Rose](#) of Duke University. Her talk is entitled "*Sputnik and Title IX: Opening Doors for Women in Higher Education.*" This program is our branch's **only** fundraiser each year. All proceeds go to our three local scholarships. Please [buy a ticket and/or a table](#) and spread the word to your friends! Buy

a 'Table for 2' and triple your money (see below).

More upcoming events:

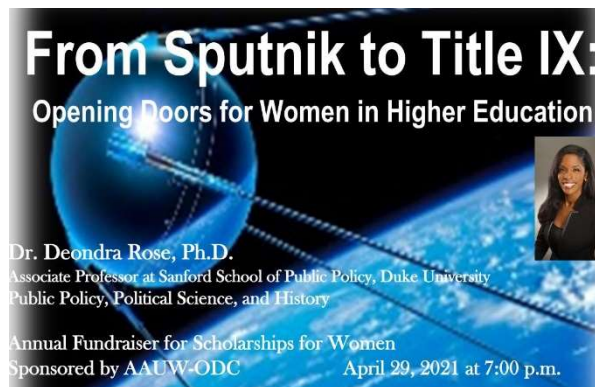
- **April 7:** Voting period opens for AAUW open membership. All members, please vote! More information in article below.
- **May 6** at 12 noon: Book club will discuss *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson. If interested, email Mary Kolek at mmkchnc14@gmail.com. Put "AAUW Book Talk" in the subject line when emailing Mary.
- **May 6** at 1 pm: New officers are inaugurated. If you want to attend, contact hoymman@unc.edu for the zoom link.
- **June 30:** New officers' term begins.
- **June or July:** Transition Board meeting with former board and new board members.

Board Meetings are Open to All; RSVP to hoymman@unc.edu

We have no summer membership meetings but will see everyone in September.

We have much to do. Can you help? Contact Michele at hoymman@unc.edu or Cindy Parks at cindy.parks57@gmail.com.

AAUW-NC News page: www.aauwnc.org/news.



Turn a \$50 contribution into \$150!

AAUW-ODC members support annual financial aid scholarships at three local institutions of higher education: UNC-Chapel Hill, North Carolina Central University and Durham

Technical Community College. We need to raise \$4K!

Please take the MEMBER CHALLENGE X 2 offer when you purchase this year's *virtual* fundraiser event ticket. Select "table for 2" (\$50 contribution) because two members have pledged to match dollar-for-dollar. We've sold nine tickets at this level, and we are half way to our fundraising goal.

Your support is needed now more than ever. If you are in a financial position to do so, we hope you will accept the challenge! And join us on Zoom, April 29th – 7PM.

[Buy Ticket - Select 'Table for 2'](#)



Open Membership Vote

National AAUW emailed a ballot to each member on April 7. There is a "VOTE NOW" button in the email with a link to your ballot. It takes only a few seconds to complete on line. You may request a paper ballot or let AAUW know if you did not receive the email here: connect@aauw.org.

Look for your ballot! It will be from memberinfo@aauw.org. It's very important that you complete the voting process because it takes five percent (5%) of the national AAUW membership to vote with a two-thirds (2/3) majority to approve a change!

What is on the ballot? The ballot presents the proposal to remove the educational requirement for membership. Our board (ODC branch) unanimously endorsed this at its March board meeting. This change is recommended by the national Board of AAUW and our state (NC) AAUW board as well.

Why do we support making this change? While the AAUW is fiercely committed to the educational attainment of all women, given its commitment to inclusion, including the larger population is simply the right thing to do. Our membership practices should align with our vision and goals. This change acknowledges the reality of alternate pathways to education

and the equity issues that exist related to access and affordability of a traditional college or university degree. AAUW's vision is: **Equity for all.**

Please vote YES to eliminate the educational requirement for membership. Please vote now!



March Meeting Summary, **XIX**

The March 20th meeting was a very special co-sponsored Zoom event with the Carolina Women's Center and PlayMakers Repertory Company. Local playwright Jacqueline Lawton, director Jules Odendahl-James, and UNC undergraduate cast and crew members Kayla Brown, Liz Howard, Aubree Chanel Dixon, and Ciara Gillis, treated us to a dramatic reading and discussion of the first half of Lawton's work, **XIX**.

The play was commissioned in 2019 by the Women's Theatre Festival with support from the League of Women Voters of Wake County with the premise of finding a new way to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment. The twist is that the play is a fictional work based upon historical evidence of black women's experience of the suffrage movement in NC at a time when our state could have played a historic role in the Amendment's passage. (Spoiler alert: North Carolina instead elected to postpone the vote.) The play weaves the threads of race, class, gender, personal freedoms and political power in a way that feels very familiar to our modern-day experience. **XIX** was intended as an opportunity to learn about black suffrage leaders left out of our history books and to imagine what their lives might have been like pushing for their rights against the backdrop of institutional racism of Jim Crow and increasing violence across the state. Audiences are encouraged to hold panel discussions about the parallels to what is happening today with voter suppression efforts, censorship in public school curriculum, and the discrimination that still exists around race, class, and sexual orientation.

The pandemic put a pause on **XIX** as a live performance piece for use during the tumultuous 2020 election year, but the hope is that it can be used now in the continued effort to pass the Equal Rights Amendment and in the 2022 election. In our Zoom discussion, members of the cast and crew shared how their experience with **XIX** related to

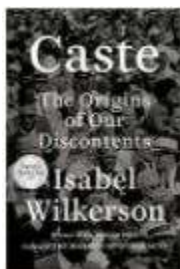
their experience as black women at a university with a predominantly Western-origin and its white audience focused drama department. Liz Howard (Florence) is a first-generation student and senior from Atlanta, who founded a new student organization on campus, Black Arts Theatre Company, because she saw the need for works and characters that better represented her experience. Kayla Brown (Adelaide), a junior Dramatic Art and Psychology major, is starting to write works that allow people to talk about issues related to race and mental health.

Just as I think all of us are eager to hear to rest of the story and to see **XIX** performed on stage, I think we all left knowing each of us has a role to play in the real-life work playing out before us here in year 2021 and beyond. Special thanks to Gloria Thomas, who serves as Director of the Carolina Women's Center (and lucky for us serves as Program Chair for AAUW-ODC) for this unique opportunity as we celebrate Women's History Month.

Cindy Parks (AAUW-ODC President-Elect)

Book Group

The AAUW ODC Book Group will meet next on May 6 at noon via Zoom. If you wish to join us please email Mary Kolek mmkchnc14@gmail.com and include AAUW May Book Group in the subject. For May, the group selected, [Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent](#) (2020) by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson.



In this thought provoking book, the author argues that caste is a concept developed early on and across cultures/nations to rank the value of certain groups of people according to heritage, personal characteristics, religious preferences, or economic status. The superior group uses these characteristics to segregate people.

Wilkerson examines different caste systems around the world and how they damage the lives of everyone involved, even those at the top. Wilkerson argues that in order to understand how to move forward, we must examine the past, how caste applies to the US and the racial structures that keep progress as a nation at bay. (Excerpted from Short Form book summary.)

In his NYT's review, Dwight Gardner asserts, Isabel Wilkerson's book, "is an extraordinary document, one that strikes me as an instant American classic and almost certainly the

keynote nonfiction book of the American century thus far. It made the back of my neck prickle from its first pages, and that feeling never went away."

Based on a myriad of reviews, for many this is not an easy read. Some of the descriptions and comparisons are disturbing and certainly--although praise is effusive--there are a number of reviewers that have criticisms similar to Gardner's.

Caste is a challenging choice, perhaps, but then provocative books are the ones that most benefit from a "social" read. And for those who may be new to the group, the good news is that even when our book choices are "heavy," our conversations and connections always provide "light" and laughter.

Thanks to Zoom-master Michele, we will gather for good conversation and a chance to catch up with each other as we head toward what looks to be the spring and summer we have hoped for.

Once again, please email your desire to participate on May 6, noon, to mmkchnc14@gmail.com, and include AAUW May Book Group in the subject. You will get a reminder of the meeting with the Zoom link several days in advance of May 6.

Please welcome New Member Patricia Collins!



Patricia is a native New Yorker born at the onset of the Baby Boom.

She has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Boston College and a Master of Nursing from the University of Florida, specifically pulmonary and mental health-psychiatric nursing. She was a Navy Nurse during Vietnam era at Naval Hospital San Diego, the largest military hospital worldwide (2000

beds).

She is passionate about social justice, loves to cook healthy foods and to garden and is a master gardener, class of 2018 in Arlington and Alexandria, VA. She currently volunteers at Orange County gardens, Carolina Community Garden at UNC, Gold Garden in Hillsboro, and Mt. Carmel Baptist Church Garden in Chapel Hill.

Patricia is not new to AAUW, as she was previously a member of AAUW of Greater Falls Church area, where they hosted an annual book sale that netted \$20,000 for local

scholarships.

Her number one interest is being with her two-year-old grandson who amazes her every day!

Thank you!

I would like to thank all members and Board members for your help during my term as President.

To all you loyal and helpful members, I value your friendship more than you know. Thanks to **Gloria Thomas** who is unfortunately stepping down as Program Chair after an incredible line up of programs this year and who flawlessly brought to you over Zoom with her as zoom meister. Thanks enormously to **Bea Keller** who has served the longest of any President (five years) not to mention serving as Program Chair, Fundraiser Chair, and patient and diplomatic advisor and friend to those who came along later. We all look up to Bea as a role model. Thanks so much to **Dr. Donna Wilson** who singlehandedly negotiated our last two scholarships and coordinates our wonderful February meetings each year. An enormous thanks also to **Katie Loovis**, whose attentiveness as recording secretary and super organizational skills keep us on target for all membership and board meetings, even while she pursues a doctoral degree and a full-time position at the Chamber of Commerce. Thanks to **Mary Kolek**, whose gracious leadership of the AAUW ODC Book Club, has led to several stimulating sessions, not to mention her connections to the League's Educational Committee. We cannot thank our Treasurer, **Mary Sipple**, enough as she "inherited" the enormous task of mounting our first ever Zoom fundraiser and did it with grace and patience, and for her innovativeness in using Mail Chimp for our newsletter. She is our tech savvy person. Our membership gains were due solely to the energy and vivaciousness of **Jan Holland**, our Vice President of Membership. Also thanks to **Martha Barefoot**, **Liz Leone** (our research whiz), **Ruth Freed**, **Becky Mann** (newsletter editor), **Sandy Mold**, and **Sandy Smalley** for their numerous contributions over the past two years. What a wonderful group of energetic and talented women!!!

Finally, we have the great fortune to have **Cindy Parks** as our next President. What a dynamo!! She was introduced in a prior newsletter. Also, **Lori Bunton** has agreed to serve on the Program Committee. You will remember she was our October speaker. She is currently Co-President of the North Carolina E.R.A. Alliance, an advocacy group for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. She worked in the pharmaceutical industry for

many years before retiring. She had served as President of North Carolina Alliance for Healthy Communities and served on the boards of Tennessee Planned Parenthood and North Carolina National Organization for Women. Welcome, Lori!

Sincerely,
Michele Hoyman, Outgoing President AAUW ODC

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