

The branch name was changed from Chapel Hill to AAUW-ODC (Orange, Durham, Chatham Counties) in 2016 to better reflect the membership. Bylaws last updated 2017.

AAUW national organization's fund provides \$6 million dollars (as of 2022 Academic Year) in annual Fellowships and Grants. In February our C/U Partnership Director organizes a membership program to recognize national Fellows & Grantees selected from NC universities as guest speakers. Our branch has historically held spring fundraisers for Local branch financial aid scholarships (see 2019-2022). Speakers at our scholarship fundraisers have included Lee Smith, Jill McCorkle, Margaret Maron, Nancy MacClean, and Joe and Terry Graedon of The People's Pharmacy. Other general membership meetings have included programs on various topics relevant to **AAUW's vision: Equity for All.**

Branch Timeline – Present to 1923

- 2020's Could be described as the great "Pandemic Pivot" decade in terms of how the branch had to learn and adapt to use of online technology that helped keep members engaged and remain effective in its mission to advance gender equity. The pandemic accelerated use of digital technology for general operations. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion awareness and training becomes a major priority for AAUW national, state and local branches.
- 2019 – 2022, The branch increased annual local scholarship commitment from \$1500 to \$5000. We added a \$1500 scholarship at NCCU (2019 -2020), a \$1000 scholarship at Durham Tech (2021), and a \$1000 scholarship at Central Carolina Community College in Chatham County (2022). This is in addition to The Carrie Heath Schwenning Scholarship at UNC-CH, started in 1928 (see below) and represented higher education support for women with demonstrated financial need in the counties represented in the branch that was no longer the Chapel Hill branch but the Orange, Durham, Chatham (ODC) branch of AAUW-NC. (March 2020 is recognized as the start of the global Covid-19 pandemic.) Social Justice interest group facilitator is appointed for the branch. Diversity officers at state and national levels and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training is a priority for AAUW at all levels.
- 2017, we supported *Women x Worth*, in their second year of providing help to and encouraging women of color on the UNC-CH campus.
- 2016, we supported *Women of Worth*, a project designed to offer encouragement and support to women of color who are pursuing higher education at UNC-CH. Our grant, together with a grant from AAUW NC and others provided a copy of *Year of Yes: How to Dance It Out, Stand In the Sun and Be Your Own Person* by Shonda Rhimes to every participant.
- 2015, we supported *Project Dinah*, a multi-part effort aimed at preventing interpersonal violence and educating the campus community about interpersonal violence including *Alliance Against Violence* and a benefit concert for the Orange County Rape Crisis Center.
- 2013 & 2014 –sponsored NCCU's *Elect Her*—a workshop to help collegiate women campaign for campus leadership positions
- 2010— 2012 (and into the 2020's) **Digitize and Diversify** is the focus: our goal is to attract a diverse membership and collaborate with other organizations to create a more equitable world.
- 1990's & 2000's—**Education Equity in the Schools is the Focus:** began an *Emerging Leaders Internship Program for Student Affiliates*
- Branch President Doris Bernlohr presents an honorary AAUW membership to the first female president of the UNC system.
- For 3 years sponsored SPARC STEM programs for girls in the Durham and Chatham County Schools.
- 1980's—**Networking Decade:** Formed Chapel Hill Council of Women's Organizations, sponsored with 18 other organizations the Women's Leader's Conference on Common Security-Building Structures for Peace

- The 1970's—**Health Issues** were at the forefront and our chapter worked with the UNC School of Public Health in various areas to improve the health of women in our state.
 - 1978, celebrated the 400th anniversary of the first woman to earn a PhD—Elena Lucrezia Comaro Piscipio at the University of Padua
 - Brochures were designed and distributed to foreign students on campus to assist their transition to the United States.
 - Member Mary Scroggs served 16 years on the CH-Carrboro Board of Education. A local elementary school is named after her. Mary Scroggs was a leader in establishing the AAUW Juvenile Literature Award which has been administered by the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association for more than 60 years.
- The 1950's—was dubbed the **Education Decade** & the 1960's –**The Arts Decade**
 - Provided Art Kits for both schools and public libraries
 - Began a Creative Writing Competition Project in the high schools
 - Gave equipment and financial assistance to the Chapel Hill Public Library.
 - Helped to start the Chapel Hill Children's Library
- 1940's—**The War Effort**
 - WWII—sent school supplies to Korea, clothing to Poland, books and magazines to Belgium.
- 1920's and 1930's—**Advocating for Women's Higher Education** at UNC-CH
 - In 1928, the seeds of the Schwenning Scholarship were sown. Entirely supported by the Chapel Hill Branch, it has grown from being a loan of \$100 per year (the student was given 2 years after finishing her studies at UNC-CH to repay the loan at the rate of 4% per annum) to a scholarship of \$1,500. The scholarship is for a female graduate student at UNC-CH and is administered by the UNC Financial Aid. Office. In 1950, it was renamed the Carrie Heath Schwenning Award after the sudden death of a member.
 - This action reinforces the dedicated support of women's education at UNC-CH
 - The first task was to provide a physical education instructor for the women students and ask an architect to design a room for physical exercise in the basement of the new Woman's Building.
 - **March 15, 1923** –Mrs. Harry Woodburn Chase invites 16 women to discuss forming a chapter of AAUW.
 - The 16 women elect Miss Louise Venable, later wife of UNC Botany professor, W.C. Coker

THE CHAPEL HILL BRANCH

Excerpts from: History of the North Carolina State Division of the American Association of University Women 1927-1947 by Carrie B. Wilson, Burlington, NC, Copyright 1948, printed by Riser Printing Company, Greensboro, NC

After a preliminary meeting, called by Mrs. Harry W. Chase, wife of the president of the University of North Carolina, **the Chapel Hill branch of AAUW was organized on March 15, 1923, with Miss Louise Venable (Mrs. W. C. Coker) as the first president.** Meetings were at the homes of members, combining a program with a social hour.

From the beginning all members seemed to be agreed that the first object of the Chapel Hill Branch should be to do something for the women students of the University. Early in its organization the Branch decided to put its major effort into the establishing of a local loan fund for graduate women who were coming to the University in increasing numbers. A tentative goal of a hundred dollars a year was set and measures taken to raise that amount, with hopes that as the years passed an endowment fund would be created. Two functions were developed and carried through successfully for a number of years. These were a bridge supper at the President's house in the fall and a "May Morning Breakfast" on the lawn of one of the churches in the spring. These affairs were well planned and executed by the relatively small membership. They were well supported by the village. The gala atmosphere achieved brought prestige to the organization as well as money for the loan fund and other commitments.

Soon after the local branch had been organized, the National Association of University Women appealed for financial aid in the establishing of a Club House in Washington. This undertaking interested the local group which made extra effort to contribute funds for the several years they were needed. A number of Chapel Hill members availed themselves of their membership cards in the new house when in Washington.

When the National Association started its campaign for the endowment of regional fellowships, the Chapel Hill Branch made regular contributions, putting the local loan fund first in its budget. Other projects aided by contributions from the Association were the Mary Bayley Pratt Memorial Library in the grammar school and the Summer Institute for Southern Workers at Asheville.

Other efforts of the Branch have been more in the usual channels. We have had annual meetings stressing the Fellowship fund. We have made an effort to keep up with the legislative trends, State and National, and to throw the weight of our influence where it would help most in getting intelligent legislation. We have endeavored in our programs to highlight the better modern trends in education, to inform ourselves as to international affairs and the creative arts.

The Branch has adapted itself to the depression, the war, and the changes in Chapel Hill as the years have passed. Funds are now raised by contribution and most meetings are conducted in an accessible public hall. The student loan fund has grown to approximately \$1800 and is administered by the Graduate School. In the 24 years of its existence the Branch has grown from the

16 members who were present at the first meeting to 84 members.

The group is indebted to the unfailing good will of the community, to the many fine speakers who have made the programs timely and interesting and to the many members who have entertained the Branch. The Branch continues to grow, and we find ourselves each year in a rich field for service to our community.

Signed—Mrs. Howard W. Odum

HISTORY OF THE
North Carolina State Division
OF THE
American Association of University Women

1927-1947



CARRIE B. WILSON
Burlington, North Carolina

"At the invitation of the Greensboro branch of the American Association of University Women, on the morning of March 17th, 1927, about forty representatives from seven of the eight branches in North Carolina, met at the King Cotton Hotel in Greensboro to discuss the possibility of perfecting a state organization of the Association".

From later mention of branches by name, we know that Chapel Hill, Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, High Point, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem were represented in this meeting, and were therefore charter members of the North Carolina State Division. Asheville evidently was also a charter member even though not represented at the time.

"The morning meeting was called to order by the president of the Greensboro branch who presided at the election of Miss Catherine Allen of Raleigh as the temporary chairman. The meeting was then thrown open for the discussion of the desirability of organization. Miss Alice Baldwin of Durham, representing National Headquarters, urged such action as a step in completing the national policy of delegating more power to state and local groups. She also outlined the field of work in which such an organization in the state would be advantageous to the branches themselves, suggesting for their attention a survey of the work, professional and otherwise, open to women in the state, the study of college standards in the state, and the provision of funds for scholarships.

"At the close of this discussion a motion was made, seconded, and carried, that the group would proceed with definite organization plans. Two committees were appointed by the chairman: a Nominating Committee, made up of Miss Mary V. Long, Greensboro, Chairman; Mrs. Franklin Smith, Durham; and Mrs. Wheeler, Chapel Hill; a Committee of Constitution and By-Laws, made up of Miss Alice Baldwin, Durham, Chairman; Miss Helen Law, Raleigh; and Mrs. White, High Point. At this point the morning session was adjourned for meeting of the committees and for luncheon."

Constitution is Adopted

"The Committee on Constitution and By-Laws submitted a report calling for the adoption of the model constitution and by-laws sent out by the Washington office, with the following alterations to be made:

In Article III, Section 2 of the by-laws, dealing with the duties of the vice-president, the statement, *She shall make an annual re-*

port to the sectional director and to the national secretary to be omitted.

Article IV, Section I, of the by-laws to read: *The executive committee shall consist of the state officers, the retiring president, ex-officio (rather than the past president) and the chairman of the standing committees.*

Article VII, Section 3, dealing with the representation of general members to read: *Fifteen members, instead of twenty-five members.*

Article IX, Section 2, dealing with dues, to read: *Each branch shall, through its treasurer, pay annual dues of ten cents per member. General members shall pay fifty cents (instead of ten cents) to the state treasurer.*

"The report was accepted as read.

"The report of the Nominating Committee was accepted and the following officers thereby elected:

President, Miss Catherine Allen, Raleigh:

Vice-President, Miss Bessie Pfohl, Winston-Salem;

Secretary, Miss Catherine Wright, Greensboro;

Treasurer, Miss Helen Lethco, Charlotte.

"After these matters of business were finished the meeting was again opened for discussion of general problems. Attention was centered upon the purpose of the organization and its fields of activity. The general feeling of the group was that there should be a more careful statement of the aims and purposes, with specific objectives outlined. No definite action was taken on this matter.

"The delegation from Chapel Hill requested the President to send a letter from the state association to the Committee on Recognitions at the National Convention, meeting in Washington within a few days, urging that the University of North Carolina be continued on the starred list until certain requirements of the Association could be met.

"The meeting was then adjourned, *sine die*."

Signed—E. Catherine Wright, Secretary.

March 18, 1927.

CHAPTER III—THE FIRST YEAR—1927-28

Again we quote from the very enlightening minutes of Miss Wright, under date of May 19, 1928, slightly more than one year later, and giving a report of the first annual convention which was held in Chapel Hill in conjunction with the South Atlantic Region's second biennial meeting:

"On May 19, 1928, at 11 A.M. in the Carolina Inn at Chapel Hill, N. C., there was begun the first regular meeting of the North Carolina State Division of the American Association of University Women. Miss Catherine Allen, State President, was in the chair . . .

"The acting Treasurer reported that \$26.10 had been received from the branches in the state . . .

"In a brief presidential address, Miss Allen spoke of the advantages of state organization in furthering the work of the national organization. She explained salient features in the national program and emphasized particularly the international features. She paid tributes to the late Elizabeth Avery Colton and Penelope McDuffy.

"Reports of the local branches followed, reports being given from Raleigh, Winston-Salem, Charlotte, High Point, Greensboro, Durham, and Chapel Hill. News came in of a new branch in Statesville, with approximately 20 members.

"Dr. Esther Caukins, International Relations Secretary of the AAUW, spoke on the million dollar fellowship fund and urged the cooperation of the states and branches . . . A committee was appointed to consider fellowship funds with Mrs. Holmes of Chapel Hill as chairman . . ."

From the foregoing we catch a glimpse of what has made the North Carolina Division a growing, potent force in the state.

Not only did the presidents help things along through the years, but efficient secretaries kept the records straight. While the minutes of every meeting cannot be quoted, we continue with excerpts from the early years before going into a more general historical overview and statistical summary.

CHAPTER IV—THE SECOND YEAR—1928-29

From the minutes of Miss Wright dated April 26, 1929, we quote as follows:

"The second annual conference of the North Carolina Division of the AAUW was held at the O'Henry Hotel in Greensboro, N. C., on April 19, 1929. The delegates were called to order at 11 A.M. by the State President, Miss Catherine Allen . . .

"Miss Allen, in a brief presidential talk, told of some of the high lights of the National Convention in New Orleans and commented on the inspiration received from Dr. Wooley, National President of the AAUW, and from Dr. Gleditch of Oslo, President of the International Federation of University Women . . . She said that all of the *nine* North Carolina branches had ex-

Our early history when we were AAUW-Chapel Hill

Source: Clara B. Allen, North Carolina, AAUW History 1947-2001



Clara B. Allen joined the Chapel Hill branch and served as president from 1995-1997. She served as Historian for AAUW -NC and spent two years researching and writing the history of AAUW in NC. Clara died on May 3, 2012, just a few days short of her 94th birthday. She had been a member of AAUW for 48 years.

Our early history when we were AAUW-Chapel Hill

"March 15, 1923. What a memorable day! Mrs. Harry Woodburn Chase, wife of the president of the University of North Carolina, had invited college graduates to her home to discuss forming a branch of the AAUW, which had resulted from the merger in 1921 of the Southern Association of College Women and the Association of Collegiate Alumnae. Sixteen ... women responded, electing Miss Louis Venable... as president. In 1927 the branch would become one of eight charter members of the North Carolina State Division.

The members agreed that the first goal should be 'to do something for the women students of the university.' Accordingly, they sought a physical education instructor for the women students and asked the architect to plan a basement room for physical exercise in new Women's Building.

The branch was committed from the onset to community involvement.... The decade of the 50's was called the education decade, and the 60's the Arts. The branch emphasized not only university education but also that of the entire public school system.

One accomplishment of great pride was the establishment [of a loan fund in 1928 that later became a scholarship and was renamed] in 1950...the Carrie Heath Schwenning Award in memory of a dedicated member.... The scholarship is awarded yearly to a deserving woman student enrolled in graduate school at UNC-CH.

Educational Equity in the schools has been [the Chapel Hill branch's] focus of attention...We support the Association's Educational Foundation, which awards Fellowship and Grants to individuals and branches, and the Legal Advocacy Fund, which aids women suffering discrimination. We're thereby committing ourselves to the priorities of education and equity for women, a continuation of the original purposes and goals....

We're proud of being members of the American Association of University Women."