



AAUW

100 YEARS OF HISTORY

1923 – 2023

AAUW – ORANGE, DURHAM, CHATHAM

Recognizing that 100 years of AAUW-Orange, Durham, Chatham branch history cannot be adequately covered in this publication, information that may be of interest to the membership is presented here as a timeline.

March 15, 1923 - Twenty-two young women formed the AAUW-Chapel Hill branch. The women had been invited to come to the president's house on Franklin Street in Chapel Hill where they discussed AAUW, began a branch and elected Louise Venable, age 37, as president of the newly formed AAUW-Chapel Hill branch. Louise Venable was the daughter of Francis Venable, a former president of UNC-CH, and the granddaughter of John Manning, who had been on the UNC-CH Board of Trustees for 18 years. In 1934, Louise, age forty-nine, married Dr. William Coker, age sixty-two. Coker was a botanist, for whom Coker Arboretum was named.



UNC-CH President's house on Franklin Street where AAUW-Chapel Hill branch was formed March 15, 1923

1923 -November - AAUW-National assessed all AAUW branches \$14 per member to help pay for the AAUW Club house being built in Washington, DC. The branch felt that they could only afford \$10 per member. It is not clear how much the branch actually paid, but the branch held events to raise money to pay National. One such event was a dance at the Carolina Inn, Chapel Hill in May 1924.

1925 -AAUW-National asked the branches to vote on two questions:

- 1) Do you think AAUW should express its opinion as to the **Equal Rights Amendment**? For: 4, Against: 12
- 2) Do you think AAUW should pass **resolutions on controversial issues**? For: 0, Against: 12

1927 -AAUW-CH discussed the idea of providing equipment for a gymnasium for the women students in the Smith building. The Smith building, built in 1901, was first a men's dormitory; in 1927 it was a graduate men's dormitory; finally, in 1945, it became a women's dormitory. Before 1945, women students lived in rooming houses. In the 1960s, Smith Hall was used for offices and classrooms.



Mary Ann Smith Dormitory built in 1901 was the first UNC-CH building named after a woman. Source; Wilson Library, UNC-CH.

1928 - The branch established the Loan Program of \$100 per year to a female graduate student to be repaid over 2 years with interest of 4% per annum.

1930 - Loan Program increased from \$100 to \$200 per year.

1935 - The branch and UNC-CH jointly sponsored a lecture by Gertrude Stein for the benefit of the **Loan Fund**. **\$136** was raised. The lecture was held in Gerard Hall in Chapel Hill. Stein was paid \$100 and insisted that only 300 tickets could be sold. She was fifty-one at the time.



Gertrude Stein circa 1900.

1939 - Mrs. E. R. Groves spoke about the Equal Rights for Women Bill, and suggested a committee to study the pros and cons. The ERA was first proposed in 1923. Congress finally passed the ERA Bill in 1972 and sent it to the States for ratification. Women are still waiting. North Carolina has not passed the ERA as of 2023.



ERA march circa 1980s when Gwen Margolis [see banner for Margolis] was in Congress from Florida. Florida has not ratified the ERA amendment as of February,2023; neither has North Carolina.

1941 - President of the branch, Colette Lane, led a discussion about entertaining soldiers.

1945 - UNC-CH was now on the approved list of colleges, so women undergraduates of UNC-CH were eligible to become members of AAUW.

1947 - Our branch sent a letter to UNC-CH requesting the school provide the following for the protection of women students: (1) list of approved boarding houses, (2) adequate chaperonage on social occasions, and (3) regulations against women going out unchaperoned to fraternity houses. Note: the branch offered their services to enforce these rules.

After WWII. The Chapel Hill branch sent 283 pounds of **books to Belgium** and 165 pounds of **food** and clothing to the university women in **Poland.**



Photo of canned goods. Source: Google search March, 2023.

1951 - The Loan Fund was renamed the Carrie Heath Schwenning Loan Fund in honor of a branch member.

1954 - Rhoda Wynn of the branch announced that the Carrie Heath Schwenning Award was made a scholarship fund, not a loan fund.

1960s -1970s Ida Friday, wife of UNC-CH President, Bill Friday, was an active member of our branch.



Member, Ida Friday, with her husband, Bill Friday, President of UNC-CH 1956 - 1986.

Ida held teas for new members at the UNC-CH's President's home. She worked for equal rights for women. In Ida's obituary, a story was related about Ida's reaction to a man at her table at a Gala; the man said to Ida that he would never sit next to 'women libbers,' to which, Ida suggested he move to another table.

1971 - There were 79 members. Meetings were held at the Morehead Planetarium on the 2nd Monday of the month at 8 p.m.

1971 - Branch dues were raised from \$1.50 to \$2.50. Together with State dues of \$3 and National dues of \$6.50, for total annual dues were now \$12.

1973 - 50th year anniversary for AAUW-Chapel Hill. Fifty-year pins were presented to some members. A luncheon was held on March 24 at 1 p.m. at the Carolina Inn. 98 people attended.

1998 - 75th year anniversary for AAUW-Chapel Hill. Thirteen former presidents of the branch attended. A dinner was held at the Chapel Hill Country Club.

2000 - An elementary school in Southern Village was opened and named for branch member, Mary Scroggs, who devoted her life to integration in local schools. She used to volunteer weekly at the new school.



.....Mary Scroggs

2008 - Branch sponsored a STEM program, SPARC, (Students Participating and Researching Careers). It was an after-school program for girls in Durham and Chatham elementary schools. Both the professional women and the students were primarily of color.



SPARC LOGO

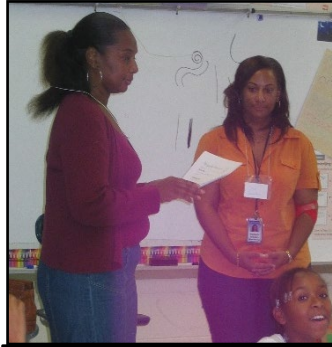


Girls engaged in the SPARC program at Oak Grove Elementary School, Durham, NC.

SPARC met twice a week for 5 to 6 weeks, with two professionals each week. Branch members took turns helping out. Each one hour session spent 5 minutes on how the women found their career and 55 minutes on a fun activity that linked to that career.



Dawn Fant, member and founder of **SPARC**



Dawn Fant on left and one chemical engineer

2013 - Sponsored *Elect Her* at NCCU, North Carolina Central University. *Elect Her* was a day-long workshop to help collegiate women campaign for campus leadership positions.

2016 -Branch changed its name from AAUW-Chapel Hill to AAUW-Orange, Durham, Chatham to better reflect its members.

2017 - Supported *Women of Worth*, a project designed to offer encouragement and support to women of color who are pursuing education at UNC-CH. Participants were given a copy of *Year of Yes: How to Dance it Out, Stand in the Sun and Be Your Own Person* by Shonda Rhimes.



Shonda Rhimes

2022 -A loan fund of \$100 in 1928 had grown to scholarships of \$5,000 in 2022. Branch now has annual scholarships of \$5,000 spread over four schools in the Triangle area:

UNC-Chapel Hill	\$1,500
NC Central University	\$1,500
Durham Technical C.C.	\$1,000
Central Carolina C.C.	\$1,000

2023 - 100th year anniversary of AAUW-Orange, Durham, and Chatham with cake and tea at Chapel Hill Library.

In Memory and in Honor of Lisa Price

Our dear friend Lisa Price died on June 23, 2022, from complications of pancreatic cancer. Lisa had a remarkable gift for friendship and service. She was well known for her work in the community. As an AAUW member, Lisa served on the program committee (2012- 2014). She recruited at least two memorable Spring Author Tea keynote speakers, Lee Smith and Jill McCorkle. Lisa was also a staunch supporter of husband US Representative David Price:



"Lisa was my life partner, supporter of everything I undertook, political and otherwise. I was immensely proud of her leadership roles, from Alderman in New Haven to being at the right hand of two Chapel Hill mayors, co-founding and leading North Carolinians Against Gun Violence, and campaigning energetically for civil rights, environmental protections, animal welfare, and the Kidzu Children's Museum."

[Photo credit: US Rep. David Price public Facebook page, 2018]