



A Message from the
PRESIDENT



Jackie Northrup, AAUW Alabama State President

It has been an undeniably difficult year for not just our country, but for the entire world. The COVID-19 global health crisis has had serious impacts on our health, our economy, our personal and professional lives, and our wellbeing overall. We have lost too many friends and loved ones, and we know that the crisis is far from over. In regard to many of these consequences, women have been disproportionately impacted. Women make up the majority of front-line workers in fields like health care and the service industry. Women also continue to manage a disproportionately high volume of childrearing, elder care, and homemaking responsibilities. The combination of these circumstances has, in many cases, led women to have to make difficult choices regarding familial responsibilities, education, and employment, issues at the heart of AAUW's work.

While racial discrimination, oppression, and violence are not new, 2020 brought about more high-profile cases of violence against Black people, and greater attention to the issue, than we have seen in previous years. The fractures within our community are more apparent than ever, and while this year has spurred new activism and promising community engagement for many, there is still so much work to be done to achieve safety and justice for all.

Finally, most election years bring about some degree of division and debate among Americans, but this election cycle has been particularly contentious. Even though we are past the election now, we have a great deal of work ahead of us when it comes to finding a "new normal" as a country.

In spite of all of these challenges, our AAUW branches within the state of Alabama have persisted. Rather than allowing social distancing to separate us from each other and our work, our members have checked in on one another and most of our branches have moved to online meetings to keep important conversations and activities alive. New state board members were elected this summer and all of our appointed offices are filled with highly qualified and motivated members. As a state organization, we are ready to assist our branches and members at large in advocating for equity for women and girls, whether it be in our schools and neighborhoods or in the legislature. 2020 may have been a difficult year, and there may be additional obstacles ahead, but as we have learned through many years of organizing and collaborating, we are stronger together.

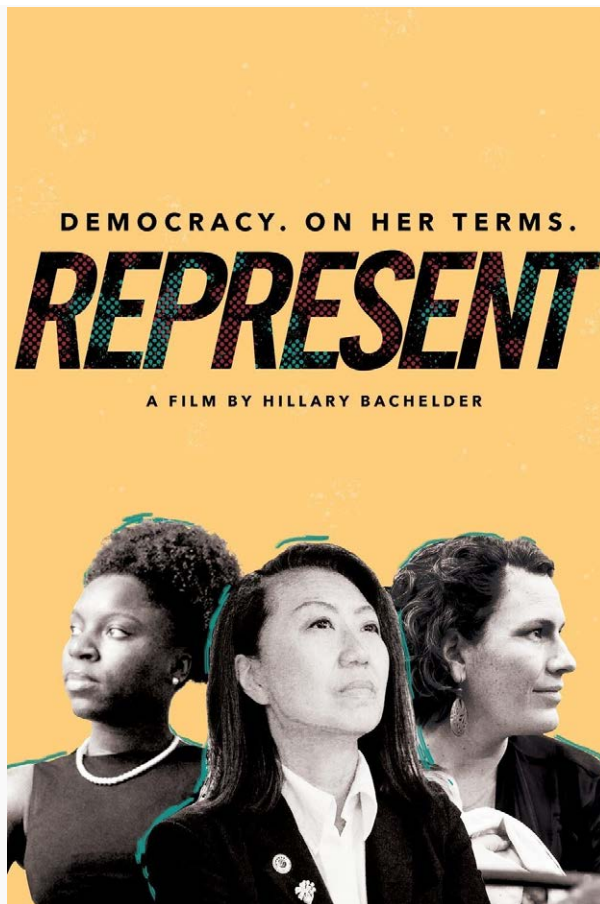
Updates from AAUW Branches around Alabama

Birmingham Branch:



The Birmingham Branch chose to salute Suffragettes and the passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution with a Celebration Parade. Our traditional September salad luncheon to welcome new members and give everyone a chance to visit was replaced with a drive-by event. Our members, both new and returning, were encouraged to wear their suffragette colors of white, purple, or green and come to Sharon Bounds' home Saturday, September 12th from 10:00 - 12:00. Most of the officers were on hand to enthusiastically greet the members and hand out our new directory. There was also an opportunity for photo-ops, socially distanced and safely outdoors of course.

Tuscaloosa Branch:



While our Tuscaloosa Branch members very much miss gathering over lunch or happy hour, we are glad to have reconnected in virtual meetings this fall. We look forward to meeting more regularly throughout the Spring and pursuing new, virtual opportunities to advocate for positive change on AAUW issues.

On October 26, the Tuscaloosa Branch hosted a virtual watch party for the national premiere of a new documentary, *Represent*. The film features the story of three midwestern women running for office during the 2018 election cycle. It was a wonderful film that captured the challenges, victories, and even routine moments of the featured campaigns. This was a great opportunity for us to revisit and acknowledge women's experiences in running for office while also taking our minds (briefly) off of the current election cycle!

Scottsboro Branch:



The Scottsboro -Jackson County Branch of AAUW has maintained its level of members during this pandemic year. We are proud of this accomplishment. We

started meeting in October in a local nonprofit board room where we can practice COVID protocols. Our speakers have included our new mayor, Jim McCamy, Heritage Association Director Annette Bradford and in January new council member, Nita Tolliver.

A highlight of our fall was hosting the wedding reception of member Laura Pitts and Drew Wisdom. Laura and Drew were married at Fernwood, historical home of Donna and John Cleveland. Donna is the Program VP of our branch. Laura is the new Communications Chair for the state AAUW board.





A Voting Experience Reflection

I've always had sweet memories of voting. And I mean that literally. My elementary school was a polling location, and my wise teachers always understood that the occasion was a ripe opportunity for fundraising, especially for bake sales. That meant that prior to each election day, we'd do some baking at home, and on each election day, I'd get my dollar out to purchase a sweet treat brought in by another student. At that time, the meaning of elections was not clear to me, but seeing all of the parents and community members filing into the halls of the school helped me understand voting as an important, routine occurrence in which "everybody" participates.

As an adult who has studied politics for many years, I now reflect on voting as a "sweet" opportunity to engage and participate in determining the future of our country in a way that not everybody can. Five year old Jackie with her fingers covered in icing had no idea about voter disenfranchisement. Six year old Jackie, on a Rice Krispy Treat sugar-high, didn't know that voting was just for citizens. Seven year old Jackie, with the cherry pie stain on her t-shirt throughout the school day, didn't know about the challenges of filing absentee ballots. Today, I know these things all too well, and feel even more compelled to participate in determining the future of our country, for myself and for those who don't have the ability to vote themselves. - Jackie Northrup, AAUW Alabama State President

Around the Club!

Each newsletter we will feature members from AAUW groups around Alabama.



Sharon Bounds is an officer with the Birmingham branch of AAUW and currently serves at the state secretary. She is a graduate of Sacred Heart high school in Memphis, Tenn., attended Nazareth college in Kentucky and graduated with a degree in art from Mississippi State College for Women. She has worked for many years in the Birmingham school system, where she spent most of her career as a reading specialist. After retiring from teaching, she earned a PhD from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her hobbies are traveling, reading, and spoiling her grandchildren.



Camisha Adams is currently employed by the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa Alabama. She has worked at UA since October 2007. Camisha is a backend web developer and web designer and a system administrator in the Office of Information Technology. She is a member of the University Faculty Staff and Benefits committee standing committee. Camisha previously served as Co-Vice President of programs for AAUW Alabama and is the current Vice President of Programs. She traveled to Washington DC with a delegation of AAUW members to meet state representatives and senators and lobbied for AAUW issues. Camisha earned a B.S. in Marketing from the University of Alabama In 1998 and a B.S. in Management Information Systems in 2003 from University of Alabama Birmingham.