

News from the Northwest

February, 2021



Newsletter of the Northwest Suburban Branch

***Our Mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls
through research, education, and advocacy.***

Our Vision: Equity for all.

Zoom Again – We Meet on February 6th

With the kind of weather we've been having during the last couple of weeks, staying inside sounds better and better, and that's just what we are continuing to do. Our virtual meetings have been a great opportunity as they have enabled us to join with other branches for great programs and have made it possible for us to get together without going out! Now we have another presentation that you certainly will not want to miss!

We are again co-sponsoring a program with the Des Plaines Library on Saturday, Feb. 6, at 10:30 am. This is a follow-up to last year's February's program with Michelle Duster, author, speaker, and educator, who will discuss the life and legacy of her great-grandmother, Ida B. Wells, who was born as a slave in 1862 in Holly Springs, Mississippi. She became an anti-lynching crusader, suffragist, pioneering journalist, and activist for the protection of Black lives. In 2020, she won a Pulitzer Prize. Michelle Duster's book, *Ida B. the Queen*, was published on January 26, 2021 and is available for purchase at [The Book Stall](#).

Sign up today, and you will get reminders closer to the program. Registration is required for the program, which will be held on Zoom. Sign up to receive the Zoom link. To register for the program, go to:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oQhAA67RSIOn3x1_s84hCA

Invite your friends to join us for this very special program. We are very fortunate to be able to partner with the Des Plaines Library again, as we would not be able to have this program on our own. We hope to see everyone there!

In Memoriam

We are saddened by the loss of our long-time member, Mary Margaret Reed, who died on January 30, 2021. Mary Margaret, one of our honorary fifty-year (plus) members, served as president of Northwest Suburban Branch from 1972-1974.

She continued to be an active participant in branch activities until recently when her hearing loss made it too difficult, but maintained her interest in what we were doing and continued to be aware of and interested in political activity and legislation affecting women.

At a time when most women did not complete college, Mary Margaret received her MPH in Public Health and pursued a career. She was ninety-seven years of age.

Rest in peace, Mary Margaret.

FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS

Dear Friends,

January was a roller-coaster of emotions; from the despair and darkness of the Jan. 6th insurrection against the government certifying results of a valid presidential election, the deaths of five people, and the impeachment of a president; to the inspiration of Jan. 20 when the first woman, Kamala Harris, was installed as vice-president and hearing the words of 22-year-old poet laureate, Amanda Gorman reciting her poem; *The Hill We Climb*.

Excerpt from *The Hill We Climb*:

"We've learned that quiet isn't always peace.

And the norms and notions of what just is, isn't always justice.

And yet the dawn is ours before we knew it.

Somehow we do it.

Somehow we've weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken, but simply unfinished.

We, the successors of a country and the time where a skinny Black girl descended from slaves and raised by a single mother can dream of becoming president only to find herself reciting for one.

And yes, we are far from polished, far from pristine, but that doesn't mean we are striving to form a union that is perfect.

We are striving to forge our union with purpose."

This raises the question of what each one of us can do. Can we make a contribution to a better democracy? Whether our actions are big or small ones, we each play a role in making our nation better. Whether you prepare to run for a state or municipal office or you register new voters, whether you lobby for a change in laws or you serve as a leader in an organization like AAUW or the League of Women Voters; we can each be a leader with purpose.

In March, we have programs that feature women leaders with varied talents who inspired others to follow them. Four women who grew up in Park Ridge and each made history in their own way, and Ida B. Wells from Chicago, who led the Black Suffrage movement and became an outstanding journalist. In addition, we can enjoy a musical program about achieving the right to vote for women. In April, we will learn about a woman from the Midwest who was a pioneer codebreaker.

We are hopeful about our future as we see women taking their rightful place as leaders in our 2021 government. Vice President Kamala Harris said, "I may be the first woman vice-president; but I won't be the last." Our mission of equity for women continues to be essential as we strive to improve our communities and our country.

Speaking of leaders, you can begin being a leader by taking on a small challenge or a large one. Take action on restoring Title IX rights. **Become a Two Minute Activist** to take action on some of our AAUW priorities when there is legislative action. Become a branch officer; we are looking for new leaders for next year as Program VP and branch Treasurer. Contact Elaine or Wendi to get more information on these two positions.

In closing, an excerpt from *Won't You Be My Sister*, 2018 by Amanda Gorman:

Hear me as a woman

Have me as your sister

On purpled battlefield breaking day,

So I might say our victory is just beginning,

See me as change,

Say I am movement,

That I am the year

And I am the era

Of the women.

Elaine & Wendi

JANUARY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

Are You Aware of the Rollback of Title IX Protections?

American Association of University Women (AAUW) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kim Churches issued the following statement May 2020 on the U.S. Department of Education final Title IX regulations for schools dealing with sexual misconduct:

Although the nation is facing an unprecedented health emergency that requires singular focus, the Trump Administration issued a rule that will substantially weaken Title IX, rolling back important protections for student survivors of sexual harassment and assault.

The decision by the U.S. Department of Education to move forward with this change follows more than a year of vigorous opposition from survivor advocacy organizations, civil rights groups and educational institutions. The outrageous new rule will make it harder for students who've experienced sexual harassment or violence to come forward to get the protections Title IX was created to provide.

In the best of times, the rule is ill-advised: It threatens to turn back the clock, reversing policies that were put in place to make it easier for survivors to report sexual misconduct. The rules will stack the deck against survivors, making it too onerous, even traumatic, for many to come forward. **In short, the rule is antithetical to the fundamental promise of Title IX, that all students deserve access to an education free from sex discrimination.**

AAUW Title IX: Breaking Barriers & Restoring Protections program follow-up actions to educate ourselves, inform others, and take action:

If you missed the program, watch the recording of the AAUW webinar sponsored by AAUW Jane Addams branch about how these Title IX changes affect schools and colleges, universities, and their students. The expert presenter is Alicia Hetman, AAUW California Title IX Consultant. <https://janeaddams-il.aauw.net/>

Review AAUW's research report on sexual harassment, **Crossing the Line**.

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/crossing-the-line-sexual-harassment-at-school/>

Educate and inform other women and students about these rule changes and urge them to become two-minute activists with AAUW. <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

Write a letter to the editor. Here are some tips. <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/title-ix-ltr/>

Contact your school district to identify the district Title IX Coordinator or search on the district web site for their sexual harassment reporting policies.

Stand Up for Equity in Education: Tell your legislators to co-sponsor GEEA (**Patsy T. Mink and Louise M. Slaughter Gender Equity in Education Act of 2019**) to ensure schools and educational institutions have the resources they need to comply with this landmark civil rights law. <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/geea/>

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Saturday, Feb. 6, 10:30 am: Ida B. Wells, Her Life and Legacy, cosponsored with the Des Plaines Library.

Advance registration is required: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oQhAA67RSIOn3x1_s84hCA

Description: Author, speaker, and educator Michelle Duster will discuss the life and legacy of her great-grandmother Ida B. Wells, who was born enslaved in 1862 in Holly Springs, Mississippi. She became an anti-lynching crusader, suffragist, pioneering journalist, and activist for the protection of Black lives. In 2020, she won a Pulitzer Prize.

Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7:30 pm: AAUW IL Town Hall on Open Membership

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Thursday, March 11, 7:00 pm: Trailbreaking Women of Park Ridge

Our chapter will host a ZOOM meeting to learn about the current exhibit at the Park Ridge Historical Society. It features TRAILBLAZING WOMEN OF PARK RIDGE, highlighting the following women:

Mother Frances Cabrini, Clara Barck Welles, Hannah Solomon, and Hillary Rodham Clinton, who advocated for social change for girls, women, immigrants, the disenfranchised. They broke barriers for their time frame and it's just pretty extraordinary that they were all here at one time or another.

After viewing the presentation created by members of the Historical Society, we will have an opportunity to present questions to the docent. The event is free of charge and it is open to all invited guests. Please send the name and email of each person you wish to invite to this event to Laurie Mallin at 4Laurie.4Laurie@gmail.com

Friday, March 19, 7:00 pm: Herstory: The 19th Amendment Turns 100!

A musical celebration of Votes for Women sponsored by the Des Plaines Library. Chicago cabaret artists Catherine Thomson and Anita Kallen celebrate in song the rabble-rousing pioneers who won the right to vote. Bring a glass of wine and celebrate! They will answer questions after the performance. Advance registration is required to get the program Zoom link. To register: <https://calendar.dppl.org/events?ctx=14.1033.0.0.35&v=list>

Thursday, April 22, 7:00 pm: Elizabeth Smith Friedman

We will meet via Zoom for a discussion of the life of a truly amazing woman, Elizabeth Smith Friedman, the founder of modern cryptography. On Jan. 11 PBS AMERICAN EXPERIENCE aired **The Codebreaker** program about Elizabeth Friedman. It's available online now via Passport or Amazon Prime. This video program is based on the book, *The Woman Who Smashed Codes: A True Story of Love, Spies, and the Unlikely Heroine Who Outwitted America's Enemies* by Jason Fagone. We will discuss the video program and the book.

The codebreaker who spanned two World Wars and took down the rum-running Mafia during Prohibition, including Capone's brother, single-handedly neutered the German U Boats' wolf pack, and took down Nazi threats in South America that could have become a southern front against the US. In World War I she cracked the German's codes. AND she did it with paper and pencil. She started this on the estate of billionaire George Fabyan in suburban Geneva. He had recruited her in the Newberry Library in Chicago. She learned her craft by trial and error. She often fought bias against women and was paid less. But because she was so talented, she was the one who was always called upon, and she often did her work in the shadows, rarely getting the recognition she deserved.

April 23-24, Friday - Saturday: AAUW IL Convention, more details to come.

**We hope to see you soon at one or more of our
Zoom opportunities!**