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From the President

We are in the midst of the lazy days of August. The State Board is gearing up for fall activities as I know Branch Leaders are doing the same. At State, we are busy planning for the October Fall Conference and the April State Convention. You will be getting save the date information soon. Both events will support Branches efforts toward meeting the Five Star Program requirements.

Morton Branch is holding a membership drive event this month. Their goals are to increase AAUW membership, and to increase community exposure to all that AAUW is about. The State Board supported the LEG UP Grant to support their effort. This is a perfect example a Branches use of LEG UP grant funding. AAUW-IL exists to support Branches to efforts to live the mission of AAUW. Be creative and know that LEG UP grants are potentially available.

Laura Desmarais
aauwilpres@gmail.com

Public Policy

AAUW continues to fight policy changes at the federal level that negatively impact education. They signed on to a coalition letter urging Congress to oppose policy riders that are anti-diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and anti-critical race theory in the fiscal year 2026 Appropriations Bill. You can read the letter here [LDF -Et-Al.-Coalition-Letter-Opposing-Anti-DEIA-Riders.pdf](#). AAUW has also signed on to another letter urging the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations to eliminate the Hyde Amendment in the fiscal year 2026 appropriations to reduce barriers to abortion care. [FY26 Letter to Congress - Eliminate Hyde Amendment](#). Access to reproductive health care is of great importance to young women and their ability to achieve educational goals.

As the state legislature will not be in session again until October, we encourage our members to look for their legislators at community events and town halls. Let them know what issues are important to you. These kinds of casual conversations can be just as impactful as a scheduled visit to a senator or representative's office. Enjoy the rest of your summer and stay informed. Visit [News – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](#) to keep up with the latest developments.

Good news often seems hard to come by in the political arena, so we wanted to share the news that a federal judge on Thursday (August 14th) struck down two Trump administration actions aimed at eliminating diversity, equity and inclusion programs at the nation's schools and universities.

Yesterday, a federal judge delivered a major legal victory for public education and civil rights. In American Federation of Teachers et al. v. U.S. Department of Education et al., the court struck down the Trump-Vance administration's attempt to force schools nationwide to censor lessons, eliminate diversity and inclusion programs, and sign unlawful compliance certifications under threat of losing federal funding and facing criminal penalties.

Judge Stephanie A. Gallagher ruled that both the administration's February 14 "Dear Colleague Letter" and its mandatory certification violated the Constitution and the Administrative Procedures Act, stating: "Plaintiffs have shown that neither challenged agency action was promulgated in accordance with the procedural requirements of the APA, and that both actions run afoul of important constitutional rights."

This decision vacates both policies, protecting the ability of educators to teach honest history, support students, and foster inclusive learning environments.

In March, AAUW joined a [coalition letter to the Department of Education](#) urging the rescission of the February 14, 2025, "Dear Colleague" letter. In April, we joined a [letter to Elementary and Secondary](#)

Ken Olson and Karen Kortsch
Co-Directors of Public Policy

AAUW-IL Fall Conference

Policy Impacts on Women and Higher Education:
Learn, Plan, Act

Virtual: Sat., Sept. 27, 2025, 9 - 11 AM



Join us for the AAUW-IL Fall Conference! All branch, state and national members are welcome. Our theme addresses the major governmental policy shifts that will impact women and higher education -- educators and students alike. We'll plan ways that we can advocate to ensure that women have the educational and career opportunities they need and deserve.

[Register Now!](#)

Branch News

Hello everyone! We have exciting news to share regarding the Dignity Index.

As you may know from our updates at branch meetings, four of our branch members, Rosie McVay, Maureen Brandon, Chris Bruun and Pat Hendrix, have been working tirelessly over the past year to spread the word about the Dignity Index. They kicked off this training effort at the AAUW-IL state convention in April of 2024, and since then this mighty team of leaders has introduced the Dignity Index to AAUW members in 7 branches, including ours (and one more is planned for next week), and several sister organizations like the League of Women Voters. In total, we estimate that more than 250 (and counting!) people have been trained.

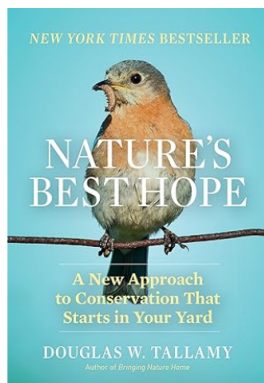
Well, as you can imagine, this kind of incredible work has drawn the attention of UNITE, the organization formed in 2018 to find ways to help ease divisions in the country and the one that developed the Dignity Index. So, we are excited to share that the great work supported by Rosie, Maureen, Chris and Pat of our Branch has been recognized in a Dignity Index website news article. It even includes a photo of our branch attendees at last year's state conference, in addition to one of the Dignity Index training team. We thought you would all enjoy reading about this work, in addition to helping the team celebrate this well-deserved recognition.
<https://www.dignity.us/news/dignity-in-action-midwestern-women-on-a-mission-to-challenge-contempt>

If you haven't yet been able to attend a Dignity Index training yet, I'm happy to share that we have an upcoming opportunity on Tuesday, September 23rd, from 6:30pm to 8:00pm in the Founders Room at the Batavia Library at 10 S. Batavia Ave., in Batavia, when our Branch is partnering with the League of Women Voters - Central Kane County. Look for additional details that Rosie will be sending out soon.

Congratulations to Rosie, Maureen, Chris and Pat!

In gratitude,
Anita Walls
Batavia-Geneva-St. Charles Branch President

and sunrise. On August 16, from 11a.m.-1p.m., we will celebrate the 5th year of this beautiful sculpture. Everyone is invited. Please contact Faye Marcus for more information. faye.marcus.fm@gmail.com.



The Northwest Suburban Branch and the Jane Addams Branch invite you to join us for a discussion of *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard* by Douglas W. Tallamy. Tallamy is a professor of entomology and wildlife biology at the University of Delaware. He encourages people to rid their properties of invasive plants and replace them with native species.

August 26, 4 pm, [Please register to attend](#)

Guests are welcome!

Next book: Sept. 23 *The Sisters: The Saga of the Mitford Family* by Mary S. Lovell

Questions? aauwjaneaddams@gmail.com

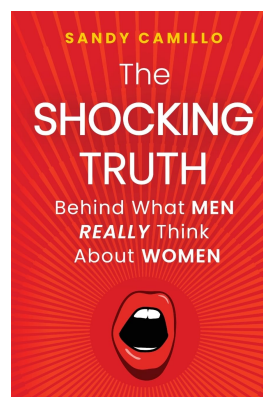
Join the Jane Addams Branch on Thursday, August 28 at 7 pm Central Time for a conversation with **Sandy Camillo** about communication between the sexes and the role of gender bias in male-female relationships.

Sandy, a lifelong advocate for women, is the author of *The Journey of an Invisible Woman* & her latest book: **The Shocking Truth Behind What Men Really Think About Women** - About the uncensored thoughts that men secretly harbor about women.

Sandy has previously served as a director, secretary, and governance officer of the National Board of AAUW, and she is currently president-elect for AAUW New York State.

[Please register to attend.](#)

Questions?
aauwjaneaddams@gmail.com



MANHATTAN SHORT is an international film festival. The festival will be the AAUW fall fundraiser. For 28 years MANHATTAN SHORT has solicited short films from filmmakers around the world. They assemble a film festival of their Top Ten Films. The films are shown at 500 venues worldwide for one week. All attendees are provided with a ballot to vote for their Best Film and Best Actor. Past films have garnered Oscar nominations and an Oscar win, for "I'm Not a Robot" in 2024.

Discover your inner film critic by casting your vote for the Best Film and Best Actor in the 28th Annual **MANHATTAN SHORT** film festival.

September 30, 2025 at 7:00 PM

The Glen Art Theatre

540 Crescent Blvd. Glen Ellyn, IL

Ticket Price \$25.00

Tickets can be purchased by cash or check at AAUW events or by contacting Suzanne Gagner at petalpower1@yahoo.com. Checks are payable to AAUW Wheaton-Glen Ellyn, NFP.

Don't wait until the last minute, there are a limited number of seats.

Tickets can also be purchased on [Eventbrite](#).

Additional information at: wheatonglenellyn-il.aauw.net and www.manhattanshort.com

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If your branch has a program or recognition or an idea you'd like to share, please [email Jennifer Urish](#) by the 14th of each month.

Our Mission: Gender Equity & Economic Security

Our Values: Intersectionality Inclusive Intergenerational Empowering

Our Focus: Economic Security Education Advocacy



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