



## **AAUW Celebrates 125th Anniversary**

The American Association of University Women proudly celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2006. Formed in 1881 by Marion Talbot, Ellen Richards, and 15 other women college graduates, AAUW began its quest in the fight for equity.

Today AAUW numbers more than 100,000 members, 1,300 branches, and 500 college and university partners nationwide. Members have included many exceptional women, such as Coretta Scott King, Brigadier General Wilma L. Vaught, and Dr. Johnnetta Cole.

### ***Late 1800s: College Education for Women***

AAUW was founded by women who envisioned an organization in which women college graduates band together to open doors of higher education to other women and find wider opportunities to use their training. The Committee on Educational Legislation was formed in 1898 to promote policies that further educational opportunities for women and girls.

### ***Early 1900s: Pay Equity***

One of AAUW's early accomplishments was the fight for pay equity in 1913 with a report on U.S. civil service job classifications and compensation. Although pay inequity still continues, this action almost a century ago was the first step toward raising a woman's earnings in 2004 to 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

### ***1940s: War Efforts***

AAUW began the Refugee Aid Fund for women fleeing European dictatorship in 1940. Throughout the war, AAUW supported the establishment of women's units of the armed services and branches recorded members' skills useful to the war effort, and distributed 100,000 registration cards. AAUW was accorded permanent observer status at the United Nations in 1946. Shortly after World War II, AAUW received the Federal Republic of Germany's Order of Merit for economic redevelopment of education in post-war Europe.

### ***1950s: Women's Financial Well-Being***

AAUW's commitment to women's economic health through lifelong learning began in the early 1950s when the Committee on the Status of Women released a financial education series, including a money management portfolio, finance folder, and Social Security kit.

### ***1960s: Civil Rights***

In the wake of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968 and the riots that followed in Washington, D.C., AAUW launched "Action for a Unified Society," a collection of community activities for civil rights.



### ***1970s: Title IX***

Beginning with the survey *Campus 1970: Where Do Women Stand?* AAUW examined sexual harassment in schools. This led to the passage of Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in schools that receive federal funding. The law was co-authored by AAUW member Rep. Patsy Mink (D-HI) in 1972. To help branches monitor schools, AAUW published the action guide *Monitoring Title IX* in 1977.

### ***1980s: Legal Advocacy Fund and Voter Registration***

In 1981, the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund was established to provide funding and support for women in higher education who challenge sex discrimination. AAUW supported LAF in its fight for gender equity through promotion of workplace equity, Title IX and equity for women in higher education. In addition AAUW released its first voting record of members of Congress, itemizing their votes on issues that are important to women. AAUW joined 39 other organizations in 1983 to form the national Women's Vote Project, which registered 1.5 million female voters by 1984.

### ***1990-2000: The Status of Girls***

The AAUW Educational Foundation released its groundbreaking research report *How Schools Shortchange Girls* in 1992. In response, AAUW launched the AAUW Initiative for Educational Equity. The initiative, including a roundtable discussion in Washington, D.C., was an effort to spark attention and action to a critical but overlooked aspect of the national education reform debate: getting girls into America's education agenda. *How Schools Shortchange Girls* marked AAUW as a go-to source for information about the status of girls in America's schools.

### ***Present: Sexual Harassment on Campus***

In 2005, AAUW and the Foundation approved a new programmatic theme: Education as the Gateway to Women's Economic Security. This theme represents a shared commitment to build a coordinated, collaborative, and contemporary portfolio of AAUW programs. The Foundation's released the research report, *Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus* in 2005. In response to *Drawing the Line*, AAUW launched a number of Campus Action Projects to help build harassment free hallways. These projects draw on the research and expand upon AAUW's prior expertise on sexual harassment in schools.

### ***Learn More***

To learn more about AAUW's rich tradition of leadership, scholarship, advocacy, and action, please visit the AAUW online museum at <http://www.aauw.org/museum/index.cfm> or contact Rebecca Leaf, senior media relations associate, at 202/785-7738 or [leafra@aauw.org](mailto:leafra@aauw.org), or contact Ashley Carr, director of communications, at 202/785-7745 or [carra@aauw.org](mailto:carra@aauw.org).