

**San Jose Branch
of the
American Association of University Women:
Past to Present**

**An Essay
Presented to
the California Pioneers
of Santa Clara County**

by

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Introduction

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) was founded in 1881, and has a long track record on crucial issues affecting women. Some of these are Education, Civil Rights, Family Medical Leave, Reproductive Choice, and Sex Discrimination. Today there are more than 1,600 branches nationwide and more than 160,000 members⁽¹⁾. AAUW is known to be a very strong advocate for equity for women and girls in education, home, and the workplace. The San Jose Branch of AAUW was formed in 1908 to further the goals of AAUW in San Jose and to provide University educated women with opportunities to join with others of similar backgrounds, interests, and goals. The members of the San Jose Branch of the AAUW have continued to meet and develop friendships with other educated women from all over the country, from all different backgrounds, of all ages, and with varying careers and interests. Members have also developed and refined their leadership skills in a friendly, and supportive environment while working toward the goals of the organization.

National Organization of AAUW.

In 1881, seventeen college alumnae met in Boston to discuss the possibility of an organization in which women college graduates would join together to open doors of higher possibilities. In 1882 on January 14 sixty-five graduates from eight colleges and universities met in Boston and formed the Association of Collegiate Alumnae. (2) By 1884, the first five locations of the AAUW to be admitted were: Washington D.C., New York, Pacific (now known as San Francisco branch), Philadelphia, and Boston.

Founding of San Jose Branch

In 1908 the San Jose Stanford Woman's Club met at the home, of Miss Eunice Gray. Miss Gray was the founder of the San Jose Stanford Woman's Club. The meeting resulted in the organization of the San Jose Branch of AAUW in 1909. Mrs. J. O. Hayes was elected the first president. The first meeting of the San Jose Branch was held at the Vendome Hotel and forty-two women attended. The aim of this association was to advance the education and cooperation with all movements for civic betterment.

San Jose Branch Events and Activities: 1909 - Present

Over the years the organization has sponsored many varied activities in support of their main goals: to support higher education for women and their basic goals and to please the interests of women in each community. Throughout the years the activities and goals varied depending on worldwide and local political events and on the economic

climate affecting the lives of women.

In 1984 a committee was formed to assemble a written history of the San Jose Branch and its activities. This committee, the Branch History Project Committee, was headed by president Diana Taylor and composed of six Branch members, each of whom "enthusiastically and thoroughly researched the records of the decade in which she was most active, thus bringing personal experience to the project." (3) For source material the committee relied on an early membership directory, numerous newspaper articles, branch minutes, presidents' reports, newsletters, branch historians' scrapbooks, and their personal recollections. The following historical summary is based largely on the work of the Branch History Committee.

1909 - 1939

Information on the early years of the Branch is scarce. However, a membership directory for 1920 - 1929 was found among old branch records in excellent condition. This directory contains the only official information about the branch prior to 1929 such as:

1909	Children's room opened in San Jose Carnegie Library by A.C.A. Intensive study of Tuberculosis National Convention
1910-1911	Story-hour maintained in Children's room by volunteer workers Anti-Tuberculosis Association was formed Lecture committee formed to inspire women of their abilities
1913	County Library and secured a trained librarian Mrs. Wilcox started Student Loan Fund
1917	All energies of A.C.A. were directed towards War Work
1921	First California State convention met in San Francisco
1922	National Convention

1923	Study groups for International Relations and Child Study
1928	AAUW established a Million Dollar Fellowship Fund
1929	International Federation of University Women's Conference, Geneva
1932	International Federation Conference, Edinburgh Revolving Loan Fund Established Branch lowered it's dues from \$4 to \$3
1933	Education Committee formed
1934	Consumer Education and Child Study groups started
1936	International Federation Conference, Crakow
1937	AAUW made a special effort to attract younger members Art Committee Coordinated an art ehxhibit Mimeographed bulletins replaced the post cards
1939	International Federation Conference, Stockholm Dues raised back to \$4 First meeting was Reunion to celebrate 30th anniversary

1940-1949

As a new decade was approaching, the population in San Jose was a little over 72,000. War became a harsh reality for Americans and many women needed support from each other. AAUW was a good way for them to support each other.

1940	AAUW members asked to actively support war efforts
1942	War Time Services Committee formed
1944	All AAUW conventions canceled because of war
1945	Dues \$5 per year

- 1947 San Jose State Graduates became eligible to join AAUW
- 1949 Branch Incorporated

1950-1969

The words of Diana Taylor express the decade of the 50's very well:

"The decade of the 50's was the beginning of the changes that were to take place in Santa Clara Valley. It changed from a lovely agricultural area to the center of the world's high-tech industry. The population in San Jose was now 95,000. People from all over the nation were moving into the valley." (4)

- 1950 Red House given to San Jose Branch by Edith Jarman
- 1953 Baby-Sitting Co-op formed
- 1954 Branch contributed money to KQED to keep station alive
- 1955 Leadership Training began
Regional Workshop at Sainte Claire Hotel
- 1957 Creative Living Day held at Villa Montalvo
Puppeteers Group formed to promote good dental health
- 1959 Branch celebrated it's 50th anniversary
- 1963 Sister City program established
- 1967 AAUW participated in a Foreign Policy Conference for Educators
- 1968 Branch purchased present headquarters

1970-1984

Words of Diana Taylor:

"The decade of the 70's was known as the decade for women and AAUW's program and activities clearly reflected its interest in the personal growth of, and equity for, women."

1970	Policy change in Association
1971	Supported Equal Rights Amendment
1975	Membership was now 832 New Member Dinner
1977	San Jose Branch made an exhibit representing life in Santa Clara Valley at the State Capitol building
1980	Branch sponsored Career Carousel for High School Girls New interest section added to branch, "AAUW Singles"
1982	Branch Co-sponsored with League of Women Voters Branch had three uninvited guests Branch set record in EFP
1984	75th anniversary of San Jose Branch Branch donated a bench to the Historical Museum Began involvement with Homeless Project
1987	Began Library Project
1992	Focus on women's health issues
1993	Began Women's History Project and "Women Who Made a Difference" Established tour for fourth graders at San Jose History Museum
1996	Began Tech Excellence for girls and "Take a Girl to Lunch" mentouring program
1999	Held a breakfast to honor outgoing mayor and Branch member Susan Hammer
2000	Began work to create San Jose Branch AAUW website

Headquarters

AAUW has had many changes in their location and the headquarters. The first location was given to the association by a member by the name of Edith Jarman. When she died in the 1940's she left a penciled note in her home stating that her home on San Carlos was to be left for the San Jose Branch's use. But the heirs of Edith Jarman contested that this informal will was not fair. The issue was taken to court and decided that equally dividing the bequest between the Jarman heirs and San Jose Branch was best. In 1949 the Branch decided to sell their portion of the house for about \$50,000.00. (5)

Later, the Branch was given some industrial property on Herald Ave. by members Mr. and Mrs. Carlos Townsend. In 1968 the Branch sold that property to the Christian Methodist Church of California for \$32,000.00. (6)

In the early 1960's the Branch rented a few second story office rooms in the dental office building of Dr. Wilbur K. Wirtz, the husband of member Rae Wirtz, on San Carlos Street. This location was discontinued, however because of the membership growth. Also the majority of members lived in Willow Glen and wanted a more local location.

The present headquarters and land was purchased for \$40,000.00 in 1968 and paid for in cash. The house is built on a lot 100 feet in width and 300 feet in depth and built in 1911. The Branch spent about \$10,000.00 updating the house. This location was chosen in a vote of 136 to 4 on June 23, 1968. Members wanted a Headquarters located in the majority area of where most members lived. The remaining money was put into two \$10,000 time deposit savings accounts, each earning 7 1/2 % interest. It is this money that maintains the headquarters costing approximately \$2,500.00 each year. (7)

AAUW Today

AAUW is a national organization that promotes education and equity for all women and girls. Today AAUW is composed of three corporations: The Association, The AAUW Educational Fund, and The AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund. AAUW is a member of the International Federation of University Women.

San Jose Branch Today

Membership

The 1999-2000 San Jose Branch AAUW membership directory lists 376 current members, all automatically members of the national association. The April 2000 Branch Bonfire also notes that by "becoming a member of AAUW you become a part of a national network of women and men who use their education for the benefit of women and society." (8)

Membership in AAUW is open to anyone holding a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university. AAUW also accepts undergraduate students, known as Associate members, enrolled in a regionally accredited educational institution, in a four-year program/career. There are only 35 associate members allowed at one time at each branch, but there is a waiting list. If Associate members do not pay their dues, they are automatically dropped from the roster and an Associate member on the waiting list takes their place. These students are eligible for student affiliation.

San Jose Branch membership dues are \$65.00 per year (\$40.00 for student associates). The dues are allocated as follows:

\$29	Association
\$10	California State AAUW
\$25	San Jose Branch
\$1	Educational Foundation

1999-2000 Projects and Programs

The program theme for the year 1999-2000 is " Women Bridging the Centuries." The following projects and programs further this theme.

Tech Excellence is a group following up on the gender equity studies of AAUW. AAUW works with 7th and 8th grade girls at John Muir Middle School throughout the year in seven projects/sections. There are only three goals:

- 1.) Explore jobs and careers outside of the usual female role
- 2.) Hands on experience with Math/ Science procedures and concepts
- 3.) Field study with local related businesses

Partners In Reading/Literacy Tutoring is a program that provides a volunteer experience for AAUW members to help English speaking adults improve their reading skills.

Project Homeless helps committee members seek to educate themselves and branch membership about the causes of being homeless. The committee actively supports legislation designed to solve the long-term problem and it supports community groups involved with helping the homeless.

San Jose Branch Scholarship Award is a memorial fund which provides a \$1,000 scholarship based on an essay contest held on the first Saturday in March at Willow Glen High School. This scholarship is open to any woman who is a senior in a Santa Clara County High School or a student in a Santa Clara County community college.

Take a Girl to Lunch is a program with Calaveras High School. An AAUW member provides a nonauthoritarian mentor experience for a girl by taking her to lunch once a month. This program is to help a teenage girl to benefit from the individual attention and encouragement offered by her AAUW mentor. This program is also used as an incentive by the school.

Sister-to-Sister is a one-day conference, bringing together girls of diverse backgrounds to candidly discuss issues that the girls as a group identify as critical and not normally discussed in the school curriculum. Adult facilitators listen to the groups of girls expressing thoughts about issues such as harassment, violence, substance abuse, and body image. At the end of the day the groups will identify actions to support solutions to the problems.

Funds, Grants, and Scholarships

Educational Foundation:

This foundation provides grants and fellowships for women who are pursuing post graduate studies. Grants are also available for research and projects that address the needs and problems of women and girls.

Legal Advocacy Fund:

This fund was created in 1981 to further its mission to promote equity, education, self-development, and positive societal change for women. It also works to achieve equity for women in higher education by providing a support system and funding for female students, faculty, and staff seeking judicial redress for sex discrimination.

Sponsor Fund:

This fund is used to enhance Branch programs, enrich specific projects, promote leadership training, and to support special activities not covered by the general budget.

Local Scholarship Fund:

This fund is a series of generous donations to AAUW by Richard and Robert Negrón in memory of their mother, Barbara Negrón. A \$1,000.00 local scholarship will be awarded in the year 2000 in her memory.

Bonfire

The San Jose Branch Bonfire is a Monthly Newsletter sent out to each member to inform them of the upcoming events, programs, and member changes. Each year the present president chooses a theme for the Bonfire for the year. The Bonfire contains a letter from the President, calendar of events, new member profiles, and anything else members would like to submit.

San Jose Branch Officers of AAUW

AAUW has many elective positions available within the Branch. Each year there are elections for new members in every position. No one member can hold a position for more than one year at a time. About half way through the year the elections are held for new position holders. The elections are held early on in the year because each position takes a lot of training and learning on how the job needs to be done. The current member in each position and the new elective member work together for the rest of that year. The current member teaches the elective member what needs to be done and how to do it.

Past Presidents Before 1967

Clara Lyons Hayes*
Mrs. William Beasley*
Laura Bailey*
Mrs. Edwin A. Wilcox
Mrs. N.H. Bullock*
Mrs. Herman E. Owen*
Mrs. J.E. Bell*
Clara Smith*
Elizabeth Jones*
Gertrude Rowell*
Florence Kinredge*
Mary Miller*
Edith Sloane*
Mrs. Howard Smitten
Ruth Cook*
Vivian Blair*
Mrs. H.H. Foot
Katharine Williams*
Mary Center*
Florence Rifenbark*
Frances Schallenberger*
Gertrude Morgan*
Fran Carruthers*
Lillian Gray
Marion Warner*
Lucille Barker*
Imo Garner*
Anne Von Christierson*
Sara Dowdle*
Christine Zoffman*
May Duignan*
Mona Brown
Rae Wirtz*
Pauline Lynch
Maud Griswold*
Sara Anderson,
Gladys Scarborough*

Eulalie Diehl*
Mabel Kimball*
Ellen Hightower
Dulcie Reynolds*
Beatrice Pennington*
Areta Stadler
Dorthy Olson
June Tablak
Edith Kerr
Ednid Barrett*
Patricia Stiner*
Jeanette Carlson
Dottie Gibson*
Mary Jean Samdahl
Marian Melendy
Virginia Cooke
Daysie Holt
Joan Fox

* Deceased

Past Presidents Since 1967

Ruth Baughman	1967-1968
Diana Larson	1968-1969
Chris Osborne	1969-1970
Gail McCoy Innis	1970-1971
Pamela Halton Farnsworth	1971-1972
Mary Ellen Helsing	1972-1973
Winifred Brown*	1973-1974
Caroline Paunches	1974-1975
Donna Austad	1975-1976
Jean Boyden	1976-1977
Fran Sneed	1977-1978
Werdna Reigel	1978-1979
Sandra Savage	1979-1980
Terri Spice	1980-1981
Barbara Snyder	1981-1982
Raelene Serrano*	1982-1983
Diana Taylor	1983-1984
Barbara Bettencourt	1984-1985
Elizabeth Shandera	1985-1986
Linda Hiebert Sekiguchi	1986-1987
Barbara Leonard	1987-1988
Elise Funk	1988-1989
Margaret Hankle	1989-1990
Myrl Metcalf	1990-1991
Maxine Hodges	1991-1992
Pat Skavdahl	1992-1993
Chris Hawkins	1993-1994
Sandra Mack	1994-1995
Jean Wyatt	1995-1996
Elaine Benoit	1996-1997
Carol Fitting	1997-1998
Zee Del Fiugo & Darlene Paulsen	1998-1999
Elizabeth Codd	1999-2000
Gloria Leonard	2000-2001

* Deceased



AAUW HEADQUARTERS
SAN JOSE BRANCH

AAUW MEMBERS IN THE COMMUNITY

The following is a sample list of AAUW representation in the community, beginning in the 1970's, a decade of activism:

City Goals Committee - Margie Schumb, Virginia Sielaff,
Barbara Cassin, Zoe Fischer
Sub-committees for the Citizen's Community Improvement
Committee - Judith Steeleman, Janet Haight, Betty
Sherer, Lauretta Hall, Donna Austad, Pam Halton,
Lee Sturtevant, Lou Brown
Mental Health Advisory Committee - Gloria Stern
Voluntary Services Advisory Board - Chris Osborne, Diana
Larson
Santa Clara County Transportation Policy Committee -
Florence Roat and Myrna Allen
Economic and Social Opportunity Board - Caroline Punches
The United New Conservationists - Virginia Garthwait, Jane
Rauch
San Jose Unified Advisory Committee for Compensatory
Education - Winnie Brown
Environmental Commission - Suzanne Kuehl
Santa Clara City Youth Advisory Committee - Dorothy Roberts
Child Development Council - Pam Halton Farnsworth
Alliance for a Safer Santa Clara Valley - Barbara Snyder
Educational Congress of California - Donna Austad and Lee
• Wagner.
Operation Sentinel Co-ordinator and City Operation and
Finance Committee member - Raelene Serrano
State Highway Commission - Margie Schumb
County Parks and Recreation Commission - Patty Wozaddlo
Anderson
County Library Commission - Ruth Nelson
Airport Commission - Barbara Cassin
Citizens Advisory Committee for the Fine Arts Commission-
Marie Hull and Dottie Perrone
State Co-ordinator for Zero Population Growth - Leona Egeland
California State Assembly, 24th District - Leona Egeland
Committee to Form a County Status of Women Commission -
Kathy Stark
Member of Rep. Leona Egeland's San Jose staff - Marie Moore
Administrative Aide to Senator Jerry Smith - Jane Decker
Administrative Aide to County Supervisor Stienberg - Beth Zientek
School Board Member, Union School District - Maxine Hodges
San Jose City Council Member - Judy Stabile

Notes

1. _____ .www.aauw.org>About AAUW.
2. Taylor, Diana. AAUW San Jose Branch. (1984), p.4
3. Ibid, p. 3
4. Ibid, p. 14
5. Fitting, Carol. History Headquarters.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. _____ .www.aauw.org."About AAUW."

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