

COLORADO

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF

UNIVERSITY WOMEN

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS

1926-2001

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COLORADO DIVISION AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN 1926-2001

A synopsis of the “First Fifty Years of Colorado AAUW” was presented at the Colorado State Convention in Trinidad, May 7, 2000. The segment covering 1976-2001 was presented at the Colorado State Convention in Fort Collins, April 27, 2002. The entire 75-year history was written by Betsy Loague, Colorado State Archivist, Foothills Branch.

Sources and Acknowledgements

Thanks to a dedicated group of women much of Colorado AAUW (COAAUW) history has been recorded over the decades in a variety of formats. These women have provided the background for the writing of COLORADO DIVISION’S 75-YEAR HISTORY. They are:

- Colorado Division AAUW: The First Twenty-Five Years 1926-1951 - Louise Fauteaux, Colorado’s third state president, Colorado Springs Branch
- ’76 Decades of Decision – Marjorie Jones and Evelyn Ely, Pueblo Branch; Ellin Mrachek, Aurora Branch
- A History of the Rocky Mountain Region AAUW to 1983 – Lillian Moore, Grand Junction Branch
- A Brief History of the Denver Colorado Branch AAUW 1898-1998 – Nancy Iona, Denver Branch
- AAUW Colorado State Division Bulletins 1931-2001

With the Summer 1986 state bulletin issue (Volume 49, #4) Judy Sanderson and Wynn Weidner, Colorado Springs Branch, succeeded Lillian Moore, Grand Junction Branch, as editors. Thanks to their extensive coverage most of the information, from the late 1970s to the present day, is culled from these publications. Thanks should also be extended to Betty Hodge, San Luis Valley Branch, who served as a special feature writer for the state bulletin from 1989 to 1998.

Actions and activities carried out by a division are directed by the Association, therefore it is important to include some of their history and growth in relating the changes within COAAUW. This information has been gathered from:

Degrees of Equality: The American Association of University Women and the Challenge Of Twentieth-Century Feminism – Susan Levine

(Originally the term division was used to designate individual states, thus Colorado Division. In 1991 Association officially changed this designation to the State of Colorado, or as referred to within the state, COAAUW.)

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The Early Years

The history of the Colorado State Division dates back to 1898 when eight Denver women organized the Colorado Branch of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA). All were graduates of eastern colleges. Prior to 1914, when Colorado College and the University of Colorado were accredited, graduates of higher education institutions in Colorado were not eligible for membership.

The Association of Collegiate Alumnae and the Southern Association of College Women merged in 1921 to form the American Association of University Women. At that time Colorado had three branches: Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo. Soon afterwards there was a movement to promote the growth of AAUW by organizing state divisions. After many months' work, throughout 1926, the constitution and bylaws of the Colorado Division were accepted on January 22, 1927 by seven branches. (Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo, Fort Collins, Greeley, Boulder, and Grand Junction.) Mrs. George Meston, from the Pueblo Branch, was elected the first president. The seven branches showed a total of 579 members. Dues were \$0.10.

One stipulation of the new organization was that the annual meeting would be held in Denver, in the Fall, during the Stock Show so members could take advantage of the low railroad fares.* There is no record of when this action was rescinded! The first annual division convention was held September 24, 1927, at Denver's Y.M.C.A. By this time Colorado had nine branches, with the addition of Gunnison and Rocky Ford, and 900 members. (* This information was taken from Lillian Moore's, "A History of the Rocky Mountain Region AAUW to 1983." However, in Tom Noel's book, *Riding High: Colorado Ranchers And 100 Years of the National Western Stock Show* it is noted that the Stock Show, since its inception in 1906, has always been held in January.)

In 1927, the Association launched the Million-Dollar Campaign to create a national fellowship program. At the second convention, in 1928, the Colorado Division voted to join with the other states in the section, or region, as it is known today, consisting of New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, in pledging \$30,000 for the Rocky Mountain Unit of the "Million-Dollar Fellowship Fund." The unit was later named for Dr. Florence Rena Sabin.

1930s

The first official division publication, the NEWS LETTER, was issued in October 1931. It announced the 5th annual state convention to be held in Colorado Springs where a round table discussion on "Progressive Education" was scheduled. Also featured was a progress report on all four states' branch quotas for the Florence Sabin Fellowship Fund.

By 1936 membership had increased to 1,400 members in 17 branches. La Junta, Alamosa, Las Animas, Montrose, Canon City, Loveland, Monte Vista, and Crowley County had been added. (Crowley County includes Sugar City and Ordway.) Dues were increased to \$0.15, while Association's were \$2.00.

The crowning event for the division in the 1930s was the National Convention held in June 1939 at Denver's Shirley-Savoy Hotel. Friday night featured a covered wagon supper on the rodeo grounds of Troutdale-In-The-Pines, a famous resort, near Evergreen on Upper Bear Creek. An important

moment in Association's history took place at the dinner when the mortgage bonds, on the national clubhouse in Washington, D.C., were burned. Following the dinner a pageant entitled "Yesterday's Woman" was held at the Red Rocks amphitheater. The pageant depicted the story of women as cliff dwellers, living in the mining camps, traveling on the Mormon trek, and on the Santa Fe Trail. This was quite an occasion because the theater was still in its final stages of completion, and the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) crews worked overtime to make the premises useable, including bringing benches from Denver's city parks. This program was the first event held in the Park.

The convention's keynote speaker was Frances Perkins, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor, the first woman to serve in a presidential cabinet position. Secretary Perkins was hastily moved to a member's home when labor leader John L. Lewis discovered she was staying in a non-union hotel. More than 1,800 women from throughout the United States attended the convention.

1940s

The travel program for the division president began in 1940, at which time she used her own money for a swing around the state to visit all 21 branches. The following year the state board voted funds for such work, and the grand tour of the state president became an accepted fact. To help fund these trips dues were raised to \$0.25, raising the annual state income from \$250 per year to about \$420. The figure included paying the railroad expense of the state president to the national convention.

In September 1940, when it became known that Colorado ranked 46th of the 48 states in state aid to education, the division requested a study, by a legislative committee, to look into the more serious needs of the state's education system. The final report led to many discussions by the branches within their local communities. Other activities during the 40's were the organizing of a "War Service Committee" to aid refugee women and children coming to Colorado from England, and to assist the war work of various state agencies.

Beginning with the 1941 state convention the annual meetings have convened in the months of April or May, instead of in the fall. Stringent restrictions on travel and meeting places forced the omission of state conventions in 1943 and 1945. This also meant the cancellation of the National Conventions. As a result the State Presidents were called to a meeting in Washington. This was the forerunner of the State Presidents Conference held in alternate years with the National Conventions. At the local level state board meetings, including the branch presidents, became increasingly important and much work was carried on by correspondence.

State health plans became the main interest of division members in the late 40's as they supported Denver member, Dr. Florence Rena Sabin, in her work for new public health legislation. This work was coordinated throughout the branches, and achieved such success that a report was requested for presentation at the National Convention in Dallas in 1947.

Because the work on Public Health had been so effective in helping to secure the reorganization of the State Department of Public Health, and in the passing of six important health bills, the study of health problems continued and was expanded into a regional project. This seemed particularly appropriate since the Rocky Mountain Fellowship Fund had increased from \$30,000 in 1944 to \$40,000 in April 1949. It was felt that the region was "making a living contribution to Dr. Sabin's life work by aiding her in her untiring effort to raise the standards of the health of the people," stated Louise Fauteaux, Colorado's third state president.

In 1947 a state theme, "Know Your Schools," was chosen. The branches worked to stimulate community interest in schools, teachers, curriculum, and salaries. Two extensive surveys were made: one on problems of elementary and high schools, and one in the field of higher education.

1948 brought a raise of dues to \$0.50 per member that helped to solve budget problems and put the state on a sounder financial basis. Branches in Leadville, Trinidad, Salida, Delta, Durango, Longmont, Julesburg, and, for a brief time, North Fork made for a total of 24.

In 1949 AAUW eased the membership requirements, accepting women graduates of any eligible college. Up to this time the membership was composed almost entirely of professional career women who held advanced degrees. This created vast changes in the demographics of the branches, which now included educated housewives. Women began joining for social relationships, as much as for intellectual stimulation. At this time the Association legislative committee rarely initiated action, and the organization only reluctantly entered into coalitions with other groups. Controversial political issues were to be avoided. Life membership in the Association was first offered in 1950, and cost \$80. (Life membership is 20 times the current dues. In 2000, 20 x \$39 = \$780.00)

1950s

In 1951, after 25 years as a division, branches in Colorado had increased from seven to 24, and membership from 579 to 2,291. The original six standing committees were Education, International Relations, Legislation, Publicity, Fellowship Fund, and Library Extension. During the late 1930s Social Studies, Arts, and Recent Graduates were added. Later additions were Status of Women and Radio.

By 1952 division dues were raised to a \$1.00, while Association collected \$4.50.

An interesting item in the April 1953 Division Bulletin was a notice that the state was selling tea, or cocktail, napkins with a blue AAUW seal. It stated that the Colorado Division was "very desirous of selling of this stock and realizing money for the state treasury." The \$1.00 selling price, per box of 500, included the cost of postage.

The problems of financing public school education involved AAUW members in a state conference of concerned citizens. The recommendations of the conference resulted in the first Public School Foundation Act. (The Act dealt with the distribution of financial aid, by the legislature, to Colorado's public schools.) In 1955 concern for Colorado's elderly citizens prompted the division to "urge its 26 branches to study the old age pension, and to promote citizen participation in an objective study of old age assistance." Subsequently members campaigned to successfully pass Colorado legislation dealing with these issues.

Delegates at the 1955 national convention voted to establish a separate foundation, the AAUW Educational Foundation, which would raise funds for fellowship programs, and provide the financing for a new headquarters building for both the foundation and the Association. Colorado branches worked to raise \$25,025 to help pay for its construction. They broke ground for the new Educational Center Building in 1958, and by the time the building was completed in July 1960 it was totally paid for.

Branches added in the 1950s were Estes Park, Lamar, Ouray, and Del Norte.

The unveiling, February 26, 1959, of the statue of Dr. Florence Rena Sabin (in one of the two niches representing Colorado) in Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C., represented five years of arduous work. Many branches assisted with the public solicitation of \$18,000, and supported the required legislation for the statue in the Colorado General Assembly and the U.S. Congress. At the acceptance ceremony in the nation's capitol Dr. Edith Beechel, a Loveland branch member who had initiated the idea for the statue, served as mistress of ceremonies. At its dedication Dr. Sabin's statue was the only one in statuary hall of a woman.

Instead of remaining in place after its dedication the statue was soon moved to the basement, along with some other statues, and was not reinstalled until 1996 when Denver's Congresswoman, Pat Schroeder, requested its return before she retired from the Congress.

1960s

June 1963 brought the Association Convention to Denver for the second time. The theme "A Structure for Our Purpose" signaled a new direction for AAUW, into a study and action organization. Branches were encouraged to discuss "emerging issues" and to identify future study topics. This was still basically a "study" approach at the expense of action. By this time the Association had adopted a structure centered around four "areas of interest:" education, community problems, world problems and cultural interest.

The meetings, held at the Denver Hilton, included a banquet at the Denver Country Club, a luncheon at the Brown Palace Hotel, and a barbecue and Colorado history pageant at the Red Rocks amphitheater. The keynote speaker was the head of the International Federation of University Women who emphasized the outreach of the organization to international concerns. Among topics discussed by the 2,000 delegates were: "Expectations for Education," "Bridging the Gap Between Science, and the Layman," and "The American Family in a Changing World."

The delegation approved an admission change, which stated that any woman with a baccalaureate degree from a four-year accredited college or university was eligible to join AAUW. This change extended membership to those having degrees in home economics, nursing, and education and erased the strict liberal arts requirement. The women in the 60's and 70's had little in common with the organization founders. They represented a wider spectrum of the nation's educational institutions and occupations. It is interesting to note that up until the late 1950s the organization's leadership was still dominated by women with PhDs.

In November 1963 the Colorado Division Board sent a letter to all Branch Presidents and Legislative Chairmen asking their opinion on holding a Legislative Workshop. The objective was to acquaint members with problems facing Colorado due to increased enrollment in schools at all levels. The leadership also felt the need to become better acquainted with the legislators and the legislative process. The first Legislative Workshop was held January 23, 1964. Attendees visited both the Senate and House in session, and heard a talk by Dr. Bryon W. Hansford, Commissioner of Education. The 1965 Legislative Workshop even included a trip to Fort Logan Mental Health Center.

The Green Circle Program was adopted as a division project in 1965. Volunteers worked with public school children, K-4th grade, to help promote fellowship among the students and acceptance of individual differences.

At the 1967 state convention the 31 branches were represented by 165 delegates. The 1st Colorado Division Art Exhibit, "Society's Reflection in the Arts," was held in conjunction with the meeting at Littleton's Howard Johnson Motor Lodge. Any artist, holding membership in a Colorado branch, had been invited to display artistic work in jewelry, ceramics, weaving, creative embroidery, or flower arrangement as well as original drawings, paintings, etchings, sculptures, etc. Members responded by displaying about 100 different art projects. The branch Cultural Interests Area Representatives had coordinated the exhibit.

Branches added in the 60's included Cortez, Littleton, Brighton, Aurora, Berthoud, Burlington, and Yampa Valley. Membership jumped from 2,500 in 1965 to nearly 2,700 in 1967. The Division endorsed the new Colorado Status of Women Commission, and became a member of the Council of Education Development.

1970s

On October 31, 1970, the 3rd Regional Conference was held at Temple Buell College (formerly Colorado Women's College) in Denver. Marjorie Bell Chambers, Regional Vice President (or director), chaired the meeting. This conference was the beginning of biennial meetings for the Rocky Mountain Region. In 1976 Dr. Chambers was elected the Association president.

The Denver Interbranch Council was organized in 1971. Urban and suburban branches in the metro area met to share ideas, problems, and activities. When it disbanded in February 1995, this body had functioned for almost 25 years, providing the metro area with several joint projects and educational programs. The group also coordinated the 5th Rocky Mountain Regional Conference at the Sheraton-Denver Airport Inn in 1978.

During the 60's AAUW opposed militant feminism but did not retreat from social action as previously. New life was injected into the membership with the shake up of the old structure. For example, by late 1968 AAUW was beginning to redefine its political identity. It was one of the last women's groups to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment. Delegates at the 1971 convention voted overwhelmingly to endorse the ERA as a top priority, and also passed a resolution "to work for the repeal of restrictive laws on abortion, making abortion legal for those who wish it after medical consultation." These decisions galvanized the membership.

After the passage of these two issues AAUW became a vocal member of the national feminist coalition. Soon afterwards, in 1972, it became an important voice in the coalition promoting Title IX. All of these actions began their nationwide involvement in actively and vocally supporting legislation as an organization.

1976 was a banner year: the Nation's Bicentennial, Colorado's Centennial, and Colorado State Division's Golden Anniversary. The state convention in Grand Junction highlighted many projects and programs with emphasis on women's roles in the future. In 1976, 32 branches, with a membership of 2,889, made up the division. Dues were \$2.00.

The development of the Virginia Neal Blue Resource Centers for Colorado Women, a coalition effort with several other organizations, was designated as a state project in the 70's, and Colorado was awarded a State Public Service Grant of \$2,100 from the Educational Foundation to aid in

this endeavor. Colorado AAUW was one of over 50 organizations that did extensive state lobbying and campaigning to win the ratification of the ERA by March 1979. It was awarded \$1,000 by the AAUW-ERA Ad Hoc Committee to help defeat the effort to repeal the Colorado State Equal Rights Amendment in November 1977.

1977-1978 is still a memorable year for many branches: Pueblo celebrated its 60th anniversary, while Gunnison marked its 50th and Golden-Foothills dropped the “Golden” from its name. The May 1978 State Division Convention in Colorado Springs will forever be known as the “Blizzard Convention”...only in Colorado!

In 1978, Association President Dr. Marjorie Bell Chambers, called on all branches to monitor all school districts and universities covered by Title IX regulations. Since no appropriation of funds was made to assist with compliance it was up to local individuals to work to prevent sexual discrimination in the schools. Also in 1978, the Division hosted a National Science Foundation Regional Forum whose purpose was to elicit information from the public regarding major issues and concerns related to science. This was the first time that the NSF had recognized women as leaders of these forums that were held throughout the nation.

In February 1979 Colorado celebrated the first “AAUW Week.” It began with Legislative Day and continued through the following week. Governor Richard Lamm was so impressed with the Legislative Day program, that he made a statewide proclamation recognizing the “AAUW Week.”

At the 1979 Association convention, delegates voted to raise their dues from \$8.50 to \$12.75. At the same time they also voted to remain a single-sex organization “until society is ready to grant women equality.”

Foothills, Sterling, Lakewood, Telluride, Douglas County, and Evergreen were branches added in the 70’s, bringing the membership total to 3,065. Over 40 branches had been in existence at one time or another in Colorado but, by 1980, only 30 were still active.

1980s

The early 1980s brought some interesting and challenging programs to the division. In 1980, the division received a \$2,000 American Public Service grant from the Educational Foundation Program for a project entitled “Helping Communities in a Changing State.” The grant, plus \$500 from the division, financed workshops for AAUW members, as well as women from the community, focusing on leadership skills, membership, and program concerns. During this time the division was also part of an ongoing African/American Educators exchange program funded through the Educational Foundation Program and the State Department. Directors from the American University in Washington, D.C sent African women to different areas of the United States so they could sample American family life. Six-day visits were made to AAUW members’ homes in Douglas County, Ouray, Trinidad, and Grand Junction from 1978-1981. Unfortunately, the program was discontinued the next year due to lack of funding.

In addition, the division joined the Clean Air Coalition, the Colorado Coordinating Council, Colorado Women Forward (changed to Women in Colorado in 1983), the Colorado Open Space Council (COSC), and, as a member of the Women’s Health Conference Coalition, co-sponsored health conferences for several years.

The Association logo was changed to capital letters in 1982, and the Legal Advocacy Fund, which began as a pilot program in 1981, became a permanent fund in 1983. Funds raised by branch members would provide money and support for women in higher education seeking judicial action for anti-discrimination suits.

In 1981-82 Chatfield Branch joined the Division, Lamar was disbanded, and Delta Branch changed its name to the Delta County Branch. Dues had risen to \$3.00. The Colorado Lobby Corps was initiated in the summer of 1982. The division received a grant from the Association to organize a training program, and with the 1983 legislative session Colorado AAUW became part of the action. It also marked the publication of the Legislative Update, a newsletter written to keep members informed of actions by the Colorado legislators. The “issues” (previously called “study topics”) of study that year were “Families and Work: Traditions and Transitions” and “Money Talks.”

1983-84 brought the reactivation of the Estes Park Branch. (It had previously existed in 1950-51). Littleton added Englewood to its name. Greeley Branch celebrated its 60th anniversary, Montrose and Canon City their 50th, and Aurora its 20th. “AAUW Week” became a national observance and was moved to March, where it was included in Woman’s History Month. And members directed their attention to “Taking Hold of Technology” in recognition of the computer and its continued expansion into their everyday lives.

Goals adopted by the Colorado Board of Directors included encouraging 100% member voter registration, promoting effective leadership, maintaining membership retention, and working on community visibility, visibility, visibility. With this in mind the Denver Interbranch Council hosted a forum, in November 1983, on “Perspectives For Peace.” Dr. Ved Nanda, Law Professor at Denver University and the keynote speaker, stated, “AAUW is one of the most influential non-governmental organizations.” The division co-sponsored a conference on “Women and World Hunger” in April 1984. Denver was one of nine cities selected from across the nation for this project of the Overseas Educational Fund. This conference gave members the opportunity to network with other groups in focusing attention on world hunger and the role of women as food producers.

The biggest challenge for all AAUW members, throughout the 1980s, came with the election of Ronald Reagan and the new conservative agenda. Legal and legislative rulings regarding civil rights and reproductive freedom, gained during the 1970s, were increasingly threatened. Association began working with other organizations to build coalitions on the national level. A united front meant a broader focus on the issue of equity. “Networking” became a focus of the Association as it encouraged branch members to form networks of cooperation to help women achieve common goals. The importance of the woman’s vote in electing candidates with similar goals became paramount. In hopes of attracting more members the Association instituted half member dues for new members joining after January 1st, 1984. This dues reduction continues to this day.

A restructuring in July 1985 gave the Educational Foundation new direction in its operations. It now functioned with its own president and board of directors in unison with Association’s mission and goals, but it was still dependent on the branches for its fund-raising and support. Since 1980 annual grants and awards, by the Foundation, had totaled over \$1 million annually.

The 1985 Fall Board Meeting/Workshop was held at The Nature Place in Florissant. This format combined the two summer workshops, held previously on the Eastern and Western slopes, and the state board meeting, held separately during the summer months. This format is still ongoing.

The winter of 1986 brought an Association dues increase to \$22.00, and a new program, VoLT (Volunteer Leadership Training for Community Development), was begun. Judy Sanderson (Colorado Springs Branch) was one of sixteen women from across the nation chosen to serve as trainers of the program. VoLT's purpose was to give community volunteers the skills they needed to become leaders, thus increasing the benefits to the community in which the volunteers worked. Funding for the program came from a grant awarded to the AAUW Educational Foundation by the Henry Luce Foundation of New York. The trainers worked with other volunteer organizations focusing on Leadership, Group Dynamics, Management/Organization, and Communication skills.

Sarah Harder, Association President, was the Travel Visitor at the 1986 Division Convention in Lakewood. Her keynote speech, "Women Making A Difference," stressed the need to develop leadership in order to create change and to challenge the direction of public policy. Harder stated that the current topic "Women's Work/Women's Worth" forced members to look at themselves and, "instead of approaching situations with a lack of self-confidence, work toward the feminization of power." Prior to the Convention, Colorado received recognition from Association in the receipt of the GROW (Grass Roots Outreach to Women) project. Harder described the outreach program as a partnership between division and Association in a pre-convention conference. The outgrowth was staff assistance in building public policy effectiveness in branches and, in turn, enhancing AAUW's public policy efforts. This focus was later refined when membership growth and program were integrated with public policy. Projects by branches included a booklet for latchkey children, a countywide candidate's forum, and exhibits demonstrating the contribution of local historical women. In addition, the Denver Interbranch Council, along with the Mile Hi Girl Scout Council, created a Girl Scout Patch called "Individual Liberties." The program included a historical perspective of the Constitution as well as the freedoms and responsibilities of being a citizen of the United States. Colorado Division received a \$5,000 Exxon grant and \$1,500 from the Association to help fund the three-year project. The convention proceedings were videotaped by a Foothills Branch member for a Show Case Video, which was shown at the Regional Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah.

During the 1985-86 year Alamosa Branch changed its name to San Luis Valley Branch. The LaJunta Branch was disbanded and Leadville followed soon after. The 31 branches numbered 2,866, down from a previous high of 3,200. Vouchers became the new procedure for handling reimbursement of division funds.

With the summer 1986 issue state bulletins were designated by seasonal names, instead of with specific months, and the editors started honoring members with the "Daisy Award" write-up. Branch members selected these "Daisies" who represented the commitment of AAUW members to their branches and communities.

The Denver Interbranch Council utilized GROW funds once again, in the spring of 1987, by co-sponsoring a project with the Colorado Committee for Women's History. The Committee awarded certificates to teachers at the elementary, middle school, and senior high levels for best integration of women's issues in their classroom curricula.

At the 1987 State Convention the attendees voted to raise dues to \$5.00, to provide financial assistance for mileage over 200 miles traveled to state meetings, and to abolish the position of corresponding secretary. The Executive Committee passed a motion that "we accept the invitation to place Colorado AAUW Archives at the Auraria Library."

At the Association Convention in Houston delegates finally voted to admit men as members, the term "chairman" was changed to "chair," and "Corporate Representatives" was changed to "College/University Representatives." Also, the origins of the Environmental Network were established in Houston.

Division's commitment for the year was to get out the vote, focusing on: voter registration; awareness of the issues; involvement in party primaries and candidate forums; and encouraging more women to vote. Association established a new endorsement policy for non-partisan candidates in June 1988. AAUW Branches/Divisions could endorse or oppose candidates for appointive office, however, it was up to them to adopt the procedures for making such endorsements. A new state newsletter, the CO-LEADER, was first published in spring 1988. It was designed to improve division/branch communication with Division officers providing leadership information.

As a member of the Citizens for Legislative Reform coalition, Colorado Division AAUW members helped in the amendment petition drive to get the GAVEL (Get A Vote to Every Legislator) proposal on the 1988 November ballot. Gavel was a non-partisan proposal to amend the Colorado Constitution to give all of the state's elected representatives a voice in the legislative process. AAUW members gathered over 2,600 signatures of the 68,000 needed to get the petition on the ballot. Their participation earned them an article in Association's Spring 1989 Leader in Action. The Colorado Division's Lobby Corps was also included in an article on lobbying in the same issue because, as the editor said, "It's one of the best in the country." By this time, with Coordinator Elaine Gardner's (Foothills Branch) guidance, the Lobby Corps had been functioning for seven legislative sessions. To close out the year, the Colorado Springs Branch hosted the June 1988 Rocky Mountain Regional Conference.

In 1988 AAUW celebrated the centennial of its Educational Foundation's fellowships programs by establishing the "Eleanor Roosevelt Fund for Women and Girls: Intergenerational Partnerships," expanding its focus to girls in K-12. The fund was to provide grants for research and study in such areas as: dissolving barriers in education; promoting greater understanding of the way women and girls think; and transcending the boundaries between generations, races, classes, and cultures. In subsequent years action projects were to supplement the research. Funds were also to be used for the Educational Foundation Teacher Fellowship program, which would train experienced teachers in gender-fair teaching and techniques. Previously Educational Foundation funding had been targeted mainly to women in pursuit of post-baccalaureate degrees.

Also in June 1988, the Association developed a new diversity policy. The statement, "AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. Membership is not by invitation," was to appear in all publications. "Graduate Woman," Association's publication, was changed to a magazine format with a new name, "Outlook."

In the fall of 1988 the "Chairlift" program was established. Each division officer served as a liaison between the branches and the division, thus creating a partnership between the two groups. The exchange of knowledge and information helped branches assimilate the organization's goals within their programs. The Garfield County Branch was chartered in March 1989, and the position of a state Legal Advocacy Fund Chair was created, while nationally the Legal Advocacy Fund celebrated its first victory.

Once again the Association stressed the importance of coalition-working partnerships with local

groups. Many Colorado branches joined other organizations in co-sponsoring the Woman's Financial Information Program, an AARP generated program of seminars designed to educate women about their financial choices and responsibilities.

With the Supreme Court's Webster decision on July 3rd, 1989, AAUW put into operation its "Campaign for Choice," a reproductive health issue, promoting freedom for the individual's rights regarding safe abortions and, in turn, her right to reproductive choice. Since 1937, when AAUW advocated the legalization of the dispensing of contraceptives, AAUW has been actively involved in the reproductive health issue. On November 10, 1989, Colorado Coalition for Choice held a Mobilization for Women's Lives press conference on the west steps of the State Capitol building. Twenty-five AAUW members joined in the Pro-Choice press conference. Association President Sharon Schuster wrote, "If we do not have the right to choice in the determination of our reproductive life, we will not be able to make other choices for our future. It is that basic."

After four years at the Nature Place the Fall Conference was moved to Copper Mountain in 1989. The attendees agreed that the division, in partnership with other concerned organizations, should join the Colorado Initiative on Teen Pregnancy, and work to pass a bill that would encourage school districts to provide a comprehensive health education program, pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. This action presented an alternative choice for members who did not actively support AAUW's Pro-Choice stand. Their hard work paid off. The bill was passed during the 1990 Legislative session.

The division continued to hold Legislative Day in the 80's, while featuring a variety of high-profile keynote speakers and workshops in keeping with AAUW's issues and agenda. The Friday before Saturday's Legislative Day was devoted to a " Hill Watch," where the morning was spent observing the legislators in action, followed by a lunch to discuss these issues.

Throughout the 80's, while actively working to protect women's civil rights, AAUW seemed to be floundering. There were too many issues and their actions were divided in too many ways. Not only did the nation not know who AAUW was, or what they stood for, but members seemed to be questioning the organization's goals as well. Anne Bryant, Association Executive Director (1985-1996), recognized this dilemma. In order to be an effective organization AAUW needed visibility in both the community and the nation. Her initiative, along with Sarah Harder, Association President (1985-1989), established the Eleanor Roosevelt's 10-year research project addressing the issue of the education of girls. These studies brought a visibility that no amount of funds could have bought.

The studies' findings shook up the educational system throughout the nation and, at the same time, brought new methods for helping girls achieve their potential. Sarah Harder stressed the need for leadership training throughout her tenure. The benefits girls received in their educational endeavors were the first step in achieving the lifelong leadership skills they would need in the future. It was time for AAUW to reemphasize its educational mission.

1990s

As the 1990s began, continuing changes were seen at the Association level. The Educational Foundation purchased a building to serve as a new national headquarters. A new logo was introduced, the fourth in 109 years. It was felt that the old logo gave the impression that AAUW

was dated and not focused on today or tomorrow's concerns. The new logo incorporated the entire name, no more guessing what the initials AAUW stood for. The term "Legislative Program" was changed to a more current "Public Policy."

The division was also experiencing change. Members were to be reimbursed \$10 per each committee meeting attended. Susie Van Scoyk (Lakewood Branch), Educational Foundation Chair, instituted the Dr. Florence Sabin Club: Gold for individual contributions of \$100 or more; Silver for contributions between \$50-\$100. The Public Policy Day program was moved to the Warwick Hotel, in 1991, where attendees focused on "Nontraditional Education." The Association Membership Committee awarded the division a grant to cover a training session on membership recruitment and retention. The session took place the Sunday, after Public Policy Day, so more branches could be in attendance.

VIVA AAUW had become the Colorado membership motto, standing for Visibility, Impact, Vitality, Action. Peggy SerVaas's (Douglas County Branch) Membership Marketing plan was the state winner at the 1991 Association Convention. Also at the Portland Convention, the delegates voted to allow student affiliates, and to remove the Women's Issues Chair and four Representatives of Areas of Interest (Community, Cultural Interests, Education, and International Relations) from the required structure. The term "division" was to be replaced by "state."

On July 17, 1991, COAAUW hosted a "Take the Initiative" meeting with Anne Bryant, Association's Executive Director. Bryant presented an informative program and discussion about the new issue, "Initiative for Educational Equity," which emphasized the organization's educational mission. AAUW launched the AAUW Initiative for Educational Equity, in 1991, to promote equity in grades K-12. The release of "Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America" sparked a national debate on gender bias. The organization was now releasing information that people could put into action. In November the Aurora Branch coordinated a Colorado Educational Equity Roundtable with a group of over forty community leaders.

In 1992 the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund published "The AAUW Report: How Schools Shortchange Girls" which made the public aware of gender bias problems within the nation's schools. COAAUW began its ongoing partnership with Girls Count as they assessed Title IX compliance in Colorado school districts. In 1993, "Hostile Hallways: The AAUW Survey on Sexual Harassment in American Schools" was released. It was the first national survey of its kind, showing that 81% of students surveyed (85% of girls and 76% of boys) experience sexual harassment in school. Soon after this came the "Barbie" incident. When the talking Barbie stated "Math is tough" Association President Sharon Schuster called for a "Recall the Doll Campaign." Cartoonists had a field day! Mattel's message was not acceptable and, thanks to their new visibility, AAUW's voice sparked a nation-wide discussion and Mattel was forced to reprogram their doll.

COAAUW joined its international counterpart, the New Zealand International Federation of University Women (IFUW), in the first-of-a-kind, live, digital compressed audio discussion at Red Rocks Community College, March 27, 1993. Colorado Congresswoman Pat Schroeder and Jenny Shipley, New Zealand's Minister of Social Welfare and Minister of Women's Affairs, were featured in a discussion about the outlook for women in politics. The simultaneous overseas transmission utilized undersea fiber optics technology.

In the early 90's, Colorado Springs and Pueblo celebrated their 75th anniversaries, Legislative Day was changed to Public Policy Day, a Colorado state membership brochure was printed, and Judy

Sanderson (Colorado Springs Branch) was appointed Association's Leader On Loan Coordinator. Also, during this time, the Parker branch was chartered, the Las Animas and Montrose branches disbanded, the Fall Leadership conference was moved from Copper Mountain to Frisco, and the Archives Chair became an unofficial state officer.

Led by Educational Foundation Chair Susie Van Scoyk (Lakewood Branch), COAAUW received an Educational Foundation award at the Minneapolis Association convention, in 1993, for the "Greatest Percentage of Increase" in branch fund-raising. Diversity awareness remained one of Association's prime goals. Locally members developed a Diversity Strategic Action Plan and held a diversity awareness workshop. McGrath Videos on sexual harassment circulated among the branches. Members participated in "Take Our Daughters to Work" day coordinated by Girls Count. COAAUW awarded its first Young Leader Award to Brenda Wolfe (Colorado Springs Branch) for outstanding leadership, professional development, and community service. As part of a continuing commitment to leadership development the state implemented three Fall District Workshops featuring leadership training as well as information on AAUW issues.

Association began its 5-Star Branch program in 1994. A branch needed to display characteristics of branch excellence through community projects, leadership development, membership growth, fundraising per capita, and public policy advocacy. Peggy Orenstein, in association with AAUW, published "School Girls: Young Women, Self-Esteem and the Confidence Gap." On her September book tour Orenstein visited Denver to talk about sexual inequality in the nation's schools and discussed her research at a reception with metropolitan members. The four Jefferson County branches were featured in an article "Dateline: Jefferson County, Colorado" in the fall issue of the "OUTLOOK." The branches submitted questionnaires to all the county's school board candidates and held a pre-election public forum. The group endorsed candidates responding in accordance with AAUW's issues.

At the 1995 convention in Colorado Springs (travelers were pelted with rain and hail, ... no snow), members listened to a successful Legal Advocacy Fund plaintiff who had spent eleven years fighting the University of Hawaii over her harassment lawsuit. Delegates will long remember the TOPS (Take Pounds Off Sensibility) group with whom they shared the meeting space. Their exuberant singing and applauding frequently forced convention attendees to halt their sessions until the noise subsided. (The TOPS group also helped themselves to COAAUW's afternoon refreshments.) Boulder's Lisa Maas became the second Young Leader Award honoree. Delegates voted to establish District Directors, and to eliminate the four Representatives of Areas of Interest and the "Chairlifts" program. The Archivist Chair became an officially recognized position. Garfield County was disbanded.

At the Orlando convention the Association launched the Voter Education Campaign and ¡Adelante!. The Voter Campaign's goal was to educate both candidates and voters on issues important to women and their families. ¡Adelante! was a diversity action program to implement community awareness. The Eleanor Roosevelt Fund released "Growing Smart: What's Working for Girls in School." Association established their initial web site in 1995 and began signing up members on their FAX/Internet Network.

Throughout this period members continued their work with Girls Count to further programs in local schools. Many branches held "Expanding Your Horizons" conferences to help young girls with career choices, highlighting the fields of math, science, and computer skills. COAAUW began

awarding \$100 to a middle school girl competitor at the Colorado Science and Engineering Fair at Colorado State University. Her project must be entered in the fields of mathematics or computer science at the Junior Division level. Betsy Loague (Foothills Branch) represented COAAUW on an Equity Steering Committee, monitoring a gender-equity grant awarded to ninth grade girls at Golden High School. The overall goal of the project, "Accept No Boundaries," was to help enhance the girls' self-esteem, and to broaden their career awareness. By summer 1995, in its six-year life, the Eleanor Roosevelt Teacher Fellowship Fund had awarded fellowships to seven Colorado teachers. One of these fellows, Maryann Varanka Martin (Estes Park Branch), used her fellowship to conduct single gender physical science classes. These projects were just part of the work being done within the state to help girls strengthen their self-esteem and to expand their knowledge base about non-traditional careers.

From time to time the state has supported specific legislative amendments and bills, thus giving guidance to the Lobby Corps, in addition to an annual public policy program focus approved by convention delegates. The highlight of the legislative program, held the first week in February, continued to be Friday's "Hill Watch," followed by Saturday's daylong program. In 1996 the Public Policy Day keynote speaker, State Senator Dorothy Rupert, said "A woman is like a snowflake. Alone she'll melt, but with other women, she can stop traffic."

Colorado became a 5-Star State in 1996. Durango celebrated its golden anniversary, Grand Junction its 70th. Almost all of the branches participated in some activity involving the national Voter Education Campaign that addresses issues concerning women and families. Members began looking at barriers and disability accessibility to their meetings. The 1997 convention, hosted by the four Jefferson County branches (Chatfield, Evergreen, Foothills, and Lakewood), commenced with a reception in the "Palm Room" at the Governor's Mansion. Cristin White from Durango Branch was the Young Leader Awardee. COAAUW archives were accessible on the web through the Auraria Library web page, and publication of the CO-LEADER ceased, because it was felt that members would be better served if the information were included in the state bulletin. The Association Board of Directors appointed Denver's Dr. Fannye Belle Evans to the newly created position of Director of Leadership Development. The Colorado Coalition for Choice presented COAAUW with their organization's Commitment to Choice Award in June 1997.

Grand Junction's Dr. Cynthia Patton was the year's Young Leader in 1998. Legal Advocacy Fund donations totaled \$7,584, a 45% increase over the previous year. Elise Sweet (Colorado Springs Branch) unveiled the COAAUW Public Policy Committee's website. Longmont marked 50 years and Denver its 100th. Five Colorado members either held Association positions or were serving on Association committees. Pat Jagger was named the top recruiter in the nation with 30 new members for the Gunnison Branch.

"Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children," another Eleanor Roosevelt funded study was released in fall 1998. Members kicked off Sister-to-Sister Summits for teenage girls in communities nationwide to discuss issues such as sexual harassment, body image and violence. The Educational Foundation and the Legal Advocacy Fund changed their recognition year to a calendar year beginning January 1, 1999. The 1999 Young Leader Award was presented to Deborah Miller of the Boulder Branch, followed by Rachel Kittleson, Gunnison Branch, in 2000.

The 90s were some of the most exciting in AAUW's history with the ongoing Eleanor Roosevelt studies. The research challenged the status quo and stimulated the educational process in

innumerable ways. Fighting gender-biased inequities for both women and girls, at all levels of education, resulted in renewed life for the organization. The recognition received in educational venues, as well as for their role in critical women's and civil rights issues, had propelled AAUW to the forefront on the national level.

2000

The new millennium brought some unexpected changes when Denver's Warwick Hotel informed the Public Policy committee that, due to their remodeling, their Public Policy Day meeting rooms would be unavailable. Instead members joined over fifty women's organizations in co-sponsoring "Women 2000: Beijing Plus Five Summit" at the Denver Convention Center. The theme, "Charting the Future," led to discussions and talks on education and health, economics, and human rights.

Colorado AAUW hosted the Rocky Mountain Regional Conference at Aurora's Holiday Inn in June 2000. The conference programming focused on the theme "Rocky Mountain Momentum: AAUW in Action." A series of workshops revolved around many AAUW issues and programs. Vanessa Thomas-Jones, an Educational Foundation Fellow (Denver Branch), spoke of her experiences as a single mom, and how the financial assistance helped her to achieve her educational goals. Friday night featured a banquet at the Colorado History Museum where the attendees were able to view the Jackson/Fielder exhibit of Colorado photographs from 1870 to 2000. The exhibit featured photos John Fielder had taken in the late 1990s, from the same locations that William Henry Jackson had captured in the late 1860s.

There were few changes in COAAUW's agenda as the new century began. With the fall elections drawing near voter education activities by the branches intensified, with the main focus on the State Board of Education candidates. The Lobby Corps, still led by Coordinator Elaine Gardner (Foothills Branch), had represented AAUW through eighteen legislative sessions. Many branches scheduled voter forums, fundraisers, educational conferences, gender equity workshops, leadership training, and/or worked in coalitions with other organizations in a variety of projects. Boulder celebrated its 75th anniversary, Foothills its 30th. Nothing really new ... but now members had the proof ... they were making a difference! And members were beginning to see a big change in the area of communication. The Colorado website! Originally set up as the Public Policy Committee's web page it now included links to: several Colorado branches; the archives at the Auraria Library; and the Association, among others. It was being constantly expanded, and had become an invaluable source to Colorado members thanks to Boulder's Phil Weinstein.

What better way to wrap up Colorado's 75th year than with a "Fandango" in Durango? The 2001 convention was held at Fort Lewis College, high atop a cool and windy mesa, overlooking the town with its panoramic view. A convention to remember in so many ways: traveling through snow, rain and sleet; two members arriving in a tow truck; hearing about another car with a blown tire on Wolf Creek Pass; meetings in the new Center for Southwest Studies; hunting for chairs at the breakfast board meeting; seeing Lillian Moore's (Grand Junction Branch) banner she made in the late 70s for "AAUW WEEK;" and listening to "*What Your Mama Didn't Teach You About Leadership*," by the Leader On Loan (LOL), Jo Harberson; ...just a few of the memories. And the delegates really did dance the fandango as they strained to view, and purchase, the Woman's Pins. The pins were striking and since the funds were to be used for state leadership training projects it was a win-win purchase.

In the early 90s members talked about “shifting paradigms.” By the mid 90s they were encouraged to “step out of the box.” Both the Association and Colorado have “shifted” and “stepped.” With the new millennium, plus constant advances in communication, it was obvious that many challenges lay ahead for the organization. Hopefully, in 2026, members will be able to look back on another productive, and successful, 25 years.

The following quote, written by a member of the library staff in the Auraria Library Guide to the Archival Holdings of COAAUW, best sums up 75 years of COAAUW:

“Of particular interest to researchers is the role of socially-prominent women in educational reform, adult education, health legislation, child health programs, and cultural programs. The changing role of women in American society is mirrored in the changing focus of the AAUW. The members redirected the emphasis of their Study Groups from literary discussions to participation in national, state and civic activities. The goal continues to be informed, responsible action for women through intellectual growth.”

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

COLORADO AAUW PRESIDENTS

1927-1928	Mrs. George D. Meston	Pueblo
1928-1930	Carolyn Tobey	Greeley
1930-1932	Louise W. Fauteaux	Colorado Springs
1932-1935	Lydia Brown	Boulder
1935-1936	Gladys C. Bell	Denver
1936-1939	Obie Sue Dunklee	Denver
1939-1940	Amanda M. Ellis	Colorado Springs
1940-1942	Mrs. Elinor Bluemel	Denver
1942-1944	Mrs. J.J. Dynes	Gunnison
1944-1946	Evelyn Geck	Boulder
1946	Mrs. Ira Richardson	Alamosa
1946-1948	Bess Neeper	Monte Vista
1948-1950	Mrs. Lester H. Stimmel	Fort Collins
1950-1952	Anne Byrd Kennon	Denver
1952-1954	Mrs. John Park	Pueblo
1954-1956	Margaret Miller	Fort Collins
1956-1958	Mrs. Lesis Littler	Greeley
1958-1960	Elizabeth Suhre	Colorado Springs
1960-1962	Betty Bresee	Longmont
1962-1964	Doris Bliss	Grand Junction
1964-1966	Pauline Carter	Denver
1966-1968	Martha Brown	Lakewood
1968-1970	Pearl Mehl	Boulder
1970-1972	Ellin Mrachek	Aurora
1972-1974	Evelyn Ely	Pueblo
1974-1975	Norma Hamilton	Grand Junction
1975-1978	Marietta Peters	Denver
1978-1980	Eleanor Hoefner	Grand Junction
1980-1982	Mary Calhoun Howe	Foothills
1982-1984	Judith Sanderson	Colorado Springs
1984-1986	Sherryl Hall Peterson	Gunnison
1986-1988	Kathy Polhemus	Lakewood
1988-1990	Diane Fuchs	Evergreen
1990-1992	Sharon Schlegel	Gunnison
1992-1994	Lael Porter	Lakewood
1994-1996	Suzanne Bodis	Aurora
1996-1998	Lois Florkey	Chatfield
1998-2000	Lisa Maas Martin	Boulder
2000-2002	Paula Cady	Denver

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

COLORADO AAUW CONVENTIONS

September 24, 1927	Denver
November 9-10, 1928	Denver
October 11-12, 1929	Greeley
November 1, 1930	Denver
October 23-24, 1931	Colorado Springs
November 12, 1932	Denver
November 24, 1933	Boulder
October 26-27, 1934	Pueblo
October 25-26, 1935	Denver
September 1936	Fort Collins
September 1937	Gunnison
September 1938	Greeley
September 29-30, 1939	Colorado Springs
September 6-7, 1940	Alamosa
May 16-17, 1941	Trinidad (Monument Lake)
May 9-10, 1942	Denver
1943	No Convention
April 29, 1944	Denver
1945	No Convention
May 4, 1946	Denver
May 16-17, 1947	Pueblo
May 1-2, 1948	Denver
April 22-24, 1949	Colorado Springs
April 28-30, 1950	Greeley
May 11-13, 1951	Salida
April 4-6, 1952	Fort Collins
May 15-17, 1953	Grand Junction
April 30-May 2, 1954	Pueblo
April 22-24, 1955	Denver
May 18-20, 1956	Canon City
May 10-11, 1957	Greeley
May 16-17, 1958	Colorado Springs
May 8-9, 1959	Alamosa
April 29-30, 1960	Longmont
May 18-20, 1961	Grand Junction
May 4-5, 1962	Pueblo
June 21-22, 1963	Boulder
May 8-9, 1964	Fort Collins

COLORADO AAUW CONVENTIONS (continued)

May 21-22, 1965	Gunnison
April 22-23, 1966	Canon City
April 27-29, 1967	Littleton
April 25-27, 1968	Durango
May 2-4, 1969	Colorado Springs
April 24-26, 1970	Greeley
April 23-25, 1971	Grand Junction
April 21-23, 1972	Durango
April 27-29, 1973	Pueblo
April 19-21, 1974	Denver
April 18-20, 1975	Alamosa
April 23-25, 1976	Grand Junction
April 15-17, 1977	Lakewood
May 5-7, 1978	Colorado Springs
April 20-22, 1979	Foothills
April 25-27, 1980	Gunnison
May 1-3, 1981	Fort Collins
April 30-May 1, 1982	Pueblo
April 29-May 1, 1983	Boulder
May 4-6, 1984	Keystone
April 26-28, 1985	Canon City
April 18-20, 1986	Lakewood
April 24-26, 1987	Trinidad
April 22-24, 1988	Littleton/Englewood
April 21-23, 1989	Gunnison
April 27-29, 1990	Estes Park
April 19-21, 1991	Aurora
May 1-3, 1992	Greeley
April 30-May 2, 1993	Alamosa
April 29-30, 1994	Longmont
May 5-6, 1995	Colorado Springs
April 26-28, 1996	Ouray
April 25-27, 1997	Jefferson County (Chatfield, Evergreen, Foothills, Lakewood)
April 24-26, 1998	Grand Junction
April 30-May 2, 1999	Boulder
May 5-7, 2000	Trinidad
May 4-6, 2001	Durango