

AWARDS GIVEN TO ELGIN AREA AAUW MEMBERS: 2023

AAUW-IL is pleased to recognize MARLENE DAUBERT as the recipient of the 2023 Agent of Change Award for leading AAUW Elgin Area to produce innovative, effective activities which brought growth and movement to the Branch, and social and educational empowerment to women and girls in the community. Marlene's accomplishments demonstrate her role as an agent of social change both inside and outside her Branch.

- As co-president of AAUW Elgin Area from 2019 to 2022, Marlene demonstrated exceptional organizational development, leadership and critical thinking skills to enable the Branch to achieve clear results and growth despite a pandemic environment.
- Marlene pressed to expand Branch scholarships to create access for women who might not get advanced education without assistance. She engaged the U-46 School District task force to develop and fund scholarships to support local women and girls facing racial and language barriers. The Branch now designates at least half of all local scholarships for women of color.
- Marlene championed new sources of funding. For example, the Branch created a popular series of online Cooking Classes with fees going to scholarships. Her own birthday celebration became a fundraiser: Branch members invited a nationwide group of friends, special colleagues and AAUW associates who celebrated the day and gave money to scholarships.
- Under Marlene's leadership the Branch produced a virtual 100th anniversary event using new technological approaches, including online interviews, testimonials and pieces from many women in the Branch. The event raised AAUW visibility by featuring national AAUW Board Chair Julia Brown and airing to an internal and external audience.
- Marlene increased Branch partnerships with other community organizations, including the Gail Borden Library and the League of Women Voters.
- Marlene challenged AAUW Elgin Area to be intentional about fulfilling AAUW Five Star criteria with the result that the Branch achieved 4-Star status.
- Finally, Marlene examined the Branch's leadership program and defined processes to recruit and support leaders in order to better encourage, equip and support the organization in the future.

—Agent of Change Award Committee, Sue Topps, Chair

—Rosemary Dyson, past Elgin Area Co-President, prepared the nomination for Marlene

Nominated by Elgin Area AAUW, JENNIFER FORD received the Marjorie Leonard Award for Volunteer and Community Service at the YWCA Elgin's annual Leader Luncheon. And deserving of it she certainly was, for Jennifer has devoted her life to community service as a volunteer, mentor, community builder and social activist who cares about women in need, about persons of differing races, ethnicities, faiths, social class and economic status as well as about ensuring that women can make their voices heard through the ballot box.

- Through the League of Women Voters, Jennifer—a mental health professional with a degree in psychology—worked with the Elgin's newly formed Ecker Mental Health Center to advocate for a more coordinated and efficient mental health system.
- For many years Jennifer served on the committee of the Long Red Line: One Billion Rising, an event that educates the public about sexual abuse of women/girls and the agencies to which they can turn for help.
- As a member of the YWCA Board, Jennifer worked with young people whose parents were divorcing. She then began and ran the Gals and Pals program, which in turn led to the establishment of a local chapter of Big Sisters, where adult women serve as mentors and friends to young girls.
- Jennifer assisted YWCA Elgin and the Community Crisis Center during the Covid pandemic to enable facilities that could provide help and shelter to open and stay open.
- Jennifer is one of the founders and current chair of Women on the Brink [WOTB]. Absent a huge budget, this group specializes in addressing small, fixable problems. One of her initiatives was to provide gift cards to mothers who could not afford to launder their children's clothes. Another was to distribute feminine hygiene products that she collected from various organizations. Under Jennifer's leadership, WOTB also instituted a pilot project with the YWCA and the Community Crisis Center to provide free drop-off childcare for parents who need to go to a job interview, a medical appointment or a court appearance.
- Believing that storytelling is better than citing statistics to help people empathize with others' struggles, when she develops programs, Jennifer brings in speakers such as a refugee from Afghanistan, a Harvard law student working on prison reform and a representative from the LGBTQ community. *continued*

- Currently Jennifer chairs the Elgin Area AAUW branch's Diversity, Inclusion and Equity efforts. In that capacity, she was a presenter at the 2022 AAUW-IL convention.
- Jennifer served as President of the League of Women Voters Elgin Area for 6 years. During these terms, she held the first Running for Office program, which was designed to encourage and prepare potential women political candidates.
- While serving on the League of Women Voters of Illinois Board, Jennifer chaired the Get Out the Vote campaign for the election year 2000.
- In the days preceding all the professional women's organizations we have today, Jennifer worked with the Women's Council of the Chamber of Commerce to provide supportive programs for business and professional women.
- A hallmark of Jennifer's leadership is the formation of institutional and personal partnerships. Her strategy is to isolate a problem and bring together the appropriate individuals to help solve it.

A tireless worker, a world class organizer, a thoughtful chair of numerous groups and committees, and an imaginative and energetic advocate for the less fortunate, Jennifer Ford truly deserved the Marjorie Leonard Award.

—Originally her nomination application, Patricia Harkin tweaked it slightly after Jennifer received the award

Elgin Area AAUW is awarding PATRICIA HARKIN—retired professor and dean at the University of Illinois, Chicago—the 2023 Susan B. Anthony Award for her tireless advocacy for women. And appropriately so. First created by AAUW in 1975, this award is bestowed upon a member who has not only contributed to the local branch but who has also shown a broader community commitment to the mission of AAUW.

Patty's first presentation for our Women in Culture interest group was on intersectionality, so let's look at the intersectionality of Patty, Susan B. Anthony [SBA] and AAUW. Although they are from different times, both Patty and SBA are the same: women with causes, women with struggles and women with achievements.

Like SBA, Patty has a defined righteous nature combined with a sense of moral outrage. She sees injustice when it appears, and she takes action.

SBA was a tireless advocate for women. Equal Pay for Equal Work was an on-going issue for her and still is for AAUW. Patty has educated us on this issue, both in person and in the newsletter. And as a professor and dean at the University of Illinois at Chicago, she witnessed the disparity of salaries for men and women and took action. There are women who would not be where they are today had it not been for Patty's support and interventions.

As our branch's current Legal Advocacy Chair, Patty has reported on and written articles for our newsletter about suits AAUW national has brought in various courts on behalf of plaintiffs in sexual harassment and salary equity cases. She has also organized three auctions to raise funds for Legal Advocacy.

For the 50th anniversary of Title IX, Patty organized a Women in Culture meeting at which local women told us the stories of how they lived this history and scrambled to get their schools on board. Patty then brought us up to date on this topic.

After the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shootings in Parkland, Florida, Patty marched with local fellow activists and Moms For Sensible Gun Laws. She spoke before the U-46 school board against arming teachers. She spoke at a gun safety program at the Centre sponsored by Moms Demand Action. And she, as is AAUW, is still fighting for gun safety.

In earlier times, Patty demonstrated with anti-Vietnam War protesters while pushing her son in a stroller.

SBA was also an abolitionist, fighting for the right of African Americans and all citizens. In that same vein, Patty has assisted in so many ways, including at the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast and at Centro de Información preparing baskets for auctions.

When Patty served as Co-Vice President for Programs, she authored a successful program for a grant to bring African American textile artist Trish Williams to Elgin to exhibit her amazing quilts. And as a member of our branch's Women in Culture interest group, she has helped bring awareness of the contributions of many women.

And I have no doubt that SBA would applaud Patty for opening her lovely Victorian home for gatherings of like-minded women. There we have watched the documentaries "Each One, Reach One" and "Project 213," the latter of which relayed the history of Blacks coming to Elgin. And in Patty's sitting room we have met many fascinating women, women such as Madhu Krishnamurthy, Daily Herald Diversity editor; and the entertaining and informative Russian professor Dr. Irina Del Genio. Patty has also hosted two of our holiday gatherings.

Though SBA is not on record for any musical contributions, I have no doubt that she would also applaud Patty's many years of service to the Elgin Symphony Orchestra and her enthusiasm for bring first-rate music to our city, as is evidenced by the fact that she is now one of four on the ESO Executive Committee.

There is, however, another similarity between SBA and Patty: they are both authors, although on very different topics. SBA wrote about women's and voting rights; Patty has written *Contending with Words: Composition and Rhetoric in a Postmodern Age*.

Like SBA, Patty has received recognition for her advocacy and service: she has been awarded the YWCA's Marjorie Leonard Award for Volunteer and Community Service; she received the ESO Volunteer of the Year award; in 2021, our branch honored her with a Name Grant. But in the spirit of progress and women's rights and equality and fairness, Elgin Area AAUW is honoring Dr. Patricia Harkin with one more: the prestigious 2023 Susan B. Anthony Award.

—Jennifer Ford, Elgin Area AAUW Diversity Chair

Elgin Area AAUW is delighted to honor RITA SHAW with a Name Grant donation to our national organization in recognition of her interest in and commitment to both our community and branch.

As many in our branch well know, Rita "shows up" and enthusiastically becomes involved: at general membership meetings and fundraisers; at our book and movie discussion groups; at Women in Culture meetings. Rita is also on the Diversity Committee and has been on the Awards Committee as well as the Nominating Committee, for one term serving as its chair. Her involvement in the Membership Committee eventually led to her being elected in 2019 to the office of 2nd Co-Vice President (Membership) and thus to our Board.

Rita has been equally involved in our community. While a student at ECC, for example, she joined those advocating for Elgin to adopt the City Manager form of government. When her 2 daughters were young, she served on an education committee of what is now the Ecker Center to set up educational events for the general public on mental health issues. Later Rita was part of Citizens for Better Government, a group that represented many segments of Elgin whose main goal was to find qualified applicants to run for mayoral and City Council seats.

A long-time math teacher in District U-46, Rita served as a representative to the Elgin Teachers Association and was involved in the District U-46's Instructional Council. She also taught a class on the "new math" for parents, and at ECC, one to help those studying to take the GED exam. And she trained for Volunteer for Income Tax Assistance, then did this work at Gail Borden Public Library.

Currently Rita is a member of Elgin Area AAUW, the Elgin Public Museum and has recently joined the League of Women Voters, Elgin Area. She also serves as a docent for the Elgin History Museum and is an ardent supporter of the ECC Foundation. And though she has lived at The Greens of Elgin for but a few years, she now represents it at the TRIAD Organization.

"Changes do seem ever present and have certainly enriched my life," Rita said. And she has certainly enriched ours.

—Bonnie Hill, Elgin Area AAUW Awards Committee