



---

# U P D A T E S

---

Volume 66

January 2025

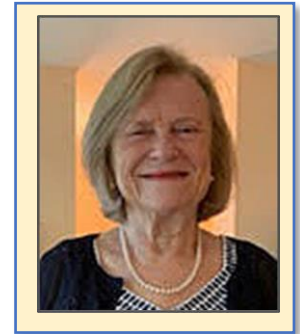
Issue 5

## President’s Message

Ann Sauberman, Co-President

Let’s talk New Years Resolutions. Some of us make resolutions, hoping to improve our own lives and outlook. That made me think about the history of New Year’s Resolutions and when the concept started.

After a Google search, I found, historically, that the ancient Babylonians were the first people recorded to set New Year pledges (later to be known as resolutions) about 4,000 years ago. The Babylonians were also the first to hold recorded celebrations in honor of the New Year. Their New Year was in March, not January, when the crops were being planted. Their resolutions related to religion, mythology, and increased power. The Babylonians started a 12-day festival called Akitu ([www.britannica.com/topic/Akitu](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Akitu)). During this celebration, people planted their crops and pledged their allegiance to their current king or crowned a new one. The Babylonians believed that if they fulfilled their New Year promises, then the gods would look favorable upon them in the coming year. The tradition of celebrating the New Year and setting pledges was continued in Ancient Rome and was celebrated on March 15 (the Ides of March). Julius Caesar, who introduced the Julian Calendar, set January 1 as the start of the New Year. The new date was to honor the Roman god, Janus. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII reinstated the Gregorian Calendar and officially claimed the New Year to be on January 1. New Year resolutions have continued in modern times to fit the current culture. Contemporary resolutions tend to be more secular than religious.



**President’s Message** continues on page 2.

---

AAUW National Website: <https://www.aauw.org/>

AAUW-VA Website: <https://aauw-va.aauw.net/>

Springfield-Annandale Website: <https://sprann-va.aauw.net/>

Like us on Facebook. Search *Springfield-Annandale AAUW*

### AAUW Mission Statement

*To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. Vision: Equity for all. Values: Non-partisan. Fact based.*

### AAUW Diversity Statement

*In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.*

## President's Message *continued from page 1*

New Year resolutions usually express people's hopes and promises for a new start to a new year. Many of us will once again make New Year Resolutions. Some may decide to eat healthier, lose weight, exercise more, or maybe travel to see family. There are so many possibilities, but many of these resolutions will be broken within weeks. I was thinking about what I may choose for my resolutions. But as I think about the current year and the new national government about to be inaugurated, I decided that perhaps group goals might be more effective. What could members of our Springfield-Annandale Branch do to work for positive change on the Branch, State, and National AAUW

*The ancient Babylonians were the first people recorded to set New Year pledges (later to be known as resolutions) about 4,000 years ago*

levels? Perhaps we could be willing to be nominated for Branch Board positions available in the Spring; attend the Virginia State Conference in Alexandria; or try to attend more Branch Programs. So often these programs and conferences, which require so much planning and work by the Board, are not well-attended. AAUW will only stay effective and important if each of us are willing to make a resolution to do a little more. I am not trying to preach, but as I studied the history of New Year's Resolutions, I realized that to plan for a successful future at the beginning of each year, we need to be willing to make a commitment for positive change. We need to make group resolutions that are worked on and not quickly broken and discarded. In this way we can make AAUW a successful and important contributor to our community.

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and I wish you a very healthy and productive New Year. Read *UPDATES* to find out all the many activities that we can attend together.

## Here's Something of Interest

Ann Sauberman, Co-President



*The Six Triple Eight*, a new movie streamed by Netflix, tells the story the U.S. Army's only Black female battalion to serve overseas in World War II. Maj. Charity Adams led the 6888th mostly black women of the Postal Directory Battalion. They were given the task of sorting millions of backlogged mail items, so that soldiers could receive letters from home, and their loved ones could hear from their family members serving in Europe. Before this mission, most of the letters lay in sacks in remote store rooms. This was a daunting task that White military leaders' thought was impossible; they expected this new minority Battalion would fail.

It is the story of discrimination in the Army both against racial and gender minorities. This is an excellent movie dealing with the concept of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (DEI). I recommend it to all AAUW members. It will reinforce the importance of our organization fighting for DEI.

In addition, on the front page of the Style section of December 23, 2024 edition of *The Washington Post*, there is a featured article about Kerry Washington, the lead actress in the movie, *The Six Triple Eight*. I also recommend this article which discusses Ms. Washington's life of activism. For those of you with a *Washington Post* e-subscription, read the article here:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/movies/2024/12/22/kerry-washington-politics-six-triple-eight/>

For those without an e-subscription, read the article posted at the end of this newsletter.

## Branch Program Meeting – January 8 – Zoom

Irene McGhee, Amy Crolus, Co-Vice Presidents for Programs

The Branch Program Meeting on **January 8**, 7:00 P.M., is via Zoom. “Empowering Women: Human Trafficking Awareness, Prevention, and Support Strategies” is the theme.

Deepa Patel, our featured speaker, is the Co-Founder of Trauma and Hope, a private government contracted mental health organization dedicated to supporting survivors of trauma including violence, sexual exploitation, and gang involvement.

A Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Sex Offender Treatment Provider, Ms. Patel specializes in trauma-focused mental health care, offering expertise in working with non-voluntary court mandated clients, including gang members and perpetrators of sex crimes. She is proficient in various therapeutic modalities such as Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Progressive Counting (PC), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Havening, which she uses to address developmental and complex trauma.



Deepa Patel

With over two decades of experience, Ms. Patel has developed a 5-day human trafficking program for professionals working with survivors of human trafficking, Sexual Exploitation Treatment and Training Services (SETTS). Her programs, rooted in evidence-based practices, have been implemented statewide in Virginia in partnership with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

Ms. Patel is a sought-after consultant and trainer in trauma, human trafficking, and gang intervention. Her work has earned her numerous awards, including the Virginia NASW Social Worker of the Year Award (20117) and the Frederick Milton Thrasher Award for gang intervention. She continues to shape policy and practice at local and national levels, providing critical education and interventions.

Watch your email for your Zoom invitation.

## Branch Program Meeting – February 7 – Zoom

Irene McGhee, Amy Crolus, Co-Vice Presidents for Programs



Jon White, NOAA expert on climate, is our featured speaker for the Zoom meeting on Friday, **February 7**, 10:00 A.M. Some topics affected by climate change are food insecurity, fish farms, rising water levels, plastics, storm water pollution, and loss of seaweed and reefs and their effect on the food chain. As normal citizens and consumers, most people want to know what they can do to help our planet and our relations with nature and the scientific community. Mr. White plans to address these concerns. Read his biography at the end of this newsletter. Watch your email for your Zoom invitation.

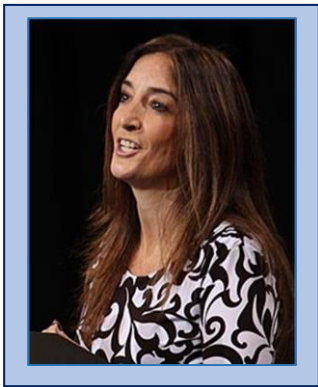
## October, November, and December Program Meetings

Irene McGhee, Amy Crolus, Co-Vice Presidents for Programs

Our AAUW monthly meetings have covered several interesting topics. In October, we welcomed Sida Lei, author and survivor of Pol Pot's Killing Fields. She told her childhood story of survival, of family tragedy, and of national upheaval in Cambodia and held us spellbound, sometimes with tears in our own eyes. We came away renewed in courage, and inspired by a resilience beyond imagining. Many community members also attended. Her book, "Two Teaspoons of Rice", is currently available at Pohick Library, and for sale by the author (<https://twoteaspoonsofrice.com/>).



Sida Lei



Eileen Filler-Corn

In November, in partnership with Pohick Regional Library, we invited Eileen Filler-Corn, former Minority Leader and Speaker of the House of Delegates in the State of VA, and the first woman and first Jewish woman to hold those positions. She represented our 41st District in Fairfax County and fought for many of the issues and policies endorsed by our AAUW Public Policy platform. Ms. Filler-Corn gave us an overview of her professional experiences in these capacities, and talked about her family background and community involvement. She did not hint at any future political ambition, but encouraged a spirit of bi-partisan co-operation and community coalitions as a stepping stone to a strong democracy.

In December, we held our Holiday Luncheon at Maggiano's Restaurant at Springfield Town Center. We enjoyed a great family style meal with a lovely variety of appetizers, entrees, and deserts, in their private dining room. The day was made more festive by the music by jazz musicians Nii Akwie Adotoye, local saxophone performer and teacher in Maryland, and keyboard artist with the Army Blues, James Collins. It was a great time of socializing. Special guests were included.

## Lobby Day in January – January 15-16

Planning is underway for State Lobby Day, **January 16**. This will be our first opportunity to meet with Virginia legislators to make the case for our priorities. Last year, several important bills passed the House and the Senate but were vetoed by the Governor. There were insufficient votes to override those vetoes. Let Susan Burk know if you plan to attend Lobby Day and are interested in carpooling. Refer to the flyer at the end of this newsletter for information about the upcoming Lobby Day in Richmond. The registration form is located here: <https://forms.gle/BiyqescmtjqS9ctc8>

## Join AAUW Capitol Hill Lobby Corps in 2025

Susan Burk, Public Policy Chair

As AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell recently wrote: “We enter 2025 with hope and renewed passion for the challenges that may lie ahead. We’re prepared to fight and start the year strong with an agenda that we will present to Congress based on AAUW’s values. Let’s keep fighting for women’s and girls’ equity in 2025 — together.”

Be on the lookout for the registration link to an online Zoom training session on **January 9**. In just an hour, learn how to interact with Congress on familiar, important issues that support women and families.

YES! You can do this! Lobbying requires only one or two mornings monthly. You don't need to be an expert! You'll always be paired with another AAUW member. You'll be well prepared with brief talking points and one specific Ask per visit. We often speak to young Congressional staffers who are not intimidating and are happy to hear from dedicated volunteers. Congressional offices are easily reached via Metro. You can do this!

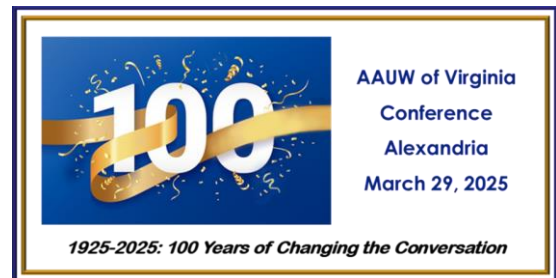
The challenges may be greater, but our public policy priorities have not changed. AAUW intends to make its views known and our voices heard on Capitol Hill through our Lobby Corps.

If you are interested and want to support this important effort, contact Sandy Lawrence for information. Sandy is a long-time Lobby Corps member and Branch member.

## AAUW-VA 2025 State Conference and Centennial Celebration

Susan Burk, Public Policy Chair

Preparations are well underway for AAUW-VA’s 2025 State Conference at which we will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the establishment of AAUW-VA. You will soon receive information about on-line and postal registration, along with information on the jam-packed program. The Conference will be held on Saturday, **March 29**, at the Sheraton Suites Hotel in Old Town, Alexandria. You can enjoy pre-conference festivities on Friday, **March 28**, including the choice of two optional tours and a celebratory toast and entertainment in the evening.



Rooms are still available at a discounted price. Refer to the flyer at the end of this newsletter for more information. Even if you don’t plan to spend the night, plan to join members from all around the state for the conference. It’s guaranteed to inform, inspire, and ignite your passion for being the change you want to see!

The Springfield-Annandale Branch already has submitted a full-page ad for the Conference Program Book designed by Judy Titterton. Earlier this year, AAUW-VA’s President, Lane Stone, encouraged branches to provide 100 of anything to donate in celebration of our centennial. Springfield-Annandale’s Board decided to purchase 100 pairs of men’s and women’s socks. They will be delivered to the Eleanor U. Kennedy Shelter affiliated with New Hope Housing this month.

Eleanor U. Kennedy Shelter

9155 Richmond Highway, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060, 703-799-0200; Fax 703-799-8127

- 50-bed shelter for adults without children.
- 38 beds for men; 12 beds for women.
- 15 additional beds for overflow capacity year-round, plus 10 more during cold weather.
- Full service sheltering and supportive services program.
- Opened in 1986. Operated by New Hope Housing, Inc.

Due to popular demand, Branches have been asked to provide gift baskets to raffle off at the conference. All proceeds will go to AAUW's Greatest Needs Fund. I volunteered to be the point of contact for our Branch basket and am working on a Provence, France theme. I have several items I picked up during a visit this fall to Provence but need your help with ideas and items to fill our basket. Let me know if you can contribute to our Branch raffle basket.

## Public Policy

Susan Burk, Public Policy Chair

### ERA: If not now, when??

As many of you know, the Archivist of the United States recently issued the following statement on the ERA ratification process on December 17, 2024:

Statement on the Equal Rights Amendment Ratification Process

Media Alert - Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Washington, DC

Archivist of the United States Dr. Colleen Shogan and Deputy Archivist William J. Bosanko released the following statement today on the Equal Rights Amendment and the constitutional responsibilities for administering the ratification process:

“As Archivist and Deputy Archivist of the United States, it is our responsibility to uphold the integrity of the constitutional amendment process and ensure that changes to the Constitution are carried out in accordance with the law. At this time, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) cannot be certified as part of the Constitution due to established legal, judicial, and procedural decisions.

“In 2020 and again in 2022, the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) of the U.S. Department of Justice affirmed that the ratification deadline established by Congress for the ERA is valid and enforceable. The OLC concluded that extending or removing the deadline requires new action by Congress or the courts. Court decisions at both the District and Circuit levels have affirmed that the ratification deadlines established by Congress for the ERA are valid. Therefore, the Archivist of the United States cannot legally publish the Equal Rights Amendment. As the leaders of the National Archives, we will abide by these legal precedents and support the constitutional framework in which we operate.

“The role of the Archivist of the United States is to follow the law as it stands, ensuring the integrity of our nation's governing institutions. Personal opinion or beliefs are not relevant;

as the leaders of the National Archives, we support established legal processes and decisions.

“We will continue to serve with transparency and integrity as we move forward in addressing this and all matters related to our Constitution.”

Needless to say, this statement was met with great disappointment and consternation. AAUW’s CEO, Gloria Blackwell, issued the following strong, official response:

“We are extremely frustrated at the National Archivist’s refusal to publish the ERA. Her decision to side with the Trump Administration and against legal scholars and the American Bar Administration is reprehensible.

Dr. Shogan, publish the ERA. Women around the country have waited long enough.”

Thank you to all who wrote letters urging the President to move the ERA forward. We are nothing if not persistent!

## The Silent Auction Committee

Debbie Gilligan has pulled together the Silent Auction Committee to work on the Silent Auction for Spring Fling. The Committee is planning a 50/50 Money Raffle, and silent auctions for gift baskets\*, desirable jewelry, elite scarves, high-end handbags, and gift cards\*\*.

Save Friday, **May 9**, for the Springfield-Annandale Branch Spring Fling, at the Springfield Golf and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Drive, Springfield.

A New Year! Time to clean out that closet and donate your jewelry, scarves, and handbags to the Committee!

Need to re-gift an item listed? Donate it to the Committee.

Feeling your Fairy Godmother stirring? Feed that feeling with a donated item, or start a gift basket.

### \*Gift Baskets Ideas

Spring Garden Basket, Italian Delights, Your Wellness Spa, Beach Time, Baby Goodies, Time for Book Worms, International Immersion.

You can volunteer to provide items for these baskets, or create a basket with your friends. Think about what you would like to win in a basket with any of the themes listed.

OR come up with your own theme!

BTW, Judy Titterton is providing a Chocolate Dreams basket. Contact her if you would care to join her in her quest.

### \*\*Gift Cards

While you’re out and about, why not stop by your favorite restaurant, spa, grocery store, apparel store, and ask for a Gift Card Donation? The business letter is at the end of this newsletter. Make a few copies and keep them in your car, bicycle basket, or sleigh glove compartment for when you are near your favorite business.

Watch your email for a message from the Committee as to where to send all your stuff. But for now, we need you to think about what you can give to make this thing happen.

Thanks!

## Evening Book Group

The Evening Book Group next meets via Zoom, Thursday, **January 2**, 7:00 P.M., to discuss *The Sewing Girl's Tale*, by John Wood Sweet. Jane Censer is the scheduled reviewer.

The group meets again virtually Thursday, **February 6**, 7:00 P.M., to discuss *Clementine: The Life of Mrs. Winston Churchill*, by Sonia Purnell. Beth Von Holle is the scheduled reviewer. This is different than what is posted in the Directory. *West With Giraffes* is the book now scheduled for **March 6**. Contact Debbie Gilligan for more information.

## Morning Book Group

The Morning Book Group meets on Thursday, **January 9**, 10:00 A.M., for a review of *How to Know a Person*, by David Brooks. Terry Graham will host and Mary Helmantoler will review the book.

The group meets next on Thursday, **February 13**, 10:00 A.M., for a review of *The Color of Air*, by Gail Tsukiyama. Irene McGhee will host and review the book. Contact Wendy Cleland-Hamnett or Deborah Dodd for more information.

## Movies at Midweek

Bev Wise and Helen Cassidy, Movie Mavens

Beginning January 2025, Movies at Midweek will now meet on the second Wednesday of the month.

The next meeting of Movies at Midweek is **January 8**. Watch your email on the Friday preceding for the movie selection.



## BRANCH CALENDAR

January 2, 7:00 P.M.	Evening Book Group – Zoom	<a href="#">page 8</a>
January 8	Movies at Midweek	<a href="#">page 8</a>
January 8, 7:00 P.M.	Branch Program Meeting – Zoom	<a href="#">page 3</a>
January 9, 10:00 A.M.	Morning Book Group – Live	<a href="#">page 8</a>
January 9	Lobby Corps Training Zoom	<a href="#">page 3</a>
January 15-16	Lobby Day, Richmond	<a href="#">page 4</a>
January 27	<i>UPDATES</i> articles due	
February 6, 7:00 P.M.	Evening Book Group – Zoom	<a href="#">page 8</a>
February 7, 10:00 A.M.	Branch Program Meeting – Zoom	<a href="#">page 3</a>
February 13, 10:00 A.M.	Morning Book Group – Live	<a href="#">page 8</a>
March 28-29	State Conference, Alexandria	<a href="#">page 5</a>

---

The June 2025 edition of the *Springfield-Annandale UPDATES* newsletter will be my last as Editor. It's time to give someone else the opportunity to serve this dynamic organization. Contact Cathie Boivin or Anne Sauberman, Co-Presidents, to volunteer for this important position.

Judy Titterton, Editor

### Famous Exits



*Gone With the Wind* – The epic love story set during the Civil War ends in grand fashion. Tired of the games being played by Scarlett O’Hara, Rhett Butler walks out on Scarlett with the epic line, “Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.” This leads to Scarlett pledging to win back Rhett because,

**“tomorrow is another day.”**

***Articles for February UPDATES due January 27***

## Kerry Washington has a message to deliver

*Her new movie, “The Six Triple Eight,” about a heroic Black battalion tasked with delivering mail in World War II, is the latest stop in a life of activism.*

December 22, 2024

By Helena Andrews-Dyer

“There’s something so hopeful and romantic about this city,” says Kerry Washington, newly barefoot and settling into a perfect Sukhasana pose inside the Four Seasons in Georgetown. Yes, she’s describing D.C. — not as a swamp or a cesspool or, say, the nest of backstabbing and intrigue seen on her show “Scandal.” But as a real place containing “a deep sense of hope and possibility.” “There’s so much formal beauty in the city,” Washington continues. “It’s meant to evoke traditions of democracy that predate us. When I’m here, I’m often filled with a desire to reach toward the best in us.” Does this sound like a stump speech? Probably. She has given plenty of those as a surrogate for Barack Obama, Joe Biden, and Kamala Harris. But Washington — the actress, producer and (perhaps most important to her) activist — is absolutely serious. She often is. Thoughtful, intentional, passionate — and unequivocal. Swathed in all black with her hair pulled back into a chic chignon, the 47-year-old is intent on making herself clear. You can see it in the signature way her lips curl around each word, imbuing every syllable with purpose. You’re gonna get this message.



“It’s not always practiced or executed in those romantic ways. But I think the potential for that exists here, like in the air,” she says.

Washington and Washington have history. The Bronx native went to college here. Then, as a young working actress, she wore down the marble halls of Congress advocating for expanded arts funding. (That’s also where she bumped into her future “Scandal” co-star Tony Goldwyn for the first time in the late aughts, as members of the Creative Coalition.) She aided the Obama and Biden administrations by serving on the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Her career-defining role as D.C. fixer Olivia Pope in “Scandal” launched her into the Hollywood stratosphere. Washington, the place, is a backdrop that Washington, the actress, doesn’t take for granted or hold in contempt. For the actress, the nation’s capital is a liminal space straddling the North and the South, two sides of the political spectrum, reinventing itself year after year. It’s always trying, striving. “In the presence of our chaos and mess as a country is the seed of our possibility to be and do better,” she says, almost daringly. Her hope is palpable. But right now it’s October. The presidential election is weeks away.

In that context, this impromptu What Washington Means to Me speech makes a lot of sense. The actress has never separated her work on-screen from her politics offscreen. This year, she seemed to work nonstop — on social media, on the campaign trail and at the Democratic National Convention — in support of Harris’s presidential campaign.

On Election Day, Washington posted an image of Beyoncé in all her Renaissance World Tour glory with the words “If you waited in line for this, you can wait in line to vote for Kamala.” The next morning, as the country settled into a new reality, the actress advised her 7.4 million followers, “Be kind to yourself today.” But for Washington, the work is the work is the work. And, increasingly, the stories she tells as an actress and producer are their own form of activism. Washington’s latest project is “The Six Triple Eight,” a war movie that pulls off the unlikely trick of telling an inspiring story about delivering the mail. Written and directed by Tyler Perry, the film (now streaming on Netflix) resurrects a forgotten chapter of history, the story of the U.S. Army’s only Black female battalion to serve overseas during World War II. The actress stars as Maj. Charity Adams, who led the 855 mostly Black women of the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, which was given the task of processing a backlog of 17 million pieces of mail. The year was 1945, and many soldiers serving overseas hadn’t been in touch with their families in ages. Other battalions had tried and failed to sift through the hangars of moldering letters. Adams and her soldiers were given six months to solve the logistical nightmare and did it in less than 90 days.

“Ladies,” Washington declares as Adams in the film, “we have been ordered to provide hope.” Washington seems to have tasked herself with a similar mission: to inject purpose. The projects she produces, including “The Six Triple Eight,” widen the aperture of pop culture in ways that are both urgent and necessary. She isn’t alone, of course. This latest film fits alongside other recent portrayals of monumental Black figures in American history who have never gotten their mainstream due, like Regina King as Rep. Shirley Chisholm in “Shirley” and Colman Domingo as civil rights trailblazer Bayard Rustin in “Rustin.”

If Washington feels a duty to foster this kind of work, it’s at least one she enjoys. “I see it as a really kick-ass gift of my job,” she says. Being a Black woman in “the business of show,” as she calls it, is political.

“I see her storytelling as a form of activism,” says Sherri Williams, an assistant professor of race, media, and communication at American University. “Especially at a time when our history as Black people is being suppressed and erased. Here she is amplifying a story about Black women that we should have known. That is activism.” Since the 2016 establishment of her production company, Simpson Street, named after the street in the Bronx where her mother grew up as the child of Jamaican immigrants, Washington has diverted the spotlight toward stories about sexual harassment (“Confirmation”), police brutality (“American Son”), race and class (“Little Fires Everywhere”) and incarceration (“UnPrisoned”).

Hers is a more involved kind of “celebrity activism,” which, with others, can sometimes feel performative and half-committed. Washington does much more than show up at rallies every four years. “She’s consistent,” Williams said. “We don’t just see her when there is an issue that is en vogue. We see her being consistent, steady, and serious.”

It helped that Washington was engaged in activism long before she was cast as Olivia Pope. As a student at the Spence School, the exclusive all-girls prep school in New York, Washington was known as “The Condom Lady,” because of her sex-education advocacy as a member of the STAR program, which raised awareness about the AIDS crisis through theater. (She kept a rainbow assortment of condoms in her backpack.) In the early to mid-1990s, young Kerry was attending rallies and protests in support of abortion rights, LGBTQ+ rights, health funding, you name it. “I definitely felt at home in lots of movement-building circles as a teenager,” Washington says. She’s been at this for a while.

After graduating from George Washington University in 1998, Washington gave herself exactly one year to make it as an actress. If it didn't work out, there were LSAT and GMAT prep books waiting. She moved back home to New York and landed her first feature film, 2000's "Our Song," a coming-of-age story about three girls in Crown Heights. The budget was "low low" for the "scrappy, no-permits-having" film, but the experience solidified what type of actor she wanted to be. Hardworking. Not famous-famous. About something.

"There was nowhere else I wanted to be. Nothing else I wanted to do every day that I was there. I felt completely creatively and emotionally fulfilled. That felt like joy to me," Washington says. For the next decade, she defined herself as a character actress, disappearing into disparate roles. Audiences didn't immediately connect her roles in "Save the Last Dance," "She Hates Me" and "Ray." Then "Scandal" happened.

The cultural tsunami around "Scandal" was immense. This was just before streaming scattered audiences and fame atomized across TikTok. Way back when, in 2012, network television still ruled, and Black Twitter was a kingmaker. As "Olivia Pope" became shorthand for getting the job done, Kerry Washington's anonymity vanished. "My life changed because she was such a star," says Washington, who was the first African American woman since 1974 to headline a network drama. Earlier this month, Washington was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Sitting front row at the ceremony on Hollywood Boulevard were Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos and his wife, Nicole Avant, who produced "The Six Triple Eight," in addition to Perry, Washington's parents, and her husband, actor and former NFL player Nnamdi Asomugha.

"She sets the example of how to be a person in this business," said "Scandal" creator Shonda Rhimes during the ceremony. "A woman in this business. A woman of color in this business. Of how to be a human in this business." Washington has wanted to quit acting no fewer than five times in her 25-year career. "It happens every few years," she says. The actress will hit a pinnacle or a wall and think, That's it. Then a project will come across her desk that is "undeniable." "And I think, 'No, no, no. I'll do this one more,'" she says. After 2004's "Ray," she thought about returning to her "working-actor hustle" as a yoga instructor. Then came "The Last King of Scotland." After appearing in David Mamet's "Race" on Broadway in 2009 and 2010, Washington figured she'd go out on a high note and maybe dust off that GMAT guide. Then she read the script for "Scandal." "I don't really like the hustle. I don't love the business of show," she says. Perhaps that's why Washington folds the art and the activism together as a producer and star. It was after Donald Trump's 2016 election win when Washington realized that society may have put a wee bit too much stock in celebrity. A seasoned surrogate by then, the actress woke up the morning after election night to fans (and presumably American voters) clamoring for Olivia Pope. "We really have lost sight of who matters in a democracy," she thought.

Olivia Pope is a very powerful character and a fixture in culture, but Olivia Pope can't actually vote," Washington says. "She can't knock on doors. She can't donate to a campaign. She can't work at a phone bank. Her dad doesn't exist in the real world." To tip the scales in the right direction, the actress convened a roundtable of experts in New York — consultants, community organizers, politicians, educators — and tasked them to help her "do this better." That is, to break through the noise and have real political impact. She wanted to shed the celebrity-surrogate role and really participate. There were two main takeaways from the Kerry Washington Summit: One, celebrity is not enough to get people to go to the polls. Two,

communities don't really respond to drop-in surrogates who show up every four years in support of a political candidate instead of supporting issues that don't take a break.

Out of that convening, Washington began the Vision Into Power Cohort, a partnership with the Movement Voter Project that pairs grassroots organizations with the deep resources someone like Washington has access to. Her foundation provides funding, infrastructure building, and media and leadership training. “So not being like, ‘I’m Kerry Washington, I know what’s best for you and your neighborhood.’ But, ‘I’m Kerry Washington. I have a couple of superpowers, like storytelling and fundraising and branding. I want to give you that so you can continue to do what you do.’”

So it's about being a better celebrity activist. But also about being a different kind of artist. Perry underscored that commitment at Washington's Walk of Fame ceremony: “She approaches it understanding that she's not just acting, but she's representing the people that she is portraying. And with that kind of love, with that kind of attention, she approaches every detail.” All of which is another way of saying empathy — how Washington chooses stories, then how she tells them. “I don't want any of us to leave this earth feeling like we don't matter, our voices don't matter, our stories don't matter,” she says. It makes her latest role — a leader of letter carriers — especially fitting: Washington is here to deliver messages. The day after the presidential election, after she charged her followers to “be kind” to themselves, she offered a reminder: “There is more work to do.”

## Biography of Rear Admiral Jon White, USN

Rear Admiral Jon White, USN (retired) enjoyed a distinguished 32-year career as an oceanography and meteorology officer in the US Navy, culminating in his assignment as Oceanographer and Navigator of the Navy. This position included leadership of the Navy's Task Force Climate Change and extensive federal and international engagement topics related to national security and global prosperity.

Following his Navy career, White served as President & CEO of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership (COL) until his retirement in 2021. COL is a non-profit corporation that represents ocean science and technology organizations from academia, industry, and the non-profit sectors.

White has extensive experience in working with Congress and federal agencies of the U.S. government to advance policy specific to the ocean, weather, and climate. He is an accomplished speaker and writer and has given interviews across traditional and social media including *60 Minutes* and *Reddit AMA*. He serves as an advisor and consultant to governmental and non-governmental organizations from local to national levels.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Oceanographic Technology from the Florida Institute of Technology, and a Master of Science degree *with distinction* in Oceanography and Meteorology from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School.



## **Save the Dates**



### **AAUW of Virginia Lobby Days in Richmond**

**January 15, 2025  
Evening Reception and Talk  
Hampton Inn and Suites, Richmond**

**January 16, 2025  
Lobby Day  
Make our Voices Heard in Richmond  
Connect with our Lawmakers**

**Room reservation link at Hampton Inn & Suites Is  
<https://group.hamptoninn.com/78zjxv>**

**\$157**



MARK THIS DOWN ON YOUR  
CALENDAR!

2025 AAUW-VA STATE  
CONFERENCE

MARCH 29, 2025

(Preconference activities on March 28)

On March 27-28, 1925, the seven already existing local branches of AAUW in Virginia met in Williamsburg. When they adjourned, the Virginia Division of AAUW was a reality.

On March 28, 2025, join us in Alexandria as the AAUW-VA centennial celebration begins, and we jubilantly begin our second century of women changing the conversation.

The conference is being hosted by the AAUW-VA Northern District branches at the Sheraton Suites Old Town Alexandria, 801 N. St. Asaph Street, Alexandria 22314 on Saturday, March 29, 2025, with preconference activities on March 28, 2025.

Great news! It's not too early to reserve a room. Guest rooms will be available for March 28 & 29 (king/sofa bed or double/double for \$159 per night plus tax, \* including a full hot breakfast for up to 2 persons.) Use this QR code to make a reservation:



or! Use this link [Use this link](#) You can also call 1 (888) 236-2427; use code AAUW of Virginia Mar2025 to reserve a room. The rate is also available for 3 days before/after March 28 & 29 on a space available basis. You must make a reservation for March 28 and/or 29, and then email [jrasolofoson@sheratonalexandria.com](mailto:jrasolofoson@sheratonalexandria.com) to book extra days.

The earlier you book a room the better because the 2025 Conference will take place on the eve of Cherry Blossom season and rooms in the hotel will book up early. Once our block is sold out, we might be able to add more rooms, but that will only be possible if the hotel is not already sold out.

**\*IMPORTANT NOTICE:** When making your hotel reservation, ignore any reference to a \$25 resort fee. You will **NOT** be charged this. The room rate is \$159 plus state and local taxes.





Spring 2025

Dear Business Owner,

The Springfield-Annandale Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) is having a benefit luncheon on May 9, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 3 00 p.m. to raise funds to support AAUW-sponsored programs such as scholarships, leadership development, lifelong education for women and girls, and the Legal Advocacy Fund. The purpose of this letter is to request your support for this fundraising effort.

At the luncheon, we will have a featured speaker and will conduct a SILENT AUCTION. We are seeking donations of items or gift certificates for use at the auction. Companies/Businesses that donate will be acknowledged as contributors to the silent auction in the printed program.

We expect 100+ people will attend this fundraising event, which will be held at the Springfield Golf and Country Club.

|

Thank you for considering our request. Responses may be addressed to:

Debbie Gilligan  
Silent Auction Committee  
Springfield Annandale Chapter, AAUW  
8908 Glade Hill Rd. Fairfax, VA 22031  
debbiegilligan@verizon.net  
703-503-2905  
<https://sprann-va.aauw.net/> Tax Id# 54-6058154

Bearer of Letter is: \_\_\_\_\_