

BRANCH BEACON

TWO WOMEN AWARDED \$1,000 EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The winners of the Educational Achievement Awards for 2025 were announced at the Annual Meeting in April. Chairman of the Awards Committee, Pauline Phillips is pictured below presenting the awards.

Committee members Pauline Phillips, Linda Brown, Terrye Howell, Michael Ann Wiley, and Dianne Schmoyer selected the recipients from four applications submitted.



AAUW was formed in 1881 by seventeen women from eight colleges.

The Lake Wales Branch was founded May 16, 1953.

The purpose of this branch shall be to unite graduates of different educational institutions in order to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.



TAMARA BRUTUS

Tamara holds a Bachelor's Degree in Health Science from the University of Central Florida and is pursuing an Associate's Degree in Nursing at Polk State. After graduation she plans to apply to ICU's in the area and begin working toward becoming a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. She is currently employed as a PRN Nurse Apprentice. She was inspired to pursue a nursing career after becoming the primary caregiver for her father when he suffered a stroke.

Tamara is a resident of Winter Haven.

ALEXANDRIA FIGUORA

Alexandria lives in Lakeland and was a single mom when she applied for our scholarship. She was unable to attend the Annual Meeting. Her wedding took precedence that day!

She has a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Central Florida. She is currently enrolled in the Master of Social Work Program at Florida State University with the goal of serving vulnerable communities as a licensed social worker.



ELECTION OF OFFICERS 2025-2026

Treasurers Dianne Schmoyer and Jennifer Nanek (left) and Co-VP for Program Kay Bean are installed by Charlene Bennett at the Annual Meeting. Dorothy Scott Wilson, also elected Co-VP for Program, could not attend.



Remembering Nancy Gossard

I first met Nancy at a party in the home of a fellow AAUW member. Being new to the area and the party's attendees, I found myself wandering into the library of the large home, and there I found a new, like-minded, and now, very missed friend. Both teachers, we found many things in common. Through the next half dozen years, we spent many an hour together at Rotary, Democratic Club, Woman's Club, AAUW meetings, and neighborhood social events, usually ending each event with a phone call or very long text. We would mull over the details and politics of each. Nancy was very quick and well read, making her a great conversationalist. She was a great person to debate on the ethics of situations. She was also very empathetic and kind, making her a great friend.

Nancy served on many Boards and many worthwhile civic and church charities. She loved animals, especially her cats, and was very concerned about environmental issues. Even with her health and mobility limitations, she remained physically and mentally active, always up for a game of Mexican Train and/or a glass of wine on the porch with friends. When soliciting her friends for adjectives to describe Nancy for this tribute, I heard the words "intelligent," "loyal," "friendly," "service-minded," and "spiritual."

Recently, the appalling state of National, State, and Local governmental affairs really offended Nancy's sensibilities and dominated many of our conversations, but at the end of each, she would remind me to "somehow find joy." This task has become a bit harder without her companionship, but a parting sentiment for which I will always be grateful.

Juanita Zwaryczuk



March 16, 2025



PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

2025-2026

*On May 9, members met to plan for next year's programs and events.
Here are the highlights.*

Overall Theme for Year:
"Advancing Women in Leadership"

Monthly program meetings:
Change from breakfast to lunch meetings
3rd Thursday of each month
Lunch at Water's Edge 11:30
Program 12:10

September program: New Member Brunch
Saturday, September 20 at Water's Edge
To be planned by the Membership Committee.

Program Topics:
October: DEI (Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion)
November: Salary Negotiation Workshops
January: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)
February: Black History Month
March: Women's History Month

Major Fund Raiser – January 4, 2026

A professional actress will impersonate Ruth Bader Ginsburg in an evening performance open to the public, to be held at Lake Ashton's main clubhouse. Details will be forthcoming.

Because the fundraiser will require so much of our time and effort, it was decided to postpone Women Who Made History on the Ridge until March of 2027.

By Charlene Bennett



Jennifer

AAUW Florida News

This year, branch member Juanita Zwaryczuk volunteered to chair the state nominating committee. Working with members from several other branches around the state, the group successfully filled the required posts.

Our very own Jennifer Nanek assumed a crucial post. She will serve as the State Director of Finance, while continuing her role as our Branch Co-treasurer.

Kudos to JZ and JN for their generous service.

By Betty Martin



Juanita

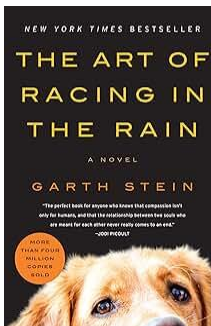
Art-in-Schools Needs Volunteers

Call Betty Martin if you can help! 863-632-1039

June 3, 4, and 5 - Collect art displays at schools
August 4-7 - Distribute new assortments of framed prints

Participation will involve a couple of hours daily, in the morning.

BOOK STUDY GROUP



The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein is our June read.

“The New York Times bestselling novel from Garth Stein—a heart-wrenching but deeply funny and ultimately uplifting story of family, love, loyalty, and hope—a captivating look at the wonders and absurdities of human life . . . as only a dog could tell it.” Amazon.com

Now a major motion picture by FOX 2000.

JUNE ONLY – MEETING WILL BE ON THE THIRD WEDNESDAY – JUNE 18TH
(instead of the second Wednesday)

Blue Palmetto Café at Bok Tower Gardens – 10 AM
Future book selections to be announced

Carol Gillespie, Chair

DINING GROUP

Linda Brown, Chair

The dining group meets monthly for a meal at a local restaurant.

Please contact me if you would like to join in this fun group.

Tel. (231) 420-0991 Email: lindabrown306@hotmail.com

The Dining Group will continue to meet during the summer months.
Times and places to be announced.

WE NEED YOUR PHOTOS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWSLETTER, AND SCRAPBOOK

Please send photos from AAUW events to Betty Martin, our historian.

Email to Bettymartin8888@gmail.com

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Branch Officers 2024-2025:

President: Georgianna Pentinen **Immediate Past President:** Juanita Zwaryczuk

Co-Vice Presidents Programs: Charlene Bennett & Pauline Phillips **Vice President Membership:** Betty Martin

Communications Secretary: Margaret Swanson

Recording Secretary: Sharon Becker Allen

Co-Treasurers: Jennifer Nanek & Dianne Schmoyer (temp.)

Bylaws and Parliamentarian: Dianne Schmoyer **Historian:** Betty Martin **Public Policy:** Pauline Phillips (temp)

Newsletter Editor: Margaret Swanson magjs@yahoo.com