Helen Stewart Statue Dedication: AAUW

Dr. Linda Karen Miller, AAUW member from Las Vegas Nevada, spear-headed fund raising efforts in Las Vegas, to build a statue dedicated to Helen J. Stewart, often called the “first lady of Las Vegas”. For the past four years Dr. Miller has been appearing as Helen J. Stewart in character and costume at various civic groups around town. In July 2010 and April 2011 Dr. Miller appeared before the Las Vegas Centennial Commission in character along with Phyllis Weaver in character as Delphine Squires, a good friend of Helen Stewart’s requesting $99,000 for a statue and $12,000 for a video. Both requests were granted.

Benjamin Victor was selected as the sculptor. He also sculpted the Sarah Winnemucca statue in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol. Gwendolyn Clancy is also doing the documentary which will be available for viewing at the Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort State Historic Park, the grounds of Helen’s former home and available to schools.

Dr. Miller presented the life of Helen J. Stewart in character at the Nevada AAUW state conference in April. The statue dedication was attended by Southern Nevada AAUW President Charlene Bolyard and other AAUW members. Helen J Stewart attended Hesperian College in Woodland , California in the 1870’s, a very unique experience for women of her day. The local chapter has made Helen an honorary member.

The statue dedication December 3 had several speakers which reflected the life of Helen J. Stewart. She sold over 1800 acres of her land to the railroad in 1902 and the land sale in 1905 boosted the pioneer town into the modern city of Las Vegas. She was the first woman to serve on a jury, first woman elected to the school board, founding member of Christ Episcopal Church, charter member of the Mesquite Club, a ladies civic organization, first post master of Las Vegas, and the first president of the Nevada Historical Society. She was a friend to governors and legislators and the Paiute Indians. She deeded 10 acres of her land to them. All of these groups along with descendants of her family were among the 300 guests in attendance. Helen was also honored by proclamations from the Nevada Governor , Representative Shelley Berkley and Senator Reid who put her name in the Congressional Record.