

November 2025

DESERT BREEZE



Las Vegas (NV) Branch

American Association of University Women

November MEETING

Saturday, November 15, 2025

11:30 AM

THE SUMMIT

2215 Thomas Ryan Blvd.

Las Vegas, NV 89134

Come join us at The Summit. The cost is \$25.00 per person. The price includes the room fee, technical equipment, lunch from the menu, and a drink. Guests are welcome, so bring a friend. No reservations are needed.

AAUW SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER

&

Guest Speaker

Jenna Heath

**Director of Student and Community Engagement
UNLV College of Liberal Arts**

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Dear AAUW Las Vegas Members,

November marks the beginning of the holiday season—a time to pause, reflect, and give thanks. It's also a moment to honor the land on which we live and gather. Here in Southern Nevada, we recognize the Nuwuvi (Southern Paiute), Mojave, and Chemehuevi peoples, whose sacred lands we now call home. Their enduring presence reminds us that gratitude begins with acknowledgment—of those who came before us and those who continue to lead with courage and resilience.

In the same spirit, we give thanks for the many who have marched, demonstrated, and advocated for equal pay, educational equity, and justice. Their sacrifices have paved the way for the opportunities we now seek to expand. This month, we met with leaders from other AAUW branches and organizations with similar missions, such as the League of Women Voters, sororities, the Association of Asian Pacific Islanders, and many others, to discuss how we support each other instead of duplicating efforts. We are reminded that ideas may begin individually, but when we collaborate, we shape policy, correct inequities, and inspire lasting change.

Our invitation this month is simple yet profound: give thanks to yourself. Not out of ego, but in quiet acknowledgment of all you contribute—at home, at work, and in your community. Whether you are a mother, grandmother, mentor, or professional, take a moment to honor your own perseverance and generosity.

From this place of inner gratitude—to ourselves, our members, and our ancestors—may we continue to lead with courage, ease the fear of uncertainty, and connect to keep building a more compassionate and equitable future.

**With gratitude,
Afi & Evelyn
Co-Presidents, AAUW Las Vegas Branch**



Dr. Afi Bruce & Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert



GUEST SPEAKER

**Women Inspiring Nevada
Jenna Heath**

**Director of Student and Community Engagement
UNLV College of Liberal Arts**

Jenna Heath built her career on the belief that education can transform lives. As director of student and community engagement for UNLV's College of Liberal Arts, she oversees programming that reaches nearly 4,000 students each semester and manages a \$28 million scholarship portfolio. She also leads the college's internship program, which connects more than 300 students annually with career-aligned opportunities through industry partnerships and advisory councils.

Her commitment extends beyond the university. Heath has raised thousands of dollars for local nonprofits, served on boards including the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, and volunteers with Gamma Phi Beta sorority. In 2024, she launched Tearin' Up My Heart: Emotional Leadership Lessons, a podcast designed to help listeners understand the emotional side of leadership and make education more accessible.

As she pursues a Ph.D. in educational policy, Heath continues to mentor first-generation students, teach leadership development and champion inclusive, emotionally intelligent leadership. Heath's work brings her research into practice while empowering others to find confidence and purpose through education.

**Las Vegas Sun
October 10, 2025**



Meeting with Tracy Brown May

A Volunteer Opportunity

WHAT IS JAG Nevada?

JAG Nevada is a 501c3 non-profit organization that changes the lives of youth through education. We guide promising young Nevadans to brighter career pathways. Nevada high school students struggle to graduate and find a pathway to a better life. Many drop out because they face seemingly insurmountable obstacles created by poverty, traumatic childhood experiences and an overwhelmed education system.

Today's students possess great intelligence, talent, desire, and need caring adults and a structured support system that embraces them in community care. This is where JAG Nevada comes in. By embedding a caring adult who can provide mentoring, support, inspiration, and workplace readiness training in Nevada schools, JAG Nevada helps students reach their highest potential. With a 97.74% graduation rate and 80.46% positive outcome rate (employment, college, and military or a combination equaling full time), JAG Nevada gives students a gateway for opportunity.

How can you help?

- **VOLUNTEER:** Your time helps JAG Nevada students envision and strive for a better life. Participate in mock-interviews, share your career pathway, teach a life skill, judge a competition. These are all ways that you will help youth see their own success in you.
- **MENTOR or TUTOR:** There's no substitute for hands-on experience with businesses in the workplace setting. Maybe you can provide an opportunity for a shadow, internship or employment experience with your organization.

One person can make a big difference. Your time, talent, or treasure will change lives. Act now by... getting involved.

Call **(725) 235-3670** or email **info@jagnevada.org**





Dr. Margoth Tello, DPP

Public Policy



Dr. Esther Pla-Cazares, DPP

Louisiana v. Callais: Why This Supreme Court Case Matters for Voting Rights—and for Us
On October 15th the U.S. Supreme Court heard *Louisiana v. Callais*, a case that could profoundly affect the future of voting rights in America—and the ability of communities to have fair representation in government.

After the 2020 Census, Louisiana adopted a congressional map that left Black voters—who make up about one-third of the state’s population—with significant influence in only one of six districts. A federal court ruled this likely violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965, which protects voters from racial discrimination. The court ordered the state to draw a new map with a second majority-Black district.

Soon after, opponents sued, arguing that this new map was unconstitutional because race played too large a role in its creation. The Supreme Court agreed to hear the case, asking a critical question:

Can states intentionally consider race to fix racial discrimination in voting—or does doing so itself violate the Constitution?

What’s at Stake

The Court’s decision could reshape how states draw voting districts across the country. If the justices rule against Louisiana’s new map, it could weaken—or even dismantle—Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, making it harder for communities of color to challenge maps that dilute their voting power.

Why This Matters to Us

AAUW has always championed equity, access, and representation. Fair voting systems are the foundation of progress on every issue AAUW cares about—education, pay equity, women’s leadership, and equal opportunity.

When communities lose the power to elect officials who reflect their needs, the policies that shape our schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods become less equitable. The right to vote—and to have that vote count equally—is essential to achieving gender and racial justice.

What We Can Do

This case is about more than redistricting—it's about who gets heard in our democracy. AAUW members can take action by staying informed, supporting civic education, and engaging in discussions about fair representation in their communities.

As the Court prepares its decision, *Louisiana v. Callais* reminds us: equity cannot thrive without representation, and representation cannot exist without fair voting rights.



Scholarship Applications are open until January. Go to the Public Education Foundation to apply. Please get the word out!

Support our Scholarship Fund

While we hold our annual fund-raising event at our November meeting, we want to remind you that donations can be made throughout the year.

To make a tax-deductible cash donation to the Scholarship Fund, checks should be sent to The Public Education Foundation, P.O. Box 26243, Oklahoma City, OK, 73126-0243. Be sure to designate that the check is for AAUW Las Vegas Scholarships. The Foundation will acknowledge your gift.

You can also donate online to our Scholarship Fund at www.thepef.org. Again, be sure to indicate that your donation is for AAUW Las Vegas Scholarships.

Non-Deductible contributions can also be made at any time by writing a check payable to AAUW Las Vegas. Checks can be given to our treasurer, Letti Dowell, at any meeting or mailed to her at 9633 Gavin Stone Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89145. Non-Deductible contributions can also be made by Zelle or Credit Card. Contact Letti for more information.

SAVE ^{THE} DATE

November 15, 2025
AAUW Scholarship Fundraiser

Our goal is to raise \$6,000 for scholarships by the end of January. Please come and participate in our fundraising efforts.



Las Vegas (NV) Branch

AAUW MISSION

- Gender Equity & Economic Security
- Education
- Advocacy

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER

RESERVATIONS NOT REQUIRED. BRING A FRIEND!

15 NOVEMBER, 2025

11:30 am - 1 pm

Summit Restaurant, Sun City Summerlin
2215 Thomas W Ryan Blvd, Las Vegas, NV
Luncheon & Speaker \$25/pp

GIFT BASKETS • CERTIFICATES • DOOR PRIZES
DONATIONS WELCOME!

SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS

- Full-time student
- Must be a junior or senior
- Maintain GPA of 3.0 or better
- Have financial need
- Desire to help community
- More on application

SURPRISE GUEST SPEAKER!

AAUW LAS VEGAS BRANCH

- a 501(c)4 non-profit
- contributions are NOT tax-deductable

<https://lasvegas-nv.aauw.net/>

TAX DEDUCTABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

Make tax deductible donations to the Public Education Fund

Mail Checks to:
The Public Education Foundation
PO Box 26243,
Oklahoma City, OK 73126-0243
Memo: AAUW Las Vegas Scholarships

Donate online:
www.thepef.org



Membership Corner

We are thrilled to welcome our newest member to the Las Vegas Branch, Judy Smith. We are delighted to have her join us. She has already brought her gifts to share with us as we expand our reach to young and mature women alike. Welcome, Judy!

At last month's meeting we were delighted once again to have our guest speaker Tracy Brown May, Chief Administrative Officer at Opportunity Village and a current member of the Nevada State Assembly, representing District 42. It was a wonderful presentation with lively interaction and discussion. A special "Thank You" goes out to our Co-President Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert for inviting Ms. May to be our guest speaker.

Join the Membership Committee:

Consider joining the Membership Committee. Share your gifts and experience with us, as grow and serve our community and continue the mission of Gender Equity, Advocacy and Education for Women.

**Claudia Merrill, D.D., M.Ed., QMHP
Vice President Membership**



WELCOME NEW MEMBER

JUDY SMITH



Membership Renewals

Membership renewals now occur throughout the year. While most of our branch members have June 30 membership expiration dates, our newer members may have a membership renewal date that occurs in a different month. The Membership Directory included each member's renewal dates this year.

You should receive an email notice from AAUW regarding renewing your membership. There will be a link to renew, using a credit card, or you may still send a check to our treasurer, Letti Dowell (see Letti's address below).

Members will begin receiving renewal notices approximately one month prior to their renewal date and will continue to receive them through the grace period, which is three months after the renewal date or until the member renews their membership. After the three-month grace period, members that have not renewed their membership are dropped from the membership.

All members with May - September renewal dates should be sure to renew their membership no later than August 31, to ensure that your membership does not lapse and so we can be sure to include you in our membership directory for 2025-2026.

Membership dues remain at \$100 for branch members, \$18.81 for student affiliate members and \$17 for Honorary Life Members.

Honorary Life Members should send their membership dues of \$17 to Letti Dowell, Treasurer. Renewing members may also send a check to Letti to renew their membership. Letti's address is: 9633 Gavin Stone Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89145.



We now have technology available for lunch payments or for donations at our Scholarship Fundraiser.

You can use Zelle, your credit card, or your debit card. However, if you use a card, there will be a \$1 service charge. For example, lunch will then be \$26.00, not \$25.00.

INTEREST GROUPS

- **Bridge & Sunshine:** Marian Stanton (951-529-1203)
- **Book Club:** Kathryn Robinson (702-458-1747)
- **Out to Lunch Bunch:** Janis Schoen (516-376-9856)

*You're Invited!
Join Us!*



OUT TO LUNCH

Thursday, November 13, 2025

at

1:00 PM

Grape Vine Cafe and Wine Bar

7501 W Lake Mead Blvd #120

Las Vegas, NV 89128

(Lake Mead & N Buffalo)

Contact Janis Schoen

by Tuesday, November 11, 2025

516-376-9856 (call or text)

AAUWSCH@gmail.com (email)

Please note that because of Thanksgiving, the lunch date has been moved to November 13.



Lunch at Paymon Restaurant

George Balanchine's The Nutcracker

PRESENTED BY NEVADA BALLET THEATRE

PRE-SHOW PERFORMANCE

The Journey Of Mary and Joseph To The Birth of Christ

AN ORATORIO PRESENTED BY THE GRACE CITY OPERA THEATRE



December 23, 2025

5:30 pm followed by

7:30 pm Performance of The Nutcracker

THE SMITH CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

361 SYMPHONY PARK AVENUE, LAS VEGAS, NV 89106

RSVP AT INFO@GRACECITYOPERATHEATRE.ORG

Contact Claudia Merrill at info@gracecityoperatheatre.org for discount ticket pricing for the December 23, 2025 pre-show performance at 5:30 PM & the 7:30 PM Nutcracker Performance. If a group of ten or more sign up, there will be a 65% ticket discount.

Special Announcements

Birthdays

Helen Bather 11/1

Jannet Benz 11/5

Kathleen Dupree 11/5

Judith VanCleeef 11/17

Pamela Addie 11/25

Mary Clyburn 12/5

Emilie Rubalcava 12/5

Alexis Vann 12/21

Anne Green 12/24

Marian Stanton 12/29



Next AAUW Meeting

November 15 The Summit

December 14 Letti Dowell's home

Board Meeting

November 21

Officers & Committee Chairs 2025 - 2027

Co-Presidents: Afi Bruce & Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert

Vice President Membership: Claudia Merrill

Vice President Programs: Shared Board Leadership

Secretary: Shared Board Leadership

Treasurer: Letti Dowell

Immediate Past Co-Presidents: Janis Schoen & Marilyn Zimmerman

Public Policy: Esther Pla-Cazares & Margoth Tello

Newsletter: Judy Ingham

Scholarships: Shirley Hills & Marilyn Zimmerman

Sunshine: Marian Stanton

Scholarship Fundraiser: Marian Stanton

Mission

Gender Equity

Economic Security

Values

Intersectional

Inclusive

Intergenerational

Empowering

Focus

Economic Security

Education

Advocacy