



AAUW STATE COLLEGE ANNOUNCES CENTENNIAL GIFT FOR PENN STATE FORUM

In recognition of its 100th anniversary, AAUW State College has established the AAUW State College Centennial Speaker endowment at Penn State. The \$100,000 endowment will help underwrite the costs of bringing speakers who have made significant contributions to women's equity to the Penn State Forum Distinguished Speakers Series.

Connie Wheeler, chair of the AAUW State College Centennial Gift Committee, said that the Branch wanted a gift that would meet AAUW's mission to advance equity for women and girls, bridge town and gown, and exist in perpetuity." Committee member Sally Kalin added that AAUW's focus on equity is broad, and includes but is not limited to, educational, socio-economic, health, and legal equity, both domestically and internationally.

The endowment and selection of speakers will be managed by the Penn State Forum, which sponsors a series of speakers/luncheons throughout the year that attracts several hundred attendees. Forum chair Lori Bechtel-Wherry, Chancellor at Penn State Altoona, is excited about the endowment, commenting, "On behalf of the Forum, I express our appreciation to the AAUW for their historic gift. Their generosity supports our continued focus on the ongoing challenges regarding women's equity. While we have made significant progress in this regard, our work continues." AAUW State College Centennial Speakers will maximize their reach by engaging with the university and local community through additional talks and seminars.

From its first meeting in 1916 on the Penn State campus, AAUW State College has had a deep and long history with Penn State that includes advocating for better curricula and facilities for women students; influencing the founding of Penn State's educational TV and radio stations; assisting in the efforts to admit women to the Hershey Medical School; and contributing thousands of dollars in student scholarships. Lucretia Simmons, the first woman appointed to full professor, and Mimi Coppersmith, the first woman to chair the Board of Trustees, were both AAUW State College members.

AAUW State College Co-President Billie Willits commented, "We are excited to contribute to an educational and diversity initiative that underscores the advancement of women. AAUW State College is, and will continue to be, a leader in ensuring the empowerment of women."