

NEWS & NOTES

LIVING THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT THROUGH GFWC ALABAMA

May 31, 2020



Christine Steele
2018-2020 President
GFWC Alabama

Notes from the President's Desk

Dear GFWC Alabama Clubwomen,

The gathering of club members at the 125th Annual Convention of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs was certainly altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. This President has not heard of any clubwoman having fallen victim to this pandemic although it is known of family members having been. Behavior, habits and the way in which lives are lived has been changed. Business procedures had to be modified in these unprecedented times. Previous emails sent last week contained all the information related to awards and an important memorial. This, my final message to you as President, contains what would have been my closing remarks at Convention, as well as my final Traveling Presidents Report. Enjoy!

In Service,
Christine Steele
President, GFWC Alabama 2018-2020

The 125th Annual AFWC Convention
"Tip Our Hats" to Celebrating 125 Years of Changing Lives Through
Scholarships

President's Closing remarks

What a ride these last two years has been. The Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs did celebrate its 125th Anniversary on April 17, 2020. Although this President has only been around for 29 years of them, educating myself of this organization's history has provided insight into what, when and how our Federation foremothers managed to accomplish so many great things and move our society forward even when they did not have the right to vote.

In Montgomery, in May 1896, at the 1st Annual Convention, "The constitution

was improved but not radically changed; the basis of club representation and the dues clubs should pay was fixed; and a flower, the pansy, and a color, violet, were chosen as the insignia of the organization.”

Miss Mary Robbins, President, stated: “We come from the circles of quiet, home loving women, whose sole aim in this gathering is mental improvement... May this union become stronger and stronger and the standard of club life higher and higher with each reunion.”

Lura Harris Craighead, author of the *History of The Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs, Volume I*, noted: "That the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs was regarded by the general public at that time as unusual, but still kindly regarded - perhaps even with awe struck admiration - is evidenced by the comments made by newspapers upon this gathering.”

In Selma, in May 1898, Mrs. Anna Eager, the 3rd AFWC President, presided over the Third Annual Convention. One area of work was described at this convention as, “The interest further awakened in the Montevallo school by the address of Mrs. McConaughy at the previous annual was so great that Mrs. Eager asked the privilege of appointing a special committee to bring its work before the body. When this committee reported through its chairman, Mrs. McConaughy, it gave an absorbing account of the advantages offered to girls, especially in the industrial courses, by means of which they could acquire knowledge that would eventually make them self-supporting; of the girls themselves, their individual work, character, needs, etc.; the appeals of the many who were unable to pay even the small amount required for board and incidentals, etc. The committee presented a set of resolutions the adoption of which resulted in the creation of a standing committee on scholarships and laid the foundation of the scholarship work of the Federation.”

In 2018, 120 years later, this 73rd AFWC President chose to honor the longest, continuous project since the inception of AFWC - Education with Scholarships, with the administration theme of “Celebrating 125 Years of Changing Lives Through Scholarships.” How to pay tribute to our foremothers was the next consideration. These women were recognized the past two years with the wearing of hats and carrying purses to meetings as members once did.

The AFWC President's Project - Special Scholarships Chairman Sherry Stutts was tasked with making this a reality. A plan of action was developed, proposed to the Board of Directors and approved. The primary fundraiser, the Degree Campaign, was initiated. College degrees would be awarded based on donations made over the course of this administration, including: Associate Degree at \$25+, Bachelor Degree level at \$125+, Master's Degree at \$525+, with a Doctoral Degree level at \$1,250+. There were nine Doctoral Degrees awarded plus many others.

Contests, games and fundraisers involving purses and hats were embraced across the state. There were some who did not and that was okay. But evidently some saw the fun that was taking place and decided to join in. Alabama members wearing hats/fascinators and carrying fancy purses were noticed at GFWC conventions with others donning hats joining in the fun and taking ideas back to their states.

All this fun fundraising has led to record breaking results! In 2018, there were three approved Special Scholarships: Jane Wright Education Major, Cynthia Geis Counseling/Psychology Major and for a Female with a Military background. The original goal was \$500 being awarded. So many donations came in that three Special Scholarships were awarded in 2019 at \$1,000 each with an additional \$4,000 being donated to the traditional AFWC scholarship fund allowing eight additional Past Presidents' Scholarships. A total of \$7,000 in scholarships were awarded through the President's Project the first year.

In 2019, fundraising efforts continued and the idea of assisting young ladies with their education was embraced by many clubwomen. Continued success led to five additional Special Scholarships being named: Suellen Brazil General Studies, Jane Brooks Business Administration Major, GFWC President Mary Ellen Brock Girl Scouts of America Scholarship, Medical/Nursing Major and this President named the Sherry Stutts Vocational Training Scholarship.

The goal was set to raise the amount of these Special Scholarships to \$1,250 and award one in each area of study. Due to your overwhelming promotion of this President's Project, there were a record breaking 42 scholarship applications received. Due to kind hearts and generous giving, there were a record breaking 21 Special Scholarships awarded totaling an amazing \$26,250 in 2020. Even more astonishing is the total for the 2018-2020 President's Project total of \$33,250 plus!!!

AFWC certainly was Celebrating 125 Years of Changing Lives Through Scholarships!

So many thanks go to Special Scholarships Chairman Sherry Stutts for her creative visions, diligence to continuously promote this project throughout the two years and dedication to AFWC to bring us back to being recognized throughout the state for assisting young ladies with their continued education through scholarships.

My deepest gratitude to those of you who donated to this project as you have a kindred spirit, understand the value of scholarships and desired to continue a 122 year history of scholarships through AFWC.

This President could have no better conclusion to this 2018-2020 administration than signing the checks that Treasurer Karol Kapustka has been busy sending to these young ladies' college account. The 125th Anniversary celebration of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs at the South Highland Presbyterian Church on April 17, 2020, exactly 125 years to the date and location of the organizational meeting of this organization, may have been wiped out by the COVID-19 pandemic, but that is just an event. The memory of the Unity in Diversity and kind, caring and giving hearts to afford young ladies the opportunity to ease the financial burden of a higher education will be forever remembered. "Oh, the Places We'll Go in the Fall with 21 Young Women."

You are the heartbeat of this organization and this President will be eternally grateful for your support of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs.

Your Federation Sister,
Christine Steele, President 2018-2020

As this President pursues the joy of new opportunities and travel adventures, she proceeds on to join the other fabulous Past Presidents of AFWC. Best wishes are extended to Randy Matthews, 2020-2022 President, the members of the 2020-2022 AFWC Board of Directors, incoming club presidents and all clubwomen across the state in your endeavors in serving your communities. Can't wait to see what's to come.

A final piece of business is in regard to the voting process. The Elections Committee submitted a motion to destroy the ballots. There were no objections voiced. All the ballots on record will be destroyed.

The COVID-19 pandemic altered 2020 Annual Convention is adjourned.

Christine Steele, President

Final Traveling President Report—

With COVID-19 restrictions in place, this president's traveling was restricted these last few months. However, I was able to have a little fun and do a little traveling via the internet and curbside drop off/pick up to shop for a couple of items.

My official Past President's "pin". I felt I would wear a necklace more with both casual and formal attire. Plus the stories I've heard on losing valuable and sentimental pins (if you only knew my story). I preferred not extravagant and someone described this pin as me. Love it!



President's "Pin" Pendant front (left), and engraved back (above)

Someone mentioned e-Bay in conversation and I realized I hadn't been on there in over a year. Not much idle time these past two years to play around and shop. I had scored an original copy of the History of AFWC Vol. I edition (purged by the Ozark-Dale County Public Library) on e-Bay the last time. So one restless night a couple of weeks ago I searched AFWC and GFWC. And look what I found - the 4 GFWC figurines in excellent condition, or so they claimed. Well the price was \$175 but were taking bids. So guess what I bid?!?! Lucky \$125!!!! I got an immediate reply that my bid was

accepted. Whoop Hoo!!! What a gift to myself. They arrived, carefully wrapped in paper and bubbles. And sure enough they are in excellent condition, no chips or nicks anywhere. I was so excited to hit this jackpot that David told me to wrap them back up before I knocked them over!



From the Editor

- The GFWC Alabama website (gfwcalabama.org) has been updated to include the recently adopted [Bylaws](#), [Standing Rules](#) and [Resolutions](#). You may find these on the "[Resources Page](#)."
- **Revised Awards Documents:** There were errors made when the News & Notes editor copied and pasted information to create the Awards files that were distributed last week. Click each Awards name below to see the revised documents:

[General Club Awards](#)
[Juniorette Club Awards](#)