

February 2024

# CHIPS

*The monthly newsletter of the Westchester Branch of the American Association of University Women, Westchester County, New York*



Westchester AAUW Has Been  
Empowering Women and  
Girls Since 1933



## CO-PRESIDENTS' FEBRUARY MESSAGE

Abby Hirsch & Marcia Keizs

In one of the opening chapters in the book The First Ladies by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray, we are introduced to Mary McLeod Bethune who becomes a close friend and confidante of Eleanor Roosevelt. The year is 1927 and Mrs. Roosevelt comments to herself that she is in conversation with the head of the American Association of University Women. How impressive is that!

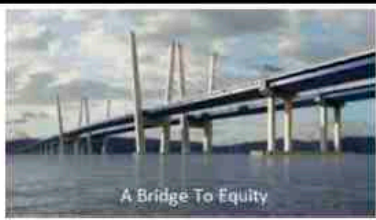
Mary Bethune, one of our earlier leaders, had parents who had been slaves and she became a major civil rights activist. In addition Dr. Bethune became a close friend to the first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, and they shared a belief in women's rights, education, and civil rights. Dr. Bethune was able to advise President Roosevelt in matters which were important to her and eventually attended the opening ceremony of the United Nations as the only African American woman.

February is Black History month. The precursor to this celebration dates back to 1926 when historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History announced that the second week of February would be Negro History Week. During this time as emphasis was placed on encouraging the coordinated teaching of the history of Black Americans in the nation's public schools. It was met with enthusiasm and the effort prompted the creation of history clubs and some elected officials, especially mayors, across the United States endorsed it as a holiday. The first celebration of Black History Month took place at Kent State University in February 1970 and six years later President Gerald Ford recognized Black History Month during our nation's bicentennial celebrations in 1976. The goal was and still is to honor the many contributions that African Americans have made to our country.

Many of these African Americans are women who we may not know, so let us enrich our knowledge by highlighting some. When we think of famous contemporary Black women, those who come immediately to mind include of course, Oprah Winfrey, Kamala Harris and Michelle Obama. As we dig deeper, we often name actors, popular singers, and athletes. But are there others that we should know? Some might be the following:

- Fannie Barrie Williams- Co- Founder of the National League of Colored Women(1893) and a founder of the NAACP(1909)
- Mary McLeod Bethune- founder of The National Council Of Negro Women(1935)
- Gwendolyn Brooks- Chicago based poet and the first Black person to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize(1950).
- Althea Gibson- first Black person to win a grand slam in tennis(1956).
- Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson and Dorothy Vaughan- NASA computer programmers, scientists and engineers, Black women whose "hidden work" propelled the first American, John Glenn, into space(1950s)
- Shirley Chisholm- Brooklyn Congresswoman and the first women to run for president(1972)
- Barbara Jordan- the first Black Woman to be elected to the Texas House of Representative(1966)
- Carol Moseley Braun- first Black women elected to U.S. Senate(1992)
- Mae Jemison- engineer, physician and NASA Astronaut and was the first Black woman to travel to space (1992)
- Toni Morrison- novelist and essayist who won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction and Nobel Prize for Literature(1987, 1993)
- Condoleezza Rice- first Black women to serve as Secretary of State(2005)

Cont. on page 5



**MISSION:** To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

**VISION:** Equity for All

**OUR VALUES:** Intersectional. Inclusive. Intergenerational. Empowering. Though we are nonpartisan, we are not values-neutral: We fight to remove the barriers and biases that stand in the way of gender equity. We train women to negotiate for pay and benefits and to pursue leadership roles. And we advocate for federal, state and local laws and policies to ensure equity and end discrimination.

#### **2022-2023 BRANCH OFFICERS**

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AAUW Westchester NY

Bridge Photo from NY  
State Thruway Authority

## **FEBRUARY BRANCH MEETING**

**Saturday, February 10 at 10:30 a.m.**

**Greenburgh Public Library, 300 Tarrytown Rd, Elmsford and via Zoom. Visit**

[www.greenburghlibrary.libcal.com](http://www.greenburghlibrary.libcal.com)

**to register for in-person and virtual**

### **PROGRAM**

#### **Black Women in Westchester**

*AJ Woodson, Editor-in-Chief of Black Westchester, will discuss his book "Black Westchester Celebrates Black Women of Westchester" which documents the stories of women who have dedicated themselves to improving their communities.*

AJ Woodson is the Editor-In-Chief and co-owner of Black Westchester, Host & Producer of the People Before Politics Radio Show, Author, Journalism Fellow, Rap Artist, Radio Personality, Hip-Hop Historian, Documentarian, Activist, Criminal Justice Advocate and Freelance Journalist whose byline has appeared in several print publications and online sites including The Source, Vibe, the Village Voice, Upscale, Sonicnet.com, Launch.com, Rolling Out Newspaper, Daily Challenge Newspaper, Spiritual Minded Magazine, Word Up! magazine, On The Go Magazine and several others.



NGO CSW (Non Governmental Committee on the Status of Women of the UN) will host a forum in NYC March 10 - 22. The NGO CSW Forum 68 informs and inspires grassroots efforts and gender equality advocacy around the world. You can either attend in person or participate virtually. Last year AAUW national had a booth and is waiting to find out if it is accepted to host a booth this year. There will be over 750 events taking place during this forum.

**Register now to start exploring the NGO CSW Forum's new and improved virtual portal!**

When you register, you will receive a confirmation email with pertinent information and a link to login to the virtual portal to start exploring!

[Register here!](#)



**CURRENT ISSUES FEB. 2**  
**10 AM VIA ZOOM**

If you want to be in touch with what is happening in the world, ask questions and learn, join us on Feb. 2 at 10 am via Zoom.

In January, we discussed:

- 2023: The Economy
- CRISPR and the Slippery Slope
- GMO and Roundup

What topics do you think would be interesting to bring to the forefront?

To join us, contact Ellen Leuner.

**There are times when one of our members is dealing with an illness, a loss, or another personal crisis.**

**If you know of a member who should receive our well wishes or support, please send the information to our corresponding secretary, Susan Ferris Rights at [susanferris123@gmail.com](mailto:susanferris123@gmail.com)**



**TUESDAY MORNING LIT GROUP**

The Tuesday Morning Lit Group will meet on February 13 at 10 a.m. via Zoom. We'll discuss Etan Rum's novel, A Woman is No Man. Berenice Pliskin will lead our conversation.

Please contact Wilma Gitchel if you'd like to join us.

**EVENING LITERATURE GROUP**

The Evening Lit Group will meet on Wednesday, February 7 at 5:30 p.m. at The Lexington Square Cafe in Mt. Kisco. Jean Havens will lead the discussion of Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt. Please contact Marsha Savino by phone, e-mail or text to let her know if you plan to attend.

If you have questions about this group phone Ellen Eschmann, the group leader. New members are welcome.

**IT'S AAUW'S  
ART CONTEST TIME!**

AAUW's annual art contest is officially under way, and we invite members to [submit a high-res image](#) of their original painting, photography, sculpture, collage or other artwork. Submissions will be accepted through January 31, 2024. Your work could be among the winning

For more information on submitting artwork, or to peruse last year's art gallery, please visit the [AAUW Art Contest page](#). entries!

**JOIN AAUW**  
**WESTCHESTER BRANCH**

Membership is open to anyone with an associate or equivalent, baccalaureate, or higher degree from an accredited college or university. To join, please complete this form and send a check payable to AAUW Westchester Branch to the address below. Dues for a new member are \$98 for the first year of membership, a \$10 reduction from regular membership dues, which are \$108/year. When you join the Westchester Branch of AAUW, you also become a member of the AAUW New York State and National organizations.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City:State:Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

College/University, Degree, Graduation Year: \_\_\_\_\_

To join send a check to: Westchester AAUW, 455 Tarrytown Rd. #1354, White Plains, NY 10607 or to get more information go the Westchester AAUW Website ([westchester-ny.aauw.net](http://westchester-ny.aauw.net)).

## OUTSTANDING WOMEN

### Submitted by Selena Barron

As promised here is information about three more women honored as part of The Financial Times 25 Most Influential Women of 2023. By representing such diverse fields as writing, technology, and accounting these three women demonstrate what women can achieve when given the opportunity. Each woman is introduced by another woman who has been personally influenced and impressed by their outstanding leadership and achievement.



Barbara Kingsolver

Ann Patchett is an author. Her most recent novel is “Tom Lake”, published by Bloomsbury. She introduces Barbara Kingsolver in the following literary terms. “Barbara Kingsolver has been reminding readers to open our eyes for a long time! Open our eyes to the crisis of the planet, to poverty, to the miracles of food and farms. She is not only one of our greatest writers, she is one of our greatest teachers, and nowhere is her skill more evident than in *Demon Copperhead*, a retelling of *David Copperfield* set in modern-day Appalachia. The hardship and degradation of poverty follows Dickens’ example, as does the longing for love and protection: a broken foster care station replaces a school, a meth lab in the back of a gas station replaces the workhouse. The story may be subverted and expanded but, like Dickens, Kingsolver means to shine a floodlight on the suffering of the poor, especially children. Small wonder she won the Pulitzer. This is her masterpiece.”

Marissa Mayer is the co-founder and chief executive of AI start-up Sunshine. She wrote the following about Mira Murati. “Mira Murati, the chief technology officer of Open AI, is at the helm of this moment’s profound digital transformation. Born in Albania, Mira now lives at the white-hot epicenter of artificial intelligence’s rapid evolution. Open AI’s groundbreaking products, Chat GPT and Dall-E, have captured the world’s imagination and will fundamentally change how we work, learn and express ourselves creatively. Mira’s visionary leadership extends itself well beyond the science and research of large language models into designing how to incorporate AI into our daily lives, as well as how to develop AI responsibly with regard to safety and regulation.



Mira Murati

Incredibly thoughtful in envisioning human-AI interactions, Mira actively advocates for open, public testing – encouraging us to seize this unique moment in time. Where we have agency over how technology will reshape us and we shape it. As a notable rarity – a woman helming a tech company – Mira’s story and leadership are every bit as inspiring as the future technology she oversees.”



Janet Truncale

Brooke Masters, The Financial Times financial editor and an associate editor, chose to write the following about Janet Truncale. “J. T. thinks of herself as a trust builder. An advocate of being down to earth, she was bringing her whole self to work before it became fashionable. She made partner at the global accounting firm EY despite being open with clients and colleagues about the fact that she worked part-time around three children. The 53 year old, this year busted through another barrier, to become the first woman to head a Big Four firm. Her success is the culmination of a decades-long evolution in professional services: 48% of EY’s nearly 400,000 employees are women. But the New Jersey native has her work cut out for her. EY is recovering from tensions revealed when senior US partners scuppered a plan to spin off its consulting arm. Still, Truncale is well positioned to bind the wounds. A U.S. auditor by training, she has been running a division that included voices from both sides of the debate.”

These accomplished and outstanding women have each earned their inclusion in the Financial Times 25 Most Influential Women of 2023. This is a special honor awarded while they are still alive. Important for two reasons. Initially because each of the women can enjoy the recognition of their work. In addition, their leadership and success is now publicized and will inspire and act as a roadmap for other women to follow.



(Cont. from page 1)

- Tarana Burke- New York based activist and founder of the Me Too Movement(2006)
- Susan Rice- first Black woman to serve as U.S. representative at the U.N.(2009)
- Ava DuVernay- first Black women to win the Sundance Film Festival's Directing award for Drama and an Oscar nominated director(2012)
- Lynn Nottage- the only woman to have won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama twice(2013, 2017)
- Misty Copeland- first Black woman to be principal dancer at the American Ballet Theatre(2015)
- Loretta Lynch- first Black woman to serve as U S Attorney General(2015)
- Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett- scientist and researcher who had a critical role in the development of the COVID vaccine(2020)
- Hana Sharif-first person of color to be director at the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C.(2023)

Certainly, as we look at the many specific examples of gains that African American women have made since the start of Black History Month, it is clear that much has been accomplished in terms of reaching equality. But if we look at some statistics, we see that much more must be achieved for a full degree of equity to be realized for African- American women. For example, there is currently only one Black female senator in the U.S. senate. Throughout history there have only been two others. In the house of representatives there are 25 Black women.

When we look at the pipeline that leads to success we become aware that many of our professional schools such as law schools and medical schools have a very high percentage of women. However Black women represent approximately only 8% of all law school graduates throughout the U.S. In medical schools only 9.4% are Black females. Of those who have received their degrees there are only 5% of Black women who are actively practicing law and only 3% of Black women are actively practicing medicine.

It is also interesting to examine some of the numbers in academia. Of current college presidents 33% are women and of these 14% are Black. Over the years there have been a few Black women presidents at our elite colleges (Brown University, Harvard University) and currently at Oberlin College and Harvey Mudd College. Moreover, in our colleges there are over 700,000 tenured professors and only 3% of these are Black women. This data does not bode well.

Throughout this month we should indeed applaud and celebrate the many Black women who have contributed to our country and who continue to make significant contributions today. We must also pursue new pathways that will assure these numbers improve in the years to come.



#### **FEBRUARY 2024**

2/2	Current Issues Discussion Group	Zoom	10 a.m.
2/7	Evening Literature Group	Lexington Square Cafe, Mt. Kisco	5:30 p.m.
2/10	Deadline for submitting for CHIPS		
2/10	Branch Meeting (Saturday)	Greenburgh Public Library and Zoom	10:30 a.m.
2/10	Board Meeting		12 p.m.
2/13	Tuesday Morning Literature Group	Zoom	10 a.m.
2/20	Poetry Interest Group	Zoom	1:30 p.m.

*Bridge - every Monday at 11 a.m. in person and/or 1 p.m. online*