

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

The American Association of University Women is a national organization of approximately 121,000 college and university women, with branches in 1189 communities in the United States. It is also a part of the International Federation of University Women, which is composed of all of the associations or federations all over the world.

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The Association was founded 70 years ago in Boston on January 22, 1882. Miss Marion Talbot and her friend and teacher, Ellen H. Richards, issued a call to all of the college women they knew - 17 in number - to meet and consider the idea of forming an association of women college graduates. This preliminary meeting was followed by a second meeting on January 14, when sixty-five college women came together and launched upon its long career the first association of college and university trained women in the world. In its early days it was known as the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, or the A.C.A. On October 20, 1948, Marion Talbot died at the age of ninety. She had served as secretary of the association for 13 years and for a term as president. In 1892 she was called to Chicago to help in the founding of the University of Chicago and shortly became its Dean of Women, the first woman in the United States to be formally named and appointed to that office. Her death marked the end of the era of the A.A.U.W. pioneers, and all A.A.U.W. members and I.F.U.W. members also are greatly indebted to the last of its founders, Marion Talbot.

The organization of the A.C.A. was followed by two other associations in the United States, the Western Association of Collegiate Alumnae formed in Chicago, Illinois, in 1883, and the Southern Association of College Women, organized in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1903. It was not until 1921 that these three associations merged to form the American Association of University Women to include all of the branches throughout the United States.

From the beginning in 1882 the purpose of A.C.A. and A.A.U.W. has been "to unite the alumnae of different institutions for 'practical educational work', for the collection and publication of statistical and other information concerning education and, in general, for the maintenance of high standards of education." It was hoped that women college graduates, by working together, might open doors in education, that were closed to women, and widen opportunities for college women to use their training.

Meanwhile, in 1907-1908, Miss Sara A. Burstall, the Head Mistress of the Manchester High School for Girls in Manchester, England, spent the winter in the United States investigating its educational institutions. Upon her return to Manchester she was instrumental in establishing the Federation of University Women in England, modeled largely after the A.C.A. in the United States. She wrote that "if it becomes national and not local it will correspond to the A.C. A. in the United States."

In 1909, following the recommendation of a special committee, the A.C.A. admitted to graduate membership in their organization those holders of advanced degrees who should apply from two Canadian institutions - Mc Gill University in Montreal and the University of Toronto. In 1918 the Alumnae Association of University College, University of Toronto, asked for affiliation with the A.C.A. As it was suggested by the A.C.A. that the Canadian women form their own association, there developed in 1919 the Canadian Federation of University Women - formed in time so that it became one of the founders of the International Federation. Thus, in a sense, both the Canadian Federation and the British Federation were children of the older organization in the United States - the A.C.A.

In 1918, while the World War was still raging, the British Educational Mission came to the United States. No members were more outstanding than the two women who represented all education in the British Isles, but ~~some~~ even more especially, the education of women - Dr. Caroline Spurgeon, Professor of English Literature

in Bedford College of the University of London, and Professor Rose Sidgwick of the Department of English in the University of Birmingham. Dr. Spurgeon was at that time the president of the British Federation of University Women. When she met Dr. Virginia C. Gildersleeve, chairman of the Committee on International Relations of the A.C.A., their talk turned to the similarity of the two associations and the possibility of an international association of those women who have so much in common - the alumnae of colleges and universities. Dr. Spurgeon and Miss Sidgwick presented the plan to the president of the A.C.A., Mrs. Marvin Bristol Rosenberry of Madison, Wisconsin, who felt that the American Association would stand ready to be again a pioneer in a great enterprise in the cause of higher education for women. Before it was time for Dr. Spurgeon and Miss Sidgwick to return to England, they both became ill with the "flu", and Miss Sidgwick died on December 28, 1918, and her body was laid to rest in the little cemetery in New York City, especially dedicated to the repose of British subjects. Later a fund of over \$10,000 was raised to endow, atleast in part, a fellowship to be known as the Rose Sidgwick Memorial Fellowship, to be awarded a woman graduated from some British University for study in the United States. Later, in 1921, the endowment was turned over to the A.C.A., with the proviso that the Association add to the income in such sum as to make the fellowship one of an adequate amount. Thus was the Rose Sidgwick Memorial Fellowship of the A.A.U.W. established.

In 1920 the International Federation was formed in London. At that first meeting there were present representatives of federations in eight countries : Canada, Czecho Slovakia, France, Holland, Italy, Spain, Great Britain and the United States. The first president was Dr. Carolina Spurgeon of the British Federation of University Women and the second, Dean Virginia C. Gildersleeve of the American Association of University Women. It is interesting to note that the immediate past president at the present time is Dean A. Vibert Douglas, Dean of Women, Queen's University, Canada. The founders believed that in I.F.U.W.

it would be possible for university women throughout the world to unite effectively in a common effort to prevent another catastrophe of war. The plans were very practical - to facilitate exchange of students and lecturers between countries, with opportunities to these persons for friendship in a new land, and to establish centers in various countries where university women from other lands might meet. Crosby Hall in London, Reid Hall in Paris, the University Women's Club in Montreal and countless others were all established as international club^s houses in recognition of the importance of personal contacts between people of different nationalities.

Both the American Association of University Women and the Canadian Federation of University Women continue to support and reaffirm in their relationships with the I.F.U.W. the splendid ideals of its founders - by building for the common good; by working to broaden and raise educational and scholarly standards; and by developing that sympathy and mutual helpfulness among individuals of different countries which leads to understanding among nations.

There have been ten I.F.U.W. Conferences which are held triennially. In 1947 the first post-war conference was held in Toronto, and this was the first ~~time~~ and only time that an I.F.U.W. Conference has met outside of Europe, and for many of the foreign delegates it meant their first visit to this continent. There were in attendance nearly one hundred delegates from twenty-four countries overseas, besides two hundred each from Canada and the United States, and accredited observers from China, the Philippines and Syria. This Conference was of special interest to the members of the Canadian Federation because one of their members, Dean A. Vibert Douglas, Dean of Women, Queen's University, Canada, was elected president for the coming triennium. In 1950 the 10th Conference was held in Zurich, Switzerland. Some 600 women, representing 20 federations, came from all parts of the world. One of the outstanding resolutions was introduced by the Canadian Federation and was voted with keen awareness of its significance

in the light of the Korean situation. It was stated as follows:

"Since the greatest desire of all the members of the I.F.U.W. is the desire for peace, and since the tragic experiences of the last years have demonstrated that no one nation alone is strong enough to ensure its own security and that peace and security for one is possible only within a framework of peace and security for all, be it

Resolved that the I.F.U.W. hereby reaffirms its loyal support of the United Nations and urge upon its national associations the fullest possible cooperation with this organization."

Great tribute was paid to Dean Douglas of Canada, the out-going president, by Dr. Althea K. Hottel, president of A.A.U.W., when she spoke of the great debt which I.F.U.W. owed to her.

The Association early interested itself in opportunities for post graduate study for women in this country and abroad. There has developed the greatest Fellowship Program for women provided by any foundation. Fellowships, National and International, are given for the encouragement of creative scholarly work and in general are awarded to women who have done enough graduate work to demonstrate their ability for independent research. Their fellowship program started back in the 1890s when \$500 was raised for the first grant. Since that time a million-dollar endowment fund has been raised by contributions from all of the branches in the United States, and many women of the United States have received help in acquiring post-graduate education. Out of this Endowment Fund, seven international fellowships have been created and given to the I.F.U.W. for award.

In 1945, A.A.U.W. members expanded their fellowship program by adding the International Study Grants. Through this fund women from countries abroad are brought to the United States for study. Today over \$100,000 is raised each year for the Study Grants alone. This has been one of the major contributions of

A.A.U.W. toward the reconstruction of the post-war world, and furthering educational opportunities for women is still one of the main purposes of the Association. The work which these women do in the United States is sometimes research, sometimes advanced study, sometimes observation of American methods and practices, but always it means a chance to get information which they can not find in their own countries. Twenty-five percent of them work in one or another of the scientific fields- from biology to nuclear physics; fifteen percent in medicine; the rest in the fields of psychology, education, social studies, American literature and law.

For 1952-53, the American Association of University Women is awarding 13 National Fellowships and 7 International Fellowships from the Million-Dollar Endowment Fund and 11 other National Fellowships and 4 International ones which have been made possible by funds raised by various branches, states or regions of the A.A.U.W. Included in this is the Rose Sidgwick Memorial Fellowship of \$2000, given for a British woman for study in the United States. More than 50 international students will be studying in the United States also under the International Grants program. If a branch makes a contribution of \$500 or more toward the International Grants program, it is called a "Named Grant" and may be named by the donors and given as an individual grant.

There are many fellowships also given by the I.F.U.W. Dr. Douglas has prepared a short history of the I.F.U.W. fellowships, the first having been awarded in 1928. Since then 62 fellowships and 14 grants have been awarded to scholars of 24 countries and of at least 26 nationalities. These scholars have gone to some 21 different countries to pursue their work - 27 going to Great Britain and 16 to the United States. Dr. Douglas' concluding words are of great importance -

"These scholars are ambassadors of cultural understanding between their countries and the country to which their research takes them. Integrity

in the pursuit and interpretation of knowledge is their primary characteristic. It is our hope and belief that a scholar's high faith in honesty will influence all her associates. Insofar as our scholars are an influence to this end, the I.F.U.W., through these research fellowships, is achieving a threefold service by its work for scholars, for scholarship and for constructive internationalism."

Education is A.A.U.W.'s first concern. Nationally and locally, it works for higher standards in our schools, for better teachers, and for better school boards. Local groups or branches study the need of children and youth; some have been instrumental in establishing nursery schools; others have sponsored recreation centers for youth. Social and economic problems are studied as concrete problems of the individual and the community. Growth through the arts is another A.A.U.W. objective, stress being put on creative writing, painting, ceramics and various types of handicraft. Status of women in A.A.U.W. means not study of the situation of women, in employment and in other respects; speaking up against discrimination; suggesting qualified women for important posts and encouraging participation of women in civic life.

Buffalo Branch was the 10th branch of A.C.A. in the United States, having been organized in 1890, when the Association was only eight years old. It was known as the Western New York Branch and the first undertaking of the branch was to assist in every way in the development of the University of Buffalo, with assistance to its endowment fund. Its interest has been maintained throughout the years. It furnished a room for girls at the university. It started a College Crecche. It worked toward the establishment of the office of Dean of Women at the University, and the appointment of one of its own members as Dean thirty years ago. It worked toward the acceptance of both the University of Buffalo and the State Teachers College at Buffalo into A.A.U.W. It is vitally interested in the affairs of the Board of Education of Buffalo.

For several years Buffalo Branch has given an International Named Grant of \$500 to the Fellowship Fund. This past year Mercedes Melchor from the Philippines was the recipient of its grant. She was studying in the field of home economics at Cornell University and was the guest of the branch at its November meeting.

Buffalo Branch has a scholarship fund, made possible by all sorts of projects carried on during the year, such as card parties, concerts when the Robert Shaw Chorale and the Westminster Choir were brought to Buffalo, theatre parties, and sales of various articles. This fund is used for gift scholarships for young women desiring to attend college. During the last nine years nearly \$3500 has been granted to deserving students to help them with their education.

In addition, Buffalo Branch has a large loan fund, known as the Chamberlin Fund, and made possible by the bequest of Mrs. Sarah A. Chamberlin. This money is loaned, without any interest, to deserving young women who are attending college but need some assistance financially. This was established in 1936, and being a revolving fund, it has brought assistance to hundreds of young college students. This fund can not be used for the gift scholarships.

Buffalo Branch is always aware of the many opportunities which are presented in carrying out the association's program locally and contributing to the national program. Many delegates attend the state, regional and national conventions, and many of the Buffalo members have been on the board ~~tax~~ of the New York State Division. The members are all proud of the part they have played in this great association and international federation in uniting the alumnae of different institutions all over the world for practical educational work and in furthering international fellowship and understanding.

E. Grace Gould

(Mrs. Clifford M. Gould)