GFWC

IDEAS, INFORMATION, INSIGHT, AND INSPIRATION

CLUBWOMAN

MAGAZINE

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS | GFWC STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP FORUM | 2026 JENNIE AWARD FINALISTS



The Legacy We Leave

MOMENTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

GFWC
est. 1890
GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

SPRING 2026 | VOLUME 104 | ISSUE 2

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The magazine of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, whose members are dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service.

2024–2026 GFWC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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GFWC Clubwoman Magazine (ISSN 0745-2209) is published quarterly: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of GFWC. The content of signed articles is the responsibility of the author. GFWC assumes no responsibility for advertisements in this magazine unless they are published in conjunction with an official GFWC program.

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LETTER FROM THE

International President

The General Federation of Women's Clubs has been empowering individuals and strengthening communities for 136 years – transforming lives through service that extends far beyond what can be measured.

With every project, our Federation evolves, expanding both impact and influence. Through your efforts, GFWC is answering the call to action to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence, victims of trafficking, the homeless, the hungry, and those impacted by online sexual exploitation. Through your work, they are seen, supported, and empowered.

I am deeply proud of the extraordinary difference you make each day. Your dedication has elevated your ability to create lasting change. Your Officers have carried that commitment to Capitol Hill, meeting with Senators and Representatives to advocate for bipartisan legislation aligned with GFWC Resolutions. Just as inspiring is your growing engagement at the state level, connecting with Governors and legislators to advance our mission. You are amplifying our voice and strengthening our role as a force for progress.

Our foremothers met the defining challenges of their time with courage and conviction. They helped establish thousands of the nation's public libraries, advanced child labor laws, championed pure food legislation and the eight-hour workday, and supported the movement that led to the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, securing women's right to vote. They also led early conservation efforts that shaped our national and state parks.

Today, we face challenges of equal magnitude – women's equality, domestic and sexual violence, online exploitation, human trafficking, child welfare, and women's health. The responsibility is great – but so is our capacity to lead.

As we honor 136 years of service and prepare to gather in Scottsdale for the 2026 GFWC Annual Convention, let our mission ignite your purpose – because the work we do today will define the legacy we leave tomorrow.

Suellen B Brazil

SUELLEN B. BRAZIL
GFWC INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT



LETTER FROM THE

Director of Junior Clubs

It is spring, and so it is State Convention season! One of the joys of serving as your GFWC Director of Junior Clubs is visiting State Federations during your Annual Conventions.

What an honor it is to celebrate your accomplishments as members, clubs, Districts, and States make a difference in your communities! I also love that we make a difference in each other's lives as we come together to encourage and inspire each other, and to thank those who have served in this current administration while kicking off the next two years.

Some of my closest friends are those I've made through GFWC. My 28-year membership in GFWC has brought me meaningful service opportunities, meaningful relationships, and personal and leadership development training that I never anticipated. How about you? What do you love about GFWC, and are you sharing it with others?

We have so many resources available to us as GFWC members. Has your Junior or Juniorette Club been working on completing the Junior Club Leadership Certification? You still have time to finish the JCLC by the deadline of June 1st. I'm also excited about the recently launched Learning Academy! While the Junior Club Leadership Certification is intended for clubs to experience together, the topics in the Learning Academy are self-paced training for individual members on a wide variety of subjects. These two programs are a great benefit of your GFWC membership. Check them out in the Digital Library on the Member Portal.

Thank you for all you do to improve your communities. You make a difference just by being YOU, and I am so thankful you are a GFWC member! Thank you for living each day trying to accomplish something, not merely to exist.

SAbailey

SHANNON BAILEY
DIRECTOR OF JUNIOR CLUBS

Women's History Month Celebration, 2026



Women's History Month took center stage at the General Federation of Women's Clubs Headquarters on March 11, as the celebration blended tradition with purpose by featuring our annual program while shining a spotlight on partners who share and advance our mission.

During the event, GFWC proudly recognized five distinguished organizations whose work aligns closely with our own and reflects meaningful, ongoing collaboration. Together, these partnerships demonstrate a shared commitment to advancing the lives of women and strengthening communities.

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT SUELLEN B. BRAZIL PRESENTED THE GFWC WOMEN'S LEGACY AWARD TO THE:

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE NATIONAL MONUMENT FOUNDATION
for Excellence in Championing Women's Legacy

NATIONAL CENTER ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
for Excellence in Advancing the Safety and Dignity of Women

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE SOCIETIES CHERRY BLOSSOM PROGRAM
for Excellence in Leadership, Service, and Cultural Understanding

MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL
for Excellence in Honoring, Preserving, and Celebrating Women Veterans

NATIONAL SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
for Excellence in Preserving History and Heritage



Through partnerships like these, GFWC amplifies its impact and deepens its legacy of service, while the GFWC Women's Legacy Award recipients exemplify the leadership and vision shaping a stronger future for women.

Following the awards presentation, two dynamic speakers took the stage for the "Historic Heroines" presentation. Kristy Huettner of the Office of Historic Alexandria and Samantha Dorsey, Principal at Heirloom Cultural Consulting, focused on recent work at Virginia museums to help audiences engage with the histories and material culture of women in the Revolutionary era.

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary, it's crucial that we remember the ladies of all backgrounds and origins who are such an important part of that era, and of every era. Our speakers explored ways to bring a wide spectrum of women's history to life, no matter how ordinary or everyday or even sometimes problematic.

> **Their argument was that these stories, these lived experiences, have value, and the presentation will help shape GFWC's planning as we gear up for the America 250 celebrations later this summer.**

At the WHRC, we celebrate the historians, registrars, and archivists doing the research to uncover women's stories, the curators and museum educators who share them with the world, and the public who expect and demand that the full history of this country be told.

The Women's History Month Celebration closed with a shared sense of purpose, reminding us that honoring women's history is not only about reflection but about shaping the future.



> "I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors."
>
> **ABIGAIL ADAMS TO JOHN ADAMS,** *MARCH 1776*



A HOMECOMING OF THE LEGACY

International Past Presidents Retreat

★ **BY SUELLEN B. BRAZIL,** *GFWC INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT*

It began with a simple, heartfelt remark from Marian St.Clair, WHRC Chairman and International Past President. Thanking me for arranging time for the Committee to stay at Headquarters while volunteering in the Archives, she shared how meaningful it was to be back, staying within those walls, gathering around the elegantly adorned dining room table with the Executive Committee, and recalling her years there as International President.

In that moment, an idea took hold of my mind and heart. If returning to Headquarters could rekindle such joy for Marian, surely others might feel it too. So, I invited our International Past Presidents to come "home" for a GFWC International Past Presidents Retreat in January 2026. Six remarkable women accepted – Carlene Garner (2010–2012), Babs Condon (2014–2016), Sheila Shea (2016–2018), Mary Ellen Brock (2018–2020), Marian St.Clair (2020–2022), and Deb Strahanoski (2022–2024) – each a leader who shaped our Federation with strength and vision.

What a thrilling arrival! When I asked where they wanted to stay, the answer was immediate and unanimous: "The 5th floor!"

> **It was more than a place – it was where they had lived for 10 years, where they reflected, laughed, and leaned on one another along their journey.**

Even our meals reflected their shared experiences. Though I requested individual restaurant suggestions, their lists were nearly identical. As we gathered at familiar tables at Giovanni Trattu's, Tabard Inn, Old Ebbitt Grill, and The Hamilton, conversation flowed effortlessly, filled with laughter, stories, and the unmistakable bond that defines GFWC.

WHRC Librarian, Joanna Church, joined us to capture their reflections on living in Headquarters and serving as International President.

> **What unfolded felt less like an interview and more like a living story, each voice flowing seamlessly into the next.**

The weather outside was bitterly cold, but inside, the warmth was unmistakable. They were more than content to remain on the fifth floor, sharing stories and bringing to life the vivid memories of the years each had when they called Headquarters home.

All too soon, the retreat came to an end. Yet for a brief, meaningful time, they were not just International Past Presidents – they were once again at home, together, surrounded by the history that binds them and the place where the legacy lives on.





International Past Presidents: A Conversation

★ **BY JOANNA CHURCH,** *WHRC LIBRARIAN*

During January's International Past Presidents Retreat, the women generously agreed to spend an hour in the Drawing Room, on camera, sharing their memories of their time at Headquarters.

Their conversation was warm and wide-ranging, covering everything from the joys (and "joys") of living and working in a historic building, to the importance of sharing our special Headquarters with clubwomen from across the country. They discussed renovations, life during COVID, the special feeling of hosting family at their home away from home, and how each International President was able to build upon the work of her predecessors to make the building and the organization stronger than ever.



"From the very first moment, Headquarters felt exactly like home."

SUELLEN BRAZIL



"Those who come here appreciate this organization, its history, its mission."

CARLENE GARNER



"I remember being awed the first time I came into this building..." — "I'm still awed!"

MARY ELLEN BROCK AND SHEILA SHEA



"There are so many parts of this building that make it so special."

BABS CONDON





"One drive of the early organization was to educate other women through art."

MARIAN SIMMONS ST.CLAIR



"We all envisioned this. Not for us individually; for this wonderful organization."

DEB STRAHANOSKI

GFWC ATTENDS

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women



The 70th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) brought together a global community of leaders, advocates, and organizations committed to advancing gender equality.

Held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, CSW70 convened UN agencies, Member States, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, and thought leaders to discuss both the progress made and the challenges that remain in achieving equality for women and girls worldwide.

> **This year's priority theme focused on accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of sustainable development, particularly through the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.**

Discussions throughout the session emphasized that while progress has been made, it has been uneven, and in some cases, setbacks have occurred due to global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic instability, and climate change. These overlapping challenges continue to disproportionately impact women and girls, making the work of CSW more critical than ever.

Representing GFWC, Second Vice President Mary Beth Williams and former Programs & Public Policy Specialist, Bella Tokushiro, attended CSW70 to engage in these important conversations and bring back insights to strengthen GFWC's ongoing work. Many of the government-led panels focused on policies and strategies that have been proven to support women's equal access to education, healthcare, justice, and economic opportunity. Highlights included the importance of strong legal frameworks, targeted investments, and inclusive policy design in creating meaningful change. From expanding access to quality education to ensuring equitable healthcare systems, it was clear that governments play a critical role in setting the foundation for gender equality.

Williams and Tokushiro also attended panels led by civil society organizations, which offered valuable on-the-ground perspectives. Topics ranged from improving access to justice for women survivors of violence to advancing women's rights in the global economy. These sessions underscored the importance of addressing systemic barriers and ensuring that policies reflect the lived experiences of women in diverse communities.

> **A key takeaway from CSW70 was the essential role of civil society organizations in driving progress. Grassroots groups raise awareness, provide data and advocacy, and propose practical solutions that shape global decision-making.**

Their participation helps ensure that community voices inform international policy and that governments are held accountable.

For GFWC, CSW70 reaffirmed its commitment to improving the lives of women and girls. By engaging with global leaders and partners, Williams and Tokushiro contributed to and learned from the broader movement for gender equality. The insights gained will inform GFWC's efforts at local, national, and international levels.

Overall, CSW70 served as both a reminder of the progress achieved and a call to action for the work ahead. The conversations and connections made during the session highlighted the importance of collaboration. As all organizations represented at CSW70, GFWC remains committed to advancing the rights of women around the world and to playing an active role in building a more just and equitable future.



JOIN US FOR THE

2026 GFWC Annual Convention



Come be inspired by remarkable voices, shared purpose, and meaningful connection. Inspiration awaits – join us and be part of the experience.

REGISTER HERE

A CONVERSATION WITH A TRAILBLAZER

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 5 PHYLLIS J. WILSON, USA, RETIRED, PRESIDENT, MILITARY WOMEN'S MEMORIAL



Join us for an unforgettable presentation with Chief Warrant Officer Five Phyllis J. Wilson, USA, Retired, President of the Military Women's Memorial. Wilson brings a powerful story rooted in resilience, leadership, and unwavering commitment.

With 37 years in Military Intelligence and experience advising senior national defense leaders, Wilson's journey reminds us that purpose is often found by showing up, saying yes, and trusting the path ahead. "You put yourself in the right place; you never know what can happen," she reflects.

A chance encounter with an Army recruiter transformed her future. What began as a four-year enlistment became a lifelong calling.

"There was something about the military that was a perfect fit," she says. "The teamwork, the travel, the exposure to different cultures – I loved it."

> "You put yourself in the right place; you never know what can happen."
>
> PHYLLIS J. WILSON

Today, Wilson continues her service in a powerful civilian role, advocating for recognition, dignity, and honor for women veterans.

A pivotal moment – being questioned for using a veteran-designated parking space – solidified her resolve.

"How many more women have to serve before they're recognized?" she asked herself. "Somebody has to champion them. Why not me?"

Her story is a reminder that leadership often begins with standing up – quietly, firmly, and together.



A BREAKFAST TO REMEMBER

WITH "THE FIRST LADIES LADY," JACQUELINE BERGER



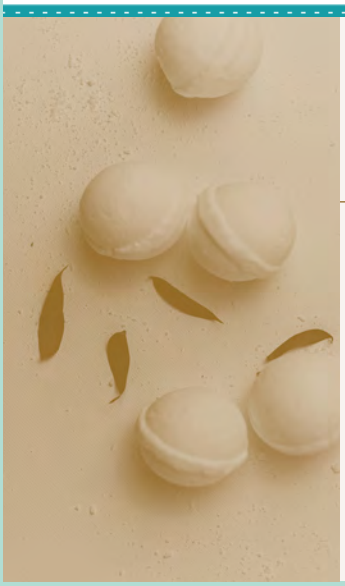
We warmly invite you to a special ESO breakfast program featuring renowned historian, author, and speaker Jacqueline Berger, affectionately known as "The First Ladies Lady."

With appearances at five presidential libraries, the Smithsonian's First Lady traveling exhibit, the National First Ladies Library, and expert features on C-SPAN and the History Channel, Berger brings history to life through engaging storytelling and thoughtful insight.

> **As the author of three acclaimed books – including Leadership Secrets of America's First Ladies – she offers a captivating look at the women who shaped our nation behind the scenes, illuminating lessons of influence, resilience, and purpose that resonate today.**

Her engaging presentation offers insight, inspiration, and meaningful connection – perfectly suited to our shared mission of leadership and service.





A TOUCH OF CARE, A GIFT OF STRENGTH

At the 2026 GFWC Annual Convention, members will come together to create spa gift jars filled with soothing bath salts and handwritten notes of encouragement for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. These gifts will be donated directly to local domestic violence shelters to help provide survivors with small, meaningful comforts that acknowledge their dignity and support their healing.

BE INSPIRED. BE CONNECTED. BE PART OF SOMETHING MEANINGFUL.



WE CAN'T WAIT TO WELCOME YOU TO THE 2026 GFWC ANNUAL CONVENTION.

VIEW AGENDA

The Value of Club Work: Native American Clubs in the Early Federation

WOMEN'S HISTORY & RESOURCE CENTER SPECIAL EXHIBIT

Are you joining us at the 2026 GFWC Annual Convention in Scottsdale, Arizona? Be sure to check out this year's WHRC exhibit! ***The Value of Club Work: Native American Clubs in the Early Federation*** will look at the many GFWC clubs organized by and for Native American women across the country.



AWARD FINALS

2026 Jennie Award Finalists



Jane Cunningham Croly, General Federation Of Women's Clubs, Founder

The GFWC Jennie Award is the only national honor bestowed by GFWC that recognizes individual members for personal excellence.

Members are nominated by their clubs to compete at State/DC, Regional, and National levels for the Federation's highest honor. The Jennie Award is named in honor of GFWC's founder, Jane Cunningham Croly, who wrote for national newspapers under the pseudonym "Jennie June." The award is an occasion to highlight extraordinary clubwomen who epitomize Croly's spirit of independence, courage, and persistence through their roles as volunteers within their clubs, representatives of their community, and as members of a family or extended family. Although GFWC has many awards for States and clubs, the GFWC Jennie Award is the only national honor that recognizes individual members for personal excellence.

GREAT LAKES

KARYN CHARVAT
GFWC ILLINOIS



"Karyn's tireless efforts, innovative initiatives, and compassionate leadership have had a lasting impact not only on those she serves but also on those who serve alongside her."

SCOTT A. WEHRLI, *MAYOR, CITY OF NAPERVILLE*

LINDA L. CLARK
GFWC MICHIGAN



"Linda's lifelong dedication to service, leadership, and advocacy exemplifies the spirit of our founder Jane Cunningham Croly."

PAULETTE MANCUSO, *PAST PRESIDENT, GFWC PIGEON AREA WOMAN'S CLUB*

MIDDLE ATLANTIC

M. RITA HOLLADA
GFWC DELAWARE



"Rita represents professional commitment, integrity, and competency as a volunteer with a true servant's heart. Her exemplary leadership skills command respect and often bring resolution..."

KIMBERLY LAW TAYLOR, *VICE PRESIDENT, MILL POND HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION*

LENORE SOUDER
GFWC PENNSYLVANIA



"Lenore demonstrates leadership, finds ways to make everyone feel included, gives recognition to a job well done, encourages those who are struggling, and is patient, kind and thoughtful."

PENNY PETRO, *PRESIDENT, THE GFWC WOMAN'S CLUB OF PERKASIE*

(Continued on next page)

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

DONNA FLINT
GFWC IOWA



"Croly's epitaph 'I have never done anything that was not helpful to women, so far as it lay in my power' is exemplified in Donna's quiet but persistent & consistent commitment to her family, community, and club."

NANCY TABOR, *CHAIR, GFWC IOWA NORTHEAST DISTRICT*

VICKI BEILKE
GFWC NEBRASKA



"Vicki is a 'mover and a shaker' and our community is extremely lucky to have her as a person that has lots of energy, creativity, and dedication to her commitments."

CHRISTINA JOY, *VICE PRESIDENT, GFWC STELLA RESEARCH CLUB*

NEW ENGLAND

GLORIA AURELIO
GFWC MAINE



"Gloria is a consummate team builder, adept in bringing out the potential abilities of members, quickly giving credit to others and coloring everything she accomplishes with grace, kindness, and positivity."

ELLEN VAN VRANKEN, *PRESIDENT, GFWC WINTERPORT WOMAN'S CLUB*

SHEILA CASEY
GFWC NEW HAMPSHIRE



"Sheila has a unique gift for bringing people together, building powerful teams with compassion and heart, and ensuring that every initiative she is involved in succeeds."

MAJOR GENERAL GRETCHEN S. DUNKELBERGER, *CO-CHAIR, USAF (RETIRED) NEW HAMPSHIRE WOMEN IN SERVICE MEMORIAL*

SOUTH CENTRAL

FLETA A. HASKINS
GFWC OKLAHOMA



"Fleta represents the very best of the GFWC spirit: a leader, a builder, and a tireless advocate for women, families, and communities."

TESSA MURDOCK, *DAUGHTER-IN-LAW*

JEWEL "TISSA" PETERSON
GFWC TEXAS



"Tissa's commitment to service and community engagement has positively impacted many, making her a role model for others."

BARBARA HARVEY, *PRESIDENT, GFWC TEXAS*

(Continued on next page)

2026 Jennie Award Finalists (Continued)

SOUTHEASTERN

MOHRA GAVANKAR
GFWC DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



"When there is a challenge ahead, you want Mohra on your side. She is a truly outstanding individual..."

STEPHANIE KLODZEN, *PRESIDENT, GFWC DC FOUNDERS AND FRIENDS*

PEGGY BARNES
GFWC KENTUCKY



"During our time together, I have witnessed her remarkable volunteer spirit and encouraging efforts in our club. Peggy has a sense of community and family all bundled together and loves sharing with others."

BONNIE KITTINGER, *VICE PRESIDENT, GFWC SUBURBAN WOMAN'S CLUB OF LEXINGTON*

SOUTHERN

DR. MARTHA ANN SAUNDERS
GFWC GEORGIA



"Martha Ann has not only touched lives – she has shaped them, leaving behind a legacy of kindness, leadership, and hope."

JUDITH H. ALLEN, *PRESIDENT, GFWC CARROLLTON CIVIC WOMAN'S CLUB*

KAY TAYLOR
GFWC FLORIDA



"Kay's actions speak volumes about her character. She is a woman of integrity, compassion, and remarkable resilience."

AUSTIN TAYLOR, *SON*

WESTERN

THERESA RUDDER
GFWC COLORADO



"She approaches every endeavor with heartfelt commitment. She wholeheartedly dedicates herself to addressing needs, enhancing our community, and recognizing the contributions of others."

KATHLEEN WOODS, *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, CITY OF ALAMOSA*

BONNIE CONNOR
GFWC MONTANA



"Using her talents as an artist, teacher, and leader, she has had a positive influence on the youth, and our community is so much better because of Bonnie Connor."

ANONYMOUS, *GFWC BIG TIMBER WOMEN'S CLUB*

GFWC congratulates these extraordinary women on their commitment to *Living the Volunteer Spirit*! Don't miss the "Liberty, Leadership, and the Legacy of Service Gala" at Convention, where we will present this year's recipients.



JOIN US SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

One day. One purpose. One voice for lasting change.

GFWC est. 1890 GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE
END DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In 2025, GFWC set out on an ambitious International Day of Service focus: to end domestic and sexual violence in the United States and worldwide.

On one powerful day, members hosted community forums, repaired rooms at shelters, collected more than $375,000 in supplies, and donated 37,000 hours of their time to serve those affected by domestic violence.

> **Their compassion for others and unyielding dedication to survivors extend far beyond a single day's work.**

The GFWC International Day of Service unites all GFWC clubs, States, Regions, and International Affiliates behind a shared mission.

When we come together on one day with one purpose, the impact creates a powerful ripple effect of hope, safety, and support in communities everywhere.

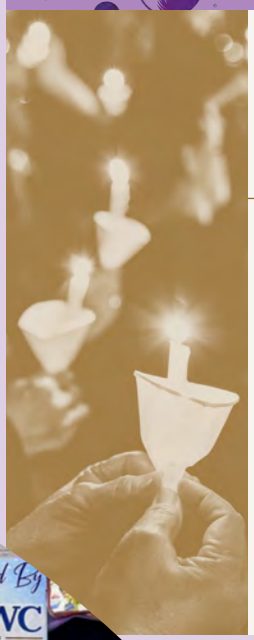
This year, we are called to reach higher, speak louder, and stand stronger for survivors.

> **Your club's participation can provide essential support, expand resources, and help change the future for those experiencing domestic and sexual violence.**

Be part of the movement. Register your group today on the GFWC Member Portal.

REGISTER HERE



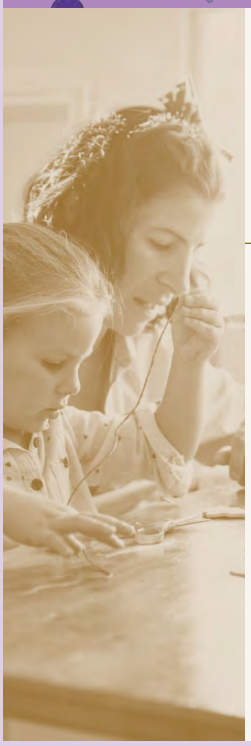


PROJECT IDEAS

GFWC TEMPE WOMAN'S CLUB (ARIZONA)

GFWC members held a "Vigil for Survivors of Domestic Violence" in a local park, inviting locals, the police chief, and representatives from a domestic violence shelter to remember and celebrate victims and survivors. Attendees heard from various speakers describing the danger faced by victims and those responding to calls for help, emphasizing prevention is key. To commemorate the day attendees wrote messages on purple ribbons, which will be part of an art piece hung in a local shelter.





PROJECT IDEAS

GFWC DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FEDERATION AND CLUBS – DC

The GFWC District of Columbia and clubs organized a day of self-care at St. Ann's, a shelter for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. In a carefully prepared setting, women and children were welcomed with crafts, lunch, and new toys. Mothers created personalized canvas bags and painted pumpkins, while children participated in activities and shared a meal. Each woman received items promoting dignity and self-care, including plants, hygiene products, journals, and small gifts. The event was deeply appreciated, and the shelter requested that GFWC return.



PROJECT IDEAS

GFWC BRUNSWICK WOMAN'S CLUB – GEORGIA

The GFWC Brunswick Woman's Club's 2025 project partnered with Amity House, a Glynn Community Crisis Center. Members thoughtfully assessed the shelter's needs, focusing on the upstairs lounge, bathroom, and shared dining table. They replaced worn chairs, added lighting, shelving, and a TV unit, as well as installing a new bath vanity and refinishing the dining table where residents gather. To fund these improvements, members hosted a luncheon, afternoon tea, and gift card raffle. Friends and supporters joined, and the Crisis Center director shared the powerful impact of this work on survivors.

HONORARY CHAIRMEN FEATURE

The Disappearance and Abduction of Autistic Children: A Growing Crisis

★ **BY DAVID COFFEY,** *SAFE SURFIN' FOUNDATION*

The disappearance of any child is alarming, but for children on the autism spectrum, the risks are significantly higher and often more deadly.

While many missing children are eventually found safe, autistic children face unique vulnerabilities that make their cases especially urgent – and too often tragic.

According to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), hundreds of children with autism are reported missing each year.

> **In 2024 alone, 481 autistic children were reported missing, with 74% recovered within a week.**

While this recovery rate is encouraging, it masks a more troubling reality: when outcomes are fatal, they are overwhelmingly linked to one cause – drowning – according to NCMEC data (missingkids.org).

The National Autism Association reports that in 2024, 91% of accidental deaths of missing autistic children were due to drowning, often occurring within a short distance of where they were last seen. The Children's Services Council reports increasing drowning deaths.

> **At least 247 autistic children have drowned since 2021, including at least 71 in 2025 alone. Most were boys between the ages of 3 and 8.**

The FBI has long identified missing and endangered children as a national priority, and cases involving developmental disabilities are treated with heightened urgency due to increased risk factors. While general FBI data shows that most missing children are recovered safely, children with autism are more likely to be classified as endangered missing due to behavioral characteristics such as wandering, nonverbal communication, and lack of danger awareness, as identified by the FBI.

> **One of the most critical factors for children with autism is a behavior known as "elopement," or wandering.**

Research indicates that approximately 49% of children with autism attempt to wander from safe environments, a rate significantly higher than that of their peers. These incidents can happen in seconds – at home, school, or public places – and often lead children toward areas of personal interest.

> **Children on the autism spectrum are often drawn to water for sensory stimulation, such as ponds or pools.**

They may also seek out water to escape overwhelming environments or may lack awareness of drowning risks. Additionally, many autistic children are nonverbal or have limited communication skills, making it difficult for them to respond to searchers or identify themselves. Because of these risks, experts emphasize that it is critical to search near water first. Time is extremely limited in many of these cases.

Organizations like the Safe Surfin' Foundation are working to address the root causes of child endangerment through education, technology awareness, and community outreach. By teaching families, schools, and law enforcement about online risks, behavioral warning signs, and child safety strategies, Safe Surfin' helps create safer environments both online and offline, with additional resources available at safesurfin.org.

The disappearance of autistic children is not just a missing persons issue – it is a public safety and awareness crisis. With greater awareness, training, and proactive safety measures, communities can help prevent these tragedies and save lives.

LEARN MORE



SERVICE & ADVANCEMENT

Gone But Not Forgotten



★ **VICKY ANN TRIMMER,** *CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH CHAIRMAN*

Did you know that three million women have served in or alongside the U.S. Armed Forces over the past 250 years?

Yet most of their names and stories have been lost to history. The Military Women's Memorial (MWM) was established to bring their stories out of the shadows to honor the countless women who served our country. Today, the memorial stands at the ceremonial entrance to Arlington National Cemetery.

Established in 1985 and incorporated as the Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation (WIMSA), the memorial was dedicated on October 18, 1997.

It features the Court of Valor, a reflecting pool, and a 200-jet fountain representing the sound of women's voices, and a 33,000 sq. ft. exhibit gallery that chronicles the history of women's service beginning with the American Revolution. Four stairwells lead to the upper terrace, breaching the original wall to symbolize women breaking military barriers.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the primary repository for Official Military Personnel Files of discharged service members.

A 1973 fire destroyed about 80% of Army records from November 1, 1912, to January 1, 1960, and roughly 75% of Air Force records from September 25, 1947, to January 1, 1964.

Records can typically be searched only by name, not sex. Thus, no comprehensive record exists of all the courageous women who served in the U.S. Military. The MWM created the Register, which allows the public to log the names and service information of the country's female service members.

More than 335,000 military women's stories are included – substantial, but only 10 percent of the 3 million who have served.

General Federation of Women's Clubs, World War II, Overseas Service Unit, 1920

Since the early 20th century, GFWC has supported women's military service reflective of each era. During World War II and beyond, this included magazine features highlighting opportunities in the WACs, WAVEs, and Army Nurse Corps. In recent decades, members and clubs have championed the Military Women's Memorial through fundraising and awareness. Locally, clubs continue their commitment by honoring and supporting veterans through meaningful outreach, advocacy, and service.

The MWM needs GFWC's help to identify and register women who have been "lost" to the historical record – those whose service has not yet been formally documented.

Do you know or are you aware of a living or deceased woman veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces? Regular members include women whose service was Active Duty, Reserve, Guard, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Corps, Coast Guard Auxiliary, or Civil Air Patrol.



Gone But Not Forgotten (Continued)



General Federation of Women's Clubs, World War II, 1919

The Registry also includes women who served overseas during wartime in support of the Armed Forces through organizations such as the Red Cross, USO, OSS, WATS, Special Services, and the U.S. Public Health Service Cadet Nurse Corps – known as the "We Also Served."

Imagine having access to a database of women who served our country at some of its most difficult times.

As we approach America's 250th Anniversary, GFWC has a unique opportunity to support the Military Women's Memorial by registering as many veterans as possible, past and present.

Let's Strive For 500 and work together to add 500 female veterans to the Registry by the end of the administration.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION INCLUDES:

PERSONAL INFO
Full name, address, and email

SERVICE DETAILS
Branch of service, rank, and dates of service

MILITARY HISTORY
Awards and decorations

STORY/PROFILE
Brief narrative about memorable experiences while serving

PHOTOGRAPH
Photograph of the woman in uniform is encouraged

Join the effort by finding women veterans – living or deceased – of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Use the free registration service Womensmemorial.org, click on Create an Account, and follow prompts.

Bring any information to the 2026 GFWC Annual Convention in Scottsdale, AZ, where a station will be ready to help register women veterans.



Let's ensure these women are registered and no longer lost to history.

Together, let's surpass the goal of 500 new registrations. GFWC members always answer the call. We need you!

ADD TO THE REGISTRY





SERVICE & ADVANCEMENT

The Value of Belonging

★ **KARYN CHARVAT,** *GFWC MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN*

In GFWC, we often talk about the benefits of belonging. Or you'll hear members ask "What are the benefits of belonging?"

But what does that statement, that phrase, "benefit of belonging," really mean? While there are indeed tangible benefits of belonging to GFWC, let us focus on the VALUE of belonging; the value of being a member of GFWC.

Belonging to any organization today can offer a deep sense of community that most people are missing in today's fast-paced world.

> **And in GFWC, it is a connection that goes beyond just saying hello or discussing common activities; it is a connection realized in purpose and legacy.**

When members initially join their local club, it is to "give back" to their communities. And the VALUE they receive is very meaningful, mainly because they are also developing personal bonds with others. Through this action, GFWC clubs are turning individual passion into powerful, collective change.

At its core, GFWC fulfills a fundamental desire: to make a difference. For more than a century, members have united to improve the lives of others through hands-on service and advocacy. Whether advancing education, supporting programs that bring awareness to domestic violence and child abuse, promoting arts and culture, or championing public health initiatives, GFWC members see the direct results of their efforts.



> **This connection between action and outcomes fosters a desire for service and reinforces the VALUE of what it means to be a member of this organization.**

Equally powerful is the VALUE that comes from being part of GFWC's expansive network. With clubs across the United States and in multiple countries, members are connected not only locally but globally. Despite diverse backgrounds, professions, and experiences, we are once again united by a dedication to "Living the Volunteer Spirit." In this environment, we come together, not for recognition, but for transformational change, reinforcing the VALUE of being a member of an organization that is built on the shared values of respect and collaboration.

Beyond the emotional connections, the VALUE of being a member is also having access to powerful platforms for personal and professional development. Our members have opportunities to lead projects, manage committees, speak publicly, and develop new skills in a supportive environment. And roles in volunteer organizations often come with the freedom to experiment, learn, and grow without the same level of risk that comes with a more traditional workplace environment. With volunteerism, the culture of learning that keeps members engaged and inspired is not only about giving back, but also about growing forward.

> **But perhaps one of the most meaningful aspects of belonging to GFWC is the sense of legacy.**

Founded in 1890, our organization has a rich history of advocacy and service that continues to evolve with each generation of members. Every project completed, every life touched, and every community strengthened becomes part of that ongoing story. The work accomplished today lays the foundation for future progress, creating a ripple effect that can influence members for years to come.



There is also something uniquely fulfilling about our work. It lives in the laughter shared during meetings, the pride felt in accomplishments, and the friendships that grow along the way. It is found in the quiet understanding that together, something meaningful is being built – something that matters.

In the end, being a member of GFWC is much more than belonging, much more than service hours or meeting agendas. It is about connection, growth, leadership, legacy, and fulfillment. It is about meeting each other face to face, without self-pity and without prejudice.

> **Standing shoulder to shoulder with women who believe in something greater – and choosing, together, to turn that belief into action.**

SERVICE & ADVANCEMENT

Light a Candle: What is Leadership Development?



★ **ANN LANDIS,** *GFWC LEADERSHIP CHAIRMAN*

Lately, I have had lots of thoughts about how the strong women who came before me managed the chaos of their times.

I am sure at times they, too, wanted to shuck it all and run away. Yet they did not have the modern conveniences we have that make life easy, so I imagine they lit a candle, got down to work solving their problems, and led their families, friends, and communities to better lives.

I'm not sure who first said this, but I know it didn't originate with me: a candle loses nothing by lighting another candle, and leaders are defined by how they light others' candles.

In leadership development, which is what we do, we focus on lighting others' candles so they, too, can contribute to the common good. We foster growth and empower others while also managing the steps necessary for success. We remember the devil is in the details, yet we are focused on the big picture, and we manage both seamlessly. We are aware that the ultimate measure of leadership is developing more leaders, leaders who are competent, skilled, and motivated to leave things better.

In GFWC, we offer opportunities in leadership development at every club meeting and every conference.

Our LEADS program is a stellar example of growing our members' leadership skills.

We help members identify issues that need addressing, set goals, measure and report their accomplishments, and then we celebrate those accomplishments. Hurray for us!

We reach out and touch future leaders who may not have seen themselves as leaders, and we welcome those who believe they can be leaders to join in and navigate the path to leadership. Just like our mentors before us, we share opportunities, training, and praise. While we do enjoy a good competition, we are also eager to share ideas and resources, and we are always ready to celebrate everyone's success. We encourage self-awareness and recognize that there is more than one leadership style. We encourage positive communication as well as sympathetic listening. We embrace our differences in leadership while we share our solidarity in our common goal of improving lives through our volunteerism.

Leadership development is a significant investment at each level of our organization.

How many of us have seen clubs languish and stagnate because the same people with the same ideas and approaches have become entrenched? On the other side, how many of us have seen clubs achieve and exceed expectations with new leaders who bring new programs and ideas to share? What distinguishes the two types of clubs? I believe it is several things, but at the top of the list is a willingness to take a chance on change and encourage and mentor new leaders. This can begin when a member first agrees to chair a Community Service Program, lead a major fundraising initiative, or engage at the officer level in a club, regional, or national capacity.

In this climate of taking a chance on people, it is also important to realize that leadership development really never ends.

Those of us who have been fortunate to have held leadership positions should always be open to improving and honing our skills. I come away from every gathering with GFWC members with innovative ideas, resources to explore, and relationship-building to try. Then I want to share them with someone!

If we expect leaders to evolve, we must constantly help to develop them, not just their skills, but their whole being.

We must lead them to learn to focus on doing what is right and good for their communities. We are about developing a heart for servant leadership, building trust among us all, and empowering every member to light her candle and shine.

National Advocacy, Individual Impact



GFWC's national advocacy efforts include grassroots mobilization of volunteers contacting their members of Congress through the GFWC Legislative Action Center and direct meetings with members of Congress, either at home or on Capitol Hill.

GFWC engagement in public policy means that effective relationships with office holders and their staff are built over time, and that our club and state community projects raise awareness of local needs for assistance and crucial gaps in service.

Leadership by example, the GFWC Officers take every opportunity when in Washington, DC, to meet with elected officials on Capitol Hill.

The Officers proudly represent members by advocating for GFWC Legislative Priorities based upon Resolutions adopted during the GFWC Annual Convention.

Highlights of the 2024–2026 Administration include advocating for increased federal funding for education, prevention, and survivor services related to domestic and sexual violence; securing robust support for the Crime Victims Fund under VOCA; and advancing anti-trafficking and anti-exploitation legislation to strengthen prevention, investigation, prosecution, and survivor support. GFWC also strongly supports bipartisan congressional efforts to combat online child sexual exploitation, establish user age verification guidelines, protect data privacy, modernize sentencing laws, and hold social media platforms accountable through a duty of care.



Additional federal funding priorities include global vaccinations to combat polio and measles; expanded support for Alzheimer's and dementia research, along with a stronger national public health response and caregiver assistance; funding for state arts agencies, regional arts organizations, community libraries, and parks and recreation at all levels; and robust programs addressing hunger and food insecurity.



GFWC Legislative Priorities can be found on the GFWC website, under Advocacy, Priorities.

Share with your elected officials and join the GFWC Legislative Action Center for broader impact.



First Vice President Jolie Frankfurth, Secretary Dr. Susan Gettys, and Director of Junior Clubs Shannon Bailey, RP, recently met with their respective United States Senators, Ashley Moody (FL), Rick Scott (FL), Josh Hawley (MO), and Eric Schmitt (MO).

During these meetings, GFWC officers highlighted our federal priorities, advocating for increased funding and enhanced services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking, and child sexual exploitation.



GFWC Convenes National Strategic Leadership Forum



The National Strategic Leadership Forum held in March 2026 at GFWC Headquarters provided an opportunity for GFWC leaders to engage with domestic and sexual violence and child sexual exploitation subject matter experts to review pending federal legislation and strengthen national coalition partnerships. GFWC highlighted local volunteer efforts as essential to effective national advocacy and raising awareness of funding gaps and service providers' needs in the local community.

"The work ahead of us requires informed leadership, and it requires organizations like ours to connect with experts, advocates, policymakers, and community leaders who share the same commitment to change the culture and end domestic and sexual violence. The opportunity before us is significant, and the need is urgent," said GFWC International President Suellen B. Brazil.

Featured speaker Eleanor Kennelly Gaetan, PhD, Vice President and Director of Public Policy at the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, described the successful effort to enact the bipartisan Take It Down Act. Eleanor summarized pending House and Senate kids' online safety bills, data regarding the harms of sexual exploitation, and outlined additional state legislative and judicial cases to obtain justice for victims and protect women and children.

Rachel Graber, Vice President of Government Relations and Advocacy at Jewish Women International, provided an update on federal appropriations for programs under the Violence Against Women Act and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act. She highlighted progress on the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act and the need for Senate approval of the bipartisan House-passed bill, and emphasized the significant support the faith community can offer.

Lynn Rosenthal, Battered Women's Justice Project and the first White House Advisor on Violence Against Women during the Obama-Biden Administration, encouraged clubs to host forums to educate elected officials, the media, and the public on survivors' chronic health issues, mental health challenges, substance abuse, homelessness, and suicide facing survivors. She stressed building partnerships with state coalitions, local rape crisis centers, and domestic violence shelters.

She urged GFWC to advocate for every local jurisdiction to craft a plan addressing domestic and sexual violence.



The GFWC National Strategic Leadership Forum outcomes include identified areas of collaboration, the need for ongoing, meaningful dialogue between GFWC leaders and field experts, enhanced projects to highlight funding gaps and program needs, and a collective partnership to advance safety and advocacy.



> **The opportunity before us is significant, and the need is urgent.**
>
> **SUELLEN B. BRAZIL,** *GFWC INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT*

MARCH SPECIAL EVENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

Honoring and Remembering United States Servicewomen





Since its inception, GFWC has remained committed to supporting the United States Armed Forces.

The Military Women's Memorial is dedicated to preserving the stories of servicewomen and ensuring that their courage and sacrifice are recognized as an essential part of American history. In partnership with this mission, GFWC is proud to honor their service with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Military Women's Memorial.



MARCH SPECIAL EVENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

Wreath Laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Arlington National Cemetery is home to the somber and reflective Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. A patriotic representation of soldiers who were lost to war, the Tomb is visited by millions each year. As early as 1935, GFWC has honored fallen servicemembers by placing a wreath at the foot of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. In this year's time-honored ceremony, GFWC International President Suellen B. Brazil, Director of Junior Clubs Shannon Bailey, President-elect Wendy Carriker, and First Vice President Jolie Frankfurth represented the organization for this honored event.







THE PRESIDENTS MANTLE

A Legacy Woven in Signatures

GFWC International President Suellen B. Brazil has bestowed upon the General Federation of Women's Clubs a singular and profoundly significant gift – the Presidents' Mantle Cloth – as an enduring tribute to the Federation's legacy of visionary leadership.

Exquisitely crafted by GFWC member Julie Bates (Georgia), the cloth features monogrammed original signatures of all 55 GFWC International Presidents.

More than a commemorative artifact, the mantle reflects the very essence of leadership entrusted and renewed. Rich in symbolism, the signatures and GFWC emblem signify the passing of responsibility from one president to the next, becoming a powerful symbol of continuity, honoring not only those who have led but the unbroken thread of commitment that binds them.

> **Each signature tells its own story, yet together they create a compelling narrative of collective impact, uniting decades of dedication and resolve into a single, striking work that reflects the enduring spirit guiding GFWC across generations.**

This one-of-a-kind piece not only honors the women who shaped the organization but also stands as an inspiring reminder of the legacy carried forward today, and the leaders who will shape its future.



GFWC Honors 2026 Cherry Blossom Delegates

The GFWC proudly hosted the 2026 GFWC Cherry Blossom Delegates Luncheon at its historic headquarters in Washington, DC, welcoming 50 accomplished young women representing U.S. states, territories, and several countries, alongside leadership from the National Conference of State Societies (NCSS) Cherry Blossom Program.

A former Cherry Blossom Delegate herself, GFWC International President Suellen B. Brazil presided over the event with a deep sense of connection and purpose, celebrating the next generation of emerging leaders.

President Brazil praised the delegates, women ages 21 to 26, for their strong commitment to civic, community, and global engagement.

She urged them to embrace service not as a moment in time, but as a lifelong calling. "At this pivotal stage in your lives, you possess extraordinary

> "Embrace every opportunity for growth, let your journey be grounded in meaningful service to others."
>
> **SUELLEN B. BRAZIL,** *GFWC INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT*







As part of GFWC's national partnership with the Cherry Blossom Program, President Brazil also joined distinguished guests at several signature events, including the Lighting of the Lantern, the Cherry Blossom Gala, the Cherry Blossom Congressional Reception, and the National Cherry Blossom Festival Reception and America's 250th Anniversary celebration held at the residence of the Ambassador of Japan.

Presented annually by the NCSS during the National Cherry Blossom Festival, the Cherry Blossom Program provides cultural, educational, and professional enrichment opportunities for women ages 21 to 26.

Selected for their academic excellence and leadership, delegates spend a transformative week in Washington, DC, engaging with national landmarks, government leaders, and members of the international diplomatic community.



potential to turn passion into purpose. Embrace every opportunity for growth, and let your journey be grounded in meaningful service to others," she said.

She further emphasized the importance of GFWC nurturing the next generation of leaders: "We have a responsibility to invest in and empower these and other young women, to foster their leadership and champion their continued development, because they will shape the future."

> **We have a responsibility to invest in and empower these and other young women, to foster their leadership and champion their continued development, because they will shape the future."**
>
> **SUELLEN B. BRAZIL,** *GFWC INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT*



TRIPLE CROWN OF CONFLICT

Bylaws, Elections, and Money

★ **LEEANN CONLON,** *GFWC CONFLICT ADVISER*

BYLAWS are the core of club operations. They provide structure and guidance on how to conduct club business and define membership, officers and their duties, authority for financial transactions, and procedures for elections.

SOURCES OF CONFLICT

PERSONAL CONFLICTS

Disagreements or misunderstandings between members.

CULTURAL CONFLICTS

Members from diverse backgrounds interpreting situations differently, causing miscommunication.

GENERATIONAL CONFLICTS

Differing expectations and perspectives between age groups.

PROCEDURAL CONFLICTS

Unclear or ignored rules and processes, especially bylaws.

TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES, ASK:

- ★ Is the club adhering to its bylaws?
- ★ When was the last time the bylaws were reviewed and/or amended?

IF YOUR CLUB IS UNSURE ABOUT ITS BYLAWS, CONSIDER:

1. Organizing a workshop for members to review and discuss bylaws.
2. Establishing a committee to propose amendments.
3. Setting a schedule for regular bylaw reviews.
4. Ensuring bylaws are accessible to all members, in print or electronic form.

RESOURCE: GFWC LEARNING ACADEMY

Utilizing Governing Documents to Build Success: All GFWC clubs and states should have Bylaws and Standing Rules that provide guidance for operating as a successful organization. These documents are often included in a yearbook or on a website, but they are rarely reviewed to ensure they accurately reflect current practice. Discussion during this course will provide methods of review and guide learners through the process of identifying the importance of following their own guidelines to ensure a smooth club or state meeting.

ELECTIONS

Does everyone understand the election process and timeline? Are your bylaws clear on the timeline, procedure, and actions to be taken? To educate your members, add an agenda item to a meeting prior to the start of nomination/election activities to review the process and address all questions. Explain the purpose of a nominating committee and the scope of its responsibilities. Members need to understand what's

A Message from our Affiliate Organizations



required to "run from the floor." When holding the election, use proper protocol and parliamentary procedure. If you need help, reach out to your closest parliamentarian at the local or state level.

MONEY AND FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

A process of monitoring and managing the organization's financial activities to ensure they are carried out correctly, efficiently, and in compliance with the bylaws and standing rules.

CLUB BUDGET

Creating a club budget helps build financial stability for the club and enables it to achieve its financial goals. It helps to manage resources effectively and make informed spending decisions.

Has a budget been approved, and are funds being used as intended? For budget concerns, appoint a committee to audit recent expenditures and ensure transparency. Ensure your bylaws are clear on fiduciary responsibilities such as signing checks, making payments, and collecting funds.

RESOURCE: GFWC LEARNING ACADEMY

Financial Fundamentals: The Importance of Financial Oversight and Building Effective Club Budgets.

SET UP FOR SUCCESS

Taking proactive steps related to bylaws, elections, and money can help resolve conflicts and strengthen your club's foundation. Conflict derails the ability of the club to support your community

A Message from our Affiliate Organizations





Our Global Connections



In early March, GFWC International President Suellen B. Brazil welcomed Caroline Chao, President of the GFWC Taipei International Women's Club (TIWC), to Headquarters in Washington, DC, marking a meaningful renewal of their international connection.

Chao was warmly received by the President's Assistants (Jubilees) and staff. Chao's first time coming to the GFWC Headquarters, she was delighted to enjoy the VIP tour of our historic Headquarters given by Joanna Church, Women's History and Resource Center Librarian.

> **The visit provided a valuable opportunity to reconnect in person following previous interactions through international calls and global travel.**

International President Brazil and President Chao reflected on their longstanding friendship through GFWC, strengthened during past visits to Taiwan and international gatherings, while celebrating the 75th anniversary of TIWC and its lasting community impact. The March visit underscored the importance of personal connection in global leadership, reaffirming a shared commitment to service, cross-cultural collaboration, and empowering women worldwide to lead with purpose and create meaningful, lasting change.

Three GFWC members traveled to HEIFER® INTERNATIONAL Honduras in February 2026, to witness the impact of GFWC's support of Heifer Honduras programs. Over five days and more than 175 kilometers of travel, they saw how donations from GFWC members are transforming lives and communities.

The delegation visited COAPHL, a beekeeping cooperative in Siguatepeque; ROAS, a community-based coffee enterprise; AGRAPIL, a honey collection and processing center; and a small-scale dairy enterprise in Ocotón, Copán, where they sampled artisan cheeses. At each stop, they were warmly welcomed and met women and men who can now support their families through gifts received from Heifer International.

They also learned about Heifer International's philosophy of "Passing on the Gift," in which recipients of livestock, hives, or poultry share the first offspring or products with another community member, multiplying the impact of each gift.



Traveling from GFWC were GFWC President-elect Wendy Carriker, GFWC New Mexico State President Debbie McAllen, and GFWC Montana State President Karen Gustavsen. Representing Heifer International from the United States was Jen Girten.

> **The delegation returned home deeply grateful for the experience and inspired by the resilience and generosity of the communities they visited.**





136 YEARS OF GFWC

Celebrating Federation Day

One hundred and thirty six years ago, on April 24th, 1890, 63 women from 17 states across the country formally adopted the constitution of the newly-formed General Federation of Women's Clubs.

The first known national commemoration of Federation Day took place on April 24th, 1940, with a radio broadcast (complete with GFWC leaders, a birthday cake, and some opera) on NBC in honor of our fiftieth birthday. The annual celebration was firmly in place by 1976, when Federation Day was added as a date in our standing rules.

Over the decades, celebrations of Federation Day have included everything from service projects to recruitment drives. Many clubs take the opportunity to raise community awareness of GFWC by seeking official proclamations or holding an open meeting for prospective members.

MILESTONE TIMELINE

1890


Thursday, April 24th,

10.30 A. M.—Meeting called to order.
Report of Committee on By-Laws and Amendments.
Discussion. Adoption of By-Laws.
11.00 A. M.—Election of Officers.
12.30 P. M.—Adjournment.
Reports from Delegates.

SUGGESTED FEDERATION DAY PROGRAM MEMO

As the *Suggested Federation Day Program* memo from GFWC President Carolyn Pearce (1966-1968) put it, "This day of commemoration – Federation Day – is far more than a formal nod to the founders of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and your State Federation. It can and should be a 'highlight' program of the year…You'll want to make this a day to remember."

1982



GFWC WOMAN'S CLUB OF DELRAY BEACH PATTERN

In the early 1980s, GFWC Woman's Club of Delray Beach (FL) devised a skit that turned the Collect for Club Women into a dress in a fashion show, a Mary Stewart Original. "The Beauty of this pattern is that one size fits all. It will never go out of style, and it is a dress one can always wear with pride." The script and this charming illustration were featured in the March 1982 issue of "GFWC Clubwoman" for other clubs to share.

2004



FEDERATION DAY REENACTMENT

In 2004, members of GFWC Norfolk Woman's Club (Nebraska), founded in 1896, celebrated Federation Day by re-enacting a visit from Jane Cunningham Croly. "Arriving from the 'East,' 'Jenny June' (Anna Mullen) is greeted by GFWC club members: Marge Summers, Lyla Fuhrman, LaRene Kopasek, Bernice Russert and Floma Taylor."

2007



OWL STUDY CLUB OF DUNCAN VOLUNTEERS

Members of the GFWC Owl Study Club of Duncan (OK) celebrated Federation Day and the Oklahoma Centennial in 2007 by volunteering time and effort at the Heritage Park and Arboretum. Their work planting shrubs, perennials, and annuals in this community park honored the state president's conservation-themed special project.

2025–2026

Girlfriends Getaway



Staying in the historic GFWC Headquarters can be a profoundly moving and exciting experience. Within walls that have stood for over 150 years, members feel a powerful connection to the generations of volunteers who came before them.

The building's character and timeless beauty reflect the enduring spirit of service that defines GFWC. As clubwomen walk its halls, they are reminded that their efforts today build on a proud legacy and help shape the future. See how last year's "Girlfriends Getaway" winners have been moved by their stay.

FLORIDA



GFWC FLORIDA'S SASSY SIX

Theresa Crockett, Mindy Estep, Lee Kraus, Grace Tabor, Kay Earhart, Kim Galvin

"Stepping through the doors of our GFWC International Headquarters was such a powerful reminder of our shared history and the incredible impact we make together. It was an honor to walk the halls of our 'home' in DC and feel so deeply connected to our global sisterhood!"

MINDY ESTEP

ILLINOIS



THE ILLUSTRIOUS ILLINI

Gina Fritz, Maria Uribe, Carol Jablonski, Megan Mitchell, Nina Casey, Lisa Flannigan

"It is a rare opportunity to sleep within the same walls that have hosted decades of women's leadership, making every night there a priceless connection to a legacy of service and unity."

GINA FRITZ

ALABAMA



SIX ALABAMA SISTERS

Cherie Byrne, Nell Fisher, Donna Mahieux, Leigh Anne McMahon, Sherry Stutts, and Karol Kapustka

> "Along with International President Suellen Brazil, the tour of the GFWC Headquarters introduced us to the history, especially the photos of all the past presidents, mementos from state associations, including a quilt honoring GFWC, with each state contributing a handcrafted block."
>
> THE SIX ALABAMA SISTERS

NEW HAMPSHIRE



NEW HAMPSHIRE GRANITE GIRLS

Pamela Conary, Anne Engelhardt, Nancy Greenberg, Mary Ryan, Denise Raisanen, Amy Hammershoy

> "Staying at the Headquarters was a truly memorable experience. Not only was it a privilege to stay in such a beautiful historic building, but having the opportunity to get to know our President is something I will never forget."
>
> DENISE RAISANEN

CALIFORNIA



CALIFORNIA WEST VALLEY SIX

Joyce Meurer, Anne Cochrane, Mary Schrader, Lisa Blanchard, Sandra Myers, Emma Vargo

> "Stepping into GFWC Headquarters instilled me with the knowledge and imagery of the tens of thousands of GFWC women whose shoulders I aspire to stand upon."
>
> LISA J. BLANCHARD

GROWING IN SERVICE

Membership Recruitment List

FOCUS ON: DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING
JANUARY–APRIL 2026, MORE THAN 3 MEMBERS ADDED

GFWC Woman's Club of Tarpon Springs, FL Inc. - 68
Tarpon Springs, FL

GFWC Girlfriends Service Book Club - 19
West Columbia, SC

GFWC North Myrtle Beach Woman's Club – 19
North Myrtle Beach, SC

GFWC Tempe Woman's Club - 19
Tempe, AZ

GFWC Tucson Woman's Club - 18
Tucson, AZ

GFWC Tempe Woman's Club – 16
Tempe, AZ

GFWC Tampa Bay Woman's Club – 15
San Antonio, FL

GFWC St. Petersburg Woman's Club – 14
St. Petersburg, FL

GFWC Greater West Palm Beach Women's Club – 14
West Palm Beach, FL

GFWC Bradenton Woman's Club – 13
Bradenton, FL

GFWC Dallas Woman's Club – 11
Dallas, GA

GFWC Lockport Woman's Club – 11
Lockport, IL

GFWC Madison Valley Woman's Club – 11
Ennis, MT

GFWC Viera Woman's Club – 11
Melbourne, FL

GFWC Bonita-Estero Woman's Club – 12
Bonita Springs, FL

GFWC Woman's Club of Raleigh – 10
Raleigh, NC

GFWC Treasure Coast Women – 9
Vero Beach, FL

GFWC Cutler Ridge Woman's Club – 8
Cutler Bay, FL

GFWC North Pinellas Woman's Club – 8
Clearwater, FL

GFWC Rochester Area Woman's Club – 8
Rochester, NH

GFWC Woman's Club of Tarpon Springs, FL Inc. – 8
Tarpon Springs, FL

The GFWC Woman's Club of Charleston – 8
Charleston, SC

GFWC Wheaton Junior Woman's Club – 7
Wheaton, IL

GFWC Woodford Co. Woman's Club – 7
Versailles, KY

GFWC Dover Area Woman's Club – 6
Dover, NH

GFWC Jacksonville Beaches Woman's Club, Inc. – 6
Jacksonville Beach, FL

GFWC Ossoli Circle – 6
Knoxville, TN

GFWC Village Improvement Association – 6
Rehoboth Beach, DE

GFWC Woman's Club of Playa del Ray – 6
Los Angeles, CA

GFWC Woman's League of the Lowcountry – 6
Bluffton, SC

GFWC Lexington Woman's Club – 5
Lexington, SC

GFWC Women's Club of Lake Worth – 5
Lake Worth, FL

The GFWC Woman's Club of Vista – 5
Vista, CA

GFWC Atlanta Woman's Club – 4
Atlanta, GA

GFWC Brunswick Woman's Club – 4
Brunswick, GA

GFWC Fuquay-Varina Woman's Club – 4
Fuquay-Varina, NC

GFWC Glendale Woman's Club – 4
Glendale, AZ

GFWC Gun Lake Area Inc. – 4
Shelbyville, MI

GFWC Hearts and Hands – 4
Indianapolis Area, IN

GFWC Homer Glen Juniors Women's Club – 4
Homer Glen, IL

GFWC LaBelle Community Woman's Club – 4
LaBelle, FL

GFWC Locust Grove Woman's Club – 4
Locust Grove, GA

GFWC Manchester Woman's Club – 4
Manchester, GA

GFWC Moultrie Federated Guild – 4
Moultrie, GA

GFWC Rotonda West Woman's Club – 4
Rotonda West, FL

GFWC Southside Woman's Club – 4
Jacksonville, FL

GFWC Village Improvement Association – 4
Green Cove Springs, FL

GFWC Women's Club of Sweetwater - 4
Rock Springs, WY

GFWC Brandon Junior Woman's Club – 3
Brandon, FL

GFWC Brandon Service League, Inc. – 3
Brandon, FL

GFWC Columbia Women's Club – 3
Columbia, MO

GFWC Deer Lodge Woman's Club – 3
Deer Lodge, MT

GFWC Lake Lanier Woman's Club, Inc. – 3
Oakwood, GA

GFWC New Tampa Woman's Club – 3
New Tampa, FL

GFWC Women's Club of Odessa – 3
Odessa, DE

GOAL UPDATE

A Façade Restored by Your Generosity



The GFWC Headquarters Facade Restoration and Beautification Project is a vital effort to preserve the historic heart of our Federation for generations to come.

To date, we have raised more than $140,000 for the Façade Restoration and Beautification Project through the amazing generosity of GFWC members!

We have finally received all three of the required building permits from the District of Columbia Office of Planning! We are still waiting for the public space permits required to erect the scaffolding, but we have what we need to get started!

> **As you read this, the construction team is working on ladders to clean and repair the lower sections of all three buildings, especially the limestone cladding.**

We've also learned a few things about the buildings. Did you know that the windowsills in 1728 N Street (home of the WHRC) may be red sandstone? Or that each of the three buildings is painted a slightly different color?

This is just the beginning. While this initial project focuses on the front façade, the other exterior walls are also in need of the same type of repair and restoration.

Our long-term goal is to repair all the exterior walls and secure the structural integrity of the buildings, keeping water and pests on the outside and protecting the art, artifacts, and people who live, work, and visit GFWC's beautiful headquarters.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT















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GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

For questions or to contact us at gfwc@gfwc.org or 202.347.3168.

1734 N St NW, Washington, DC 20036

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