



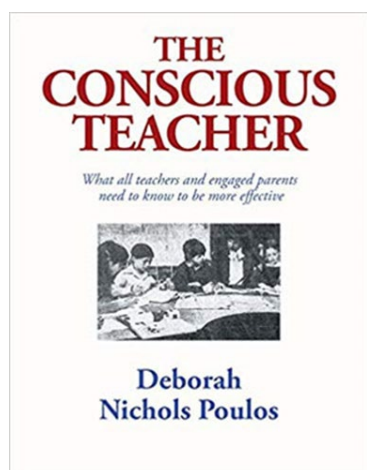
## THE SPOKESWOMAN

November/December 2020

### MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

#### The Perfect Gift: The Conscious Teacher

AAUW is proud to acknowledge the perfect gift for parents, grandparents, teachers, childcare providers, or anyone teaching and living with children. *The Conscious Teacher*, recently published by Deborah Nichols Poulos, retired teacher, former president of AAUW Davis Branch 1978-79, and former Davis City Council member, 1984-88, is absolutely the perfect gift to give or to buy for oneself.



Throughout the book, Deborah utilizes her personal experiences as a struggling young learner and her 27 years of teaching experience, primarily in the Davis School District, to write a book that perfectly hits the mark for teachers, parents, and others who want to be more effective in teaching children. Not only is this book a labor of love and dedication, but it is a real tribute to Deborah's belief that building relationships with children is essential to engaging and helping them learn in the most effective ways. It honors children's incredible abilities to achieve

when they are treated with dignity, respect, and kindness.

The book is clearly organized with a detailed Table of Contents and begins with the importance of getting to know each student, their families, and cultures. Then she writes about the importance of developing a respectful, caring environment in the classroom by creating behavior standards, routines, expectations, and establishing communication with families and school teams. The extensive section on the 'Instruction in the Classroom' is divided into subject areas and focuses on teaching gifted students and differentiating curriculum for high achieving students in a regular classroom. The Appendices in the Final Thoughts section are filled with excellent

examples of student work, curriculum guidelines, rubrics, project planning, suggested reading lists for specific grade levels and subjects, and so much more.

On a personal note, I was asked to return to a temporary teaching position after being retired for two and a half years. Coincidentally, I had just learned through AAUW that Deborah's book was available at Avid Reader, Amazon, and Barnes and Nobles. So I gifted her book to myself and used it as a resource to re-engage my thoughts and plans for re-entering the classroom. Deborah's book, filled with wisdom and suggestions for both new and veteran teachers, was inspirational for me and guided my planning and steps for establishing high expectations, classroom routines, and a positive culture where all students' needs could be met with a differentiated curriculum. I felt very fortunate to have discovered her book as it helped guide my path into a classroom that had experienced an entire semester with numerous substitute teachers. The Final Thoughts section of the book was a great reminder of techniques and strategies that I had used in my classroom and a salute to the collegiality that many of us shared with each other while teaching in Davis. I had the good fortune to work with Deborah through the district's 4th Grade level meetings and staff meetings in the 1990s and always appreciated her willingness to share effective strategies and projects.

I believe that Deborah's book is one of the best books you can read to initiate a positive career in teaching and in parenting. It not only encourages you to be the best loving, insightful, and patient teacher and parent as possible, but helps you understand the importance that your positive impact will have on all of our children and families.

At the age of 55 Deborah was diagnosed with Primary Lateral Sclerosis (PLS), a progressive degenerative impairment of the voluntary muscles in 1999 and retired at the end of the school year in 2000. She and her family wanted to travel and do as much as possible while she maintained the ability to walk. She lost the ability to walk in 2002 and in 2006 was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Even though any movement continues to become more difficult for Deborah, her supportive family, her Quilting Group, and her Memoir Writing Group backed her up on her decision to write this book, which took over



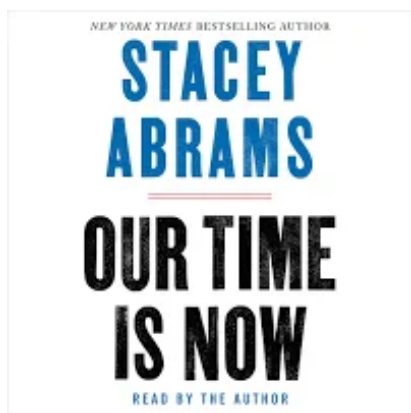
four years to complete, edit, and publish. We are thankful to Deborah and all of her dear family, friends, and colleagues who believe we can often do more than we think we can. We are excited to announce that Deborah is now in the final stages of publishing her second book, *Home Schooling: During COVID-19 and Beyond*.

- *Written by Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt*

## REPORTS

### BOOK CLUB MEETING October 10<sup>TH</sup>

Participating were: Estelle, Barbara D., Helen, Verena, Stephanie, Rhonda, Juliana.



*Our Time is Now: Power, Purpose, and the Fight for a Fair America* by Stacey Abrams was discussed during the October book group meeting. Abrams provided numerous examples of voter suppression in our country that are often blatant but sometimes surreptitious. Voting in many other countries is obligatory and people have the day off. Shift workers, in particular, often cannot take time off to vote. When wrong ballots are sent and a new one issued, is it a

form of voter suppression? Although voting is an inalienable privilege and right for U.S. citizens 18 years and older, this was not always true for women and people of color.

Abrams also discusses identity politics: sharing a culture vs. “otherness” and exercises in power (for example, women having to ask men for certain rights). One identity intersects with another and meanings of words change.

Prisoners lose the right to vote and states have different rules. If ex-felons are allowed to vote, there is less recidivism. We send people to observe other countries’ voting, yet we are not setting a good example with our redistricting shenanigans. The end of Abrams’ book exposes the possibility of a dictator leading our country, which is a scary thought.

Members shared their thoughts about voting in different countries. In Italy, all must integrate into the dominant culture. In Australia, which is multicultural, there is no integration. A common education might help people getting together, yet allow for keeping one's culture/identity. Color blindness is to treat people equally, but systemic practices keep equality at bay. To level the playing field, injustices must be identified. Systemically, with different shades of brown, darker is seen as less desirable. While color is visible, try to erase the color and deal with the person.

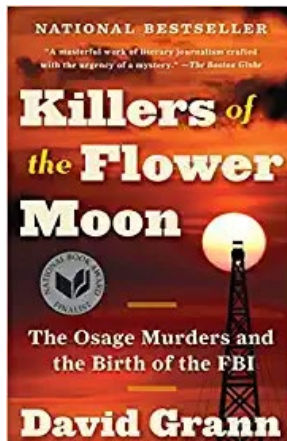
Even in colored cultures, lighter is perceived as better. In India, with the caste system, color paste has been used to try to lighten one's looks. Meanwhile, whites pay for tans and use anti-wrinkle skin products. It seems universal that lighter skin is preferred over dark skin color.

Verena told us that in Ethiopia, she saw the same color hierarchy. The people near Sudan were darker and looked down upon. She adopted a daughter in the Philippines, where the good prospective adopting parents' home had two bathrooms and "tall noses," in contrast to Filipino noses. The conversation shifted back to current voting issues and the positive and negative aspects of the electoral college vs popular vote. The electoral college is intended to give rural states balanced representation. For example, Wyoming has a population of under a million vs California, which has a population of 10% of the whole US but the number of electoral votes is proportional to its population.

Helen was working a phone bank and sadly heard from so many disenfranchised African-Americans. She recommended, *The Hard Work of Democracy*, a book on getting people to vote. Technology is separating people. She wishes she could just drive over to help people register to vote and get ballots to those who are so leery.

### BOOK CLUB MEETING November 14<sup>TH</sup>

Participants: Karen, Estelle, Barbara (dual), Juliana (dual), Carol (Woodland), Verena, Rose Mary, Helen, Rhonda, Stephanie.



The November book group discussion was about the Osage nation as we learned from *Killers of the Flower Moon*. Barbara noted that the book was not fun to read, but was interesting to her, especially regarding the growth of the F.B.I., for which her father worked.

General comments followed:

Money drives so much. We were surprised that Native Americans married whites. The men wanted the money that Native American women received from the government. There was a systematic “robbing and control” of the government payment to the tribes, which continues today. For example, the Navajo are still having lawsuits over wind turbines and oil rights. Native Americans were not considered people. Beatings of Native Americans were considered “cruelty to animals”. There are so many examples of man’s inhumanity to man. The book was hard to read, let alone visualize. Some had to reread parts of the book in order to get the characters lined up. The F.B.I. today is not the same organization as it was at inception. It is not trustworthy. Crimes against Native Americans have been deemed unimportant or investigations have cost much money without resolution. Today, the Osage Nation has grown in numbers and is more viable.

Native Americans were discouraged from retaining their language and culture, forcing separation in schools and reservations. The book, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* depicts the rape and pillage of Indians on purpose, and explains how tribes were decimated. Later, many individuals were not able to “prove” their status when government money and tribe membership counted. The *Wounded Knee* book is apparently the only book required in high school reading. Native Americans are still treated poorly as they are portrayed in *The Trail of Tears*. Many tribes have no running water despite some federal money. Treaties were broken, and pipelines were approved despite taking over Native American lands and sacred ground.

Barbara reported that the Cache Creek tribes worked slowly and carefully to build up their funds to buy more land for agriculture. They even helped other tribes. Small towns can often help each other and embrace all, avoiding “us” vs. “other”.

Helen told us of her experience in South Dakota, living with Native Americans for three weeks through AIM, the American Indian Movement. The group reclaimed territory because treaties were ignored. She learned about DQ University as the only U.S. Native American University. Rose Mary went to a pow-wow there. It was very informative and enlightening. It was serious and meaningful. Helen also talked about the Australian Aborigines. At every public gathering, each Aborigine group is culturally acknowledged. This ritual is then passed on to the children.

Karen's 90-member family found out that her great-grandmother was Native American and could claim her heritage, but didn't because of the stigma of being Indian. Rhonda told of Native American staff members at Fish & Wildlife trying to get permission for protecting the salmon run area. They were invited to attend a Bear ceremony for bears coming out of hibernation similar to salmon coming home. Since the ceremony was a hybrid of different groups, the government would grant them no recognition due to no cultural integrity, even though it was the government that split them up years ago. There was systemic restriction of self-identity, so no federal money was given.

Rose Mary pointed out how much we are not told/taught about the poor treatment and history of Indians as well as African Americans. Ethnic studies should be taught starting in elementary school. Canadians call Native Americans the First Nation, not First Americans or First Canadians. We truly "white" wash history.

Hooray for historical novels to connect us to the characters while learning about history and culture. Many other books were recommended: *Eye of the Bear* by Naida West, about how Mission Indians were really treated; *Sing Down the Moon* and *Trail of Tears* by Scott O'Dell; Jean Craighead's *Julie of the Wolves* and *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

*Killers of the Flower Moon* is now being filmed and is anticipated to be released in 2021.

The next book group meeting is on Saturday, December 12th at 9:00 am to discuss *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang. On January 9th, we will discuss *Women Peace Makers: What We Can Learn from Them* by Barbe Chambliss. The author will be joining us on Zoom. Additional details are forthcoming. Please watch your e-mail.

## OCTOBER CELEBRATE THE 19<sup>TH</sup>

On Sunday, October 18th, our Celebrate Zoom program was held as a general sharing of well-being for members participating (Shahla, Stephanie, Estelle, Verena, Helen, Rhonda, Nan, Marti, Rose Mary, Dolores, Juliana). Stephanie joined us from Hawaii, and Rhonda by phone at Suisun Marsh. We discussed a possible field trip to the marsh, Jepson Prairie, or virtual visits to Yolo Bypass. Helen mentioned working on restoration grants as part of her work with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. She is currently working as a COVID Contact Tracer.

How else are we keeping busy or sharing?

Shahla showed us her co-worker, a stuffed bunny.

Nan showed pictures of her and her granddaughter knitting together.

Estelle has enjoyed outdoor movie nights with her cul-de-sac neighbors; they have viewed Back to the Future, Hamilton, and West Wing: Get Out the Vote. Estelle also reported that the students with President Eva have ten members with three to four new ones. They are looking into AAUW's Work Smart program.

We praised Verena for asking Marty West to write up her talk about RBJ during the vigil at Community Park, and we enjoyed Marty's article in the Enterprise.

Stephanie's vacation in Hawaii was a "surreal experience" with squads of National Security patrolling the airports and with no visible crowds around. While she was swimming, two turtles joined her, and then a third came ashore.

Marti is hoping to get back to swimming in her pool. However, she has made many beautiful quilts.

Dolores is busy with her two dogs and had to leave the Zoom early. Regarding Zoom, all prefer to have no passcode, just to wait in the waiting room.

Verena told us about the Cereus flower in her yard. It can bloom several times a year, typically around midnight, and is pollinated by moths. She sent us pictures of the beautiful white flower which is common in the Philippines. She also told us about the UN documentaries that were shown online on the November 22nd and 23rd. Children won't be in school and collecting for UNICEF, so Verena reminded

us that our contributions to UNICEF could be sent to her home or the First Northern Bank. She reported that the I House and Sahaya Walk programs were done well. All the Zoom webinars are taking up much weekend relaxing time.

## NOVEMBER CELEBRATE THE 19<sup>TH</sup>

The following members joined Shahla: Stephanie, Rhonda, Estelle, Verena, Juliana.

Shahla asked each of us to say one word which exemplified how we were feeling: frazzled, anxious, tired, free since jobs were done, good after yoga. Stephanie had been “spinning” (working out on a stationary bicycle). Rhonda is very busy with her new puppy. Shahla reported that many of her staff were getting pets and talking of cats on the keyboard. This sharing was a good icebreaker at work.

We then talked about various charities we primarily supported.

Juliana - ACLU for refugee help and legalities; Juliana also supports many animal causes

Stephanie - Natomas School, Explorit Science Center, and numerous theater and art groups

Rhonda - Yolo Basin and various political causes and the Lincoln Project.

Verena - UNICEF, Heifer Project where a family is trained and given an animal to raise and then give the first-born to a community member to raise, UNHCR helping refugees, Chris Borton Memorial Scholarship to study abroad (and keeping in touch for years after). If one can personally relate to the charity, it is much more meaningful.

Estelle- Firefighters Burn Institute of Sacramento, which sponsors camps for burned children (Rich suffered burns from a plane fire), Hawaii Literacy since her mother tutored students through this program, AAUW Legacy Fund since equity is still a long time coming. Estelle recommended watching ‘A Small Act’ – an inspiring and heartwarming true story about a poor Kenyan boy who was able to advance his education as the recipient of a small monthly donation from a kind Jewish refugee living in Sweden. The film was part of the Monterey UNA-USA International Documentary Film Festival in November but can be rented on Amazon Prime.



Shahla - garage sales so as not to waste; Shahla appreciates American charities since many Iranian politicians could not be trusted to use the money honestly. She also supports public tv and uses automatic deductions at work to make donations to Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF, Red Cross, AAUW, and conservation groups. Shahla mentioned that she plans to retire from her position at the State Water Board in March 2021.

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

As previously written, AAUW Davis members will be asked to participate in a VOLUNTARY sharing of personal information in a biosketch. Using the following two write-ups as examples, you can decide if you wish to share some of your life history in the Spokeswoman. Juliana will email you a suggested outline which you can use as a guide. For questions, please call Juliana at 530-758-3011 or e-mail [carwells@thegrid.net](mailto:carwells@thegrid.net). Following are the bio sketches of new member Helen Thompson and long-time member Juliana Wells.

### HELEN

I was born in Philadelphia and was raised in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. I moved to California to attend U.C. Berkeley, and after my BS in Conservation and Resources Studies I worked on organic farms and lived in western U.S. and Chile. After traveling, I returned to graduate school on the east coast where I completed my Ph.D. (Rutgers).

After getting married, I worked as a restoration ecologist and later trained as an accountant (Masters at CO State). I was trained as an environmental scientist specializing in plant ecology (MS from Cornell).

I worked for eight years as a professional scientist: Ecologist in MN, Restoration Ecologist in San Jose, Graduate Teaching Assistant at CO State, Finance Officer at Australian Greens, Contracts and Grant Analyst at UCD School of Vet Med, Analyst and Environmental Scientist at State Water Control Board, Restoration Grant Manager at CA Dept Fish and Wildlife.

During those working years, we adopted two daughters and then moved to Sydney Australia for six years. After divorcing, I returned to the U.S. and Davis with my two daughters and our Labradoodle.

I first had contact with AAUW in 2018 through the Davis Branch series for middle school kids ‘Women in Technology’. I brought my daughters and was inspired by the number of students that AAUW was reaching and the quality of speakers at the event. It was a great way to introduce girls to the range of opportunities in the sciences and to meet other professional women.

My hobbies include gardening, hiking, kayaking, and camping, but most of my time is spent organizing my house and supporting my teenage children’s activities. My current goals include becoming more informed in my field, creating a shady space on my patio, and being a positive role model for my daughters.

I am busy with my work and my kids but hope AAUW can support my intellectual stimulation and professional growth. Currently, I am enjoying the AAUW book club and presentations at the meetings. Eventually I would like to support AAUW career events to support young women entering professional, academic, and scientific fields. I am also interested in supporting the UN activities associated with AAUW.

A favorite quote: “Sisterhood is powerful”.

## JULIANA

I was born in Massachusetts, but lived in California, where my brother was born, and then Washington due to my Naval father. We moved back East for my sister’s birth and lived with my grandparents, who were immigrants from Lithuania. We grew up bilingual and all moved to a farm in Dracut, where we had chickens, ducks, rabbits, a goat, a dog, and cats. We also had a huge garden area surrounded by pear and apple trees. It was a wonderful place to grow up.

My grandparents watched us and cooked all meals, while Julie, my mother, went to work in the textile mill and later was a secretary for a paper mill. All through our early schooling, we heard “study, learn, get good grades so you can go to college”. In 4th grade, I got to play the flute. I continued with music throughout high school, in summer music school, in All-State Band, and with the UCD Aggie marching band

before they disallowed women. My goal at Davis was to become a veterinarian. I changed to Zoology and ended with a Masters.

After being unsuccessful in finding a job in the science field and with Fish and Wildlife in the late sixties, I went back to school for a teaching credential which enabled me to teach grades 3-6 in Woodland for 30 years.

I took a short break in 1976-77 to perform on piano the women's music which I had composed. I also wrote for a Davis weekly newspaper, the Argus.

I joined AAUW shortly after I retired in '99 because the goal of encouraging girls in science is still important to me. I have benefited from being a member working for: a good cause, meeting interesting people, using my talents (newsletter and working with sixth grade girls in the CHOICES program), and having leadership opportunities and experiences.

Key phrase: Make my life a blessing.

## UNA UPDATES

**December 10th, noon PST.** Regional program hosted jointly by UNA Nor Cal, So Cal and Hawaii. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) honored or ignored: *Mechanisms to Actualize the Articles of Human Rights*

Featuring a top UN official, John Pace, who has had a distinguished 33-year career in human rights. Please participate at <https://bit.ly/3ILMRsi>

**December 10<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm PST.** UNA-USA will be hosting a special program on Zoom titled, *The Artistic Approach to Human Rights*. As described on UNA-USA's website, Human Rights are not only enshrined in the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and supported across the world through UN agencies, social justice movements, and activists, but they are also seen in statues, murals, street art, photographs, textiles, and other art forms.

In this special GEOS session celebrating UN Human Rights Day, UNA-USA will feature pieces of art that have been submitted as visual indicators of human rights. Guest speakers will offer perspective and context regarding the artwork and related UN activities.

To register for this event go to: <https://unausa.org/event/the-artistic-approach-to-advancing-human-rights-geos/>

December 12<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon to 1:30 pm PST, 2020 Human Rights Day program offered by the UNA-USA Monterey Bay chapter. Ellen Snortland, writer, actor, and producer is the featured speaker: *Providing Global Education for Young People Locally Impacts Human Rights Globally*. Register to attend at: [hKps://bit.ly/38t8Gdk](https://bit.ly/38t8Gdk)

## CALENDAR

**December 10<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, Noon:** Mechanisms to Actualize the Articles of Human Rights

**December 10<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, 1 pm –** UNA-USA Zoom program, *The Artistic Approach to Human Rights*

**December 12<sup>th</sup>, Saturday at 9 am –** Book group meeting to discuss *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang; Zoom invitation to be sent this week.

**December 12<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, 1:30 pm – 2020 Human Rights Day:** *Providing Global Education for Young People Locally Impacts Human Rights Globally*

**December 15<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday –** Deadline for contributions to AAUW Funds

**December 19<sup>th</sup>, Saturday at 4 pm –** Celebrate the 19<sup>th</sup> with special guests from The Pantry at UC Davis, a student-led campus organization that helps students experiencing food insecurity.

**January 9<sup>th</sup>, Saturday at 9 am –** Book group meeting to discuss *Women Peacemakers: What We Can Learn from Them* by Barbe Chambliss. The author will be joining our meeting by Zoom.

Link for [AAUW California December webinars](#)

Link for [upcoming AAUW webinars and recordings of past webinars](#)

**BE AS ACTIVE AS YOU CAN, BUT STAY A MEMBER.**