

BRANCH MEETING: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20

“ANYTHING I WAS BIG ENOUGH TO DO”: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM SNCC WOMEN

Dr. Emilye Crosby, the speaker at our November branch meeting, is Professor of History at SUNY Geneseo. She teaches courses on African-American History and on the modern Civil Rights movement.

Dr. Crosby will use an interactive approach to look at the place of women in the modern Civil Rights Movement, specifically, in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Women's involvement was central to SNCC—defying segregation, building voter registration campaigns, and developing local leadership. At the same time, they also challenged gender-based limitations, opening up space for themselves and inspiring subsequent generations.

Dr. Crosby will reference the following writings in her talk:

- SNCC Women's position paper, CRM Vet
- Ella Baker: The Black Woman in the Civil Rights Struggle
- Interview of Dorie Ladner by Emilye Crosby

They can be accessed through: tinyurl.com/bm-links

Dr. Crosby's first book, *A Little Taste of Freedom: The Black Freedom Struggle in Claiborne County, Mississippi*, was honored by the Mississippi Historical Society. She is also the editor of *Civil Rights History from the Ground Up: Local Struggles, a National Movement*, a book of essays.

Join us on November 20 to hear about the place of women in a central organization of the Civil Rights era. The evening promises to be informative and interesting.

Zoom link will be sent the morning of the presentation.



Dr. Emilye Crosby

Schedule:

- 5:00 PM** Arrive & sign in
- 5:30 PM** Branch Meeting
- 6:30 PM** Dinner

Dinner menu:

Chicken stuffed with spinach and rice with Béchamel sauce, Roasted herb potatoes, Salad, Rolls and butter, Brownies, Beverages. Vegetarian option available upon request.

Cost of dinner: \$25

Reservations:

Call, text, or email Julie Cotraccia by **November 13** with your reservation.

 [585-370-2235](tel:585-370-2235)

 perkinsmansiondirector@gmail.com

AAUW is a powerful advocate and viable leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.



FROM THE (ACTING) PRESIDENT'S KITCHEN TABLE

November 2025

At the beginning of Covid, I moved my workspace from a home office to my kitchen table, which looks out on my backyard and a wooded area behind it. Today I'm watching rain, blowing oak leaves, and the pink-orange leaves on the smoke tree. I'm grateful to live in such a beautiful part of the country.

Thanks to Susan: My first topic is a shout-out to Susan Motten, who organized and prepped and shopped for the new member event. Susan is one of a new group of officers who have embraced the organization and their jobs and imagined new possibilities for us. Many thanks!

My second and third are in Marilyn Tedeschi's area, Public Policy.

- **ERA Petition.** Marilyn is working on a petition drive to remove the time limit on the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. If you haven't signed it yet, ask her about it and pull out your pen.
- **NOW Convention November 9.** This year the State convention of the National Organization of Women (NOW) is meeting in Rochester on Sunday, November 9 at the RIT Conference Center, 10 AM to 4 PM. The theme of the conference is Feminism is Activism. It will feature plenary sessions with the national and State heads of NOW, break-out sessions, and networking opportunities. Attend in person for \$15 or \$25, or virtually for \$12. See the detailed program and register through Eventbrite. (Type New York State NOW convention into your browser.) I plan to go to find out what a sister organization is doing, to be inspired, and to do some networking for GRAB. Join us if you can.

Next Steps? Finally, discussion at the new member event identified areas in the community and the organization where participants felt we should be working. See the article on page 4 for the details. So, how can we set priorities among those needs, define what we can do, and get moving? I am asking new and veteran members to read about the areas of concern and commit to working on one or more of them. We will plan a follow up event to spell out the needs in more detail and begin to figure out the best use of our time and resources to approach them. Stay tuned for an event announcement.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving, and plan now to come to the Mansion on **Saturday, December 13 to decorate for the holidays.** It's always fun and a good way to meet new people.



Judy Trabert

RECAP OF OCTOBER BRANCH MEETING: DR. TOKEYA GRAHAM

By Faith Walter

At the October 16th branch meeting we had a special guest presenter, Dr. Tokeya Graham. Dr. Graham wears many hats: author, leader, creative, businesswoman, advocate, philanthropist, community steward, and educator. She is the founder and director of Soulustainable Living LLC, an equity-focused consulting firm. The two arms of her firm are The Black Healing Project, an “ecosystem of culturally grounded wellness,” and Blue Flame Publications, a platform for legacy building and storytelling.

At the meeting, Dr. Graham’s daughter, Keilani Graham, interviewed her about her new book, *The Black Healing Project*. The book is a collection of poems and experiences about love, loss, and everything along the way. It focuses on Black resiliency, grief, and growth through all of life’s challenges. Through *The Black Healing Project*, Dr. Graham has built a community through words that inspire all readers. Dr. Graham incorporates family and community into all aspects of her life. During the talk, she credited her family—husband, son, and daughter—for being her biggest support system and motivation. In addition to sharing her journey for creating *The Black Healing Project*, Dr. Graham also let us in on her future creative endeavors, including a possible opera, with the words, “Whatever I want, I create. I am art.”

The audience of branch members and guests reacted with enthusiasm to this inspiring speaker. It was a memorable meeting.



Faith Walter
Intern



Dr. Arlette Miller Smith introducing Dr. Graham



Keilani Graham interviewing Dr. Tokeya Graham



Members and guests listening



Susan Motten and Dorothy Pecoraro

NEW MEMBER EVENT OCTOBER 22ND

The Branch board of directors welcomed new members at an early evening social and program event on Wednesday, October 22nd. Susan Motten, Vice President for Membership, had designed a lively ice-breaker exercise; attendees interviewed each other to find commonalities such as birthday months, favorite TV shows, or pets. After some fun, the group moved to the dining room for the formal program. Judy Trabert reviewed the history of the branch, beginning with its founding in 1897. There was a request for a branch program on GRAB history, which isn't widely known by members.

After a noshing break, the group returned to suggest concerns for the future:

- How to organized and disseminate information about scholarships and other educational support for women, including the Education Fund
- How to mentor teachers and students
- How to locate and nurture trustworthy adults that can help children grow
- How to raise "competent" children who can thrive as adults
- How to support mothers and other caregivers
- How to mentor future leaders for the branch

New members attending were: Yvonne Asmoah and her daughter, Guest Yolanda Asamoah, Karen Cox (board member), Teresa Froncek, Julie Holzbach, Chiamaka Ikpeze, Linda LoCastro, Tara LoCastro, Susan Motten (board member), Jill Stolt, Catherine Thomas, Lucia VerSteeg. Veteran member Dorothy Pecoraro shared her wisdom and experience and tended bar. Board members Cathy Dayan, Midge Pia, Barbara Stevens, Marilyn Tedeschi, and Judy Trabert offered history and commentary.



Tara LoCastro and Karen Cox



Midge (Mary Jane) Pia



Chiamaka Ikpeze and Jill Stolt



Lucia VerSteeg and Julie Holzbach

NEWS FROM THE PERKINS MANSION

November 2025

Dear Friends of the Perkins Mansion,

I am thrilled and delighted to let you know that the 2025 Francie Wilcox Card & Game Weekend netted \$18,303.46! Thank you all who played games on Friday night and BUNCO on Saturday. The following people gave donations: Laurie Ditzel, Ruth Fischer, Vickie Fumia, Barbara Hoffman, Anne Miller, Susan Motten, Dorothy Pecoraro, Aggie Perry, Barbara Stevens, Arlette Miller Smith, Judy Trabert and Marilyn Tedeschi. A very special thank you to Dr. Nora Wilcox who donated \$10,000!! This is a fantastic beginning to raising the funds we will need for our kitchen upgrade.

We are currently in the process of applying to the Historic Preservation board for approval to enclose our back porch. This change would give us room to install a walk-in cooler. We plan to close the kitchen down right after the holiday celebrations and remain closed for the month of January while we remodel the kitchen with new appliances and flooring. In the spring, we will enclose the back porch if we get the approval.

We are figuring the total cost of the remodeling will be about \$85,000 including construction, electrical and plumbing costs. Please be as generous as you can in your response to our end-of-year appeal letter. Some of the main reasons we decided to upgrade the kitchen are to start a culinary school and to be able to feed those community partners who may suffer food insecurity due to present administration cuts. Our tenant and community partner WellVentions has written a grant proposal to pay for the expenses of the culinary school program. I will keep you informed of our progress.

Another thank you goes to intern Garcelle Carter who is working diligently on our displays on the second floor. Kevin O'Dell, our maintenance specialist, is making new cabinets for the displays. Please take some time to go up to the second floor and see their work in progress.

Another upgrade to the mansion is the security entrance system. Each board member and tenant will receive a fob and a pass code. The system has the ability to give us a report on each person entering the Mansion. We have also installed six new cameras inside and outside. These cameras are running and recording 24/7. Next will come the computer security upgrades.

Again, at this season of giving, please give as generously as you can to our annual appeal.

Onward and Upward,



Marilyn Tedeschi

marilyntee991@gmail.com

[585-414-4979](tel:585-414-4979)

GRAB AAUW MEMBERS AT NO KINGS DAY OCTOBER 18TH

Both national AAUW and the Greater Rochester Branch are prohibited from partisan political activity by virtue of their status as 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporations, but members of the branch participated in the No Kings Day activities as individuals and shared pictures. Marilyn Tedeschi and Judy Trabert participated in a rally at 12 Corners in Brighton. Karen Cox, in a cow costume, appeared in Gates and at the Gateway Center in downtown Rochester.



Marilyn Tedeschi participating in a rally at 12 Corners in Brighton



Judy Trabert (right) and her neighbor Carolyn Ragan march at 12 Corners



Karen Cox in cow costume with friend



UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 9

NOW Conference at RIT
Conference Center

NOVEMBER 19

GRAB Board Meeting

NOVEMBER 20

November branch
meeting

DECEMBER 13

Holiday Decorating at
the Mansion

DECEMBER 17

GRAB Board Meeting

DECEMBER 18

Branch Holiday
Celebration