

Published May 26th, 2010

AAUW Awards and Elections

Submitted by Evelyn Westlye



Joy Elkinton-Walker, last years Distinguished Woman, presents an honorary engraved Nambe platter to the 2010 Distinguished Woman, Mary Stephens Smith Photo K. de Groot (AAUW photographer)

years.

She graduated from U.C. Berkeley majoring in chemistry - the only female to do so that year and worked in the lab there for some time. Later she graduated from St. Mary's College as a paralegal after which she joined a law firm where she specialized in probate and estate administration. For seventeen years she worked for Kaiser Permanente, retiring as manager of the Physicians Benefit Department.

As a survivor of cancer requiring multiple operations, chemotherapy and radiation treatments she volunteers in the Wellness Community of Walnut Creek. Her experience is a tribute to her resolve, and a source of hope and inspiration to fellow patients and survivors.

Mary is the mother of one daughter, Carol, and grandmother to Carol's three children, while her second marriage to Chuck provided her with an extended family of three sons, another daughter and nine grandchildren - most of whom were in attendance to share this happy tribute. She is proof of the old saying that if you need something done ask a busy person.

Retiring board president Leslie Pfeifer acknowledged the acclaim for a very successful year over which she had presided and spoke movingly of the outstanding dedication of those members of her board after which she introduced newly elected Mary Helene Tietz, who will succeed her. The perspicacity and readily apparent dedication of the 2010-2011 newly elected board inspired faith that the organization remains in good hands.

Membership in the OML Branch of American Association of University Women is open to women who hold an AA degree from an accredited college, or a BA, or more from an accredited College or University. Please visit the website for a Membership application:

www. AAUWOML.org.

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A gala celebration was enjoyed by all of the participants at the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch (OML) of AAUW luncheon on 18 May at the Orinda Country Club. It was at once both a celebration and a rededication to all that its members hold most dear - advocacy for women and girls in education, opportunities for leadership and joyful personal friendships.

Retiring board members catalogued the achievements of the OML branch within the state association, and all were proud to learn that they were 1st in the State in Legal Advocacy contributions which help defray legal expenses for women who sue for redress from sexual harassment or gender inequality an academia and in business. OML also found themselves awarded a 9th in State for contributions to the AAUW FUNDS - Education to raise money for awards and fellowships for graduate women university students. Jo Harberson, who served as mistress of ceremonies, made heartwarming and witty tributes to all of the individuals who chaired the various committees and their members who worked long and hard to bring reality to those goals.

The highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of the Distinguished Woman Award to the 2010 honoree, Mary Stevens Smith. Mary has been a branch member for over thirty years during which time she served in many capacities: Branch treasurer, treasurer of the Educational Foundation, and of their first investment group. She has also been chair of one of the book groups for several