



Riverside-Moreno Valley-San Geronio (CA) Branch

THE PIPELINE

July-August 2021



MISSION: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

VISION: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

<https://riverside-ca.aauw.net/about/newsletter>

BRANCH NEWS



Board of Directors and Elected Officers: *President:* Amanda Nichols; *Program:* Barbara Purvis and Keri Then; *Secretary, Treasurer & Membership:* Barb Ryon; *Communications & Pipeline:* Carole Nagengast; *At large:* Ellie Bennett, Julie Bennett, Carrie Garrett, Charlotte Lucey, Ruthann

(Millie) Mlcoch).

Board Meetings. We meet by Zoom, usually the second Monday of every other month. The next meeting will be 12 July. Contact Amanda Nichols if you wish to join us amandanichols311@yahoo.com

Branch Meetings: There are still no in-person meetings. Watch this space for future announcements. [We have hopes for September!!](#)

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT AMANDA NICHOLS



Dear Friends,

Our AAUW year is about to come to an end and what a year it has been- all virtual since March of 2020. The new AAUW year will bring some very exciting things and we look forward to making a difference once again. AAUW California posted that we are in a transitional stage and to follow county guidelines for how large a group can meet in one space— inside or outside. Our next board meeting will be on zoom until more information can be provided to determine the best approach to resume in-person meetings (if desired).

In May, our pipeline featured a beautiful remembrance of our dear friend Ruth Wilson. There will be a memorial on 25 July at a place and time to be announced in the Press-Enterprise.

Many of our members have been working on personal accomplishments to support the AAUW mission. If you would like to highlight your accomplishments, please send Carole Nagengast (cnagenga@gmail.com) an email.

This edition of the Pipeline features an amazing interview with Dr. Regina Patton Stell, President of the Riverside Branch NAACP. It was an honor to have her and we appreciate all of the hard work and dedication. Thank you Keri Then for arranging and conducting the interview, making edits, and following up with Dr. Patton Stell!

Just a few reminders:

-It's time to renew your membership. If you need assistance in renewing online, please let me know.

-College students of any age can become student affiliates, either through a branch or as a student affiliate-at-large. National student affiliate fees are \$17, (plus separate branch and state dues, if you decide to join at all three levels).

-I encourage each of you to submit ideas for the Pipeline to Carole (cnagenga@gmail.com). We all have connections, let's utilize them!!!

- All best,
Amanda



The Board of Directors decided last year not to solicit Tech Trek nominations for 2021 because of the ongoing uncertainty of the pandemic and the difficulties of on-line events. We expect to resume for 2022 and will be asking for your help.

EVENING BOOK CLUB

Book Club is meeting 4th Thursday of every meeting will be July reading *The* Bennett. The



will be August 26 and we will be reading *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah. **Contact** Erika Britton (e.britton@sbcglobal.net) for the Zoom particulars if you wish to join us. All are welcome.

by Zoom, the 3rd or month @7PM. July 22th and we will be *Vanishing Half* by Brit meeting after that

GREAT DECISIONS

Great Decisions Public Policy Discussions will resume at the home of Charlotte Lucey as soon as National gives us the word that in-person events are appropriate. Again, we have hopes for September.

BIRTHDAYS



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JULY Nancy Lane –24th.

AUGUST Virginia Blumenthal- 2nd;

Erika Britton -10th;

Carrie Garrett -18th.

If we have omitted your birthday, this month or any month, please let Carole Nagengast know.

cnagenga@gmail.com.



LAST CALL - DUES REMINDER

Annual dues to AAUW were payable in May and June. Annual dues are \$99, \$62 of which goes to National, \$20 to State and \$17 to the Branch. If you have not yet paid, you can do so online by following the instructions below, or you can send a

check to Barb Ryon, 23820 Ironwood Ave, #210; Moreno Valley CA 92557-8185.

HOW TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ONLINE

If you wish to renew online, the following will guide you through the process:

1. Go to AAUW.org
2. Click on Membership in the upper right corner.
3. In the list on the right, click on Member Services Database.
4. Sign in to your account, or create an account if you don't have one. You will need your membership number. If you don't have it, contact Barb Ryon, who can obtain it for you.
5. Once you can sign in, click on Enter Member Services Database.
6. On the left hand menu, you will see Membership Payment Program.

Click on Renew My Membership and follow the directions. You can pay by credit card or by check, which you would need to mail, per the directions.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Interview with Dr. Regina Patton-Stell, President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – the NAACP, Riverside Branch. Conducted, transcribed and edited by Dr. Keri Then, a director at large for the AAUW. Also edited by Carole Nagengast.

Date: February 28, 2021 Final approval given July 1, 2021

KT: First of all, thank-you. Do you go by Dr. Patton, Dr. Patton-Stell? How do you, what do you go by? What do you want to be addressed by?

RPS: You know, I do like to have Dr. Regina Patton-Stell. It's a long story about my dad, the Patton is about him.

KT: This past year many of our AAUW programs were put on hold or outright canceled due to COVID. One of them was the AAUW STEM camp for seventh and eighth-grade

girls. The local branch of AAUW asks Riverside and Moreno Valley Unified School Districts for nominees to go to our STEM camp. And sometimes we would fund it. Sometimes other people would fund it. Last summer I interviewed Laurie Sisquoc, the curator of the Sherman Indian Museum. And she told me that Sherman is not a member of any USD but she would like her girls to attend. So I had set up a conduit if you will, to have the Sherman Indian girls attend this year. And then, of course, all of it was canceled.

So we thought to ourselves, how can we continue our program outreach to women and young girls and continue to be a leader in the community as far as encouraging young women and then maintaining that encouragement once they graduate from university or whatever their path is; how can we encourage that? And that's when we came up with the idea of interviewing leaders in our community who encourage women and young girls in all stages of their lives. Just to let you know, our next interview will be with the new RUSD Superintendent, Renee Hill. Yes, that's our goal for our next interview. So that was just to let you know who we are and why we're doing this. So moving on to the questions.



Q1: Please Tell us about yourself, the mission of the NAACP, and your journey to becoming the president of the Riverside branch.

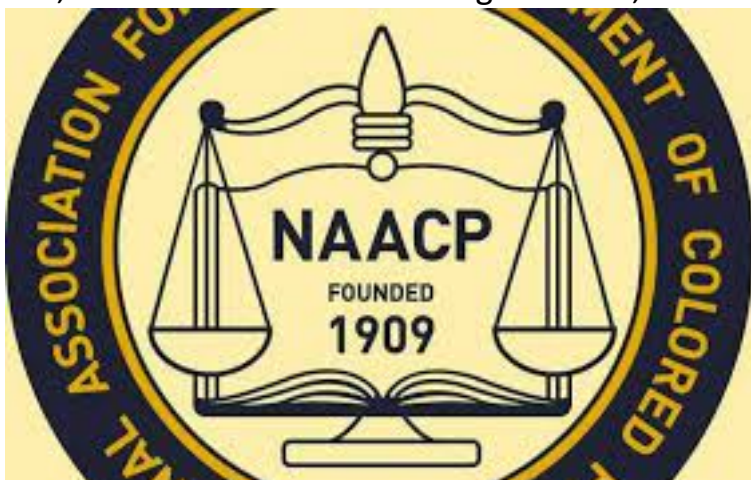
RPS: Okay. Well, I'll begin with actually coming to California, in July of 1976, at 26 years old. I'm from Chicago, graduated from college in '72 and taught four years in the inner city of Chicago in special education: behavior disorders, autism, brain disabilities. I went to a special education conference, and the Riverside County Office of Education was there recruiting. Dr. Lou Barber, the Asst.Supt. offered me a contract and by July 1976 I moved to Riverside for a summer position. I had great mentors, Dr. Susan Stark, one of my mentors and coached me to begin administration classes to complete an administrative credential program and subsequently a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from USC. I moved up quickly with the Riverside County Office of Education. I have eight years of teaching, and was promoted to staff development, working with teachers. It was very exciting to teach teachers how to do diagnostic

testing. I met my husband at 29 and was married two years later. I was encouraged to go for a principal-ship over special schools for the severely disabled.

So I moved into administration pretty early. I have almost 30 years of administrative experience. My territory was the entire County. I worked with 23 different school districts in Riverside County. Some of them at that time hadn't seen people that look like me at all. Particularly when I went to Romoland and Murrieta. At that time it was like, where are you? What are you? But, it was exciting. So they used to call me the Rosa Parks of Special Ed. Because I was just pushing for kids to be educated on campus with regular education students.

I think that's how Woodie [Rucker-Hughes] got to know me as she was a strong student advocate, also. She was at that time involved with NAACP and she said, Oh, you are a diamond in the rough with a heart and passion for civil rights. But, I told her that I could not help her at that time. I mean, I was really busy with my family and RCOE responsibilities however my financial support started with monthly contributions thru United Way to the local NAACP Riverside Branch. I was the first African-American assistant superintendent at the Riverside County office level which I found interesting coming from Chicago where we had black superintendents working around me. I took that position and was very proud to serve.

After I retired from the Riverside County office of Education. I started helping Woodie (at NAACP) with the Freedom Fund annual fundraiser. I told her I don't want to do administration stuff, but I definitely can do the Freedom Fund, because it was event planning. When I first started, there were 100 to 200 attendees. Our team got it up to about 750 attendees because you get pretty connected when you work for the County, you know how to build collaboratives and mobilize people. And I always told her, I don't want to lead this organization, I'm doing the fun part only. Then she got



sick, and before she passed she asked that I lead until we can get someone to take the lead. So we went into one term and then we had COVID and now this is the second term. But now more than ever we must keep this civil rights organization present and viable in our county. For a civil rights organization to go away now in

Riverside County would not be a good thing.

Q2: How does the NAACP support the greater Riverside community? What type of outreach involvement do you have?

RPS: Riverside County is growing in the movement. When I came here in 1976, I thought it was a little city and in time growth would come about. The growth has been fast and demographics have shifted to reflect a greater diversity of residents. Riverside County is pretty diverse with pockets of black and brown people and it's time for us to come together and address changes needed to improve and increase access to services, programs, and education outcomes for all residents. We have to be a part and have a voice in the cities we reside. The isolation of the voice of color in this county has been entrenched and remarkably slow to eradicate however now is the time. Time for coming out with diverse representation in city government and local city councils....we are becoming more active and strategic to be heard and represented

KT: Absolutely. It's too bad that it's as if the legal bar is too low and the humanity bar is what's high. Somehow we've got to get the legal bar up to the bar of humanity. And I see that today.

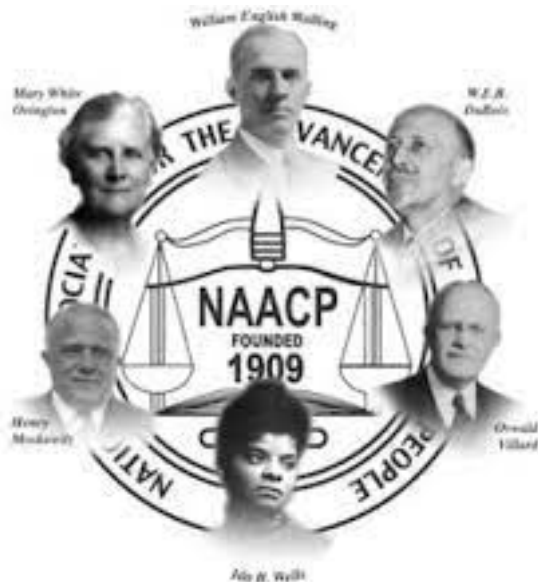
RPS: It's a challenge, but this is something... Dr. Holmes - you probably knew Dale Holmes, he always said to me, you know, teaching and leading are about the art and the skill. You have to know the content. You have to know the subject matter to teach it, but the art and teaching are what perfect the outcome. And the more you can identify and really know the context people come from, you can just teach them better. You can make that human connection. And I say all this to say that I think one of my unique abilities is that of making human connections. I have really become even more informed about what has happened here [in the United States] for 400 years and why at times feelings of resentment and anger emerge. I am committed to making people understand that it is incumbent to all of us to know the truth of our nation acknowledge ills and sins of slavery and move forward. We are reading books and holding book reads to prompt courageous conversation about racism.

KT: I'm reading the *Color of Law* [Rothstein], right now. RPS: I am too! Are you a partner of the Anti-Racist Reading Group?

KT: I'm not. It was mentioned during a housing equity summit I attended last week. I ordered it immediately and I'm reading it right now.

RPS: I read President Obama's book. He said if you don't read but three books, that was the first one. It's a must. So I immediately ordered it. And, the evidence, just really trying to educate myself, because it is what it is. And you try to take a look, something that he [Rothstein] had to figure out how was how it was woven together. And then you may have a better strategic approach to helping unwind it. That's what I was saying about ... like my younger children, all sons and they're all college graduates... we must educate ourselves. This social justice thing is not just marching out in the streets. We have to read. They are, but you know, everybody's tolerance for differences would be better if we just try to educate ourselves, start reading a little bit more, or get that information to people. And that was our idea, at Riverside. So just start a community read and everybody's kind of doing that. And we exchanged, and I realized everybody doesn't have to read every book. We can just do a jigsaw, you read this, I read that. We come together and what has happened and what's happening is we have every other Saturday morning we talk about a book or a section of a book. We're doing Chapter 12 now [Rothstein] because we have a lot of housing issues here about not being able to find places for affordable housing. I'm like, we have all this empty space. I come from a place that didn't have any space. I'm like, I don't understand.

KT: We can't find developers that want to build affordable housing because there's not enough profit margin to do so. And they need incentives.



RPS: So they attack it, saying we don't have enough space. KT: There's plenty of --what they call it, dirt. Plenty of dirt in the Inland Empire.

RPS: I think this position at the NAACP allows me to take my experience, knowledge, and skill to “break it down” and move us along. I bring together a lot of new people. As I said to them, the organization has to be integrated, read the book, read the hundred-year-old things about the NAACP. It's an organization that was organized, founded to

help the advancement of colored people. That was the terminology, but there were people -- Jewish people and white people, that really felt this way. So we are building up a new collaborative team here that has common interests in issues. And the

membership is just growing. So that's the new America or the new Riverside County, I want to build. And we are not the same Riverside Branch #1059. It's really county-wide. There are four cities in the Southwest (county) that do have a branch. Now it's called Southwest, I think because of Murrieta, Temecula, Lake Elsinore, and Menifee. I think Menifee has always felt like part of Riverside, but Menifee now is not the Menifee that I used to know. So it was interesting watching the dynamics of the county change. It became more urban without some of the infrastructure needed. You know, there are some people, like they don't want it. Some people don't know how to do it, but it's going to happen.

Q 3: How has the primary focus of the NAACP changed over the years, if at all, and how has it remained the same?

RPS: Well, let me speak to how it's remained the same. One thing is that it is very community-based. The community of diversity is changing, but it is a grassroots level up, where people in the community came together and said, we need to do this. And because of that, you have a 100% volunteer organization. At this point in Riverside County, we have no paid staff. So we have people that have come to work because they want to be a part of the work. With that being said, you come, you get people to do the work. Many times they do not have the necessary skills because you know, we elect all officers some with skills and some without skills. And many of us take community service responsibilities and have jobs. We need more staff and resources and staff development/training to do more projects. So that's when I realized we have to increase the membership so we can grow the team. We also need to increase the diversity of the Executive Committee and the General Membership. And we also have to train people as we go. Another thing that's unique and I love this about the NAACP, our early framers knew that you need to bring young people along. I don't know if you know this, but there's an NAACP Youth and College Branch. There's even a youth team for elementary school. Now we have not had it all the way down to elementary school, but we have 55 young people that are between high school and college that we're bringing along in this work. Civil rights work is as we'd like to think of, it's a pass-the-baton type of field. My response to taking over the branch was "I am not ready and the state President said to me Meager Evers wasn't ready, neither was Martin Luther King, civil rights work is not that kind of business you step up and move forward. We don't have a choice. We have to bring our young people along, because like I said, we've been in this civil rights work along time. The organization is 112 years old, but African-Americans have been here for 400 years. And we find ourselves today

dealing with the same things we were dealing with 200 years ago. So civil rights advocacy and civil rights work can not go away and will not go away because of this organization.

It's probably something that other organizations should look at. We have to bring our youth along. We have to educate young people and prepare them to take the helm.



Now the virus, the pandemic, really took the band aid off many systemic things. You know, at first, we were just working on social and criminal reform. Then we were working on housing, working on voting, but what this virus has shown us is the disadvantaged points with African-Americans and not just African-Americans. I'm on a research project now at UCR. We have three teams, Black/African American, Native American, and Latino brothers and sisters. We meet every Friday, talking about where we are with Covid sharing information, technology, vaccination education ... many of us are dealing with the same challenges. So even though the virus has been horrendous it's resulted in an opportunity to show us the

necessity of looking at the root causes of health disparities impact on our communities. The root causes must be addressed to prevent deaths.

It's really a lot of things. We have to start working at a faster rate on housing equity, the equity of education, you name it, access to equity healthcare. I am going to use this analogy I heard yesterday: There are some people in this pandemic that are in a yacht, some are in sailboats, others are in paddle boats. As my husband loves to say, some of us may not have a boat and some may not even have oars, but we're all facing this virus together. So we need to at least have a minimum level of life support so that we can deal with big plagues like this and big viruses.



Q 4: What do you think are the greatest accomplishments of the Riverside branch of NAACP and what is left to do?

RPS: Well, I think probably sharing with the thousand NAACP presidents who come to our training has shaped my thinking to focus on the critically issues, i.e. police reform, voter registration, political

appointments, city council candidates, etc. I would do a lot of things nationally, the big impact actions, and appreciate the relationship we hold with government and public elected officials in the county. We see and talk with our sheriff and the (police) chiefs. And when we have a problem, like in Hemet the other day, I was able to call the Hemet chief, and he called me back. In some places that doesn't occur. So I guess I can say that even though we have lots of changes yet to make here, we don't seem to have deaf ears to plague us, which is probably due to Woodie's relationship with many officials in the county.

You don't legislate people's hearts, but you surely can legislate and make policies. And I'm learning to think differently about that. You know, whether you and I agree on what racism is or how you feel about racism, what do we feel about the policies that you, your kids, and grandkids are living under in a democracy. And that's where we can really extrapolate what needs to be extrapolated. So we can get things done. Policy changes need to happen. And we have the skills to do it. We have the responsibility to do it, but we only do that when we're willing to come to the table together and be willing to talk. And learn, maybe why things are the way they are, and be able to express and articulate what things we can do to change them and hopefully come to some planning together to do that.

Q.5: What impact have current events had? You've talked a lot about COVID and pandemic, but for example, the Black Lives Matter movement, calls for police reform, etc. What has had the biggest impact on your branch and on your ability to foster the change you seek in your community and its people?

RPS: Let me speak to my experience. When George Floyd was killed, that hit everyone and everyone, or most people, responded. We were right at the beginning of the



pandemic, we had gotten a signal from the national president of the NAACP that he did not want us out [on the streets]. We [NAACP] are about policy change. We're about doing what we do and have done for 112 years - changing laws. And he didn't want us to get emotionally hung up in the Floyd killing and lose lives, number one. But, I had a call from a young woman in her thirties. And she said, Ms. Regina, we really want to do something to honor this man, you know, we just want to do something. Then, you know, we talked to the police or the

sheriff and they were asking if the NAACP is involved. And I said I'm glad you called because I think we should do something, our organizations, not me. I asked her what is it you want to do? And then she said to honor him and then bring people together. She told me that some of the organizers are a part of the internet, higher Black Life Matters. And I said, I'm so happy you called me because I need to be more educated on who they are. She said, well, they won't talk to you. They believe the NAACP's time is over and you know, so to speak, you guys didn't get the job done. So it's time for us to step up. We're still dealing with this and you've been dealing with it for a hundred years. I was trying to figure out what I have heard about the beginning of the distance between BLM and NAACP. And so, fortunately, I said, tell them I'm open. I love y'all to keep my back. I prefer y'all keep them in town.... So we have that talk. So because of that, I've been really educated 'cause I got on the phone and called the friends that know the founders of the local BLM. And I was able to talk to one of the original founders for a long time. She explained their history to me, how it started and how it splintered all over. They are having interesting times because some of their people want to form chapters everywhere and you know, you go too fast, you don't have them. But she said, if you think about it like this Regina, it's a movement; it's labeled Black Lives Matter. It's like we had the civil rights movement. This is just another phase of it.

KT: That's a good way to think of it.

RPS: Yes, because I kept meeting people at first, when I was asked to come onto a call with the civil rights group, and the president of the group was a white guy. And we

mentioned something about doing mirror BLM murals. And he was like, that's not going to work in Riverside. And I go, wait, what? Why? I said I got to be educated myself. And so when you think of BLM, what do you think about it? And he said I think about people not going through windows. And I said, let me educate you. This is an era when people are saying, Black Lives Matter. They didn't add Black life Matters to the civil rights movement because for so long, many of those people's lives haven't mattered. You could shoot people down ... with a knee on their neck. You see that over and over and over again, happening around the country. And many things haven't been depressing. People feel like they need to start saying, Black Lives Matter. And he, and so he even said, Oh, I hadn't thought about it. I didn't think about it like that.

I was going to be with a lot of African-American people and there were a couple of young people there. And there was a pastor whose brother sat next to me - young guy. He was pretty quiet. So older people were talking. And when he wanted to speak, I said, well, we haven't heard from him. As soon as he said BLM, they didn't even let him finish. You said, well, let me tell you, I don't think that people need to, he was a rapper and the guy stood up. He said that's what I meant. You guys won't even listen. Let us speak in these meetings. And I said to myself, we have interesting dynamics going on, but you need everybody in the room because sometimes we just need to be there to move the conversation forward.

White people, young people, black people, all nationalities. I mean, you need to have people in the room sometimes to just translate the language so that communication can go forward. But to answer your question, I think BLM, it's a phase, it's a movement. It's a voice that has now been brought to a high level across the world. And other people began to identify with it. When I saw people in Australia that were black-skinned. Now they hear us. People of color in Russia it's not just America, you know, wherever you're from.

KT: It's almost, in some ways, it seems like when I see the greeter at the Moreno Valley Walmart wearing a BLM shirt and she's doing her job, she's not trying to be radical. She's just doing her job. It has normalized some things as well. And I thought to myself, that's... I don't know what kind of progress it is, but it seems as if it is some level of progress. If a greeter at Walmart can wear a BLM shirt, then we all can.

RPS: I think that BLM has kind of been helping us. And then I shouldn't say this, but it is true. I think that a lot of people don't understand what fear does to people. I do

think that many, this is my opinion now, that many white people are afraid. Statistics say the numbers are moving. I mean, we won't be here to see it, but at some point in America, how are we going to have more, you know, people of color than... way down the road. So fear brings about strange behaviors...

KT: It does. People tend to hold on unless they really understand that.

RPS: Well, my mother used to always say, love does not subtract, love multiplies. It takes the end and accommodates, you know? But if you haven't really felt that, or don't know what that really means, it can bring behaviors that look like the stuff we're seeing. And then, you know, the media, the media, I hadn't even thought about it. I can talk to a person for probably five or 10 minutes (and) I can tell you what news they're listening to.

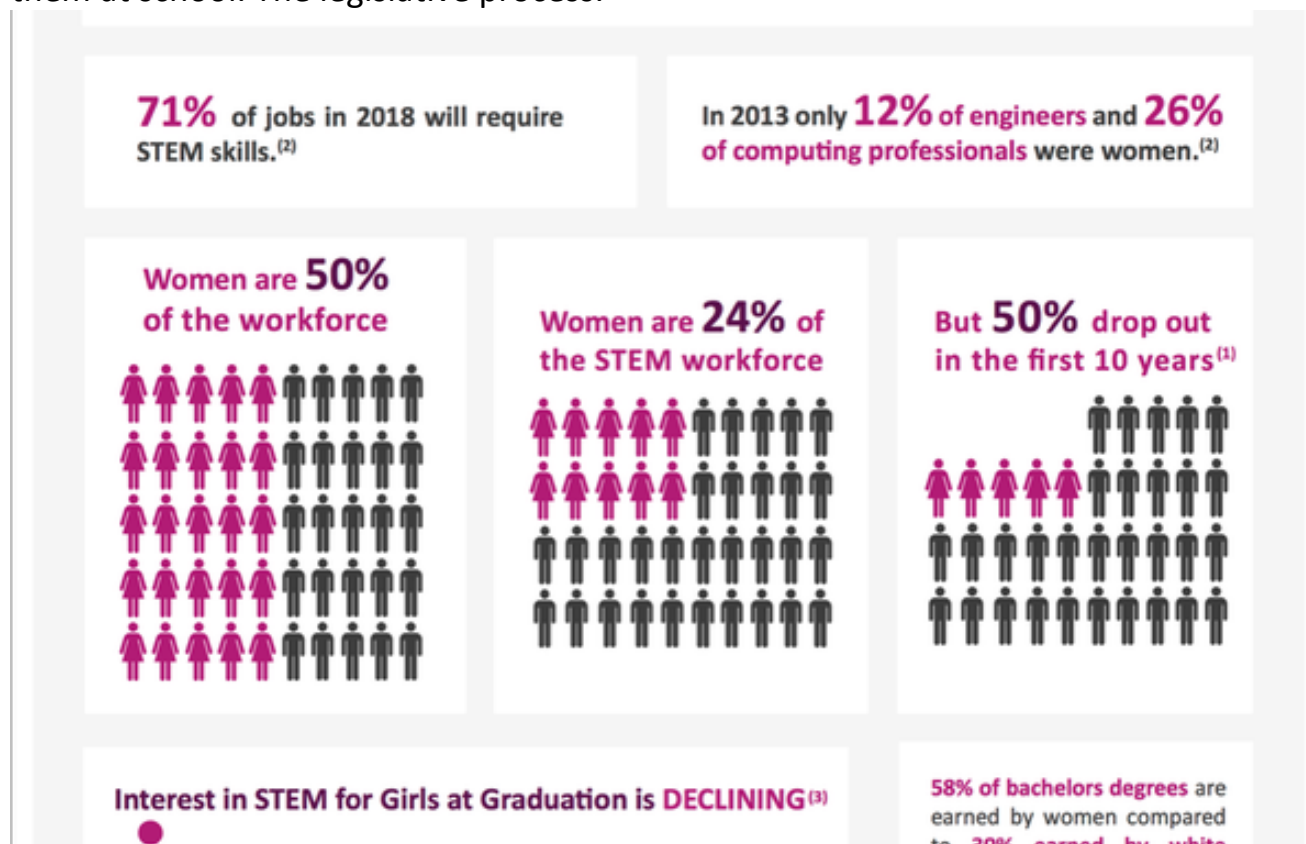
KT: Yes. And I make myself listen to another thing, another story, I believe it, but you just need to know what are the narratives, and then understand that we typically listen to the narrative that we, subjectively, ourselves believe in. Which limits us to really being able to understand the whole truth too. There is the faster truth and then there is the real truth. Yeah. It's as if you continue to listen to the same voices all the time, then you, you hear nothing but the same voices all the time.

RPS: And it got us thinking, look, you know, it's hard. You're guided by what you hear, faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God. Violence comes by hearing, you know, and mistruths come by hearing.

Q 6: The mission of AAUW is "to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy." How can AAUW help to bring more equity to women and girls of the NAACP?

RPS: Well, our [NAACP] mission is to ensure, first of all, that civil rights are out there for everyone, not just Black people. Just civil rights, according to our Bill of Rights. And, particularly bigotry, disparities, and equitableness in our systems that serve young people, all people, education and health and living situations, but particularly in hearing that your focus is on women. You know all little girls grow up to be women. And what we are learning is that women have such a drastic impact, really on our country, our families, our communities. Then I think it puts a little more pressure and need for us to make sure that we are bringing women of all ethnicities into conversations and exposures and access to many things that you and I have had the privilege of doing — education, culturally different.

You told me about the Tech Trek camp. I thought how wonderful, how wonderful, how wonderful, and when we're learning just a little bit that we've opened up for young girls being into STEM or being into any field is that we have some very, very, very smart, unique, talented women, young girls out here. I mentioned Susan Stark at the beginning. This action and advantage now, we can do, is we can get late into the game because of the woman's suffrage. It helps to have a positive female in your life that takes an interest in you, our mentors. And if we can partner up, particularly with youth programs that we're doing, women and young boys, but that's truly an area. And I would say besides just education and mentoring programs, to be able to motivate them to get involved with early civics. It's so sad to me sometimes when I hear people, not even know how the legislative parties [work]. You know, we have them at school. The legislative process.



KT: Yes, Government 101. Watch the government, who does what and them having to have a person in cases. And we knew that like, they just need to be brought back into that process. And I think the earlier that we can start going back to having those things happen locally. At one time, we used to do a lot of that, you know, in the County office, in the districts, the civic engagement and education, and actually opportunities to bring them into the process..... Why don't we bring classes into the city council meetings periodically or in their, in their particular communities? And I think one of

the ladies, Ms. Wallace, who was just was elected mayor in Banning or Beaumont. Because she was at our last meeting. One of our three-year mission goals is to have a representative within Banning or Beaumont. We called the pass area and desert.... So that's another goal.... bring the youth in that process. Why don't we have small youth groups in the Banning and the pass area, working on civil rights, teaching them how to do it together? We have to expand it, start them when they're young and they'll do it when they're old.

KT: I just listened to a group [the Morongo Basin Coalition for Social Justice]. ... They're more towards 29 Palms and that region. And, they are working with the 29 Palms sheriff. Apparently, there are some problems there. Now I realize that's San Bernardino County, but you know, there's a fine line off the 10 freeway, Cabazon and, that little south area is in Riverside County, but north, literally one street over, is San Bernardino County. So they don't divide the county up. And, I listened to some of the issues that they've had out there and I just thought to myself, you know, big city, little city, it doesn't matter. The barriers are still there.

RPS: The barriers are still there. And really those are the places that we really do need NAACP. We had a couple of hangings in that area. I had to call the president (to ask) what's really going on. And his story was totally different from what we got out of the press.

-Discussion about a homeless black man who took his life in Victorville-

KT: I may not be able to draw a direct line that lack of income, or low-income housing, caused this man's suicide, but the fact that he was homeless caused the depression that caused his death, you know, so you have all these causes and the outcome and the effect was very evident. He took his life.....

Q7: What do you personally, or, from being the president of the NAACP, but what do you think is the most important issue right now impacting girls and women that we might not have discussed?

RPS: Two things. I am still concerned about where we do not show up. I know, I know we're making progress and numbers and we're announcing CEOs that are black and women. But when I look at the number of places that women are not showing up. ... Particularly, I'm learning to understand that power is being at the table. There are still tables that we are not sitting at. I mean, I'm still, you know.... I'm concerned about that.

And then, maybe because of what's come just out recently. (Governor Andrew Cuomo of NY being accused of sexual impropriety), I don't know as there are accusations of sexual improprieties that have happened to many women. And as I just said that it's when I was thinking if I have forgotten anything that, that may have happened in my life. And, I'm thinking how many little girls grow up to be women that bury things that happened, either that they've put them under or they just never really thought about it. But, how much of the conditioning has perhaps tapped greatness in every female that has come into this world.

And so for me, I am recommitted to hearing when I don't hear something from a young person, particularly. But, even my friends are quiet. You know, sometimes you say stuff and the room just gets quiet. That may be at some point in time, I will either issue an invitation or something, touch base with some female. Because I think that telling it helps the situation. If one person can hear a secret you've kept forever and it'll free you up a little bit, then it's worth my time and taking on that knowledge. So I don't know if that's what she wanted to hear, but I really think that as women, there are just some things that we don't talk about.

KT: That's correct. And it's almost like you live with silence alone, you don't realize you've been silenced.

RPS: So I think we, once we kind of... I want to get there. We are unraveling that. But, we have a long way to cross all ethnicities, I believe more so now.

KT: Yeah. We see the high profile cases and, you know, the Harvey Weinstains, and right now the case that's being brought out against, what's his name? He's a producer [Woody Allen]. And Cuomo yes, today three, four different statements that he had to release today in order to explain his behavior.

RPS: What does that really tell us about how are we raising our boys? So we just need to put that in check.

KT: Yes, that's absolutely true. Yeah, that's true. Well, Regina, those are all my questions. Do you have anything else that you think AAUW would be interested in knowing either about you or NAACP? Believe me, we will be reaching out to you because once this pandemic is to the point where we think we can get back to - should I say regular programming? We dare not use the word normal anymore.

We want to get our awesome STEM program going again. We actually selected, the

girls, interviewed them. They were nominated by their middle school, their school teacher. But, we would interview them to make sure that they were ready to go to a camp because our camps were held at UCSD and at Whittier College. And they would have leave their home for a whole week and be with other girls in a dorm. And there were no cell phones allowed and they had to leave their parents behind, and especially for some Latina young ladies at age 12 and 13 to leave their families behind was a difficult thing to decide to do. And we had been running this program for five or six years. It started with Riverside Unified and then we worked with the superintendent in Moreno Valley to expand it to Moreno Valley. Then we got them to fund a great percentage of it. And then just all of a sudden it came to a screeching halt. And we don't know where it's going to pick up or how it's going to pick up because many of these colleges out there did it on a leap of faith where they would allow us to use their dorm rooms and their meeting halls and their dining facilities. And, we had several hundred girls. Not just from our branch here in Riverside and Moreno Valley, but all branches in California. They would go to the colleges and do this STEM training. And boy, we're trying to see the positive that somehow the program will be better or that we'll find a program that will be just as good. That's the goal. And we're looking for that right now.

So if you think of something we can do to help. We have a great branch, very active. What used to be a very active branch. We are trying to get back in at least an activity mode. We are trying to think of ways to get out there in the community and still be relevant. Or, why are we here if we're not relevant? Why are we here?

RPS: - Well, I'm going to call you. 'Cause I, when it's quiet and still early in the morning before and after I pray, I get these ideas, I'll call you about this.

KT: Please do, because if it hadn't been for Laurie Sisquoc telling me I didn't know that Sherman Indian School was not part of RUSD, but I had to have her tell me that in order for it to click. And I thought to myself, well, that means your girls aren't included in our STEM program. I had to have her say it to me. I, my brain was not putting together the facts of life. And then she told me about the three other Indian schools that are in the region. And I said, well, then, you know what, I'm going to reach out to those branches and connect them as well. And, that is not something that we can do with NAACP because you're not running schools, but there might be something we can do together. And I think that's the key.

RPS- Wonderful. Thank you so much. **END**