

Welcome and Opening Remarks
Theresa K. Leiphon, State President
AAUW of North Dakota State Meeting
April 22, 2017, Wahpeton, ND

THEME: “Let Your Power Flower”

It’s spring! Early flowers are blooming in flowerbeds and garden shops. They are a sign of beauty and new life. Women are often compared to flowers by poets and song writers. What most people don’t appreciate about flowers, however, is how amazingly strong and determined they are. See a crocus blooming in the snow. See poppies, daisies, and petunias spring from tiny seeds. See tulips push out of recently-frozen ground every year. Like flowers, the women of AAUW are strong, courageous, resilient, and ingenious!

Today we will hear from women leaders who will show us ways to let our power flower. We will hear from national AAUW leaders Malinda Gaul and Alicia Hetman; from State legislators Alisa Mitskog and Kathy Hogan; and from state AAUW leaders Connie Hildebrand and Renelle Bertsch. They will clarify our mission, describe issues of interest and concern to us in our State, and show us techniques to become effective advocates.

It takes a lot of work to become a flower, and it takes interest, engagement, commitment, and action to promote the empowerment of women, our mission in AAUW. Later we will recognize people and projects who exemplify those qualities.

In our own ways, in our local organizations, let AAUW be a recognized agency for positive change and courageous action for all women. The desire is here. The means are ours. It’s spring again, time to let our power flower. End sexual assault and human trafficking! End gender discrimination! End the exploitation of women and children! We may never eradicate these evils, but at least within the reach of our influence, let us make them much more difficult! Watch our power flower as we stand and cry, “Not on our watch!”