

MARTHA GRIFFITHS EQUITY AWARD

The AAUW of Michigan is pleased to announce the Martha Griffiths Equity Award, to be given for the first time at the State Convention, May 3, 2008. In keeping with AAUW's mission of advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education and research, the AAUW of Michigan encourages branches to identify a person who has promoted equity for women and girls in Michigan in a demonstrable manner. For instance, the following are some activities that demonstrate the promotion of equity for women and girls. The nominee may have published articles, been a keynote speaker, or initiated equity programs/projects. The award is intended to increase the visibility of AAUW of Michigan, and is not limited to AAUW members.

BACKGROUND ON MARTHA GRIFFITHS

Martha Griffiths served as U.S. Congresswoman from Michigan and later served as Michigan's first female elected Lt. Governor. Griffiths' first try for public office in 1946 resulted in defeat, but she was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in 1948 and served two terms. After serving as Recorder's Court Judge in Detroit (the first woman to do so), she ran successfully for U.S. Congress in 1954, where she served with great distinction until retiring in 1974. After her years in Congress, Griffiths practiced law until running for Lieutenant Governor of Michigan in 1982, and served two terms of office. In addition to her other achievements, she was also the first woman to serve on many corporate boards of directors.

Griffiths cemented the word "sex" into the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, legislation not originally intended to address gender discrimination, and blasted the Equal Rights Amendment out of Congressional Committee where it had been buried for 47 years.

For much of her life, Martha Griffiths scored firsts, becoming the first woman to serve on the House Ways and Means Committee, and on the Joint Economic Committee of Congress. She also chaired the House Subcommittee on Fiscal Policy. These positions gave her unique power in Congress to accomplish the passage of legislation that continues to affect the lives of women and men, today.

Martha Griffiths was a member of the Detroit and Oakland branches, and was an honored speaker at AAUW events. Established to make Martha Griffiths' national importance in improving gender equity better known, the Martha Griffiths Project was begun by the Oakland Branch of AAUW in 1989. First joined informally by other Michigan AAUW branches, this project then was endorsed by AAUW of Michigan as an ongoing state mission in 1993. Successes have included Griffiths induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York, and an upcoming biography written by Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, Sheryl James. In a rare public appearance in her later years, Griffiths attended the AAUW of Michigan-sponsored *Women's Video Film Festival* where the video **Martha Griffiths Speaks Out**, created by the Oakland Branch, was shown.

NOMINATION PROCESS

- Branches may submit the name of a potential nominee, either as an individual branch or in conjunction with other branches, using the Martha Griffiths Equity Award Nomination Form.
- Branches are encouraged to solicit input from their local communities about possible nominees.
- The chosen honoree will be invited to accept the award at the state convention.
- The process of selecting an award recipient will be handled by an ad hoc committee appointed by the state board of directors that will review the nominations and select the honoree.
- The honoree will be expected to attend the convention in order to receive the award.