

**PROGRAM ON A PAGE
(or two)**

The LEGAL ADVOCAY FUND

The establishment and implementation of the Legal Advocacy Fund reflects AAUW's philosophical commitment to advancing gender equity in the AAUW Value Promise: By joining AAUW you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that women have a fair chance.

The AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF) works to combat sex discrimination in higher education and the workplace. This is done through community and campus outreach programs, a resource library, on line advocacy tools, and various research reports. LAF was conceived and implemented to encourage member contributions to invest in activities that prevent and combat sex discrimination through the support of litigation and educational programs. As of January 1, 2009 LAF case support was expanded to address discrimination cases that protect women in all workplaces, as well as those in the academic venue. Specifically LAF will seek to support plaintiffs with significant cases that have the potential to set precedent and protect women against discrimination in the future.

As we move forward:

- AAUW will expand our LAF case support beyond the academic sphere to the wider workplace so that all women have a fair chance.
- LAF will seek plaintiffs to support whose cases address significant issues that will clearly impact our fight for pay equity and workplaces free of sex discrimination.
- AAUW will also continue and expand our long-term support in *amicus curiae* in gender discrimination and other civil rights cases.
- AAUW will work closely with other respected organizations that are active in the gender equity arena to identify key cases that align with our mission.
- AAUW will look to organizational partners, collaborators, and members to help us target cases in which AAUW's voice will make a difference.
- AAUW has been in the fight to combat sex discrimination from the first, but with the U.S. Supreme Court narrowing our rights and pushing hard to rescind the gains we've made, we need strategic litigation, which will be a critical weapon for us over the next few years.

AAUW member financial support will continue to be essential. This is vital if we are to broaden our focus beyond the academic arena and target our resources to cases that establish significant legal precedents. We must create a fund that will support a significant attack when a big case comes along. We will still need to support LAF travel

grants and program management, but the real need will be for a “war chest” that we can call upon for strategic litigation.

This year (fall 2009) is set aside for district meetings in lieu of our state Fall Conference. Consider securing a Plaintiff Travel Grant, which is an annual grant that enables a LAF supported plaintiff to speak at a branch, state, or regional meeting or convention about their lawsuit, sex discrimination issues in the workplace and higher education. The procedure for following through is on the Association website as one of the Programs in a Box. (www.aauw.org) These speakers are quite compelling and will give members an opportunity to observe first hand the outcome of their contributions. The deadline for applying for one of these grants is October 15th.

AAUW of Michigan branches have generously contributed to the Legal Advocacy Fund. Let us continue our legacy of giving, so that all women have a fair chance.