



# 2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT



June 2026  
Woman's City Club  
of Greater Cincinnati



[www.womanscityclub.org](http://www.womanscityclub.org)  
[wcc@womanscityclub.org](mailto:wcc@womanscityclub.org)  
(513) 751-0100

# LEADERSHIP



## 2025-2026

**President** - Beth Sullebarger  
**VP for Administration** - Jeff Dey  
**VP for Civic Engagement** - Cheri Rekow  
**VP for Membership** - Laurie Frank  
**VP for Programs** - Anne Buening  
**Secretary** - Christy Backley  
**Treasurer** - Jennifer Funk

### Trustees

Deborah Allsop  
 Anne Lathrop  
 Nina E. Lewis  
 Sharon McCreary  
 Sarah Muncy  
 Susan Noonan  
 David Siders  
 Marcia Togneri  
 Sue Wilke

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**Treasurer** - Barbara Myers

### Trustees

Deborah Allsop  
 Anne Buening  
 Elizabeth Buening  
 Melissa Currence  
 Angela Klindedinst  
 Sarah Muncy  
 Susan Noonan  
 Ellen Pierce  
 Sue Wilke

## Thank you for your service

WCC is deeply grateful to the following people for their years of dedicated service and whose board terms have concluded: Jennifer Funk, Nina E. Lewis, Sharon McCreary, and Marcia Togneri. Anne Lathrop will also retire from the board.

WCC thanks Sue Wilke for agreeing to serve a second full term. And, we welcome new board members Elizabeth Buening, Melissa Currence, Angela Klindedinst, Barbara Myers, and Ellen Pierce. Thanks to all the candidates for their willingness to serve!

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Turning Purpose into Progress



*Beth Sullebarger, President*

Since it was founded 111 years ago, Woman's City Club has been guided by purpose and committed to progress in our community. This is reflected in everything we do—including our public forums, advocacy on issues and legislation, and our special events in which we stand for principle and work to improve the quality of life for all people in Greater Cincinnati.

Margaret Mead is credited with saying, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." I'm sure you've heard that before, but in the case of WCC it is so true. It is what we strive to do every day in any way we can. It is absolutely amazing how much a small volunteer board can get done when everyone pitches in!

This year was one of momentous change in the way we run our office. After our administrator, Donna Tukel, bade us a fond farewell, we contracted with Kim Fantaci of Advanced Management Concepts. The transition was very smooth, and Kim is doing a fantastic job. *(Read more on page 13.)*

Our programs and communications are the primary ways we reach members, the public, and elected officials. Our programs are fresh and timely because we respond to what's going on at the moment. Two programs particularly stand out.

1. Our **October panel** discussion about the role of Community Councils in public decision-making after the mayor and council ignored hours of public testimony from hundreds of citizens against a zone change allowing an oversized and incompatible development on Hyde Park Square.
2. Our **May panel** about alternative voting methods with Ohio Senator Lou Blessing and Matt Koesters of Fortify Democracy after our state assembly banned the use of Ranked-Choice Voting. *(Read more on page 6.)*

As usual, we kept an eye on city affairs. Cheri Rekow and I penned an opinion piece in the *Enquirer* opposing the redesign of Piatt Park. At a march on March 8 in observance of Women's History Month, I spoke to the crowd in front of City Hall about the contributions of WCC leaders Edith Campbell, Agnes Seasongood, Marian Spencer and Nancy Minson to good government and social justice in Cincinnati. These women worked to turn principle into progress, and we are dedicated to continuing their legacy.

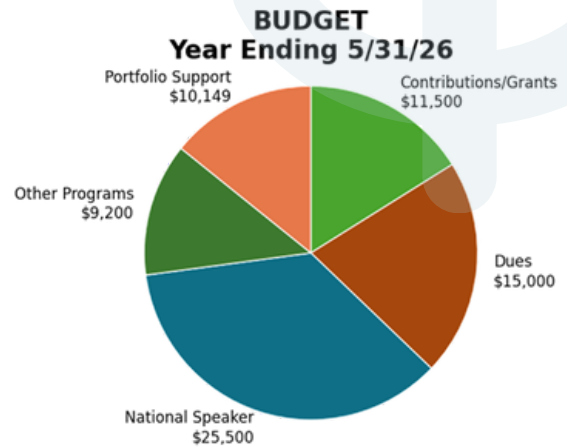
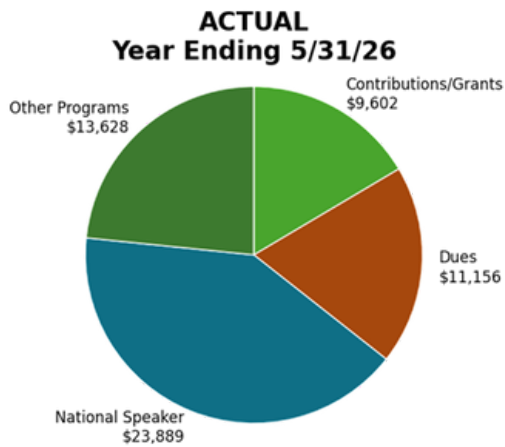
WCC is growing because people who want to preserve good government and effect constructive change are looking for ways to connect. Our Annual Meeting offers you a perfect opportunity to commune with other members over a delicious dinner and hear Eric Russo, executive director of the Hillside Trust, explain how WCC helped found this successful organization 50 years ago. We also want to hear from you—about what more you think WCC can do to deliver the citizen voice to help shape our community's future. I'm excited about serving another year as president and finding ways to make WCC more influential and sustainable. Your ideas are welcome!

# FINANCIAL REPORT

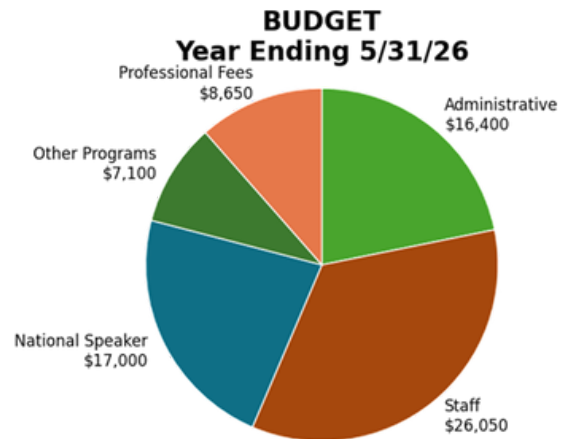
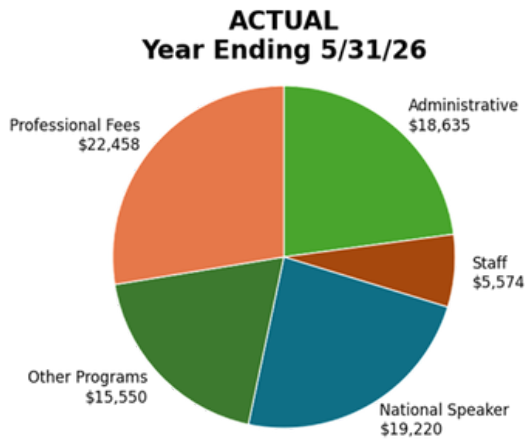
Submitted by Jennifer Funk, Treasurer

WCC's fiscal year 2025-26 operating budget was \$75,749. Operating revenue totaled \$58,275, led by program income, membership dues, and contributions through the Annual Fund. Program income was especially strong, with National Speaker Forum sponsorships and Seasongood Annual Luncheon support exceeding budgeted expectations.

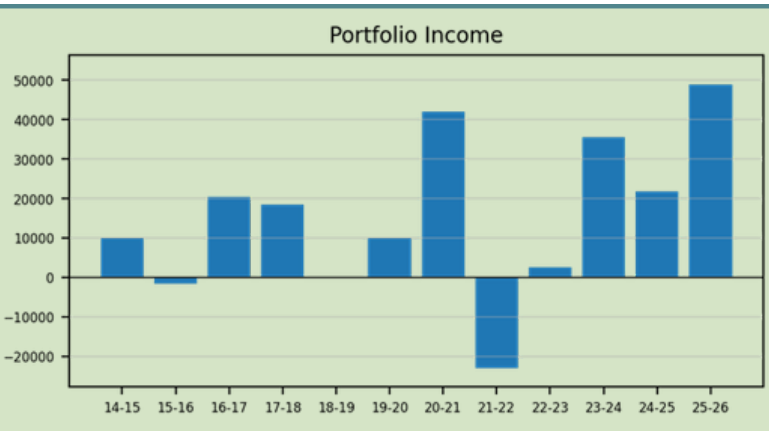
Operating expenditures totaled \$81,438, resulting in a net operating deficit of \$23,163 before investment activity. A strong investment year more than offset the operating deficit, with net investment income of \$48,969 and total net revenue of \$25,806. As of May 31, 2026, the organization reported total assets of \$314,197, including \$282,189 in investments held at Park National Bank.



INCOME



EXPENSES



# ANNUAL FUND REPORT

Woman's City Club thanks all those who so generously contributed to our Annual Fund.

Jo-Ann Albers  
Deborah Allsop  
Anonymous Donor  
Christy Backley  
Annie Faragher Bennett  
Janet Buening  
Melissa Currence  
Marge Davis  
Jeff Dey  
Carole Donnelly  
Barbara Elleman  
Linda Fabe  
Laurie Frank  
Eleonora Fusco  
Jennifer Funk  
Sarah Gideonse

Judith Green  
Sara Heckscher  
Jane Hopson  
Chara Fisher Jackson  
Harriet Kaufman  
Edna Keown  
Nina E. Lewis  
Elizabeth Mann  
LaVerne Mitchell  
Susan Noonan  
Mary Owens  
Alice Perlman  
Cheri Rekow  
Jeanette Rost  
Alice Schneider  
Janice Seymour

Janet Simpkinson  
Katherine Smith  
Beth Sullebarger  
Margaret Tojo  
Janet Walsh  
Susan Wilke

**Donate Today**



Please remember that this is a yearly effort. Membership dues go a long way, but they don't cover all our administrative costs so we must raise additional funds through our Annual Fund and special events such as Feist Tea, Agnes B. Seasongood Luncheon and our National Speaker Forum. This enables us to offer all our informative forums free to the public!

## What we raised this year

We raised \$8,900. We thank our 38 donors who made that happen.

# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Submitted by Cheri Rekow, VP for Civic Engagement

Civic Engagement (CE) objectives included 1) review and advocacy around proposed City and State legislation; 2) collaboration with other partner organizations; 3) CE facilitation via WCC committee support, especially Programs, Communications, Membership, and the 2026 National Speaker Forum.



Among other publications, we reviewed City and State legislative agendas (i.e. City Planning Commission, six City Council Committees, and Ohio's State House and Senate). The Board addressed legislative initiatives, communicating WCC positions on active legislation via verbal public testimony or in writing, consistent with WCC's mission and values. At the local level:

- Ongoing testimony was provided relative to Hyde Park Square rezoning, urging City Council's adherence to existing community plans and design standards.
- In position statements supporting two November 2025 ballot levies, WCC endorsed 1) a 10-year renewal for CPS general fund operating expenses supporting student achievement; and 2) the Great Parks of Hamilton County levy to fund continued management and protection of Hamilton County Parks (both approved 9/22/25).
- In response to two proposed City Income Tax Increases, the Board submitted a written statement (1/26/26) to the Mayor and City Council with six considerations, including more civic engagement before going to the voters.
- An editorial on potential adverse impacts from proposed plans for downtown Piatt Park was published in the *Enquirer*.

At the State level WCC submitted letters and/or positions regarding the following bill: SB 763, which effectively banned Ranked-Choice Voting. We followed up with a program about alternative voting methods on May 14, and are currently following many pending bills that may impact civil rights in Ohio.

To leverage resources, collaborate on forums, and solicit co-sponsors for events and programs, we reached out to partner organizations and leaders including: **League of Women Voters (LWV); Elizabeth Chasteen Day, Amnesty International, OH; Elizabeth Bartley, Invest in Neighborhoods; Steve Goodin, Charter Committee; Karl Kadon, retired US District Attorney; Connie Roesch, Cincinnati; Eric Russo, The Hillside Trust; Lucy May, WVXU; Matt Koesters, Fortify Democracy; Louis Blessing, III, Ohio State Senator; University of Cincinnati School of Planning, and Sierra Club.**

As reported in our weekly *Updates* and *Bulletins*, civic engagement efforts addressed government, social justice, education, and the environment. The VP for Civic Engagement worked closely with the Program and Membership committees to produce timely relevant motivational programs and events that engage members and encourage broader civic engagement around the WCC core values.

# PROGRAMS REPORT

Anne Buening, VP for Programs

During the past program year, we had a full calendar of fantastic public forums on timely topics. As we do each fall, we collaborated with the League of Women Voters on a round-robin interview with candidates for City Council.

In October, we presented a discussion about the **role of Community Councils in decision-making about neighborhood development**. Their status was called into question after City Council approved a zoning change allowing an incompatible development on Hyde Park Square despite hours of testimony against it. More than a dozen community councils citywide joined a petition drive because they too had concerns about being heard by City Hall.

Are Community Councils still a “crucial link” in city governance? Are they representative of their neighborhoods? Are they respected and heard? These questions were addressed by a stellar panel moderated by Cheri Rekow that included David Mann, former Mayor; Elizabeth Bartley, Executive Director of Invest in Neighborhoods; Amber Kassem, President, East Price Hill Improvement Association; Jacqueline Edmerson, President, Bond Hill Community Council; and Sue Wilke, Co-chair, Civic Engagement Action Team and WCC board member.

Anticipating the Thanksgiving feast, we presented a **panel on fighting hunger**, which increased awareness about the operations and impact of local providers. Speakers included Renee Mahaffey Harris of Center for Closing the Health Gap; Kurt Reiber of the Freestore Foodbank; and Amy Scarpello of La Soupe, who

each discussed their services, goals, achievements, and next steps. Anne Buening moderated.

In January, WCC presented a program about **AI being used to make decisions about what types of medical procedures will be covered by Medicare**. Known as “The Wasteful and Inappropriate Service Reduction (WISer) Model, this program is being piloted in Ohio and five other states. Our speakers were Charlotte Rudolph of UHCAN Ohio, which helps people navigate healthcare systems, and Greg Landsman, U.S. Representative. Concerned that this use of AI could harm patients, Landsman discussed the Seniors Deserve SMARTER Care Act intended to stop the pilot and prevent AI-driven denials of coverage.

“**Arts and activism**” was the theme of our National Speaker Forum with Gina Belafonte in March. As a preview, we highlighted local arts activists Toilynn O’Neal Turner of the Robert O’Neal Multicultural Arts Center; Kathy Wade, internationally known jazz vocalist and director of Learning Through Art; and Elissa Yancey, president of A Picture’s Worth in our February program. In connection with Earth Day in April, we focused on the environment, presenting recycling expert Bob Gedert discussing his recent book, ***Untangling Plastics: the Missing Link in Mitigating Climate Change***.

After our state assembly banned the use of Ranked-Choice Voting, we held a panel on May 14 moderated by Lucy May of WVXU about **alternative voting methods** with Ohio Senator Lou Blessing, III, and Matt Koesters of Fortify Democracy. At the urging of Cheri Rekow, VP for Civic Engagement, who organized the panel, Koesters created an app so we could offer a live demonstration of several voting methods and attendees could see the impact of each. We will continue to follow Senator Blessing’s legislative initiatives about voting.

*A diverse panel of experts on civic engagement give their input on the role and significance of community councils at an October 21 forum.*



# MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Submitted by Laurie Frank, VP for Membership

During the 2025–2026 program year, the Membership Committee expanded year-round initiatives designed to encourage engagement, foster connections, and build community among current, new, and prospective members. WCC membership grew from 178 in September to 212 members by mid-May.

## Focus Areas

- New Member Welcome & Orientation Programs
- Membership Recruitment, Engagement, and Retention
- Establishment of a New Member Welcome Process
- New Member Welcome Events

The Membership Committee hosted two **new member welcome events** during the year. While initially focused on orienting new members, these gatherings were expanded to include all members, particularly those seeking greater involvement in WCC activities.

## September Potluck in the Park

Held September 21 at French Park Pavilion, the annual **Potluck in the Park** welcomed 27 attendees. The event provided an opportunity for members to connect, reconnect, and learn about upcoming programs and ways to become engaged in WCC.

## Sip, Share, and Connect

On January 28, members gathered at The Regency’s Heritage Room for the **Sip. Share. Connect. New Member Welcome & Orientation Program**. Laurie Frank welcomed attendees and outlined opportunities for involvement. WCC officers and committee leaders highlighted programs, committees, and volunteer opportunities.

Jeff Dey introduced the “WCC Job Tree,” a visual guide to short-term volunteer opportunities. Many attendees signed up for areas of interest that evening. President Beth Sullebarger also shared an overview of WCC’s history and longstanding commitment to advocacy and civic engagement. The event fostered lively conversation, new connections, and enthusiasm for future involvement.

## Member Engagement Events

The committee also organized activities that encouraged member participation and introduced prospective members to WCC.

## WCC Salon

On October 19, Anne Buening hosted a fall craft-making salon, sharing creative ideas and materials for holiday-themed projects.

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Performance:

**+16%**

Membership Increase

## Membership Committee:

Anne Buening | Jeff Dey | Sarah Gideonse  
Sharon McCreary | Annette Tarver | Marcia Togneri  
Ad Hoc: Cheri Rekow | Beth Sullebarger

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### Sip, Share, and Connect at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House

On April 12, twenty-six members and guests gathered for lunch and a tour of the Harriet Beecher Stowe House. Members shared what they value most about WCC before enjoying a fascinating tour led by Anne Buening. The event sold out quickly and highlighted the appeal of small-group social and educational experiences.

### Membership Recruitment & Retention

The committee developed a new member welcome process that includes a buddy system and enhanced onboarding procedures. Efforts focused on improving how inquiries are handled, reviewing membership forms, and creating a more consistent welcoming experience. This work will continue in the coming year.

### WCC Membership Directory

The WCC Membership Directory will remain available electronically through the members-only portal on the WCC website. Printed copies will be available upon request. Only current paid members are included, and new members receive portal access information in their welcome materials.

## We appreciate all our members

### LIFETIME MEMBERS

Deborah Allsop  
Joyce Asfour  
Mary Ellen Ashley  
Cathy Bernardino Bailey  
Jenny Broh  
Janet Buening  
Heather Rae Byer  
Marjorie Davies  
Marge Davis  
Jeff Dey  
Barbara Elleman  
Sarah Gideonse  
Joy Haupt  
Connie Hinitz  
Suzanne Joiner  
Michael Maloney  
Jeanne Nightingale

Lori Nuckolls  
Mary Osterbrock  
Mary Beth Owens  
Hera Reines  
Cheri Rekow  
Burton Roehr  
Alice Schneider  
Janice Seymour  
Beth Sullebarger  
Emily Thobe  
Beverly Thomas  
Marcia Togneri  
Nancy Lu Walters  
Linda Wihl  
Dan Zavon

### ENGAGED MEMBERS

Mary Wells

### FEISTY MEMBERS

Jo-Ann Huff Albers  
Elizabeth Bartley  
Carole Cutter-Hawkins  
Cynthia Duval  
Emily Hodges  
Angela Klinedinst  
Rina Saperstein  
Jean Sepate  
Grace Sferra  
Jane Katzman Simon  
Pat Timm  
Janet Walsh

### HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

Annie Faragher Bennett  
Kathleen & George Brinkman  
Ruth Cronenberg  
Carolyn Eagen  
Linda Fabe  
Rachel Foster  
Laurie Frank  
Kathleen Hebbeler  
Chara Fisher Jackson  
Laurie Johnston  
Harriet Kaufman  
Marie Schotz Kocoshis  
Susan Kreuzmann  
Betsy Mann  
William Menrath  
Ariel & Huxley Miller  
Rozy Park  
Roxanne Qualls  
Janet Simpkinson  
Susan Wilke  
Victoria Wulsin  
J.M. Yacher

# ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMITTEE

## A MOVE TO REGROUP

Submitted by Jeanne Nightingale, Chair

Since founded in 2004, WCC's Environmental Action Group (EAG) has helped to focus the club's energy on environmental justice issues facing our city. As a practice, the group has collaborated with other civic, neighborhood, environmental, and faith groups in the city to educate the public and participate in actions, advocacy, and undertake projects that raise eco-awareness and green the urban environment. We did this through educational programs and environmental projects. Like the other Action Groups formed in 2004, we have evolved over the years in response to changing needs.

As founding members of the *Past Plastic Cincinnati Coalition* who lobbied City Council to pass an ordinance banning single-use plastic bags, WCC's Environmental Action Group, the League of Women Voters' Natural Resources Committee, and the Sierra Club's Conservation Committee, all persevered together this past year to develop work-around solutions due to the State's preemption of the city's ruling in 2020. This past year, we worked on devising incentives, such as the *Sustainable Stores Program*, to find ways to encourage grocery stores, retail operations, and city institutions to act voluntarily to reduce plastic.

In this past year, we have begun working in closer partnership with two other environmental action groups in Cincinnati: The **Natural Resources Committee of the League of Women Voters** and the **Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club Miami Group**. All three of us share a mission to secure a sustainable, equitable, and resilient community. Building on our history of teamwork this past year, we have cosponsored each other's education programs and environmental actions.



This photo pictures Jeanne, Marie, Janet, Bryan, and Sarah at Leirer's Market, a neighborhood low-waste store in Northside, offering sustainable solutions for everyday essentials.

Now, as WCC dissolves its Action Groups and places their principles of action under the umbrella of the VP for Civic Engagement, EAG members have devised a plan to transition its work to a more intense collaborative effort with other environmental groups who are working on related issues. Working in close partnership with the League and the Sierra Club will help us increase our impact as threats to our ecosystem grow.

This plan offers new opportunities to broaden our efforts as we confront new challenges such as the proliferation of AI Data Centers in Ohio, the imperative to incentivize equitable sewer rates in our city with **Communities United for Action (CUFA)**, and advocacy for communal green spaces and gardens in neighborhoods and in schoolyards via the **Green & Healthy School Movement**.

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(Continued from page 10)

WCC members interested in environmental action will now meet regularly at the following times.

- The **Natural Resources Committee** of the League meets virtually every 4<sup>th</sup> Monday at 11 am
- The **Conservation Committee** of the Sierra Club meets hybrid every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday at 7 pm

Please let me know of your interest at [jnightingale@fuse.net](mailto:jnightingale@fuse.net) so I can send you a Zoom link. If you decide to join us, it is not required to become a member of the League of Women Voters or the Sierra Club Miami Group, although encouraged. Members of our integrated committee will continue to submit *Green Tips*, news updates, announcements, and committee reports to the *WCC Bulletin*.

# AGNES B. SEASONGOOD LUNCHEON

On May 2, 87 people gathered at the Kennedy Arts Center Annex to enjoy the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Agnes B. Seasongood Luncheon and Marian A. Spencer Education Awards.

In her introduction, WCC president Beth Sullebarger remarked how this event supports the club's mission—to educate, empower, and engage people to be responsible citizens and take an active part in our democracy. Cincinnati icons Agnes Seasongood (1890-1982), a dedicated member and benefactor of WCC, and Marian Spencer (1920-2019), civil rights activist and president of WCC 1971-73, were trailblazers who dedicated themselves and their efforts to improving the quality of life for Cincinnatians.

The highlight of the event was the celebration of six high school seniors who received Marian Spencer Education Awards for their outstanding commitment to their schools and communities through civic engagement and volunteering, evinced in essays and recommendations (*see related story on next page*).

The featured speaker at the luncheon is always a local woman who is prominent in her field. This year's speaker was University of Cincinnati alumna **Yvonne DiCristoforo**, who, after a 32-year career in federal law enforcement, recently

retired from her position as Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service Cincinnati Field Office. She

shared her wide-ranging experiences, which included protective details of four vice

presidents and their families, undercover work involving fraud, “learning to drive really well,” and recruiting as “not always exciting, but always an opportunity to learn and grow.” She encouraged the awardees to embrace whatever challenges come their way.

Committee and board members created 17 ingenious baskets that brought in \$893. Overall, the luncheon generated a profit of \$1,100, which benefits the Marian Spencer Education Awards.



*Susan Noonan, long-time chair, helped make several attendees very happy by winning donated baskets. Special thanks to George Klinedinst for his help.*

# MARIAN A. SPENCER EDUCATION AWARDS

Chalet Jules was this year's education awards chair. She and her committee read and evaluated 51 essays submitted by young women from 26 schools. The essays were impressive, and the committee was hard pressed to choose only five awardees, so WCC members donated to fund a sixth award.

This year's awardees each received \$1,500:

**Ava Datillo**, William Mason High School  
**Martha Garcia**, Hamilton High School  
**Emori Witmer-Gautsch**, William Mason High School  
**Grace Phillips**, Colerain High School  
**Tazara Prohett**, Walnut Hills High School  
**Isabella Sammut**, Madeira High School

To review the recipient's essays, visit  
<https://womancityclub.org/program/seasongood-luncheon/>

Many thanks to Kim Fantaci for her administrative expertise and to the committee members: Deborah Allsop, Marge Davis, Jeff Dey, Carole Donnelly\*, Dave Edmundson\*, Laurie Frank\*, Sarah Gideonse\*, Brandi Hinton\*, Chalet Jules\*, Angela Klinedinst\*, Sharon McCreary\*, Alice Schneider, and Sue Wilke\*.

Very special thanks to Susan Noonan, who chaired this committee for the 22<sup>nd</sup> time.

*\*Essay readers*



# ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Submitted by Jeff Dey, VP for Administration

The year provided perspective, looking back at Woman's City Club's history and forward to its future while keeping a firm handle on continuing operations in the present. The board is proposing amending the bylaws to change the name of the Vice President for Administration position to Vice President for Governance. This change reflects the continued need to facilitate interaction between the board and WCC's committees, along with enabling the continuation of Strategic Planning. A Governance Committee is being formed to provide input and support for these efforts. This will be voted on at the Annual Meeting along with some changes arising from the Nominating Committee recommendations.

The highlight of the year was the contract with Advanced Management Concepts for Kim Fantaci to serve as Woman's City Club's Administrator. She continued the work to streamline and automate the membership renewal function. She works with the Communications Committee to produce many of our communications and to help facilitate our forums and programs. Because she provides her own office, Woman's City Club has consolidated its presence at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian to only the Conference Room, reducing our office expenses (rent, phone, internet, etc.).

In the coming year, we will be working on:

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Submitted by  
Chara Fisher Jackson  
Committee Chair

The nominating committee began meeting in November 2025 to solicit Woman's City Club members to serve on the board. The following members agreed to serve a three-year term (2026-2029) and were elected in March by our members via electronic ballot: **Elizabeth Buening, Angela Klinedinst, Barbara Myers, Ellen Pierce, and Sue Wilke** (returning). **Melissa Currence** was elected to serve an unexpired 1-year term.

The committee then recruited the following members to serve as at-large members of the Nominating Committee for 2026-2027: **Cathy Bernardino Bailey, Chara Fisher Jackson and Marcia Togneri.**

Many thanks to this year's Nominating Committee—Edna Keown, Sharon McCreary, Jan Seymour, and Marcia Togneri—for their fine work.

strategic plan



A new iteration of a **Strategic Plan** commencing with the Board Retreat in August.

archival  
materials



The transfer of papers to our collection at the Cincinnati History Library & Archives in order to preserve the 111-year history of the Woman's City Club. We are including many of our past presidents and other long-term members in these efforts.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## REPORT

Submitted by Sarah Muncy, Chair

The Communications Committee spent the past year focused on strengthening WCC's visibility across multiple communication platforms. Through expanded social media efforts, improved publication processes, and collaboration with program and event teams, the committee helped elevate awareness of WCC's mission and activities.

The committee has also laid the groundwork to establish standard ways of working in the coming year—stay tuned!



### Publications & Member Communications

- Successfully coordinated and released all scheduled *Bulletins* and weekly *Updates* throughout the year. Special thanks to Kim Fantaci for her huge role in this!
- Transitioned *Bulletin* planning toward more structured timelines and publication schedules.
- Supported event promotion, committee updates, and organizational announcements through consistent written communications.



### Social Media & Public Outreach

- Expanded WCC's social media activity on Facebook and Instagram, with content reaching over 2,800 viewers, an increase of 40% over the previous year.
- Created promotional campaigns for major events including National Speaker Forum, Feist Tea, Seasongood Luncheon, Earth Day "Untangling Plastics" forum, Alternative Voting Methods Forum, and civic engagement and voting awareness initiatives.



### Branding, Technology & Systems

- Began implementation of Google Workspace to improve communication, file sharing, and organizational collaboration. Shoutout to Elizabeth Buening for her expertise and efforts.
- Secured approval for free WCC Canva Pro access to streamline graphic design and improve visual consistency.
- Began work on centralizing brand assets, templates, fonts, and design standards.



### Website & Marketing Support

- Coordinated timely updates to the WCC website for programs, events, registration links, and member information. Thank you again, Kim!
- Supported marketing efforts through partnerships with media and community organizations including CET, WVXU, Soapbox Media, and others. Thank you, Sarah Gideonse and Beth Sullebarger!
- Enabled easy QR code registration for WCC special events on the website.

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## Looking Ahead

**Priorities** for the coming year include:

- Finalizing Google Workspace implementation
- Continuing growth of social media engagement
- Standardizing branding and communications workflows through Canva

# JOIN THE CONVERSATION BOOK CLUB

submitted by Sarah Gideonse

The Woman's City Club's informal **Book Club** meets virtually most months on the third Saturday at 10 am. The book club is open to all WCC members who want to be part of a lively conversation on interesting, often timely, books. Members attend according to their availability and as the books interest them. We do request an RSVP if you are planning to attend to receive the Zoom link.

Look for announcements of book selections in the weekly *Update* and the *Bulletin*. For more information and to join a discussion, contact Sarah Gideonse.

The book club most often selects books one month at a time, and so it's somewhat surprising to find patterns. This year, all but two books all or in part take place in the past: novels, biographies, a memoir, history. The other two endeavor to explain the challenging present.

## Analyses of current issues

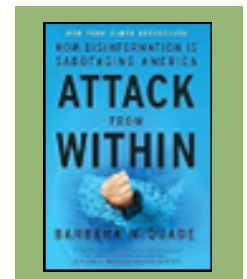
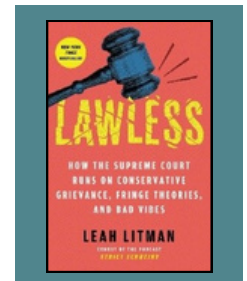
**Lawless: How the Supreme Court Runs on Conservative Grievance, Fringe Theories, and Bad Vibes** (2025) by Leah Litman – The author details the past two decades of judicial transformation, revealing “nothing short of a hostile takeover by right-wing ideologues,” by applying the doctrine of originalism in delivering decisions.

**Attack from Within ~ How Disinformation is Sabotaging America** (2024) by Barbara McQuade – The legal scholar and analyst shows how to identify the ways disinformation is seeping into all facets of our society and how we can fight against it.

## History, biography and memoir

**Love, Queenie: Merle Oberon, Hollywood's First South Asian Star** (2015) by Mayukh Sen – A biography of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century movie star, who was secretly biracial and striving to succeed in a racist Hollywood culture.

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**A Woman of No Importance** (2000) by Sonia Purnell – A riveting biography of Virginia Hall, an extraordinarily brave WWII heroine, who fought with the French resistance, earning the Gestapo's epithet as “the most dangerous of all Allied Spies.”

**Winning the Earthquake How Jeannette Rankin Defied All Odds to Become the First Woman in Congress** (2025) by Lorissa Rinehart – Rankin served in Congress twice and as Congress's fiercest pacifist, she used her vote to oppose the declaration of war against the German Empire in 1917 and the Japanese Empire in 1941, holding fast to her belief that “you can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake.”

**An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960's** (2024) by Doris Kearns Goodwin – Memoir, biography, and history—Doris was a White House Fellow working with LBJ, who became a critically acclaimed Presidential historian. Her husband, Dick Goodwin, was a close aide and speechwriter to JFK, LBJ, and RFK. An enthralling work.

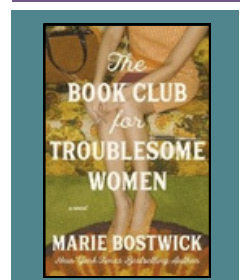
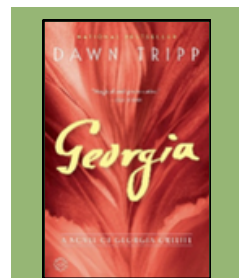
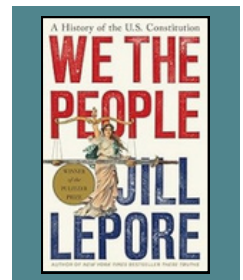
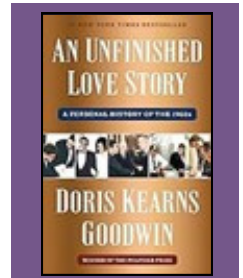
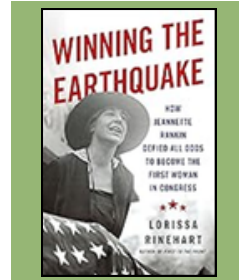
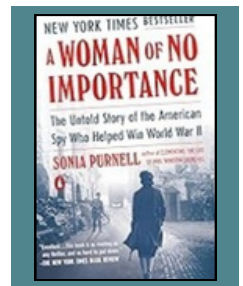
**We the People: A History of the U.S. Constitution** (2025) by Jill Lepore Lepore argues that our constitution was meant to prevent change but also to allow for change without violence. But the ratification process of amendments is so difficult, with nothing meaningful passed since 1971. The result is constitutional change is only occurring through the courts or by Presidential fiat.

**Georgia, A Novel of Georgia O'Keeffe** (2016) by Dawn Tripp – A heavily researched novel based on the life of the renowned 20<sup>th</sup> century artist Georgia O'Keeffe, her love affair with photographer Alfred Stieglitz, and her quest to become an independent artist.

**Like Mother, Like Mother** (2024) by Susan Rieger – A novel about strong-willed mother and daughter, both who feel abandoned by their mothers, both successful despite this. A mystery around the grandmothers' death hovers.

**Book Club for Troublesome Women A Novel** (2025) by Marie Bostwick Four well-off women in the Sixties read *The Feminine Mystique* in their new book club, and the novel then traces its impact on their lives—their marriages, their work, and their outlook over several years.

Woman's City Club thrives because of members like you who believe in informed engagement, meaningful connections, and positive change in our community. One of the best ways to strengthen our organization is by **inviting a friend, colleague, neighbor, or family member to join us**. Simply share this QR code and help us grow the impact of Woman's City Club for generations to come.



# OVERVIEW FEIST TEA

Submitted by  
Laurie Frank, Chair



Woman's City Club held its 16th Annual Feist Tea celebration and fundraiser at the Kennedy Heights Arts Center Annex this past December 7. The celebration recognized this year's three feisty honorees, previous WCC honorees, past presidents, and new members.

Attended by 54 members and friends, the afternoon festivities opened with an enjoyable social hour, with light fare by Catered with Grace, and a memorable slide show Jeff Dey had compiled, reminding us of this past year's wonderful programs and activities.

The event's highlight was the introductions of the 2025's remarkable feisty women, who embody the club's mission to educate, empower, and engage. Each introduction showed the honoree's strong dedication and advocacy for making a difference in our regional community. Here are short descriptions of the 2025 honorees:

**Crystal L. Kendrick**, President of The Voice of Your Customer, has over 25 years of global and

domestic marketing experience targeting diverse populations. She is also the publisher of *The Voice of Black Cincinnati*, a media company designed to educate, recognize, and create opportunities for African Americans in the region. Crystal serves on the boards

of directors of the Spring Grove Funeral Home and Public Media Connect—CET/Think TV. Crystal has been named a YWCA Cincinnati Career Woman of Achievement, a Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Woman of Distinction, and a *Cincinnati Enquirer* Woman of the Year.



**Jodine (Jody) Grundy** is the ultimate Feisty Woman who has fought to make the world a better place! As a psychotherapist, she has helped many people deal with life challenges. As an activist and community organizer, she has fought for social justice and environmental protection her entire adult life.

She has advocated for farm labor rights, sustainable agriculture, domestic violence prevention, preservation of our threatened tree canopy, and established many significant programs. Jody's notable initiatives include the formation of Rural Resources, leadership of the two-year Cincinnati Kharkiv Sister City international program on Domestic Violence Prevention Training, the Green Partnership for Greater Cincinnati, and the Taking Root Campaign.

**Sister Judy Tensing**, a sister of Notre Dame de Namur, has been a dedicated advocate for social justice throughout the years. She has based her work on the belief in economic justice for marginalized people. She has been a teacher, a school principal, and an outreach worker ...and a restaurant owner and a caterer!



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When a group of women in the West End community of Cincinnati wanted to be more independent of welfare assistance, she and Sr. Barbara Wheeler, a Dominican Sister of Hope, opened a shop that evolved into a small Italian restaurant called Venice on Vine, staffed by these women and others. The goal (besides serving tasty food) was to inspire personal growth and commitment, while helping them find housing, daycare, and health services.

WCC is deeply grateful to all who attended and supported the Tea and honorees. The income from the event was \$2,251 and expenses were \$2,187.50, giving WCC a profit of \$63.51. Proceeds from this event will support the programs and operations of WCC.

## Feist Tea Committee Members

Deborah Allsop, JoAnn Huff Albers,  
Christy Backley, Marge Davis, Jeff Dey,  
Sharon McCreary, and Susan Noonan.

## Special Thanks for Support

Kim Fantaci, WCC administrator  
Harriet Kaufman, photographer  
Elissa Yancey, emcee

# GINA BELAFONTE INSPIRED ALL NATIONAL SPEAKER FORUM

Submitted by Janet Buening and Beth Sullebarger

WCC held its 32<sup>nd</sup> **National Speaker Forum** at Memorial Hall on March 10. Speaker Gina Belafonte spoke to an audience of about 350 on *Arts and Activism: the Belafonte Legacy*. She was outstanding in every way: entertaining, informative, and inspiring.

After a warm welcome by WCC President Beth Sullebarger, Kathy Wade, internationally known jazz vocalist and founder/director of Learning Through Art, Inc., introduced Gina, noting her accomplishments as an actress and producer and highlighting her work to elevate the voices of the disenfranchised and promote peace, justice, and equality as co-founder and Executive Director of Sankofa.

Like her father, Harry Belafonte, Gina is a commanding stage presence. With a nod to the Forum's title, *Arts and Activism*, she pronounced that "throughout history art has never been separated from movements for justice." She spoke about joining with her father to establish Sankofa, interspersing her remarks with three videos to illustrate its history and

activities. In the first video, Harry Belafonte professed that art could elucidate an issue, such as violence or homelessness, and make a difference. Gina said proudly, "My father understood that a song could go where a speech could not."



Another video focused on using visual arts and role-playing to help incarcerated persons to adjust to a life of choices and decisions after being in prison where all things are decided for you. Sankofa also uses art to help young people develop their own creative power. Gina's third media piece included videos made by young people about gerrymandering and voting, mental health issues, and access to

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safe and clean water. “Stories are infrastructure,” Gina explained. “They change what people believe is normal, possible.”

Gina closed her rousing presentation with a call to action: “History tells us art can change the world. Will we be brave enough to use art for change?” In the lively question-and-answer session that followed the presentation, moderated by Cheri Rekow, WCC’s Vice President for Civic Engagement, Gina shared more memories of her father and focused on ways we can be engaged in activism, urging us to “Never go a day without doing something to undermine injustice.”

After the presentation, about 150 patrons enjoyed a reception catered by Catered with Grace. Harriet and Ben Kaufman kindly took photos of the evening, and The Bookshelf sold relevant books. The event made a modest profit but had a big impact.

WCC is extremely grateful to our sponsors for supporting our biggest event of the year. A big thank you also to our generous members and friends and to all the members of the NSF committee: Janet Buening, Carole Donnelly, Sarah Gideonse, Edna Keown, Barbara Myers, Jeanne Nightingale, Susan Noonan, Cheri Rekow, Alice Schneider, and Kay Smith-Yount!



Special thanks to James Ricks for providing pre-event entertainment.

WCC would also like to thank the terrific staff at Memorial Hall in OTR for hosting this year’s National Speaker Forum, the venue fit perfectly with the theme and festivities.

### presenting sponsors

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Miami University Menard Family Center for  
Democracy  
Southwestern Ohio Education Association  
St. John’s Unitarian Universalist Church Social  
Justice Teams  
The Diocese of Southern Ohio  
Urban Appalachian Community Coalition  
Zonta Club of Cincinnati



The highlight of the evening was the Q&A portion with Cheri Rekow and Gina Belafonte.



A photo opportunity for the NSF Committee members and Gina Belafonte.



Gina Belafonte spends time with Aurelia Simmons, Cheryl Meadows and others after the program.



Memorial Hall didn't disappoint, bringing just the right atmosphere to the evening's inspiring program.



Kitty and Dick Rosenthal enjoyed the program and festive post-event reception.



Like her father, Gina Belafonte is a commanding stage presence. She said proudly, "My father understood that a song could go where a speech could not."