

NEWS & NOTES

LIVING THE VOLUNTEER SPIRIT THROUGH GFWC ALABAMA

March 2020



Christine Steele
2018-2020 President
GFWC Alabama

Upcoming Dates to Remember in 2020:

3/14: South District Spring Meeting, Gulf Shores

3/21: ~~Central District Spring Meeting~~, Canceled by venue; will send out future notification if rescheduled

4/16 - 4/18: [125th AFWC Convention](#), Birmingham

6/27-7/1: [GFWC Convention](#), Atlanta

Notes from the President's Desk

The 125th Annual State Convention will be held in Birmingham April 16-18, 2020, at the Hampton Inn & Suites - Tutwiler Hotel. *The deadline for the discounted room block reservations is MARCH 17th!* See below for further details.

The Opening Session on Friday morning will be held at the South Highland Presbyterian Church where exactly to the date, April 17, 1895, the organizational meeting of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs took place. This is an event you won't want to miss.

As we are in uncharted times, my intention is to stay fully informed on the facts and status in regards to the Coronavirus COVID-19 in Alabama. The health of our clubwomen and their families are first and foremost.

At the time of this writing, the **convention will still be held**. Your Convention Chairmen continue to be busy making plans for a successful celebration of 125 years of this wonderful organization. Please continue to make your reservations as we need that information to complete plans. The hope is everything will be fine and a convention will be held.

Consideration whether to cancel or not is ongoing. Everything possible will be done to keep everyone safe and act responsible toward your safety in decisions made.

Be certain that you **will receive a refund** should the convention be cancelled prior to April 1. If the convention is not canceled at that time, there will be an very brief window of opportunity to request a refund, by April 3, if you still have concerns about attending. After April 3, no refunds will be given as the final numbers, costs and contracts are set and owed.

This email method will be the avenue to keep you informed on the status. Obviously, if Governor Ivey invokes a State of Emergency or the hotel cancels at any point, then the convention will be canceled.

Please send in your registration form by the deadline of April 1 to avoid the penalty fee. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

• *Christine*

MAKE YOUR HOTEL RESERVATION ASAP - deadline is March 17! A block of rooms has been reserved for "The Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs, GFWC" (if asked, the code is WCG). The convention room rate for a standard king or two queen beds is \$129 plus lodging tax (current lodging tax rate



is 17.5%). King and two queen bed suites are \$149 plus lodging tax. A free, hot breakfast is included each morning for hotel guests. The hotel only offers valet parking, but your convention planning committee has negotiated a great rate of only \$12 (plus 10% tax) per vehicle per night. Street parking is based upon availability.

The most current Information regarding the 2020 Convention is on the GFWC Alabama website (gfwcalabama.org) with a major heading on left side of the “Resources” page. This information contains a [direct link to the Tutwiler’s online reservation site](#). If you use the online Hilton site to make your reservation, be sure that the check in/check out dates correctly reflect the dates for which you need a reservation.

2020 AFWC Convention Cues

Please see below for updated information you need to know for the upcoming 125th AFWC Convention next month:

- Proposed [Bylaws](#)
- Proposed [Standing Rules](#)
- Revised [Convention Information](#)
- Revised [Convention Registration Form](#)

Pro tip: Print the first two and bring them with you to Convention so you can follow along during the presentation of these items. Read the "Convention Information" document for everything you need to know about Convention, including WHAT TO WEAR for each major event!

GFWC Alabama Leader Spotlight

Did you know that two of our own GFWC Alabama members are VERY active at the regional and national levels of this great organization! Both of these great ladies will be speaking at our upcoming 125th Anniversary AFWC Convention in April. Read on to learn more about these two dynamic leaders!



Suellen B. Brazil
GFWC Second Vice President

GFWC Alabama is proud of Suellen Brazil who serves as GFWC Second Vice President. As Second Vice President leading 107 GFWC chairmen and committee members, Suellen applies the national perspective, organizational expertise, and collaborative skills developed throughout 47 years in diverse leadership roles. With a rich background and extensive experience, Suellen is a highly enthusiastic, dynamic leader whose dedication and passion are unwavering.

From 1980-84, Suellen served as GFWC Alabama Director of Junior Clubs, then GFWC Junior Education Chairman. Suellen then became HOBY International Leadership Seminar National Volunteer Chairman, with 12 years of national service and exponential growth within the Hugh O’Brian Youth Foundation.

During 45 years on the GFWC Alabama Board, Suellen served all appointed/elected offices, including State President (1998-2000) where policy improvements she championed impact Alabama today. She organized leadership training opportunities, along with seminars at the Alabama State Capitol, and implemented state/district LEADS programs.

After being State President, Suellen successfully led several GFWC programs, and GFWC Southern

Region as treasurer, secretary, vice president, and president. Focused on strengthening international connections, she welcomed the Woman's Club of Aruba to Southern Region. That international commitment continues today. As GFWC Leadership Chairman (2012-14) she oversaw a 73% increase in GFWC State LEADS programs and provided numerous leadership resources.

A native Alabamian, she and husband Billy have two sons. Retired after 44 years with Baldwin County Schools, her final position was Executive Elementary Administrator, supervising 28 schools and 18,000 students. Working with domestic violence prevention, homeless, and veterans keep her grounded in grassroots service.

From her varied experiences, Suellen has strong vision, stellar leadership, and steadfast dedication to GFWC. GFWC Alabama is proud to call her one of our own!

Cynthia Geis **GFWC Southern Region Vice President**



Cynthia's Federation journey began in 1990 when she joined the GFWC Heritage Junior Woman's Club. In 1994, Cynthia began serving on the GFWC Alabama Board of Directors as a member of the AFWC Junior Board (Special Projects Chairman). Subsequently, she served as the AFWC Director Elect of Junior Clubs (1996-1998) and Director of Junior Clubs (1998-2000). In 2000, she was elected as GFWC Alabama Treasurer and served in all elected officer positions (except secretary) through her 2010-2012 tenure as State Federation President. Cynthia currently serves as the GFWC Alabama Parliamentary Advisor and Chairman, Finance Committee.

Concurrent with her service to our state, Cynthia also served on the GFWC Board of Directors from 2000-2002 as the Home Life Special Projects Chairman and as GFWC Jennie Chairman (2012-2014), member of the GFWC Special Projects Committee (2014-2016), and Chairman of the GFWC Special Projects Committee (2016-2018). She is currently serving as the Chairman of the GFWC Elections Committee. Cynthia is the current GFWC Southern Region Vice President, having previously served as the GFWC Southern Region Treasurer (2014-2016) and Secretary (2016-2018). In October 2019, she was elected to serve as the 2020-2022 GFWC Southern Region President at our Annual Meeting and will be installed in Atlanta on June 28 during the 2020 GFWC Annual Convention (see invitation below).

In 2000, Cynthia was one of the chartering members of GFWC Legacy and served as its first president. She is also a member of GFWC duMidi Woman's Club and the GFWC Alabama Foster House Club. Additionally, she is a member of four national clubs – the GFWC Past Presidents' Club (treasurer), the GFWC Past Junior Directors' Club, the GFWC Emeralds, and is serving as “president for life” of the GFWC Condonsations. Cynthia is also a member of the National and Alabama Association of Parliamentarians.

A Huntsville native, Cynthia has been married to Gregg Geis for 43 years. Gregg is an honorary member of GFWC Alabama, a member of the GFWC Boosters and AFWC Foster House. Their son, Geoff, makes his home in Los Angeles, CA. Gregg and Cynthia are active supporters of the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, the Huntsville Museum of Art, Burritt on the Mountain, and the Huntsville Botanical Garden and are congregants at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, where Cynthia serves on the vestry. Cynthia retired from the Department of Defense with 39.5 years of service in September 2018. In her spare time, Cynthia enjoys reading, traveling, and spending time with family and friends.

GFWC Alabama is proud of Cynthia and excited to be hosting a reception for her on Sunday night at the GFWC Convention in Atlanta after she is installed as the next GFWC Southern Region President. Won't you consider joining us in Atlanta this June? Click here for [GFWC Convention information](#).



join GFWC Southern Region
President Cynthia Geis

Champagne and Chocolates

SUNDAY • JUNE 28TH

130th GFWC Annual Convention
Atlanta • Suite Number to be Announced

FOLLOWING DINNER • HOSTED BY GFWC ALABAMA

Conservation Corner

by Ellen Clack, Conservation CSP Chair

Conservation is a subject near and dear to me. I love all things outdoors - animals, trees, beautiful vistas, bees, wildflowers, birds, national parks, state parks, etc. I am looking forward to Spring and being able to once again enjoy all that the outdoors has to offer. Time to get my garden plowed!

Earth Day—April 22nd

This year's Earth Day is the 50th anniversary. "[The first Earth Day in 1970](http://www.earthday.org) mobilized millions of Americans for the protection of the planet. On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans – 10% of the U.S. population at the time – took to the streets, college campuses and hundreds of cities to protest environmental ignorance and demand a new way forward for our planet. The first Earth Day is credited with launching the modern environmental movement and is now recognized as the planet's largest civic event."—www.earthday.org.

According to the website, the first Earth Day led to the passage of landmark environmental laws in the United States, including the Clean Air, Clear Water and Endangered Species Acts. There are quizzes on the website to test your conservation knowledge. Earth Day Tips give 47 ways to conserve our natural resources and reduce your carbon footprint. The website gives a wealth of information!

National Arbor Day - April 24th

Alabama's Arbor Day celebration takes place the last full week in February. If your club has planted trees or plants to plant trees during the 2018-2020 AFWC administration, please report the number of trees planted to me to be included in the count with our GFWC sisters. One of the 7 Grand Initiatives is to plant 1,000 trees in celebration of Arbor Day. A few suggestions from www.arborday.org are:

- Organize a Big Tree or Oldest Tree search within your community.
- Choose a public park or downtown area to clean up.
- Sponsor a poster contest, poetry contest, or tree trivia contest.
- Organize a tree identification hike.

Be sure and bring your [gently used shoes](#) to our 125th AFWC Convention in Birmingham to be donated to [Soles 4 Souls](#) who gives them to people in need.

And, it's never too late to start brainstorming ideas for new and creative conservation projects for the 2020-2021 club year!

It's easy to join the GFWC AL mailing list!

Just send your email address by text message:

Text
GFWCALABAMA
to **22828** to get started.



Message and data rates may apply.

It's easy to join our email list! Follow the instructions above to text to join the list from your cell phone, or subscribe via our website, www.gfwcalabama.org. Click on the "Contact" link and then the blue "Join Our Email List" button to sign up by completing the form.



Do you have club news to share with your Federated sisters throughout Alabama? Email your "cut and paste" ready articles (Word or text, *no PDFs please*) and/or pictures (jpeg or png) to your GFWC Alabama Communications Chair: [Christi Robinson](#) or to afwc2728@gmail.com The next deadline is January 20 for the February AL Clubwoman.