



BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE BRANCH NEWSLETTER

September 2025

Website: <https://bcc-md.aauw.net/>

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FOX HILL

8300 Burdette Road

Bethesda, MD 20817

Handicapped accessible. Plenty of parking.

WELCOME TO THE 2025-26 PROGRAM YEAR!!!!

Saturday, September 13, 2025

11:00 a.m.

Artificial Intelligence – Friend or Foe?

Rob Gordon

Senior Strategic Leader for AI at Document Storage Systems (DDS), Inc.

As an expert in Artificial Intelligence, Robert “Rob” L. Gordon III is the Senior Strategic Leader for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Innovation at Document Storage Systems (DSS), Inc, a software product and integration company. He has extensive senior management and cross sector experience in the military, government, high tech, and nonprofit sectors Rob is the former Chief Growth Officer of SBG Technology Solutions, a wholly owned subsidiary of DSS. His tenure as a senior executive in the high tech industry includes being a Chief Global Officer of Connected Living, a tech company that deploys high technology solutions to advance quality of life at senior living communities worldwide. Rob was also a senior executive at a high tech augmented reality (AI) smart glasses software company, where he was responsible for overall business development, strategic planning, corporate partnerships, and strategic corporate communications.



Gordon was appointed the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy on July 19, 2010, serving under U.S. President Barack Obama. In the Defense Department he was responsible for defense-wide policy, program execution and oversight of global community support programs to care for, support, and empower 2 million Service members, 1.2 million military spouses, 2 million children, and over 2 million military families worldwide.

An Airborne Ranger, he completed a 26 year career in the U.S. Army, retiring at the rank of Colonel after serving in command and staff positions as an artillery officer, aide-de-camp to General Colin Powell; National War College instructor and graduate; and Academy Professor and Director of American Politics at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. As a White House Fellow from 1992 – 1993, he served as the Special Assistant to three Secretaries of Veterans Affairs. Rob also served in the Office of National Service in The White House to help create AmeriCorps. He is the former President of *Be the Change*, a nonprofit focused on Veteran empowerment and national service.

Rob earned his BS from the United States Military Academy at West Point, and a Masters in Public Affairs (MPA) from Princeton University, where he specialized in national health policy. He is a former French American Foundation Young Leader and a former board member of the French American Foundation. He serves on the board of AVID, where he is the Secretary and Chair of the Governance Committee. He is an advisor to several technology startups focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Veterans health, and city coordinated health care services.

Born in Richmond, Virginia, Gordon is the son of an American Army officer and a schoolteacher. Most of his youth was spent overseas in Taiwan and Germany. As a child he lived with his family in the Tian Mu district in Taipei, Taiwan, where he attended the Dominican International School in downtown Taipei. He also lived in Frankfurt and Augsburg, Germany, where he attended Augsburg American High School for two years. As a military brat, Gordon lived in New York, Virginia, and Colorado in the United States. He graduated in 1975 from General William J. Palmer High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

His awards include The Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service, The Franklin Award, Bernard Gill Urban Service-Learning Leadership Award - National Youth Leadership Council, Edward P. Bullard Distinguished Alumnus Award, Princeton University; Rotary's Distinguished Presidential Citation; honorific Order of Saint Barbara (two awards); Legion of Merit; the Defense Meritorious Service Medal; the Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first newsletter for our 2025-26 Bethesda-Chevy Chase AAUW branch! I always enjoy my time with our members – and remember that you may bring guests at any time. We have plenty of room!

We will continue to meet at the Fox Hill senior community at 8300 Burdette Road in Bethesda (just inside the Beltway at the River Road exit).

And what an exciting fall this will be. We are dealing with major issues which affect women, and are of interest to all people. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been a great gift, but it also surfaces issues of privacy, copyright, and ethics. Our speaker is Robert (Rob) Gordon, an expert in AI and a leader in government, nonprofit, and private sector organizations. I fortuitously met him waiting for a flight at Dulles Airport and was so impressed by him and his areas of expertise that I immediately invited him to speak to our branch.

We are also dealing with issues of aging and dying well. Our speaker for October, Chris Palmer, notes that "Death is inevitable; dying badly is not." A good death is achievable, and he will share his perspectives from his book *Achieving a Good Death* in our session. This is an issue of particular importance to women, since we generally live longer than our male counterparts. In November we will tackle a topic very much in the news this year: What is the role of our federal court system, particularly the Supreme Court, in this time of rapid change and challenges to the courts? Julia Penny Clark, a noted private attorney, previously served as clerk to Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court Lewis F. Powell Jr. from 1974 to 1975. She was among the first dozen women to clerk at the U.S. Supreme Court. She has also argued cases before the Supreme Court and is married to William Curtis Bryson, Senior United States circuit judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

I urge you to join us for meetings and to be involved with AAUW in any way for which you have an interest and time. During the legislative session, you will have the opportunity to lobby our legislators on issues of concern to our members – and even testify on bills if you have a particular perspective. You can also participate in state AAUW efforts including statewide meetings.

Contact me at any time (e-mail is often best because I travel a lot!) if you have questions about options for you. Carol Starr, our public policy chair, can advise you on options to get involved with issues.

Enjoy Labor Day – and please join us on September 13 for our first meeting of the new program year.

Pat

Pat Stocker
patstocker@aol.com

Upcoming Programs

Saturday, October 11, 2025
11:00 a.m.

Achieving a Good Death

Chris Palmer

Author, *Achieving a Good Death: A Practical Guide to the End of Life*

Chris Palmer is an end-of-life activist and a trained hospice volunteer. He frequently gives presentations and workshops on aging, death, and dying issues. He founded and runs an aging, death and dying group for the Bethesda Metro Area Village and serves on the board of several nonprofits focused on end-of-life issues, including Montgomery Hospice and Prince George's Hospital, Final Exit Network, the Funeral Consumers Alliance, Hemlock Society of San Diego, and the Maryland Office of Cemetery Oversight.



This is a second career for Chris, who is well-known as a teacher, speaker, author and environmental/wildlife film producer who has swum with dolphins and whales, come face to face with sharks and Kodiak bears, camped with wolf packs, and waded hip-deep through the Everglade swamps. Until his retirement in 2018, Chris served on American University's full-time faculty as Distinguished Film Producer in

Residence. In 2004 he founded AU's Center for Environmental Filmmaking at the School of Communication, which seeks to inspire a new generation of filmmakers and media experts to create informative, ethically sound, and entertaining work that makes a difference.

Over the past 30 years, Chris has spearheaded the production of more than 300 hours of original programming for prime time television and the IMAX film industry. His films have been broadcast on numerous channels, including Animal Planet, The Disney Channel, PBS, and TBS. His IMAX films include Whales, Wolves, Dolphins, Bears, Coral Reef Adventure, and Grand Canyon Adventure. In the course of his career he has worked with the likes of Robert Redford, Paul Newman, Jane Fonda and Ted Turner. He has jumped out of helicopters and worked on an Israeli kibbutz. He was a boxing champ in high school.

Chris and his wife, Gail, have lived in Bethesda, Maryland, for nearly 50 years and raised three daughters. They now have nine grandchildren. Chris was a stand-up comic for five years and has advanced degrees from London and Harvard. He is currently learning to juggle, draw, dance, play tennis, and play the piano. He loves standing on his hands for exercise, keeps a daily gratitude journal, and has a 30-page personal mission statement.

His book, *Achieving a Good Death: A Practical Guide to the End of Life*, will be available for purchase at our meeting. All proceeds fund student scholarships.

Saturday, November 8, 2025

11:00 a.m.

The Supreme Court, Lower Courts, and the Challenges in the Current Administration

Julia Penny Clark
Attorney

Our members have expressed concern about the role of the courts, particularly the Supreme Court, in the current Administration. One aspect of that is the relationship



between the Supreme Court and lower courts, particularly the relationship of the judicial and administrative branches of government. We are also interested in historical precedents and how the courts have jurisdiction as well as the interactions among the various courts.

Penny Clark is an attorney who has argued employee benefits law cases before the United States Supreme Court and who served as law clerk for Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court Lewis F.

Powell Jr. from 1974 to 1975. She was among the first dozen women to clerk at the U.S. Supreme Court. She studied at the University of Texas, and received a B.A. in 1969 with membership in Phi Beta Kappa. She continued her studies at the University of Texas School of Law, serving as an editor of the *Texas Law Review*, and graduating Order of the Coif and Chancellor honors with a J.D. in 1973.

Recently retired, she practiced law since 1975 at Bredhoff & Kaiser, PLLC, where she was a partner. She has argued two cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. In 2006, she argued the employee benefits case of *Beck v. PACE International Union*, 551 U.S. 96 (2007). In 2014, she argued *M&G Polymers USA, LLC v. Tackett*, 135 S. Ct. 926 (2015), concerning collective bargaining agreements under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). She represented Tackett and a group of retirees who sought to maintain healthcare benefits under a collective bargaining agreement. She has also argued several cases before the United States Courts of Appeal, including recently in the Second Circuit, *Osberg v. Foot Locker, Inc.* 862 F.3d 198 (2d Cir. 2017).

Penny is married to William Curtis Bryson, a senior judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. They have two daughters. They met in law school, and both were law clerks at the U.S. Supreme Court.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Additional Program Dates – all at 11:00 a.m. at Fox Hill – Speakers to be announced:

Saturday, December 8, 2025

Saturday, January 10, 2026

Saturday, February 14, 2026

Saturday, March 14, 2026

Saturday, April 11, 2026

Saturday, May 9, 2026

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Officers 2025-26

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MLAW Fall Conference November 1, 2025

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women, MLAW, will host its annual fall conference on Saturday, November 1, 2025. This year's conference will be held in person at The Meeting House in Columbia, MD. Join us as we advocate for progressive legislation for Maryland's women and families! AAUW, including our Bethesda-Chevy Chase Branch, are members of MLAW – and together we determine our priorities for the 2206 Maryland General Assembly.

Join us to:

- Gain valuable insights from advocates and legislators presenting **2026 legislative proposals**
- Network with other MLAW supporters, advocates, and legislators from around Maryland about these important issues.
- Welcome and guest speakers pending. Stay tuned!

To register for the conference, visit <https://MLAW2025Conference.eventbrite.com> and select **GET TICKETS** button. Tickets are \$45 through 10/15; late registration after is \$50. Student tickets are available for \$25. There will be no on-site registration, so please register early.

Sponsorship opportunities are available and encouraged. Support the conference and MLAW by becoming a sponsor. Sponsorship deadline for inclusion in our program booklet is October 10th.

For more information, call 443-519-1005 or email mdlegagenda4women@yahoo.com. We hope to see you at the conference in November!



AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

AAUW Vision Statement: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

AAUW has been empowering women as individuals and as a community since 1881. For more than 135 years, we have worked together as a national grassroots organization to improve the lives of millions of women and their families.

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks and inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

Our mission

Higher Education & Economic Security

AAUW empowers women and girls by championing their success in higher education and pushing for bold policy solutions to create lasting change. For more than 140 years, AAUW has led the fight for gender equity in higher education and beyond. With a strong record of advocacy and action, AAUW continues to break barriers and defend the rights of women in education and the workplace.

MEMBERSHIP DUES – 2024-2025

Join or Renew Now!

Dues:

\$100

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU SHOULD RECEIVE A RENEWAL REMINDER FROM AAUW NATIONAL, AND IS YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE SEE OUR TREASURER, KAREN BRAUN. IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE THIS REMINDER, YOU MAY USE THIS FORM TO RENEW.

Includes \$74 for national AAUW
\$10 for AAUW Maryland, and
\$16 for Bethesda-Chevy Chase AAUW Branch
AAUW National will send renewal notices to your e-mail on file

\$71 is TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Note: AAUW national membership dues are \$74, of which \$71 is tax deductible as a charitable contribution. The remaining \$3 is not tax deductible because it supports the AAUW Action Fund's section 501(c)(4) Capitol Hill Lobby Corps and get-out-the-vote activities

Honorary Life members pay no dues.

Life members of AAUW pay \$26 in state and branch dues.

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

PREFERRED PHONE_____

EMAIL_____

DEGREE(S) & COLLEGE/UNIV_____

YEAR(S) OF GRADUATION_____

To renew by check: Make your check for \$100 payable to B-CC AAUW, complete the enclosed form above and mail it to our branch treasurer:

Karen Braun - 9707 Old Georgetown Road, Apt. 1302, Bethesda, MD 20814

For questions, you can reach Karen at: karen.braun@verizon.net