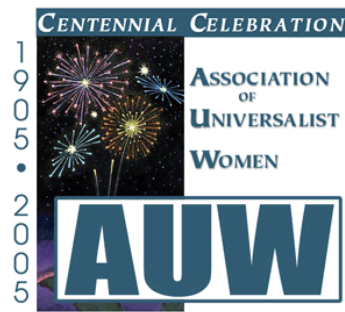


AUW Centennial Chronicle

The Association of Universalist Women (AUW) continues the celebration of its 100th anniversary, featuring a brief historical note by decade and the profile of a distinguished member from that time.



Changing Times for Women¹

AUW Decade 6: 1955-1964

This was a time of great change and growing collective feminist consciousness. The women of First Universalist worked for numerous social projects including Unity Settlement House and the Clara Barton Diabetic Camp. Early in this period, AUW records show women referred to as “Mrs. Robert Smith,” but by the end, “Mrs. Jane Smith” was the norm. AUW leaders developed important leadership skills that they found transferable to paid jobs and community organizing for societal changes. In 1959 there already were so many women in the work force that AUW added an evening section. In 1962 the organization held a "Know Your Congress" workshop, and in 1963 the new minister, Rev. John Cummins, began preaching about feminism and female leaders in our denomination.

Biography of Caroline Macomber Crosby (1871-1960)

Long-time friend of AUW, Caroline Macomber Crosby, used her skills as a scientist and notable family name to lead an active, public life – unusual for an unmarried woman of her day, but more common late in her life. She is best remembered for her thirteen-year tenure as head resident of Unity Settlement House.

Caroline grew up in the heart of Minneapolis’ milling history² with her family also noted as prominent church members. Caroline majored in botany at the University of Minnesota, and in 1900 she traveled to the Hawaiian Islands on an expedition to collect samples of algae and lichen she identified under her microscope.



From 1902-1915 she served as head resident of Unity House.³ Starting only five years after Unity’s founding, Caroline was instrumental in building it from a small project to a thriving organization. She led a staff of seven, yet she accepted no salary, while making significant contributions to the Unity budget. AUW records document Caroline’s periodic reports at AUW meetings on charities and Unity House.

Following service with the Red Cross during WWI, she held leadership positions with the Children’s Protective Society, the Infant Welfare Society, and the Children’s Home Society and was appointed by the Governor to the State Board of Control. In 1934 Caroline went on another botanical expedition, collecting algae in New Zealand and Australia. Writing about “Vocations Open to Women,” Caroline listed intelligence, perseverance, and patience as necessary personal qualities—and a balanced university education, with training in philanthropy, and following that, experience!

¹ History and biography researched and written by Reverend Sarah Barber-Braun; edited by Mary Junge and Jennifer Thomas.

² Father, John Crosby III, early Minneapolis miller. Brother, John Crosby IV, co-founder of the company that became General Mills.

³ See article for Decade 5 in Liberal Issue No. 10 for more details on Unity Settlement House.