



**AAUW Palos Verdes
Peninsula Branch**

**STATUS OF WOMEN AWARD
2015**



Sherry May

I am delighted that the Branch chose Sherry May as this year's recipient of our highest award and that we are issuing a special edition of CoastLines to celebrate and highlight her many accomplishments.

The award recognizes women who have had a positive impact in the community and who have made a difference in the lives of women and families. Sherry's life story is one of achievement and caring, and she certainly meets and exceeds the award's criteria.

Congratulations, Sherry, and special thanks for all you have meant to the branch.

Elayne Nahman, Chair, AAUW PVP Branch

Sherry and her academic career....

Sherry has outstanding academic credentials. She has a doctoral degree in Historical Theology, magna cum laude designations attached to her degrees and a Phi Beta Kappa membership. And she earned her Ph.D. at Drew University while taking care of her two small children!

After relocating in Palos Verdes, Sherry taught for 10 years at Cal State Northridge and Cal State Long Beach. At Northridge she was a member of the Religious Studies Department. She was very much part of the development of the Women Studies curriculum.

Sherry and her husband Bill traveled twice to faraway places as faculty members of the University of Pittsburg Semester At Sea program. While at sea she taught courses on *Religions of the World* and *Women and Sexuality*.

Sherry as Advocate...

Sherry was the Executive Director of the Adolescent Pregnancy Childwatch for six years, working with over 100 public and private agencies in LA County.

The main goal of the organization is the reduction of adolescent pregnancies and the provision of counsel and support to teen mothers. The list of her reports and presentations regarding the subject is impressive.

Because of her expertise, Sherry has served as consultant to a number of organizations such as the YWCA of Greater Los Angeles, and the Children's Defense Fund among others.

Sherry as Administrator...

For over ten years Sherry held high level administrative positions at USC. As Dean and Vice Provost for Continuing Studies, she developed curricula and alumni services. She was also Vice President/Executive Director of the General Alumni Association.

Sherry as Volunteer...

Throughout her life Sherry has given her talents to a variety of organizations, many of which support women's causes such as Rainbow Services, and Los Angeles Women's Foundation.

One of her most generous volunteer activities is Hospice visitations. She provides companionship and because of specific training, she performs "compassionate touching massage" to those requesting it.

Sherry as AAUW-PVP leader....

Sherry became our leader (Chair) in 2012 right after our “transition” period. She was the ideal person to guide us in formalizing the new branch leadership model.

She opened her home to informal meetings where we discussed new ideas and projects. The International Women Salons, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Village and the revival of Tech Time as Exploring Science took place during those meetings.

As a fairly new member, Sherry was active in refocusing the branch on the AAUW mission, and WAWA (Who Are We Anyway) was born. She continues to be the leader of this group.

She is always a thoughtful participant at Council meetings. As someone said, “When Sherry speaks we all listen.”



Sherry's family

Sherry, her husband Bill, a USC professor, and her two very accomplished children form a remarkable family.

Steve is a successful business man who with his wife has sailed for months at a time all over the world. Karen is Google vice-president of People Development who has been featured on *60 Minutes*. We find these facts almost by chance since Sherry does not like “to sound like bragging.”

The Mays have traveled the world beginning with family sailboat trips to Catalina. They have visited numerous and remote countries. Bill's photographs of *Working Women in Developing Countries* demonstrate their deep connection with other people and cultures.

Their home is warm and gracious. Bill's beautiful photographs adorn the walls and the entrance is enhanced by Sherry's carefully tended orchid plants.

Sherry and the Palos Verdes Peninsula Village

Sherry has been the principal force for the formation of Palos Verdes Peninsula Village.

She has spent countless hours on the project and has attracted a group of dedicated and talented individuals, who with her will soon make the concept a reality.

NOTE:

Our thanks to Bill May, who without Sherry's knowledge provided details and photographs.

Through Bill we also learned interesting tidbits about Sherry. We learned that she was greatly influenced by Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. That she used a small leaky structure as her “off limits” space to do her work, and that she accumulated a sizeable collection of books in Women's Studies. A by-product of the library was the education of her kids and their friends, who took great interest in *Our Bodies, Ourselves!*



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AAUW Mission Statement

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