

## Janet Martin Welch



Janet Martin Welch, a long time, dedicated member of the AAUW Greater Naples Branch, passed away on January 4, 2023, at the age of 77. Janet served on the Boards of the Greater Naples AAUW Charitable Foundation and the AAUW Greater Naples Branch for many years. She co-chaired the Branch's Public Policy Committee, and the Reading is Fun Program, which was renamed in her honor.

A sustaining fund for this program was created by the Greater Naples AAUW Charitable Foundation, with the support of her family, including her husband of 55 years, Bill.

Janet graduated magna cum laude from Bucknell University and earned her master's in library science from Rutgers University. She served as a librarian at SUNY Albany and North Country Community College and collaborated with her father on library studies nationwide. For nearly two decades, she was the Director of The Rochester Regional Library Council.

Janet was an early advocate for information technology in libraries. She partnered with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and others to provide computers and free internet access in New York libraries, before many homes had internet.

In 1996, Janet was appointed as New York's State Librarian, making history as the first woman to hold this position in the library's 200-year existence. Following the September 11 attacks, she oversaw efforts to collect and preserve artifacts from the World Trade Center for the New York State Museum. Her achievements included renovating the Research Library, enhancing the Talking Book and Braille Library, and expanding the State Library's collections.

Her numerous accolades include awards by the American Library Association and the NYLA.

After retiring in 2008, Janet remained active, traveling extensively with Bill. She volunteered as a literacy tutor, alongside her involvement in the American Association of University Women (AAUW), advocating for women's rights and other important issues.

In memory of Janet, contributions to the Janet Martin Welch Reading is Fun! Sustaining fund may be sent to the Greater Naples AAUW Foundation, PO Box 9742, Naples Florida, 34101 or through the webpage: <https://greaternaples-fl.aauw.net/greater-naples-aauw-charitable-foundation/>. All donors should click on the yellow “donate” button on the right and note “Janet Martin Welch Reading is Fun!” On the check or in the notes section of the donation form.