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## AAUW-OML Distinguished Woman, Stacia Cragholm

Submitted by Jan Cushman



Stacia Cragholm Photo provided

Every May, the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW-OML) honors one of its members as the Distinguished Woman of the Year, for services to the community and the branch.

In April, Stacia Cragholm was named the Distinguished Woman of the Year and was honored at a luncheon in her honor on May 17.

Cragholm graduated from UC Berkeley, playing on the tennis team for two years and trying out several majors, including math and biology and then settling on history. She completed a minor in elementary school physical education, while attending San Francisco State's credential program. She launched her teaching career at Mill Valley Middle School. She married Ellis Cragholm in 1970 and moved to Missoula, Montana, his home state, where she taught girls PE and after school sports. In 1972 they moved to Oakland and later to Lafayette. In 1973 Stacia began teaching in Lafayette, subsequently working at Vallecito, Montecito, Happy Valley and Burton elementary schools. After spending time with her two daughters, Julie and Cristina, she was hired by the West Contra Costa Unified School District where she worked in Richmond and in Hercules teaching elementary and middle school students. She retired from teaching in 2009 and joined AAUW in 2011.

When she became a Branch member, she joined the Tech Trek committee and helped interview and select seventh-grade girls for AAUW sponsored Tech Trek camp. But she had a vision to engage over 100 middle school girls with a one-day conference to provide hands-

on workshops on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). She met Dr. Kristen Beck and Roy Wensley, Dean of Saint Mary's School of Science, who supported what has become OML's STEM Conference. Saint Mary's donated the use of classrooms and Stacia engaged with Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) conferences to secure a grant from Chevron as well as contributions from the community, including the Sunrise Rotary and the Bettelheim Family Foundation. She has been the initial catalyst, inspiration and leader for the STEM conference, working over multiple years.

In total over 800 girls have attended the conferences from 2016 through 2019, virtually in 2021, and in-person again in 2022. Now that's success! And it didn't stop there. High school girls who participated in Sister-to-Sister and Tech Trek are recruited each year to hone their leadership skills as ambassadors to the conference. Stacia's idea has become a powerful reality, introducing the STEM world to over 800 girls - a life-altering experience for them and for Cragholm a legacy to be proud of. AAUW-OML is privileged to celebrate Stacia Cragholm's commitment to young women and the mission of AAUW as our Distinguished Woman of 2022.

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