

Minutes
129th GFWC/CT Annual May Convention
May 16, 2026 at Hilton Garden Inn, Windsor, CT

Proclamation –Geri Harvey, Windsor Woman’s Club and GFWC/CT President Kathy Barnes introduced and led the Executive Committee into the convention hall.

Call to Order – State President Kathy Barnes, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m., welcoming all attendees to the 129th GFWC/CT Annual May Convention.

Inspiration -- Zunny Martinez, Hamden Woman’s Club delivered a wonderful Inspiration, emphasizing that “Service is not something we do only when it is convenient. Service is who we are. It is the heart of this organization, the mission we carry, and the spirit of every woman in this room. We show up not for recognition or reward, but because we know that what we do matters. From the moment we became members, we said “yes” to something greater than ourselves by asking one simple question: “How can we help?” [excerpt]

Presentation of the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America -- Brownie Troop 10160.

Preliminary Credentials Report – Joanne Sullivan, GFWC/CT Meetings Chair, gave the following Credentials report: Past State Presidents – 5; Club Presidents – 16; GFWC/CT Executive Committee – 9; Board of Directors and Voting Delegates – 40; Total Voting – 70; Total Non-Voting Delegates – 5; Registered Guests – 4; Total Attendees --- 75; District with the Largest Attendance – North Central; Club with the Largest Attendance – Windsor.

Rules of the Convention – Jo Ann Calnen, GFWC Parliamentarian, read the Rules of Convention which were also printed in the program. Convention rules were approved.

Welcome to Windsor – Mayor Nuchette Black-Burke was introduced by Geri Harvey, President, Windsor Woman’s Club, to give welcoming remarks. Mayor Black-Burke welcomed and recognized State President Kathy Barnes, Executive Committee members, officers and all attendees to Windsor, the first town in Connecticut, although they often battle with Wethersfield for that designation! The mayor gave special recognition to the Windsor Woman’s Club and the impact they make on their community. Recently when she and her Deputy Mayor were planning a special event for Woman’s History Month, immediately the WWC came to the surface. She added that they were excited to host the Convention this year and recognized the great work the General Federation of Women’s Clubs is doing all across Connecticut. Mayor Black-Burke ended with a favorite quote of hers, “Service is the rent that you pay while you’re living here on earth. Thank you for putting your hands out to serve and to be served.”

Memorial Service – Michelle Eifes, GFWC/CT Corresponding Secretary, opened with a prayer expressing our thanks “...for all our sister’s lives and all the years we shared with them.”

The 2026 Memorial honored the passing of these twenty-three Club Sisters:

GFWC Harwinton Woman's Club – Doris Sibley and Louise Fiengo; **Woman's Club of Enfield** -- Pam Lord; **Bethel Women's Club GFWC** – Gail Hilton; **Woman's Club of Danbury/New Fairfield** – Val Stagen, Marie Kornhaus, Phyllis Kenes, and Dolores Pietropaolo; **Newtown Woman's Club GFWC, Inc.** – Joyce Webster and Marie Sturdevant; **Women's Club of Madison** – Carol Begor and Carol Muante; **GFWC Women's Club of North Haven** – Carlene Myers; **Somers Women's Club** – Nadene Lake; **Windsor Woman's Club** – Marie Bruhn, Elizabeth "Liz" Paklos, and Claire Reilly; **Hamden Woman's Club** – Shelly Imler; **Milford Woman's Club** – Anne Cherniavsky; **GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club** – Maureen Reale and Ann Sinatra.

Special Recognitions -- Although the **Federated Women's Club of Glastonbury** left GFWC and closed down, State President Kathy Barnes wanted to recognize **Mary Preisner**, their club Historian. She passed April 12, 2026 after a long illness. "Her daughter and I have been in contact and I now will be receiving all the archives from the club which will eventually get to the GFWC/CT archives at the state library." Sadly, the **Branford Woman's Club** is also no longer. President Kathy Barnes wanted to recognize **Elizabeth Vanicisin**. "This wonderful lady, was just 8 days shy of her 100th birthday when she passed on Nov. 19, 2026. Elizabeth was a Past State President of GFWC/CT. She is now resting."

The memorial ended with a quote by William Kent Kruger from his novel *Ordinary Grace*, "They're never far from us, you know." "Who?" I asked. "The dead. No more 'n a breath. You let that last one go and you're with them again."

Installation of Northford/North Branford Junioresettes, GFWC – President Kathy Barnes asked Molly Cleary, the members of the Northford/North Branford Junioresettes, and their advisors to come forward. She spoke of the history and mission of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and its three major objectives. The first, to be of service in our communities by Living the Volunteer Spirit, symbolized by the white candle, which signifies purity, hope and new beginnings. The second is to be active participants in state, national, and international matters, represented by the blue candle signifying constancy, peace and stability. The third objective is to live our motto "Unity in Diversity," represented by the red candle, the color of courage.

Kathy continued, "A candle is such a simple thing, it starts with just a piece of string. Each time it is dipped it becomes more whole and when complete can share its light. Such is true of your volunteer service. What may seem like a small, insignificant act, when joined together with the work of your Federation sisters around the world, becomes a bright light shining through and making this world a better place to live. Each member, in becoming a clubwoman, must be ready to take up her light. She must carry it so that its rays will shine into dark corners and faraway places; to light the way for those who need encouragement and assurance."

Kathy explained to Molly her responsibilities as President of Northford/North Branford GFWC Junioresettes and will she accept this responsibility. Saying "yes", Molly took her candle to share that light with her members. Dr. Susan Gettys, GFWC Secretary then presented Molly with the Club President's pin. Club advisors, Courtney, Elisa, and Cathy, came forward with their gold

candles, symbolizing a circle of strength to their commitment to guiding a new generation of GFWC members. Accepting their responsibility, President Kathy Barnes then declared: "Northford/North Branford Juniores, take your candles and shine their light as you represent GFWC in your community. Be like a sunflower – stay bright, face the sun, and never look back!"

Collect for Clubwomen – Courtney Cleary, Northford/North Branford Woman's Club

Co-President, led the recitation of the Collect.

GFWC Junior Pledge -- Molly Cleary, Northford/North Branford Juniores GFWC President, led the recitation of the GFWC Junior Pledge: *"I pledge my loyalty, to the Junior Club Women, by doing better than ever before, the work I have to do; by being prompt, honest, courteous, by living each day trying to accomplish something, not merely to exist."* President Kathy Barnes noted, "The Junior Pledge is the inspiration to accomplish something good every day and it's not been said as part of our state meetings for decades. Thank you for choosing to recognize that as your pledge and bringing it back to our club."

Susan Gettys, GFWC Secretary. "Greetings from GFWC Headquarters in Washington, D.C. and all the Executive Committee members. This is my first term in office as GFWC Secretary and I'm learning more about the organization and seeing it all from a totally different perspective, working directly with the wonderful staff members working out of the office in Washington. Staying at our historic headquarters building and attending executive committee meetings there has been a real treat. I wish those walls could talk and share stories about all the people who have walked the halls and spent time in that building."

SPECIAL RECOGNITION. Dr. Gettys gave special recognition and thanks to State President Kathy Barnes and Debbie Fiore. Kathy is serving as GFWC Washington President and also representing our state on the GFWC Board. Debbie Fiore is on the GFWC Membership Committee representing Connecticut, and serves as New England Region Secretary.

Dr. Gettys reported on the progress being made on the façade restoration work being done on the GFWC Headquarters building located at 1734 N Street NW, in Washington, DC. Built in 1875, it has served as GFWC headquarters since 1922. GFWC celebrated ownership for over 100 years and plans to do so for another hundred. But it takes a lot to keep the historic building in good shape. So far GFWC Clubwomen have raised \$139,000 towards restoration of the front façade. Funds are needed to repair and restore the other three sides which are also in need of repair and restoration. Information on how to donate to the project can be found the GFWC website. The **International Day of Service** will be observed this year on September 26th and the focus will be on ending domestic and sexual violence. Because of a technical snag on the GFWC website, only 60% of clubs reporting for last year were actually able to submit their report. Even so, Dr. Gettys wanted to share a few figures and facts from last years' service day: Clubs, districts, and states participating: 1,000. Number of Volunteers: 17,000. Service Hours: 27,000. Dollars raised for survivors of domestic and sexual violence: \$217,000. Dollars donated in goods and services: \$377,000. Some of the service projects reported were: community education

forums, support for domestic violence survivors, collections of essential supplies, shelter improvements and renovations, and partnerships with other service organizations. Registration for the International Day of Service is available now on the GFWC website. You don't have to have a project in mind at this time, but please go ahead and register your clubs now.

In her final remarks, Dr. Gettys thanked all GFWC/CT clubs for the work they are doing in their communities. Her favorite part of being Secretary is visiting the different states and attending their conventions and hearing of the wonderful things they do. So far, she has visited 11 states with one more state to go during her second year. She noted how different they all are, and yet all have the same heart for serving their communities. Dr. Gettys will return this afternoon to talk about the benefits of GFWC.

Greetings from GFWC/CT Past State Presidents – Past President Jeanne Waseleski (2006-2008) introduced the Past State Presidents: JoAnn Calnen, (2010-2012); Debbie Fiore, (2020-2022), and Kathy DeBurra, (2022-2024).

Reports of GFWC/CT Officers – State President Kathy Barnes introduced the following members of the Executive Committee: **Member-at-Large**, Mischa Campbell thanked everyone for the past two years spent seeing many faces committed to improving the relationships between all the clubs. She reported that suggestions have been few and far between but one that stands out was making shoulder pouches to protect chemo ports from seat belt straps. The pattern is being ordered and a sample made to see how it can be helpful to our treatment centers. **Asst. Treasurer**, Pam Lerner expressed her gratitude to Kathy DeBurra and Kathy Barnes for their guidance and support over her two terms as assistant treasurer for GFWC/CT. She was also grateful to the clubs that have cooperated in providing her with information as requested in a timely manner. She ended her report with sincere wishes for success to the incoming administration under Wendy Kainu and to all clubs who make GFWC/CT a thriving Federation. **Treasurer**, Jeanne Kehoe reported “Our accounts are up to date and all invoices have been paid or in process. Expenses are within budget. We will be ending this year in the “black”. Our current checking account balance is \$25,697.38. This balance includes \$17,000 to be paid to our scholarship winners and receipts from this convention. Funds from three District Days have been collected and proceeds sent to the designated charities.” Jeanne added it was an honor to serve as State Treasurer during this administration and she looks forward to continuing on as part of the next administration. **Corresponding Secretary**, Michelle Eifes had no correspondence to report. She thanked President Kathy Barnes for the trust and opportunity to be part of the Board, and also for the privilege to work on the GFWC/CT newsletter. **Recording Secretary**, Joann Hohensee reported that the minutes for the Fall Conference held Sept. 20, 2025 are posted on the GFWC/CT website. Between September 2025 and April 2026, four Executive Committee meetings were called by President Kathy Barnes and held on Zoom. She asked for 3 readers to approve the minutes. The following women volunteered to be readers: Jeanne Kehoe, Pam Lerner and Joanne Sullivan. She added that it was an honor to serve as

Recording Secretary for this administration while at the same time making new friendships, learning new skills, and working with a wonderful team of sisters in Federation. **3rd Vice President**, Sara Newell thanked all the District Presidents and Assistant District Presidents. "Each District Day was held this spring and each was a lovely day. Thank you to all who have stepped up for the next administration, and all the GFWC/CT Club Presidents. You have all done a tremendous job." **2nd Vice President**, Nicole Karalli shared how much she appreciated reading their reports. Not only were they informative, but also inspired her to adopt some of their ideas. "This year, the GFWC/CT achieved remarkable milestones, demonstrating the power of teamwork and dedication. In total, you reported **821 projects** and invested an impressive **83,507 hours**. This commitment translated into a significant impact, with **contributions totaling \$250,526 in monetary donations and \$199,531 in in-kind donations. You spent \$7,533 for Advancement Plans and you raised \$224,166. And read 182 books.** When you think about the value of all this hard work, it's eye-opening! If we calculated the hours worked at minimum wage, which is currently \$16.94, it would amount to **\$1,414,608.58**. Even more impressive, the value of volunteer work, calculated at \$34.79 per hour, brings the total value of your contribution to a staggering **\$2,905,208.53**. What is particularly striking is that all of this was done for free. Your hard work and dedication have not only made a significant difference in our community but have also show how much can be accomplished when people come together with a common purpose."

President Elect, Wendy Kainu reported about the CT State Library project. "Debbie Fiore has graciously accepted management of the project through the next administration, so she will reach out when it's time this summer. On a personal note, but very important to share for our minutes – you may have noticed me being introduced differently and it is because I am legally changing my name. It is a Finnish name, honoring my mother's heritage.

It is pronounced *Kai nu*."

AWARDS

Nicole Karalli, GFWC CT 2nd Vice President, presented the following awards:

SIGNATURE PROJECT – Domestic Sexual Violence Awareness & Prevention

1st Place Large Club – Killingworth Women's Organization 2nd Place Large Club – Manchester Women's Club

1st Place Medium Club – Bethel Women's Club GFWC 2nd Place Medium Club – Suburban Woman's Club of Greater New Britain

1st Place Small Club – GFWC Harwinton Woman's Club 2nd Place Small Club – GFWC Women's Club of North Haven

Advocates for Children

1st Place Large Club – Windsor Woman's Club of CT & GFWC 2nd Place Large Club – Newtown Woman's Club

1st Place Medium Club – Bethel Woman's Club GFWC 2nd Place Medium Club – GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club

1st Place Small Club – Terryville Woman's Club GFWC-CT 2nd Place Small Club – GFWC Northeastern Woman's Club

Arts and Culture

1st Place Large Club – Windsor Woman’s Club of CT & GFWC 2nd Place Large Club – GFWC Woman’s Club of Danbury/New Fairfield

1st Place Medium Club – Suburban Woman’s Club of Greater New Britain 2nd Place Medium Club – Northford-North Branford Women’s Club GFWC/CT

1st Place Small Club – GFWC Harwinton Woman’s Club 2nd Place Small Club – GFWC Northeastern Woman’s Club

Civic Engagement and Outreach

1st Place Large Club – Killingworth Women’s Organization 2nd Place Large Club – Windsor Woman’s Club of CT & GFWC

1st Place Medium Club – GFWC Women’s Club of Greater New Milford 2nd Place Medium Club – East Hartford Woman’s Club

1st Place Small Club – GFWC Northeastern Woman’s Club 2nd Place Small Club – GFWC Thomaston Woman’s Club

Veterans

1st Place Large Club – Killingworth Women’s Organization 2nd Place Large Club – Mystic Women’s Club

1st Place Medium Club – Suburban Woman’s Club of Greater New Britain 2nd Place Medium Club – East Hartford Woman’s Club

1st Place Small Club – GFWC Harwinton Woman’s Club 2nd Place Small Club – GFWC Northeastern Woman’s Club

Education and Libraries

1st Place Large Club – The Women’s Club of Enfield 2nd Place Large Club – Manchester Woman’s Club

1st Place Medium Club – Somers Woman’s Club 2nd Place Medium Club – Northford/North Branford Woman’s Club of GFWC/CT

1st Place Small Club – GFWC Woman’s Club of North Haven 2nd Place Small Club – GFWC Northeastern Woman’s Club

Environment

1st Place Large Club – GFWC Woman’s Club of Danbury/New Fairfield 2nd Place Large Club – Mystic Women’s Club

1st Place Medium Club – Somers Woman’s Club 2nd Place Medium Club – Suburban Woman’s Club of Greater New Britain

1st Place Small Club – GFWC Harwinton Woman’s Club 2nd Place Small Club GFWC Northeastern Woman’s Club

Health and Wellness

1st Place Large Club – Killingworth Women’s Organization 2nd Place Large Club – Mystic Woman’s Club

1st Place Medium Club – Suburban Woman’s Club of Greater New Britain 2nd Place Medium Club – GFWC Women’s Club of Greater New Milford

1st Place Small Club – GFWC Harwinton Woman’s Club 2nd Place Small Club – GFWC Woman’s Club of North Haven

ADVANCEMENT PLANS

Communications and Public Relations

1st Place Large Club – GFWC Woman’s Club of Danbury/New Fairfield 2nd Place Large Club – GFWC Woman’s Club of Woodbury

1st Place Medium Club – GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman’s Club 2nd Place Medium Club – Northford/North Branford Women’s Club of GFWC/CT

1st Place Small Club – GFWC Thomaston Woman’s Club 2nd Place Small Club – GFWC Harwinton Woman’s Club

Fundraising

- 1st Place Large Club – Madison Woman's Club 2nd Place Large Club – GFWC Woman's Club of Danbury/New Fairfield
1st Place Medium Club -- Hamden Woman's Club 2nd Place Medium Club – GFWC Newington/Wethersfield Woman's Club
1st Place Small Club – GFWC Harwinton Woman's Club 2nd Place Small Club – Terryville Woman's Club of GFWC/CT

Leadership

- 1st Place Large Club – Killingworth Women's Organization 2nd Place Large Club – Windsor Woman's Club of CT & GFWC
1st Place Medium Club – Suburban Woman's Club of Greater New Britain 2nd Place Medium Club – Northford-North Branford Women's Club GFWC/CT
1st Place Small Club – GFWC Harwinton Woman's Club 2nd Place Small Club – Terryville Womans' Club GFWC/CT

Membership

- 1st Place Large Club – GFWC Woman's Club of Danbury/New Fairfield 2nd Place Large Club – Killingworth Women's Organization
1st Place Medium Club – Somers Woman's Club 2nd Place Medium Club – Bethel Women's Club, GFWC
1st Place Small Club – GFWC Northeastern Woman's Club 2nd Place Small Club – GFWC Woman's Club of North Haven

Legislation and Public Policy

- 1st Place Large Club – The Women's Club of Madison 2nd Place Large Club – Mystic Woman's Club
1st Place Small Club – GFWC Northeastern Woman's Club

Women's History and Resource Center

- 1st Place Large Club – The Women's Club of Madison 2nd Place Large Club – Windsor Woman's Club of CT & GFWC

ESO

- 1st Place Large Club --- Windsor Woman's Club of CT & GFWC
1st Place Small Club – GFWC Northeastern Woman's Club

Photography Awards

- Natural Wonders - Martha Gay Stewart, Woman's Club of Madison
Our World Up Close - Donna Addressi, Woman's Club of Danbury New Fairfield
Reflections - Nicole Figueiredo, Manchester Women's Club
Living the Volunteer Spirit - Becky Otterbein, Manchester Women's Club
Each awardee was presented with a certificate and photographed alongside State President Kathy Barnes and GFWC Secretary Dr. Susan Gettys.

At this time State President Kathy Barnes was pleased to make the following announcements:
The 2026 LEADS candidate from Connecticut is: **Geri Harvey** from the Windsor WC, **and**, The GFWC Jenny Award Nominee from Connecticut is **JoAnn Calnen** from the Enfield WC.

Expression of Thanks – Susan Michaud, The Woman's Club of Enfield, delivered the Expression of Thanks prior to lunch being served.

Keynote Speaker – **Dr. Susan Gettys, GFWC Secretary**

Dr. Getty asked how many members had active accounts on the member portal on the GFWC website and was very impressed with the show of hands, adding that it was the most she had seen anywhere this year.

She spoke on what she thought to be the top 10 benefits of belonging to GFWC:

#1. GFWC website has a member portal and digital library available. In the member portal are toolkits especially useful for club presidents and leaders, from parliamentary procedures, creating agendas, and recently added is a section for state LEADS programs. All are boiler plate, ready for you to take and tweak it to your clubs' needs. Updated as of July 1, 2026 are the sections on Communications and Public Relations, Legislation, Membership, Strategic Planning, Digital Library, and the GFWC Club Manual.

#2. The top ten Special Programs from seven different years, listed by program area, will also be updated and included later this summer.

#3. Information on current affiliate organizations, and a new affiliate will be introduced later this summer.

#4. Women's History and Resource Center. Here you'll find project ideas, information on GFWC Headquarters, and much more.

#5. The LEADS Program. Dr. Getty's spoke on the importance of LEADS and how continual training in leadership is valuable to our clubs. She asked for those who have attended LEADS to please stand up and be acknowledged.

#6. Honorary chairmen for 2024-2026 GFWC advancement areas included Suzanne Fox, David Coffey, Amy Peale, Dr. Regina Benjamin, Ann Lauer, Jude Mabone, and Leslie Capps.

#7. GFWC Facebook page.

#9. NEW! Learning Academy. Found in the member portal, this offers 26 free courses on leadership, club resources, finances, and technology, plus honorary chairmen webinars.

#10. The ability to register for the upcoming International Convention to be held in Scottsdale, AZ this year, and in Charlotte, NC in 2027.

Sheila McCauley Walking Contest Awards presented by Ginny Chulkovs, GFWC/CT Health and Wellness Chair: 1st Place: Bethel Woman's Club, 1,331,00 steps; 2nd Place: Danbury/New Fairfield, 949,000 steps; 3rd Place: Madison, 852,000 steps.

GFWC/CT Memorial Scholarships. Beverly Regan, GFWC/CT Scholarship Chair, announced the six winners of the Memorial Scholarships Phipps and Schoelzel. She thanked the clubs that participated this year in bringing these outstanding young women to their attention, and enabling GFWC/CT to help them fulfill their goals. The first recipient is **Haneen Alkabasi**, sponsored by the **WC of Newington/Wethersfield**. Haneen, who is trilingual and speaks Arabic, Spanish and English, would like to help other young people achieve their academic goals with the aid of multi-lingual counseling in financial help. Haneen was awarded a \$3,000 Phipps Scholarship. Our second scholarship winner is **Erica Espinal**, sponsored by the **WC of Danbury/New Fairfield**. Her goal is to create a non-profit organization that focuses on

providing speech and language services to vulnerable communities. Erica was awarded a \$3,000 Phipps Memorial Scholarship. Our next winner is **Madeline Murray** who is sponsored by the **Manchester WC**. While working at a lobbying firm, Madeline worked on a bill that would bring filtered water to every public school in the state. As a lobbyist, she sees how she can serve the community in a meaningful and positive direction. Madeline was awarded a \$3,000 Phipps Scholarship. Our fourth scholarship winner is **Jenelle Newcomb**, sponsored by the **Northeastern CT Woman's Club**. Her graduate degree will enable her to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker to better serve the growing number of men and women who experience a variety of mental health issues. Jenelle is married with two children. Hers is the only stable family income and this scholarship will help her achieve her goal. Jenelle was awarded a \$3,000 Phipps Scholarship. Our fifth scholarship winner is **Leah Lynch**, sponsored by the **Northford/North Branford WC**. As a teacher of ESL (English as a Second Language) in the New Haven public school system, her students, many of whom are refugees, have experienced the trauma of war, hunger, domestic violence and abuse. Leah is pursuing a six-year degree in Trauma Informed Practices. She will remain in that school district to serve students and families "who often rely on schools as their first place of safety, belonging and support." Leah was awarded a \$1,5000 Phipps Scholarship. Our sixth and final recipient is **Amy Caruso**. Amy is the second scholarship candidate from the Northford/North Branford WC, and she is sponsored by the **WC of North Haven**. Since 2014, she has owned and operated a children's center for children with special needs. As a mother of four, one of whom has Down Syndrome, she has experienced first-hand the many social and emotional needs of young children and its challenges. She returned to school last year to major in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with the goal of becoming a licensed play therapist supporting children's mental health. Amy has been awarded a \$1,000 Phipps Scholarship and a \$2,000 Schoelzel Scholarship.

Proposed By-Laws and Standing Rule Changes: The GFWC/CT Bylaws Committee consisting of Eileen Brunner, Wendy Clery, Pat Johnson, Nicole Karalli, Chylene Pender, and Eileen Driscoll, Chairman, place for the following recommendations by the Nominating Committee and a realization that two Vice-Presidents, rather than three, will best meet our organization's needs and better meet today's leadership challenges. Treasurer Jeanne Kehoe presented the recommended changes on behalf of the Bylaws Committee:

ARTICLE V. Section A.

Amendment: In the first sentence Strike out "a Third Vice-President."

If amended would read: The officers shall be a President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Assistant Treasurer. All officers shall be elected by delegate vote at the State Convention held in even number years.

Motion passed.

ARTICLE V. Section A Bullet point 2

Amendment: In the second sentence strike out “three” and insert “two.”

If amended would read: Eligibility for each office shall require active membership in a member club. Candidates for the offices of President and two Vice-Presidents shall have served on the Board of Directors of the State Federation as well as president of a GFWC/CT Club.

Motion passed.

ARTICLE V. Section C Bullet Point 2

Amendment: In the third sentence strike out “and Third Vice Presidents” and insert Vice-President; Strike out “in order”

If amended would read: The Vice Presidents shall assist the President at her request. The First Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in her absence. The Second Vice-President shall assume the responsibility when the First Vice-President is unable to do so. T

Motion passed.

ARTICLE V Section C Bullet Point 6:

Amendment: Strike out “Third” and insert “First”

If amended would read: The First Vice-President shall serve as Dean of Districts, and shall promote and encourage membership in Federation.

Motion passed.

Article VI Section A

Amendment: Strike out “three” insert “two”

If amended would read: The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, two Vice Presidents, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and one member of the Board of Directors appointed by the President.

Motion passed.

STANDING RULES

Section 2. Bullet point B.

Amendment: Strike out “three” insert “two”

If amended would read: Copies of all mailings shall be sent to the President, two Vice-Presidents, District Presidents and Assistant District Presidents.

Motion passed.

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GFWC/CT President’s Focus Area, Creative Living Community of Connecticut: Mischa Campbell, Member At Large, introduced Michelle Joyce, Executive Director of Creative Living

Community of CT, which is dedicated to answering the question “What will happen to my adult aged child with a developmental disability when I am no longer able to provide care?” The mission of CLCC is “to create a shared, inclusive living experience for individuals with and without developmental disabilities in a farm community, by focusing up on the gifts of all in mutually rewarding relationships.” Michele explained that CLCC is fully funded, and is available at no charge to adult participants who work on various programs offered to them, such as the greenhouse program, a farmstand, arts and recreational activities, community sponsored agriculture training, and a chickens and alpaca therapy program, all designed to provide paid employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. For more information you may contact Michelle by calling 860-967-2287, or by email: michelle@creativelc.org.

Community Impact Program Award presented by Wendy Kainu, GFWC/CT President Elect to the Windsor Woman’s Club for their “Lucinda’s House” project which collected approximately 2,700 essential baby items for clients of Lucinda’s House.

Election of GFWC/CT 2026-2028 Administration Officers: Kathy Barnes, State President; Katherine DeBurra, Nomination Committee Chair, and Heather Spencer, Head Teller. The Nominating Committee members were: Kathy Aiello, Debbie Fiore, Joanne Sullivan, and Jeanne Wasileski, with Alternates Madeline Gross and Lynne Sarro. The slate of candidates for the 2026-2028 Administration was presented: Wendy Kainu, State President; 1st VP Joanne Sullivan; 2nd VP Lynne Sarro; Treasurer, Jeanne Kehoe; Asst. Treasurer, Zunny Martinez; Recording Secretary, Andrea Freibauer; and Corresponding Secretary, Michelle Eifes

The slate was elected by ballot count.

Service Project: Kind hearts give us strength. Brave minds show our knowledge. Fierce spirits are driven by our passion. Gratitude is our gift. A service project based in gratitude for what we have accomplished in the 2024-2026 Administration. President Kathy Barnes spoke on the benefits of gratitude and ways to practice gratitude. Attendees were asked to remember the last time they expressed gratitude or received thanks from someone and how it made them feel. Each Clubwoman was provided with a blank card write a thank you card for someone, address it if possible. The cards would be mailed by GFWC CT.

Special Recognition and Gavel Awards

Sara Newell, GFW/CTC Membership Chair presented the **Plummer Gavel** to Madison; the **Sutton Gavel** to Northeast CT; and the **Pettis Gavel** to Danbury/New Fairfield

The Ursula Kolb Casioppo Federation Awareness Gavel was presented by Joann Hohensee, GFWC Recording Secretary to Danbury/New Fairfield. This award is presented for an outstanding Public Relations and Awareness Program.

The **LaFontaine Volunteer in Progress Award** was presented by State President Kathy Barnes to **Maddy Marzullo**, Co-President, GFWC Harwinton Woman’s Club. The **Eileen Russell Memorial**

Spirit Award was presented by State President Kathy Barnes to **Joanne Sullivan**, Windsor Woman's Club.

Fundraising Results: The 50/50 raffle raised \$340 with \$170 going to the lucky winner. Six raffle baskets raised \$365.

Final Credentials: Joanne Sullivan, GFWC/CT Meeting Chair presented the final credentials: Past State Presidents, 4; Club Presidents, 16; GFWC/CT Executive Committee, 9; Board of Directors and Voting Delegates, 40; Total Voting, 70; Total Non-Voting Delegates, 5; Registered Guests, 10; Total Attendees, 71; District with the Largest Attendance, North Central; Club with the Largest Attendance, Windsor.

During the recess before Installation a reception was held featuring special beverages and assorted fruit, cheese, and cracker displays, along with fresh vegetables, crudities, and dipping sauces were available for all to enjoy.

Closing Remarks of the 2024-2026 Administration: State President Kathy Barnes: "My Sisters in Federation: I am so very proud of what has been accomplished by our clubs and the differences they have made in our communities, and the differences they have made in each other's lives. Did we reach all the goals we set last year? Maybe not, but we had some amazing things happen. Remember that workshop about Advancement Plans from May Convention last year? We have the 1897 Club now. Junioresettes were not on anyone's radar until July. Thank you, Northford/North Branford, for that question. Then BANG – a message from Killingworth about Junioresettes! We learned how to handle surprises with grace and technology when our guest speaker had car problems – Zoom to the rescue. We had a fun event in Madison during a blizzard and nobody crashed on the way home. That's a success.

Our clubs reported an incredible increase in projects and volunteer hours. Was it an increase, or have we learned to recognize the impact of our work and talk about it? We have leadership teams for the next administration in all our districts and our state. Our clubs are celebrating their members' service and anniversaries, and club shirts are a standard not an exception. I hope we all can enjoy the successes and reflect on the challenges of the last two years while we look forward to the next administration. We must not forget that as Club Women we all are leaders. It starts with saying yes. And it continues with asking a friend to come with you. I leave you with the words of Jim Morrison. Let the Doors song wander through your mind for a while. It's been playing in my head for some time now. *"This is the end, my beautiful friend. No safety or surprise, my friend. I'll never look into your eyes again, my friend."* At least not from this end of the room! As State President, the miles are many, but the roads are fun! The days are long but the years are short. Thank you for all for the last two years."

Installation of 2026-2028 GFWC/CT Executive Committee: Installing Officer Maureen Fernandes of the Windsor Woman's Club presented each officer of the new administration with a ribbon in one of the rainbow's colors.

State President	Wendy Kainu
1 st Vice President	Joanne Sullivan
2 nd Vice President	Lynne Sarro
Treasurer	Jeanne Kehoe
Assistant Treasurer	Zunny Martinez
Recording Secretary	Andrea Freibauer
Corresponding Secretary	Michelle Eifes

Following Installation, President Wendy Kainu spoke to the theme of the 2026-2028 administration of GFWC CT: Believe in Yourself. Believe in Each Other. Believe in GFWC/CT. in her installation speech, she shared considerable history of GFWC CT and the inspiration of the GFWC Motto: "Unity in Diversity." She shared plans for the next administration and spoke of the inspiration of rainbows. Her closing remarks were: "Thank you for all of your support, encouragement, and love. There are so many people that I am thankful for that we'd be here after midnight going through them, but if you have any doubt if you are one of them, please know that you absolutely are. I am so honored to serve as your state president and I will continue to do whatever I can to help you meet and exceed your goals. I love our GFWC sisterhood of service. Here's to another great two years! *Let's do this!*"

Reception: Wendy introduced her family members in attendance for her installation. The full text of her Installation Speech is attached to these minutes.

Passing of the Gavel. GFWC/CT State President Wendy Kainu and Past State President Kathy Barnes officially declared the 129th GFWC/CT Annual Convention adjourned at 5: 00 pm.

Joann Hohensee, Recording Secretary
GFWC/CT Administration, 2024-2026