

VISION2020  
EQUALITY IN SIGHT®



DREXEL UNIVERSITY  
College of  
Medicine  
*Institute for Women's Health & Leadership*

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



NOVEMBER 2015



Vision 2020 Congress attendees and artist Alan LeQuire with TN Woman Suffrage Monument model

The photograph above was taken in front of the Tennessee Woman Suffrage Monument in the artist's gallery. It reflects the energy, unity and sense of purpose that so dominated the Vision 2020 Fifth National Congress in Nashville in late

October.

When I returned home, at the top of a stack of emails was a message from an attendee, saying how highly she valued "the time spent with such **amazing** women."

"Amazing" is an accurate choice of adjectives to describe our productive 48 hours. New Delegates brought a fresh perspective. New Allies brought tested solutions. Not-so-new Vision 2020 loyalists brought essential continuity to the "Countdown to 2020."

The lively discussions confirmed the worth of convening leaders of the powerful national coalition we have built in Vision 2020's campaign for equality.

A significant outcome of our time together was the demonstration of shared ownership of the Vision 2020 coalition's goals. Leaders all, the attendees were not reluctant to raise their hands to volunteer for the challenges of the next five years.

The 2020 themes were reinforced: **Honoring the Past, Enriching the Present, Shaping the Future.**

### **Honoring the Past**

- The choice of Nashville as Vision 2020's mid-decade site demonstrated our respect for the historic contribution Tennessee suffragists achieved when their state became the 36<sup>th</sup> and last state needed to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920.
- That story -- of young Tennessee legislator Harry Burn, who cast the deciding vote for ratification after his mother, Feb, wrote to him to "be a good boy" -- was told by Delegates **Yvonne Wood** and **Pat Pierce**, wearing long white suffrage dresses, wide-brimmed hats and "Votes for Women" sashes.
- The inspiring sculpture of five suffragists reminded us that historic markers for women are few in number, and Vision 2020 plans to help overcome that with a prominent exhibit at the National Constitution Center in 2020. On a personal note, the five women in the Tennessee monument reminded me also of my mother and her four sisters, who were born in Tennessee prior to women's right to vote, and when asked to say a few words at the ceremony, I spoke of them.

### **Enriching the Present** -- Moving from Vision to Action on the National Goals

- **Shared Leadership:** Vision 2020 Delegates from four states (Iowa, Massachusetts, Utah, Rhode Island) are working together to implement a CEO

Challenge to increase the numbers of women on corporate boards; Oregon Delegates are hosting a Vision 2020 Forum in Portland on November 19 for the same purpose; And Catalyst, a Vision 2020 Ally and Program Partner, described its many resources to support efforts to achieve shared leadership among women and men.

- **Economic Security:** Leadership Circle members Bobbi Liebenberg, Lisa Passante and Connie Lindsey are serving as conveners, communicators and coordinators of activities to close the gender gap in pay and retirement income; connecting with AAUW Delegate leaders in several states and a new Vision 2020 Ally, WISER (Women's Institute for Secure Retirement).
- **Youth Education:** many Delegates and Allies are working on STEM education for girls, with support from the Society for Women Engineers, whose leaders attended the Congress; others seek to incorporate the history of women into secondary education curricula, and some are emphasizing social media; Vision 2020 rewarded two college students -- Busra Gungor and Emily Beckman -- with the Tomorrow Award in honor of their STEM trailblazing.
- **Civic Engagement:** The Vision 2020 goal of rallying 100% of eligible women to vote in 2020 is attracting significant interest and support; writer/speaker Ellen Goodman, who received the Visionary Award at the Congress, cheered us on, and major Allies committed to joining the effort. Voter registration, education and mobilization, as well as training women to run for office -- all are on the action list. Leadership Circle coordination is coming from Karen Kaplowitz, Governor Barbara Roberts and Erin Vilardi.

## Shaping the Future

- Dianne Semingson, chair of the centennial celebration in 2020, previewed a three-part calendar that invites nationwide participation.
- Vision 2020 is developing a business plan for the next five years, a marketing plan and sponsorship package which will be available to all. Look also for an identity logo to increase our visibility.
- State and regional Vision 2020 conferences during 2016 are being planned and the next National Congress will be held early in 2017 -- Locations discussed in Nashville included Salt Lake City, St. Louis, Washington D.C. Any other bidders out there?

In summary, the Nashville Congress generated significant power, purpose and performance. Chicago's Connie Lindsey captured the spirit. She said, "I will not accept the things I cannot change; I will change the things I cannot accept."

To close the Congress on October 28, we heard an inspiring talk by Tennessee

Supreme Court Justice Cornelia (Connie) Clark, recipient of Vision 2020's Pioneer Award. The following week I received a note from Justice Clark, who wrote, "I am so energized and uplifted by the goals of your organization and the collective power of the women from around the country who are leading it."



In this Thanksgiving season, I am thankful for all of you. Have a good holiday!

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