

## FAREWELL AND GOOD LUCK TO GISELA STEFFE

Christine Hopwood

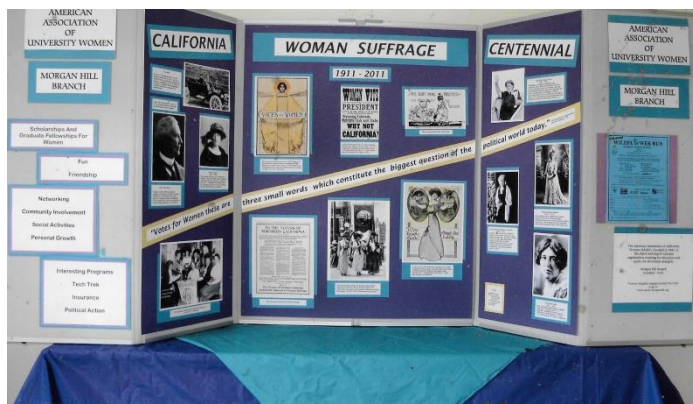


Gisela Steffe joined the Morgan Hill Branch of AAUW in January 1992 after she moved here with her husband, Will.

She was born in Bavaria and came to the US when she was nine years old. At the time Gisela didn't speak a word of English. However, she learned quickly, and for many years helped other foreign language speakers become conversationally fluent in English. Her lifelong passion is music. She started learning to play the piano with her father when she was 6 years old, obtained her BA from the University of Iowa and won a Woodrow Wilson

scholarship to the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY, from where she graduated with an MA in Music. Her major at Eastman was the piano, but after she sustained a hand injury she switched to the violin. Not surprisingly, Gisela spent much of her working life teaching music.

Gisela loved all things about music but most important to her was playing in an orchestra. She joined the South Valley Symphony in January 1992 and has played violin with the orchestra until she left for Iowa in mid-May. She has found the last 10 years particularly rewarding as the Music Director challenged the musicians with ever more difficult and exciting compositions. She hopes to find a small ensemble or chamber orchestra in Cedar Rapids so she can continue to make fine music with others who share her passion.



While music was Gisela's passion, community involvement was high on her list of interests, along with history, languages, reading, gardening and travel. After joining AAUW she wholeheartedly became involved in Branch activities, particularly supporting its mission to advocate for fair pay and economic security for women. She ruefully

remembered a rejection letter she received after applying for her first job after college - she was too marriageable!

In 2006 Gisela was named an AAUW Honoree and the following write-up accompanied the announcement in the September 2006 issue of The Wildflower. "Gisela Steffe is one of those quiet, behind-the-scenes workers. She serves as Neighborhood Chair and organizes the Annual Neighborhood Dinner. She also coordinates Afternoon Book Group. Her artistic talent is evident in the Women's History exhibits and Wildflower Run displays she creates each year."



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Gisela has loved every minute of living in Morgan Hill and cherishes the friends she has made. After losing her husband, Will, in late 2016, she finally decided to move closer to her daughter in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She has a comfortable condominium on the third floor with a view of woods and walking trails. She says that the city is culturally diverse with lots to do. It boasts a rebuilt downtown, a pretty river and many parks. She lives about 20 minutes from her alma mater, the University of Iowa, where there is always something going on. Her decision to leave was not easy, but she has a positive outlook on life and is fond of the expression "one must bloom where one is planted". We wish her well and hope she will find fertile ground in which to put down roots. Gisela's new address is below. Please note her email address remains the same.

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