



On June 9, 2017, the Northern Monmouth County Branch (NMCB) (NJ) of AAUW was honored with a Founders' Award at the Brookdale Community College (BCC) Foundation Scholarship Golden Jubilee Ball. The ball was held at the Eagle Oaks Golf & Country Club, Farmingdale, NJ.

In the mid-60s, after learning about the New Jersey County College Act of 1963, the NMCB legislative study group brought information about the act to the branch. The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders had begun a study to see if a county college would be a benefit to the county. That study was a year in when the NMCB education study group, led by Audrie La Towsky, began its own in-depth study to see whether Monmouth County could benefit from a public two-year college. County/community colleges were a relatively new idea at that time. Thousands of New Jersey students were leaving the state in search of affordable higher education opportunities. Indeed, the women of NMCB found that our county would benefit from a public two-year college not affiliated with any four-year institution. Those were fine for students seeking bachelor's degrees and beyond, but they did not take into consideration students seeking terminal degrees in such fields as nursing and in the technologies. Nor did they meet the needs of adults seeking continuing education opportunities. Through meetings with the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders and with a letter writing campaign through the local newspapers the NMCB was able to convince the Freeholders to sign a proclamation to begin a comprehensive public community college in Monmouth County, New Jersey.

A history of the founding of Brookdale Community College was written by members of NMCB to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the founding. The College has just published a third edition of that history, *A Triangle of Land*. An electronic copy is available from BCC's website:  
<https://www.brookdalecc.edu/documents/design-production/a-triangle-of-land.pdf>

Mary Lea Burden and Karen Topham were co-presidents of the branch at the time of the honor. They were joined by incoming co-presidents Nancy Butler and Pat Miller at the Gala celebration. Their photos and photos of the Founders' Award, plus proclamations from the NJ State Senate and NJ State Assembly can be found on NMCB's Facebook page:  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/AAUW.NMCB/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=1252343441542458](https://www.facebook.com/pg/AAUW.NMCB/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1252343441542458)

Karen and Mary Lea were among the honorees who were interviewed by BCC Television in advance of the Ball. That interview is also available on NMCB's Facebook page:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqVzTOryXjs&feature=youtu.be&t=12m45s>