



Dear GWI Family,

Season's greetings to all of you!

One of the blessings of this time of year is that it is another opportunity to connect across the miles. Since my end-of-summer letter on 4 September, I have had the privilege to be in constant touch with our NFAs via WhatsApp, email, newsletters, LinkedIn, Zoom, Committees, and enjoyably in person gatherings. Each interaction has reaffirmed the incredible energy and dedication that drives GWI forward.

The GWI Board has had a fulfilling, busy year, not without its challenges. We have survived because of our collective resilience, mindset and strategic plan. It is this mission and vision that keeps us laser focused and committed. As President, the 'buck stops with me' and I do not resile from this responsibility and with the Board am grateful for your continuing support in this our 105th anniversary year.

2024 is known as the 'super election' year as half the world's population went to the polls leading to a wave of women leaders. Let us not forget they would not be in that position if it were not for the historic role our foremothers who were trailblazers as education and gender equality advocates.

I was deeply honored to represent GWI at several key events this year, including:

- Representing GWI at the United Nations Summit of the Future in partnership with UN Women and Dr. Anino Emuwa, BFWG member and Women in Philanthropy and Impact Africa Co-Founder, where I made introductory remarks on 'Catalytic Philanthropy for Gender Equality'.
- Participating a podcast on 'Building Leadership in the Humanitarian sector', (interviewed by Himani Deswal) that was released on YouTube in early October and was also on LinkedIn.
- Delivering a presentation representing GWI on 'The importance of redistributing power within Doctors Without Borders (MSF) global operations, addressing the role of DEI in shifting away from Eurocentric models and recognising local expertise' to mark Black History Month.



- Volunteering as a Rotarian, at the British Red Cross on migrant and refugee support, and also at MSF at their London offices in the Finances/Services department, and a member of UN Women UK.
- October saw me in Dublin, Ireland for the Irish Federation of University Women's (IrFUW) Centenary. See us below on 11 October 2024 at Trinity College next to IrFUW President Gisele Scanlon with University Women Europe President Anne Negre. Congratulations once again to IrFuw and President Gisele.



11 October 2024 at Trinity College Centenary

- Contributing my written remarks and words of congratulations to WG-USA conference and the Swiss Federation of University Women Centenary.

Each of these moments was an opportunity to highlight the extraordinary work of GWI and its members.

I was stunned when my 2-minute video on World Day against Capital Punishment on X (formerly Twitter) got 821 views, 82 likes - more extraordinary 70 reposts! We can all identify with one of the four types of Human rights activist- citizen, rebel, change agent and reformer.

This year, we celebrated remarkable accomplishments: impressive presence at the Commission on the Status of Women where we hosted three parallel events. Alongside producing impactful webinars, releasing advocacy toolkits, and launching the 2025 international Rose Sidgwick Fellowship. The Young Member Network Mentorship series thrived, and GWI was recognized as the **"Most Empowering Graduate Women's Network"**



by *Acquisition International*. These successes are a testament to the passion and dedication of our members worldwide.

Of course, our biggest milestone was celebrating GWI's 105th anniversary! So many of you participated in the celebration and have donated to the Heritage Fundraising Wall. NFA [videos commemorating](#) our 105th birthday are both creative and novel. I offer my gratitude to you all.

As we look ahead, I invite you to spread the holiday spirit by supporting GWI's efforts. Whether through purchasing a [customized virtual brick](#), (where we still need two \$505 donations for the wall), contributing to the [Girls' Education for Brighter Futures initiative](#), or honoring someone special with a [fellowship donation](#), your support helps us continue our vital work. Every gesture, no matter the size, makes a difference.

I extend my special thanks to the GWI Board, our Executive Director Stacy Dry Lara, GWI Convenors, Committees, and UN Representatives for their tireless efforts. Together, you make GWI the vibrant and impactful NGO it is today.

As Eleanor Roosevelt so beautifully said, *"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."*

As the year draws to a close, we have much to be thankful for. Christmas is the season of love, harmony and spreading awareness. Please consider giving an early Christmas present to GWI by pressing this link, you'll see the menu here - <https://graduatewomen.org/pay>.

May 2025 bring us all new opportunities and continued success in our shared mission.

With gratitude and warmest wishes,

Patrice Wellesley-Cole

President, Graduate Women International

