



**giving
women
a seat
at the table
of power**

WAND25

for 25 years

**only
the
beginning**

THE STORY OF “THE CHAIR”

“The chair” that we use to illustrate the concept of a “seat at the table of power” has a long history in WAND and WiLL.

When Debbie Stabenow was running for U.S. Senate for the first time, she admired a pin worn by Arlene Victor (president of Michigan WAND and chair of the national WAND board). The pin was in the shape of a chair, and represented, according to Arlene, women’s seat at the table of power. Arlene promised that she would give the pin to Debbie when she won her seat in the U.S. Senate; and she did so in 2000 when Debbie became the first female U.S. Senator from Michigan.

Since then, Debbie has worn the pin often, and told the story repeatedly. In 2004, at the WAND/WiLL reception in Washington, DC, she bestowed the chair pin on U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi, minority leader of the House of Representatives.

At the ceremony, Rep. Pelosi spoke about leadership and what it is like to be a woman and a leader in today’s political world.



“One of the first things that happened to me when I was elected Whip, I went to the White House for a meeting with the President, it was the opening of the session for that particular year, to talk about the agenda. I didn’t even think much about it. I have been to the White House numerous times before. Not to be blasé about the White House, but Jack [Representative Murtha] and I work in the Capitol of the United States. They come here, we go there.

“... As soon as that door closed and I looked at the table, I realized that this was unlike any other meeting I had been to at the White House. In fact, it was unlike any other meeting a woman had been to at the White House. Here we would be consulting over what the agenda would be.

“... As the President began to talk, I began to feel squeezed in at my chair. It was if people were sitting there with me. It was getting tighter and tighter. I could just sense that every woman who had worked to promote women’s opportunity was sitting on that chair with me. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, certainly Juliette Gordon Low, were sitting on that chair with me, and many others. And all of a sudden I could hear them say: ‘At last, we have a seat at the table.’ And then they were gone. My first thought was: ‘we want more.’ And it drove home to me what my responsibility was, certainly my opportunity, but also the responsibility that I have. A reminder that we all stand on the shoulders of others.”

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Women’s Action for New Directions Education Fund

WAND empowers women. To take political action. To change our culture and our national priorities: Toward peace and real security. Away from militarism and violence.