



# studies

college of liberal arts • university of south carolina

Women's Studies 30 years

## Parra-Medina Receives NIH Grant

Research to Reduce CVD Risk for African-American Women



Deborah Parra-Medina, Ph.D., WOST and public health, has just received a \$2.1 million grant from NIH to understand

how to effectively promote cardiovascular heart disease risk reduction in health care settings among poor African American (AA) women ages 35 and older. Parra-Medina and her co-investigator, Sara Wilcox, Ph.D., public health and faculty affiliate in WOST, have developed a system for creating and evaluating print educational materials that are ethnically and culturally relevant for specific groups, the Heart Healthy and Ethnically Relevant (HHER) Lifestyle Program.

Cardiovascular disease, in most cases, is a preventable disease. Yet, it is the leading cause of death in women especially in low-income AA communities. According to a 1997 report from the American Heart Association, the coronary heart disease death rate was approximately 31 percent higher for AA than for white women.

Medina continued on page 7

## Barbara Ransby to Deliver 2004 Freeman Lecture

Barbara Ransby, professor, Department of African American Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago, will deliver the 2004 Adrenée Glover Freeman lecture in African American Women's Studies on Thursday, Nov. 11, at 7 p.m., in Gambrell Hall Auditorium. The title of her lecture is "Ella Baker: A Radical Intellectual and Democratic Organizer for Social Change."

Professor Ransby is a historian, writer, and longtime political activist. She received her BA from Columbia University in New York and her Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan. She is the author of a widely-acclaimed biography of civil rights activist and intellectual, Ella Jo Baker, titled *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003). The book has won numerous national awards, including The Joan Kelley Memorial Prize from the AHA, The James A. Rawley Prize, and The Liberty-Legacy Foundation Award, both from the OAH. She serves on the editorial board of the London-based journal, *Race and Class*. Her essays have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, including: *Race and Reason*, edited by Manning Marable; *Black Women in America*, edited by Darlene Clarke Hine; *The American Radical*, edited by Paul and



Barbara Ransby, author of *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, published by the University of North Carolina Press, April 2003  
Photo by Lisa Ebright

Mari Jo Buhle; and *Words of Fire*, edited by Beverly Guy Sheftal. In addition to scholarly publications, Professor Ransby is also a freelance writer who has had her work published in *The Nation*, *The Black Scholar*, *Southern Exposure*, *New Directions for Women*, and *In These Times*. She writes for the Progressive Media Project, based in Madison, Wis., which distributes weekly opinion editorials to Knight-Ridder newspapers across the country. She has published editorials in over a dozen papers, including: *The Denver Post*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Houston*

Ransby continued on page 6

# Looking Back, Stepping Forward—Women’s Studies at 30



Dr. Lynn Weber, WOST director

## Director’s Comments

Thursday, Sept. 30, was a great day of celebration for Women’s Studies at USC — 30 and counting! Envisioned and planned by our Community Partnership Council, the day included panels, a luncheon with a video produced especially for the occasion by one of our first BA graduates, Helen Tecklenburg, and two dynamic keynotes: Dr. Sheryl Ruzek, who addressed the future of women’s health studies, and Chief Wilma Mankiller, who brought a native perspective to the reflections and imaginings of the day.

During the day we looked back at the 30-year history of Women’s Studies at USC and around the nation and were reminded of the faculty, students, and community friends of USC whose efforts established the foundations for the program we have today, the struggles of women in and through the law to gain equal rights and social justice, and the innovations in teaching that women’s studies has effect-

ed and made a routine part of a college education today. Students and faculty are challenged to collaborate in the learning process and to connect their own histories/biographies to the content of their classes, recognizing and engaging the connection between emotions and learning, and connecting classroom education with outside the classroom activism to improve the status of women and to promote social justice.

We were reminded of the impact of our scholarship on changing the landscape in virtually every discipline. Women’s studies has dramatically changed the questions that are asked, the methods that are used to conduct research, and the histories that are discovered and rewritten. We have changed the definition of “writer” and “the canon” in literature by recognizing and studying the kinds of writing that women have always done, including writing in venues not previously considered legitimate for scholarly pursuit—cookbooks, children’s books, and writing to organize in such new outlets as “zines.”

And we were reminded of the amazingly rapid development of a new interdisciplinary in the academy in a very short period of time. Across the United States today there are over 700 women’s studies programs and departments, 10 Ph.D. programs, 35 master’s programs, over 60 graduate certificate programs—ours being among the best—and thousands of undergraduate and graduate students in courses across the country every year, over 2,500 at USC alone.

We have survived the early struggles to become an integral part of the academy and are now a permanent fixture. We also recalled the fact that this amazing change has not come easily. It has required and

still requires the hard work and vigilance of many people to ensure that we will not only survive, but thrive.

At times the resistance to our efforts has been intense. When I reflect on this history, I am clear that one measure of our success is the intensity and persistence of the resistance to our work. Powerful institutions and the people who benefit from them do not easily embrace and accept challenge or change. And to face that resistance as we begin to step forward into our future, we must stay focused on the larger goals that motivated our founding sisters and brothers as well as all of us who contribute to the life of the program today.

We have each been motivated to use our collective talents, abilities, and energy to improve life for women, girls, and families and to seek a healthy balance between the genders in our society, in our global community, and in our personal lives.

That is what our work is about. It is important and we know it.

But it is not always easy to envision what a balanced world would look like, the best paths we might take to get there, or how we individually and collectively can find and walk those paths. Dr. Sheryl Ruzek and Chief Wilma Mankiller helped us to envision that future. Our Community Partnership Council, ably led by Sally Boyd and Marie-Louise Ramsdale, envisioned this celebration and brought it to fruition. We celebrated and raised money to support the future work of women’s studies. John Skvoretz, interim dean, and the College of Liberal Arts were generous in their support, as was the Office of Research, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of South Carolina. Women’s Partnership Council members and many faculty, students, and friends made contributions to

Director continued on page 6

# WOST 30th Anniversary Celebration



left to right: Carolyn Sutton, Rosa Thorn, and Cleveland Sellers



left to right: Wilma Mankiller, Lynn Weber, and Sally Boyd



Provost Mark Becker addressing anniversary attendees



left to right: Elizabeth Todd Heckel, Marie-Louise Ramsdale, Helen Tecklenburg, and Mary Baskin Waters



left to right: Sheryl Ruzek, Lynn Weber, Laura Woliver, Zoe Sanders, and Wilma Mankiller



Anniversary video producers Helen Tecklenburg and Felix Childs

## Women's Studies Graduate Certificate Program Highlights



Hendricks

The Graduate Certificate Program has had an impressive year. Interest as well as applications to the program has grown. Current students are actively engaged in the scholarly community, graduated, received numerous awards, and obtained employment. The winners of the spring 2004 Faucette Award were Amanda Bayer and Winifred Thompson. Amanda's research focused on the sterilization abuse of women of color and Winifred's focused on the prevention of cardiovascular disease among African-American college students. Several students garnered recognition at The Graduate School's Awards Day ceremony. Winifred Thompson was presented with the Emily Thompson Award for the best paper focusing on women's health and Alice M. Fields and Laura J. Gambone were awarded third place in the social issues category for their project on women and violence. Preston McKeever-Floyd, who enrolled in the program in fall 2003, won the Graduate Student Teaching Award in the spring. His students in the African American Feminist Theory course thought that he was "an awesome" instructor who was "passionate" about teaching.

Graduate continued on page 7

## Call for Applications

### Women's Studies seeks applications and/or nominations for the following awards:

#### The Josephine Abney Fellowship and Carol Jones Carlisle Research Awards

These awards are designed to encourage cutting-edge, women-centered research that is solidly grounded in women's studies perspectives. Women's Studies invites proposals that are consistent with the research mission of Women's Studies to reconceptualize existing knowledge and to create knowledge about women and their experiences, through the lens of gender and the prism of diversity. The research should be interdisciplinary or have interdisciplinary implications and should reflect a commitment to improving the status of women. Both awards are open to any full-time, permanent faculty or professional staff member. The amount of the Abney Award is \$5,000 and the Carlisle Award is \$1,000. Applications deadline: Jan. 24, 2005. Application forms for both awards are available online at the WOST Web site [www.cla.sc.edu/WOST](http://www.cla.sc.edu/WOST) and/or the WOST office.

#### Women's Studies Teaching Awards

Women's Studies presents two teaching awards—one for excellence in teaching by a faculty member, and one for outstanding teaching by a graduate student. Award criteria include: having taught at least one Women's Studies course within one semester of the time of nomination; demonstration of effective and sustained integration of race, class, gender, and sexuality issues into course materials and requirements; evidence of providing guidance and inspiration to students beyond the classroom; and, positive student and peer teaching evaluations. The faculty award is \$1,000 and the graduate student award is \$250. Nominations deadline: Jan. 31, 2005.

#### The Harriott Hampton Faucette Award

The Harriott Hampton Faucette Award assists Women's Studies graduate certificate students with research and professional development. The award is for a maximum of \$500. Applications must be made in the form of a one-page proposal. Fall application deadline: Oct. 4, 2004; Spring application deadline: Jan. 31, 2005. Send proposals to Dr. Wanda A. Hendricks, Graduate Director, Women's Studies Program, 201 Flinn Hall, Columbia, SC 29208.

#### Emily Thompson Graduate Student Award

The Emily Thompson Graduate Student Award is presented to an individual graduate student or a group of graduate students who have the best research paper or project focusing on some aspect of women's health. Applicants must submit one original and three copies of their research paper or a description of their research project (including a paragraph demonstrating its significance to women's health) to Dr. Wanda A. Hendricks, Graduate Director, Women's Studies Program, 201 Flinn Hall, Columbia, SC 29208. Projects may have originated at any time in the 2004–2005 academic year, and the student must be currently enrolled at USC at the time of submission. Award amount: \$250. Proposal deadline: Feb. 14, 2005.

#### The Arney Robinson Childs Memorial Undergraduate Award

The Arney Robinson Childs Memorial Undergraduate Award winner is nominated by USC faculty members. Nominees should preferably be seniors with a major or minor in Women's Studies, a record of extraordinary achievement and contributions to Women's Studies classes, and exemplary commitment to women's issues on campus or in the community. Award amount: \$250. Nominations deadline: Feb. 14, 2005. ■

## Mark Your Calendars

### Fall 2004 Pedagogy Brownbag Teaching Series: Teaching for Social Justice

#### *"What Does It Mean To Be A Woman?"*

Monday, Sept. 27, 2004, noon  
Flinn Hall, Room 101

Facilitator: Suzanne Swan, Ph.D.,  
WOST and the Department  
of Psychology

#### *"The Election and the Classroom"*

Tuesday, Oct. 19, 2004, 12:30 p.m.  
Flinn Hall, Room 101

Facilitators: Laura Woliver, Ph.D.,  
WOST and the Department of  
Political Science;

Greg Forter, Ph.D., Department of Eng-  
lish; and Amanda Bayer,  
College of Library and  
Information Science

If you would like to schedule a brown-  
bag, please call DeAnne Messias at  
803-777-0410.

### 2004-2005 Research Series Reception following lectures

#### *"Can We Talk? Giving Feminist Intersectional Scholarship a Voice in Health Disparities Research"*

Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2004, 3:30 p.m.  
Gambrell Hall, Room 151

Speaker: Lynn Weber, Ph.D., Director,  
Women's Studies Program

#### *"A Foot in Two Worlds: Mexican Immigrant Women in South Carolina"*

Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2004, 3:30 p.m.

Gambrell Hall, Room 151  
Speaker: Elaine C. Lacy, Ph.D.  
Director, Consortium for  
Latino Immigration Studies

#### *"Women and HIV: A Neurobiological Perspective"*

Thursday, Jan. 20, 2005, 3:30 p.m.  
Location TBA

Speaker: Rosemarie Booze, Ph.D.,  
Department of Psychology

#### *"Profiles in Activism. Women and the NAACP"*

Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2005, 3:30 p.m.  
Location TBA

Speaker: Patricia Sullivan, Ph.D.,  
African American Studies Program and  
Department of History

#### *"Students Creating New Knowledge"*

Wednesday, March 2, 2005, 3:30 p.m.,  
Location TBA

Speakers: Women's Studies Graduate  
Students' Panel

#### *"Teresa of Avila and 20th-Century Vocal Music"*

Wednesday, March 16, 2005, 3:30 p.m.  
Location TBA

Speaker: Helen Tintes-Schuermann,  
DM, School of Music

## 2004 Faculty and Staff Research Awards Announced

The Women's Studies Program awarded the \$5,000 Josephine Abney Research Award to Dr. Lisa Hammond Rashley, associate professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of South Carolina Lancaster for her research project "Cultural Perceptions of Breastfeeding Online: Support, Community, Judgments." The project will analyze the language and assumptions in breastfeeding Web sites and in the postings of the women who participate in those community spaces to study how the Internet affects women's choices to breastfeed or not.

The program also awarded the \$1,000 Carol Jones Carlisle Research Award to Dr. Ramona Lagos, associate professor, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures for her research project "Invisible Citizens and the Backlash of Middle-Class Values." This book project aims to expand knowledge into the little known area of children with special needs but without obvious external signs of their disabilities or exceptionality in their early years, sometimes hidden until adolescence. ■

## 2005 WOST Conference Announces Call for Proposals

The 18th Annual Women's Studies Conference will be held Thursday, March 17, and Friday, March 18, 2005, at the Daniel Management Center, Moore School of Business. The conference theme is "Looking Back, Stepping Forward," and Frances Smith Foster, Charles Howard Candler Professor of English and Women's Studies and Associated Faculty in African American Studies and in American Studies, Emory University, will deliver the keynote lecture. She will discuss her research on 19th-century Afro-Protestant ideals of motherhood, marriage, and sexual morality. You are invited to submit abstracts (300 word maximum) for individual presentations or proposals for a panel/session relevant to

the conference theme. Fifteen minutes will be allotted for individual papers and 45 minutes for panel/session presentations. Abstracts and proposals must contain a cover sheet with the name of the presenter, address, work phone, home phone, fax number, e-mail address, and biographical information. Information must be provided for all individuals included in the panel/session proposal. The deadline for abstracts or proposals is Friday, Dec. 17, 2004. All presenters must register for the conference: General registration: \$40, students: \$20. The non-refundable registration fee includes a packet of conference materials, lunch, and reception. ■

## WOST Undergraduate Program

### Director continued from page 2

the program and gave generously of their time and effort to make the celebration a success. And Rosa Thorn and Jackie McClary, Women's Studies staff, gave their all to make the event a success.

I could think of no better way to honor our past and to step into the future than by doing it in the way that women's studies has always done. The celebration—both its preparation and the events themselves—was a model of collaboration, serious reflection, sharing, persistence, and just plain fun. Bring on the next 30! ■



**Woliver**

ates who minored in Women's Studies. Currently, we have over 30 majors.

The internship program in Women's Studies (WOST 499: Practicum/Internship) provides many connections between the program and the community. Last year students majoring or minoring in Women's Studies completed internships at the USC Sexual Health and Awareness Program, the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in Columbia, the Congaree Girl

The Women's Studies undergraduates continue to thrive. We now have 35 alumna from our BA degree in Women's Studies. We also have dozens of gradu-

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## women's studies

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### Ransby continued from page 1

*Chronicle, The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, The Miami Herald, and USA Today.* Her articles address a range of subjects, including African American politics and history, women's issues, popular culture, welfare and poverty, feminism and sexuality, and strategies for social change.

As a result of her scholarship and community involvement Professor Ransby has spoken at numerous conferences and on college campuses across the country and internationally, including Stanford University, Columbia University, University of Wisconsin, Brown University, Princeton University, University of Iowa, Williams College, University of Zimbabwe, and Fudan University in PRC. She has also appeared as a political commentator on a range of radio and television shows including: *Nightline, The Today Show, Good Morning America, The BBC*

*Women's Hour, Crossfire, The Jim Lehrer News Hour, and CNN.* She is a regular contributor to Chicago Public Radio's, WBEZ where she often interviews scholars and writers about their work.

The Freeman Lecture was established in 1993 in memory of Adrenée Glover Freeman, a Columbia Attorney who was active in civic affairs and served on the Community Advisory Board of the Women's Studies Program. Professor Ransby's visit is co-sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts, the Department of History, and the African American Studies Program. The lecture is free and open to the public. Contributions to the Freeman lecture fund may be made to the Women's Studies Endowment Fund, USC Educational Foundation, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. ■

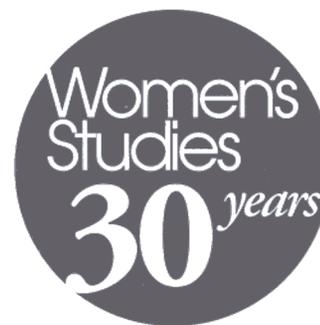
Six students received graduate assistantships for this academic year. They are Alice Fields (psychology), Kristen Hudgins (anthropology), Julie Jacobson (art), Claire M. Mensack (public health), Keri Norris (public health), Christine Sixta (political science) and Bethany Williams (history). Congratulations!

Five students were awarded the certificate during the 2003–2004 academic year. Charmaine Flemming and Jessica Forehand Overstreet graduated in May. Emily Aleshire, Elizabeth Fore, and Sharon White graduated in August. Soon after the completion of her program Charmaine was appointed to a position as lecturer in history in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Savannah State. And, Courtney Tollison, a spring 2002 graduate, is currently on the faculty at Furman University.

The Graduate Student Panel on Wednesday, March 3, featured some of the best scholarship in the certificate program. Emily Aleshire who is also in the comparative literature program presented “Biblical Gendercide: Towards a Theological Reading of Patriarchy and Colonial Conflict in the Old Testament.” Alice Fields and Laura Gambone, also students in the Department of Psychology, presented “Women Who Use Violence In Intimate Relationships: The Role of Anger, Victimization, and Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress and Depression.” Christine Sixta, also in political science, presented “The Effect of Socioeconomic Modernization on the Status of Muslim Women” A Comparative Case Study of Saudi Arabia and Syria, 1980–2000.”

The number and times of courses offered by both core and affiliate faculty have increased and greatly expanded opportunities for students to enroll in interesting, rewarding, and challenging classes. The Feminist Theory (WOST 702) course taught by Professor Susan Schramm-Pate from the Department of Educational Leadership and Policies in the College of Education, for example, was, for the first time in more than five years, taught in the summer.

For more information about WOST awards or about the graduate certificate program, please contact the Women’s Studies Office at 803-777-4007 or Wanda A. Hendricks, graduate director of Women’s Studies, at 803-777-4009. ■



Compounding the problem, most poor AA women do not perceive heart disease as a threat to their lives and do not understand the association between physical inactivity, obesity, high blood pressure, smoking, and non-insulin dependent diabetes and the disease. The HHER Lifestyle program hopes to correct this problem.

Over the next four years, the program will allow the duo, along with collaborating researchers in WOST and other departments to test the efficacy of a culturally appropriate, theory-based intervention to reduce dietary fat and increase moderate intensity physical activity among patients in primary care settings. “We have shown in a previous program that relevant, culturally appropriate materials can make a difference in health outcomes,” said Parra-Medina. “Our hope is that we will have the same success with this population.”

The HHER program is about lifestyle and making changes that work for the individual. For women, who aren’t in the areas in South Carolina being served by the intervention program, the “Walking Program” and “Low Fat Living” materials are available on the Internet by logging on to [prevention.sph.sc.edu/tools/index.htm#hher](http://prevention.sph.sc.edu/tools/index.htm#hher).

“We don’t propose anything radical. It’s the small changes day to day that will make a difference in your life,” she said. “Cardiovascular disease is such a serious problem in South Carolina that we need to make every effort to reach women and help them overcome their struggles to become heart healthy.” ■

**Support USC Women’s Studies and the Initiative for Women’s Well-Being**

The Women’s Studies Program is growing. We invite you to join our efforts to promote the understanding essential to improving the lives of women and girls by becoming a Friend of Women’s Studies.

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please use my gift for the following:

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## Barbara Wofford Receives Arney Robinson Childs Award



Wofford

Barbara (Bobbie) Wofford has received the 2004 Arney Robinson Childs Award. Graduating from the USC Honors College in May of 2004 with a BA in Women's Studies and a minor in anthropology and French, she wrote her honors thesis on the use of "doulas" in healthy, women-centered birth experiences at Lexington County Hospital. She has been a civic leader as well as a stellar student. She worked with USC's community service program, "Alternative Spring Break" for two years. She was a leader in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service at USC in both 2001 and 2002. When she studied in Massachusetts she was active on behalf of

homeless citizens through the "Homeless Experience in Boston." She did her Women's Studies internship in spring 2002 at the South Carolina Governor's Commission on Women where she helped organize and facilitate community meetings regarding women's health in South Carolina. In between all of these activities, she co-produced the USC "Vagina Monologues" and has been a stalwart leader in the Women's Students Association. Wofford's academic accomplishments include memberships on the presidential honor roll and the dean's list.

Wofford is adventurous. She was an exchange student at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst for the fall of 2003, and in Australia at the University of Newcastle in spring 2003. She honed her fluency in French in the summer of 2002 at L'Institute de Touraine in Tours, France. She is currently an intern in the South Carolina Washington Semester Program where she works on women's issues at the Feminist Majority Foundation. After her stint in D.C. she will go to Dakar, Senegal, on a Rotary International Cultural Scholarship for 2005. In the future she also hopes to study the impact of globalism and community "fair trade" initiatives on women's well-being in India. Eventu-

ally she plans to attend law school and specialize in international labor law, particularly fair trade agreements.

The Childs Award is in memory of Arney Robinson Childs, an educator and one of the first women principals in South Carolina (Logan Grammar School in 1928). Childs joined USC as dean of women in 1935 and held that position until 1958. She was awarded an honorary doctorate in literature by USC in 1960. Dr. Childs was also active in issues of social justice and women's rights. She was an accomplished and prolific scholar of American history, and after retiring from USC, she taught history at Columbia College, where she helped develop the South Carolina history course for South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV). She died in April 1987 at the age of 96.

Through gifts to the Women's Studies Endowment, Dr. Childs' friends and family honor her rich and generous life, her leadership among women, and her enthusiasm for learning. Each year, an outstanding Women's Studies student is recognized to further our commitment to build and to spread knowledge about women in every discipline and walk of life. Barbara Wofford continues the work and legacy of Arney Robinson Childs. ■