WOMEN'S STUDIES AT CAROLINA

News from Women's Studies at the University of South Carolina

Spring/Summer 1996

Women's History Month Activities Reach New Levels

March! What a month it was! (Because Spring Break consumed one week of March, Women's History Month activities actually were packed into just three weeks.) The calendar of events and the diversity of participants were larger than ever this year—which is saying a lot, considering past years' successes. Sixty events were listed on the printed calendar, and others were added after the calendar went to press; virtually every academic unit and student organization participated in some way. The range of events included special displays and exhibits, films, panel discussions, concerts, workshops, performances, and many individual speakers—all addressing issues of importance to women.

Among so many exciting activities, it is

difficult to single out any for individual description, but some were truly outstanding. Among these would have to be the premiere of "Weaving Dreams of Women," a program combining dance, poetry, music, and art to represent the feminine journey, conceived and directed by Melody Schaper, associate professor in the Department of Theatre, Speech, and Dance.

Another Women's History Month premiere featured the historical documentary film "Voices in the Threads," which details the lives and work of Southern women cotton mill workers in the early part of this century. The film was written and produced by Renée Holliday Zeide for her Master of Media Arts, and

History Month, Cont. p. 7.

Dancers from "Weaving Dreams of Women"

National Search for New Women's Studies Director Continues

Four finalists for the position of director of women's studies have visited the Columbia campus this spring. They are Dr. Rose Weitz, professor of sociology at Arizona State University; Dr. Stephanie Shields, professor of psychology at the University of California at Davis; Dr. Barbara Ryan, associate professor of sociology at Widener University; and Dr. Lynn Weber, professor of sociology and social work at the University of Memphis. No decision had been announced by our publication deadline.

Women's Studies Program Joins the College of Liberal Arts

The Women's Studies Program was transferred this spring to the College of Liberal Arts, after reporting for the last 10 years to the Office of the Provost. Women's Studies originated in the college more than two decades ago. In the last decade, it has grown into a strong interdisciplinary program with ties to twelve colleges and other professional schools within the university.

Dean of the college, Dr. Lester Lefton, welcomed the program to its new home and stated his strong assurances that women's studies would maintain and expand its interdisciplinary mission in research and teaching.

Women's Studies Conference Caps Women's History Month



Participants unwind after conference at Alumni House reception.

The ninth annual USC Women's Studies Conference on March 29 proved to be a fitting culmination to Women's History Month. The all-day conference opened with a lecture about a female Muslim cleric and women within Islamic culture and concluded with a keynote address focused on women's spirituality within a Christian context; all manner of interesting papers and events occurred in between.

The theme of conference, "Making a Way Out of No-Way," was taken from the title of the keynote speaker's address, and by all measures, the conference was an outstanding success. In terms of attendance, there were approximately 150 registered participants, representing 10 South Carolina colleges and universities, six colleges on the USC Columbia campus, and various other attendees from the local community and other parts of the state. Papers? There were over forty, organized into up to five concurrent sessions. And the two featured speakers provided informative and inspiring talks.

Dr. Joyce Wiley from USC Spartanburg, the 1995 recipient of the Josephine Abney Faculty Research Fellowship, opened the conference with a paper about Bint al-Huda, a Muslim woman cleric executed by Saddam Hussein for her work to improve the status of women in Islamic society. She was responsible for establishing the first religious schools for girls and taught theology to scholarly laywomen. Ironically, Bint al-Huda's primary motivation was to discourage women from defecting from

the Muslim faith by showing them that the Koran's teachings regarding women were far more equitable than the interpretations placed on them by modern male leaders. Little is known today of Bint al-Huda—either within or outside of Iraq—and Dr. Wiley's translations of her Arabic writings provide valuable new information both about the woman and the Koran's verses about women.

The conference concluded on a high note with the annual awards ceremony (see page 3 for a summary of awards recipients) and the keynote address by Dr. Delores Williams, Paul Tillich Professor of Religion at Union Theological Seminary. Dr. Williams is author of Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk (1993). In her address, entitled "Women's Spirit: Making a Way Out of No-Way," she critiqued patriarchal stories and remythologized them from what she called a feminist, womanist perspective. She spoke in a theological voice about women's ability to rediscover and repair sisterhood across boundaries.

The conference ended with a reception at Alumni House, followed by a one-woman performance of "Water over Time," the story of Laura Bassi, an 18th century physician and first female professor of science at the University of Bologna. Sharon Glassman's performance was sponsored by the College of Science and Mathematics, the School of Public Health, and six individual departments.



A few of the 150 conference registrants.

Joan Warshauer Fox Recipient of Brenda Gross Memorial Award

The Brenda Harden Gross Memorial Award was established in 1995 as an annual honor for a student with a particular interest in women's spirituality. The nominee selected for the award this year was Joan Warshauer Fox, whose current studies and past activism reflect the spirit and ideals exemplified by the woman for whom the award is named.

In presenting the award during the annual Women's Studies Conference on March 29, Dr. Sally Boyd described Ms. Fox's early work in the Civil Rights movement, her involvement with programs to enhance AIDS education and treatment, and, with her recent return to the university, her focus on spirituality and social work. Her obvious commitment to spiritual issues and outstanding academic performance make her a fitting recipient of this year's award, an autographed copy of Dr. Delores Williams' book, Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk.

Extending Our Reach

Note in the class schedule (page 8) that, for the first time, we are offering women's studies courses during the summer sessions. WOST 111, Women in Western Culture, and WOST 112, Women in Society, will both be taught by Program Assistant Maxine Higgins. Demand for these two courses surpasses our capacity to offer enough sessions during the regular school year, so we are confident that the summer offering will be successful

In addition, plans are well underway to develop a distance education version of WOST 113, Women and Their Bodies in Health and Disease. Dr. Carolyn West of USC Sumter is scheduled to teach the class during spring 1997 in a distance education format. When the course is offered in subsequent semesters, video editions will be available making it possible for students at regional campuses to take the course for full credit.

Linda Neff Winner of Emily Thompson Award Evans' Study of

The eighth annual Emily Thompson Memorial Award went to Linda Neff of the School of Public Health. The award of \$100 is presented annually for the best research paper by a student on the topic of women's health.

Neff's paper, entitled "Cultural Differences in Body Size Perceptions and Weight Management Practices among Adolescent Girls," examines how social and cultural factors affect young women's perceptions and attitudes about their bodies. She found that by their teen years, women are well aware of society's ideal of a slim body image and that white teens are more likely than black teens to perceive themselves as being overweight. In addition, white adolescents are more likely than black women to try to control their weight, both through traditional measures such as diet and exercise and by unhealthy

practices, such as pills and vomiting.

Linda Neff will receive her Master of Science degree in public health at the May commencement. She has been accepted into



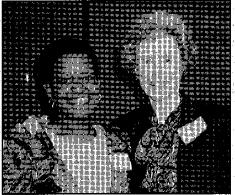
Linda Neff

the Ph.D. program in Public Health, where she plans to continue her studies in epidemiology, focusing specifically on projects related to women's health. In addition to her academic pursuits, Neff currently serves as the student coordinator for the Tobacco Control Network of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the USC Prevention Center.

Evans' Study of African American Women's Attitudes Merits Carlisle Award

Dr. Kathy M. Evans, assistant professor in the College of Education, was awarded the sixth annual Carol Jones Carlisle Award in Women's Studies. The \$500 grant will lend support to Dr. Evans' proposed research, "A Naturalistic Inquiry into the Attitudes of African American Female Adolescents and Women on their Racial, Gender, and Feminist Identity and Career Development."

Dr. Carol Jones Carlisle presented the award to Dr. Evans during the awards ceremony of the USC Women's Studies Conference on March 29.



Drs. Kathy Evans and Carol Jones Carlisle

Dr. Joan Gero Receives 1996 Abney Fellowship Award



Dr. Joan Gero

Dr. Joan Gero, associate professor in USC's Department of Anthropology, was awarded the eighth annual Josephine Abney Faculty Fellowship in Women's Studies for her research proposal "Meals and

Metals: A Feminist Inspection of Early Formative Household Labor in Catamarca, Argentina." The \$3,750 award supports summer research related to women's studies by USC faculty.

Dr. Gero's proposed research builds upon initial excavations at a study site in the Andes Mountains of northwest Argentina, where her goal is to investigate gendered household arrangements between 200 B.C. and 500 A.D. Her preliminary excavations have revealed a rare, intact house floor, complete with entire vessels, grinding stones and pestles, indigenous tools, and a hearth with evidence of specialized metallurgical activity. Further investigation will allow her to develop a model of gendered household economy and

contribute to an ongoing debate about the "dispersed" and "replicative" nature of settlement patterns of the period. Early evidence suggests that productive activities reproduce and reaffirm household social structures and challenge the notion that specialized labor segregated out male work groups which might have given rise to maledominated social structures.

An additional component of her research proposal addresses feminists' concerns about so-called "objective" scientific research. During the course of her research, Dr. Gero plans to maintain "reflexive" documentation about her research process, revealing how her conclusions emerge from specific practices and decisions at the site and in the laboratory. This documentation will constitute an intrinsic part of the publication and presentation of her results to the academic community.

Dr. Gero received her master's and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Massachusetts and is recognized as an established scholar of Andean prehistory and gender and prehistory. She was the recipient of a Fulbright Research and Lecture Award in 1994 and is a Lifetime Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge University.

Women's Studies Now in Cyberspace

Women's Studies joined the cyberworld this spring with our new home page. The Women's History Month calendar also appeared on the university web site (thanks to Ginny Matthews of Thomas Cooper Library), enabling us to provide up-to-the-minute information about events during the month.

Our home page contains information about curriculum, faculty, class schedules, upcoming events, graduate and undergraduate programs, and other current news of interest. It can be updated easily, insuring that readers will receive the most recent information possible.

Check it out: look for us on the College of Liberal Arts Home Page, listed under Programs. Or access us directly at (http://www.cla.sc.edu/wost/).

South Carolina Women's Resource Center on Track

In the fall newsletter we reported on a planning initiative to establish a women's resource center in Columbia. Since their first meeting in August 1995, dedicated women of the community have continued to work and plan to make the resource center a reality, with impressive results. At the fall meeting, a constitution was adopted; in early spring the group accepted nominations for and elected members of a Board of Trustees; and by-laws for the organization were adopted at the April meeting. Now that all these steps in forming a legally-constituted organization have been accomplished, the group can apply for status as a non-profit association and then seek funding through grant applications. There is still much work to be done to get the center up and running, but an impressive amount of progress has been made in a relatively short period of time.

The resource center is a nonprofit organization designed to serve as an educational, informational, and cultural resource to enrich the lives of and help all women of South Carolina. All interested women are encouraged to attend the next meeting and consider joining the group. (Membership fees are minimal – \$12 per year). For information regarding the resource center or the time and place of its next meeting contact June Duggin or Jeannie Stricklin at 791–8156, or Pat Gilmartin at 777–4007.

Dr. Adeleri Onisegun Presents Workshops

A clinical psychologist and principal of the Yoruba Royal Academy at Oyotunji African Village in Sheldon, South Carolina, presented two workshops on African American women's psychology and spirituality this spring. A native of St. Thomas, Virgin Íslands, initiated as a Yoruba priestess of Obatala in West Africa, Dr. Adeleri Onisegun is adjunct professor of psychology at USC Beaufort. She spoke at USC Columbia on February 28 on "The Psychology of Black Women: An Africentric Perspective" and on March 20 on "Sisters, Mothers, and the Divine: An Introduction to African Spirituality." Both workshops drew on her experience as a scholar, counselor, and religious leader. The presentations were co-sponsored by Women's Studies and African American Studies.



Dr. Adeleri Onisegun

Poet Nikky Finney Reads from Latest Collection

South Carolina-native Nikky Finney, currently assistant professor of creative writing at the University of Kentucky, read from her most recent book of poetry to an appreciative audience of more than 100 on September 7. The reading was co-sponsored by the Women's Studies Program and the Department of English.

Ms. Finney's works include the poetry collections On Wings Made of Gauze (1985) and Rice (1995), the latter named after a staple crop and favored export of South Carolina in the 18th and 19th centuries. Her most recent poems focus on the special heritage of our state as

"the land that black folks made." A child of the Civil Rights movement and an activist for the cultural importance of poetry, Ms. Finney urges in her introduction to *Rice*, "May we always resist what we know in our hearts to be wrong. May we do right and keep our word. May we know the fullness of plain rice and how simple and delicious a meal it can be with plain words."

Her reading was attended by her grandmother, Beulah Davenport, and her parents, Frances Davenport Finney and the honorable Ernest A. Finney, State Supreme Court Justice of South Carolina.



Dr. Alice Charlotte Hogsett



In Memory of Alice Charlotte Hogsett

Dr. Charlotte Hogsett died on March 10, 1996, in Gainesville, Florida, where she and her long-time companion, former director of USC's Women's Studies. Dr. Sue Rosser, had recently moved. Dr. Hogsett received her bachelor's degree from Rhodes College, her master's from the University of Toronto, and her Ph.D. in French Literature from Harvard University. Author of a book on the 18th century author Germaine de Stael, and more than a dozen journal articles, she taught at Duke University, Mary Baldwin College, Richland Northeast High School in Columbia, and Lincoln Middle School in Gainesville.

Charlotte had a long association with USC Women's Studies, having taught a graduate seminar in feminist theory and an undergraduate course in Women and Western Civilization. Her many triends and former students in Columbia will miss her but at the same time remember her for her humor, graciousness, and compassion, as well as her brilliance as a scholar and teacher.

Memorials may be made to the Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research at the University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611 for the Charlotte Hogsett Scholarship for Education of Women and Girls.

Women's Studies Research Series Highlights Feminist Research

The 1995–96 Women's Studies Research Series featured a sparkling variety of speakers and topics, including a set of presentations by graduate students on their research. The programs, about one a month throughout the school year, highlight current feminist research by faculty across the university.

Leading the series off in September, Dr. Ed Madden of the Department of English presented a paper entitled, "The Gospel According to Radclyffe Hall: The Lesbian Messiah in *The Well of Loneliness*," in which he reexamined the biblical nature of Hall's novel, especially in the portrayal of the lesbian, Stephen Gordon, as a Christ figure. Madden maintained that the novel's power lies in its uniting of sexological and religious discourse and its representation of a lesbian messiah.

The second paper in the series summarized important research suggesting a relationship between sexual assault in childhood and later pre-invasive cervical cancer. Based on a study of 150 women prison inmates, Dr. Ann Coker, associate professor in the School of Public Health, found that women who reported childhood forced sex were 10.8 times more likely to have cervical neoplasia than non-victimized women. These results were obtained after accounting for differences in the women's age, race, education, and number of sex partners. Dr. Coker considers this to be a small, "hypothesis-generating" study but recommends that clinicians monitor sex abuse victims for cervical neoplasia.

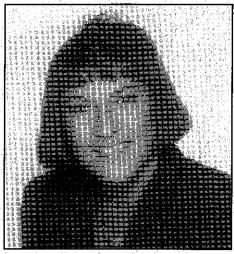
History professor, Dr. Lori Loeb, presented the provocatively-titled paper, "Stoned Angels: Marketing Patent Medicines to Victorian Women," which challenges the myth that the typical Victorian drug-user was a working class man or literary figure, showing instead that middle-class women were likely the largest consumers of the often-addictive patent medicines. Marketing strategies containing themes of evangelical self-deliverance, maternal wisdom, and feminine power were aimed specifically at Victorian women, who

were susceptible to such messages due to the tremendous social pressures they faced and the apparent omnipotence of the medical establishment.

Recipient of the 1995 Carol Jones Carlisle Research Award, Dr. Miriam Freeman of the College of Social Work, presented the results of her research on integrating existing work on family systems with feminist theory and practice. Her study, entitled "Virginia Satir, Family Therapy, and Gender Issues," used content analysis, surveys, and interviews to demonstrate that while Satir's model of systemic family therapy was not originally intended to be feminist in approach, it can nevertheless inform and be informed by feminist principles to produce even richer strategies for working with families.

For the second year, graduate students also participated as presenters in the research series. The January program, entitled "Creating Knowledge About Women," was reserved for research papers authored by graduate students and comprised three papers selected from among all those submitted for consideration. Jennifer Hynes, a Ph.D. candidate in English and a 1996 recipient of the graduate certificate in women's studies spoke on "The Meaning of Republican Sisterhood: Harriet Beecher Stowe's Collaborative Apprenticeship with Catharine Beecher." One of our 1995 women's studies graduates and a Ph.D. candidate in geography, Carol Hall, presented a paper entitled, "The Gendering of Computer Technology: What We Don't Know Might Keep Us Out." And Brandice Whiten, who will graduate from women's studies this spring and is working on her master's degree in Religious Studies, read her essay entitled, "Reclaiming Sexuality through Spirituality."

The final presentation in the research series featured Dr. Emilie Smith from the Department of Psychology and Dr. Shirley Geiger of Government and International Studies speaking on "Don't Talk About My Momma', Single Parents, Social Capital, and Involvement in Children's Schooling."



Dr. Patricia Hill Collins

Dr. Patricia Hill Collins Addresses Black Women's Political Activism

Alarge and appreciative audience heard noted scholar Dr. Patricia Hill Collins present the Adrenée Glover Freeman Memorial Lecture in Áfrican American Women's Studies on November 15. Approximately 200 people were in attendance as Dr. Collins spoke on "Building a Critical Mass: Rethinking Black Women's Political Activism." An articulate and eloquent speaker, Dr. Collins was alternately humorous and reflective in constructing her message about black women's political activism.

Dr. Collins' talk generated considerable interest and discussion which continued through the book–signing and reception which followed, as people lingered late into the evening talking further with her and among themselves.

Author of Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (1990; 1995), for which she received publications awards from several professional organizations, Dr. Collins holds graduate degrees from Brandeis University and Harvard University. She is currently professor of sociology at the University of Cincinnati.

The memorial fund for Adrenée Glover Freeman was established in 1993 to honor the former Columbia attorney, who died in 1992. Donations to the endowment fund are used to support this annual lecture on African American Women's Studies. It is hoped that in the future the fund will grow large enough to support an endowed chair in African American women's studies.

Colombian Women Visit USC Women's Studies

As part of a program of exchange visits between women of South Carolina and South America, four Colombian women met on February 9 with several Women's Studies faculty and staff and representatives from the Governor's Office Commission on Women. The visitors, who are teachers, students, and social workers at home, were especially interested in learning from us about the status and resources available to women in this state and country. We learned from them how little support there is for women's rights in Colombia and the difficulties they face in trying to foster leadership development and civic participation for Colombian women.

The Colombians' visit to Women's Studies was just one of a full itinerary of appointments that filled two weeks and took them to numerous agencies, schools, and other institutions around the state. The trip was an extraordinary experience for the women, none of whom had traveled outside of Colombia before. They said they were particularly impressed by how friendly South Carolinians are, noting that total strangers often speak to each other on the streets.

Funded by the U.S. Information Agency Grant Commission and implemented through Columbia College's Leadership Institute, the exchange program is designed to encourage women's civic participation through global linkages. Two visits each are planned by representa-

1995-96: A Banner Year for Women's Studies Graduates

Twelve students earned their graduate certificates this year, bringing to 28 the total number of certificates which have been awarded since the program's inception just four years ago. Thus our list of alumnae/i increased by about 60 percent in just the past year. About two-thirds of our graduates have earned their certificates concurrently with graduate work in other academic departments, while the remaining third have enrolled for the Women's Studies certificate alone.

Two students, Tami Eldridge and Phoebe McLeod, received their certificates at the December commencement ceremonies. Tami also graduated with her master's degree from the School of Public Health. Phoebe continues to work on her Ph.D. in clinical psychology and will be serving her internship in San Diego this year.

The accompanying picture of the December graduates also shows the graduation stoles presented to them by Women's Studies. The stoles are made of fabric patches contributed by faculty members, who, in many cases, also provided personal stories of the fabrics' significance to them. While the stoles are beautiful and bright creations in their own right, the feminist principles that they symbolize are even more



December graduates Tami Eldridge, left, and Phoebe McLeod

important: to honor women's life experiences and value collaborative enterprises.

The 10 students slated to graduate in spring commencement include: Ena Shea Bramblett, Angela Crisp, Joanna Daiwo, Amy Hill, Jennifer Hynes, Becky Lewis, Jennifer Reed–Burlison, Elizabeth Robinson, Linda Slonim, and Brandice Whiten. Unfortunately, graduation pictures of this class were not available before publication deadlines for this newsletter; look for them in the fall edition.

tives from Colombia and South Carolina. This first set of Colombian visitors will be followed by another group of four in June, and delegates from South Carolina will travel to Colombia in May and July.



Four Colombian visitors to USC with Candy Waites, second from left

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Friends of Women's Studies

The following is a listing of friends of Women's Studies who have supported the Women's Studies Endowment by contributions from January 1995 through February 1996.

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History Month, Cont. from p.1.



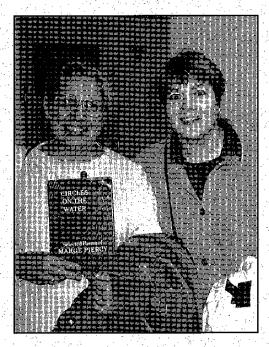
Renee Holliday Zeide, writer and producer of "Voices in the Threads,"(left) and Dr. Mary Evans Frederickson from the University of Miami of Ohio

its production was supported by Women's Studies Harriet Hampton Faucette Fund. The film employs interviews with former mill workers and contemporary scholars along with historical photographs and film footage to reveal both the hardships and the pride in accomplishment that the women experienced. Following the film, Dr. Mary Evans Fredrickson, a labor historian from the University of Miami of Ohio,

discussed Zeide's film and offered insights from her own research on women workers of later periods.

Poet Marge Piercy, author of a dozen volumes of poetry and as many novels, read a selection of her poems before an appreciative audience of over 300 on March 28. On topics as mundane as zucchini and cats and as potent as abortions and mother/daughter relations, Piercy moved her listeners with the insights and images created by the power of her words. After the reading, she autographed books for a long line of fans.

The many months of planning and work by hundreds of participants produced a Women's History Month for USC which was truly impressive in its scale and diversity. It provided the thousands of people who attended the events, from both the university and the community, with new insights into the histories, talents, concerns, and power of women. Coordination of the month's events was the work of a committee of faculty, staff, and student liaisons from across campus.



Two pleased Marge Piercy fans with autographed book: Cathy Kerwan, left, and Lyn Isbell. Both are working toward their graduate certificates in Women's Studies

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