

Contents

<i>Director's Chair</i>	1
<i>Family Outreach Dallas: Teenage Parenthood in Dallas</i> by Nancy Fuentes	2
<i>Igniting a Passion for Politics</i> by Whitney Harp	2
<i>Two Internships with Planned Parenthood</i> by Alex Day, Amelia Johns	3
<i>Feminist Boot Camp</i> by Whitney Harp	4
<i>Report from the Eighth Annual Feminist Theory Workshop at Duke University</i> by Lauren Miskin, Aimee Velez	4
<i>How My Work in the WGS Certificate Program Informs My Ministry</i> By Cristina Cavener	5
<i>In Memoriam: Margareta N. Deschner</i>	6
<i>WGS Scholarship and Award Winners 2013-2014</i>	6
<i>News and Announcements</i>	7

Director's Chair

"Shelby Knox: Feminist, Activist, Texan": that was the title our 2013-14 event in McCord Auditorium on October 29. Readers may recognize the name **Shelby Knox** from the 2005 feature-length film, *The Education of Shelby Knox*, which chronicles the efforts of a young high school student to bring comprehensive sex education to her high school in Lubbock, and to help make her school more supportive of gay and lesbian students. Ms. Knox gave a winning talk that was



Shelby Knox

at once sharp, articulate, inspiring, and funny. She connected immediately with an audience consisting of students, faculty, and members of the wider community, and galvanized the undergraduates who took her to lunch, drove her to and from the airport, and showed her around campus. In short, the event was a success.

Our **graduate certificate program**, formerly limited to Ph.D. students in Dedman College and students in the Perkins School of Theology, is now open to students in the Dedman School of Law. The certificate in Women's and Gender Studies provides an additional credential for these students, signifying that their studies contain a focus on women, gender, sexuality, and/or feminist studies. The addition of law students to

the Advanced Feminist Theory seminar required of all students in the program will bring an important new disciplinary perspective to the course. Still in the works at this writing: a once-a month colloquium at which advanced WGS students and faculty members share work in progress and read contemporary feminist theory together.

In March, nine WGS graduate or law students and faculty members attended the eighth annual **Feminist Theory Workshop at Duke University**, an event organized by their superb Women's Studies Program, one of the best in the nation. Because SMU paid our way, our university was named as an institutional co-sponsor. The opportunity to listen to four lectures by leading feminist scholars and theorists over two days was intellectually energizing and gave us much to think about and to bring into the classroom and into our own research. Responses by **Lauren Miskin**, a Ph.D. candidate in English and WGS certificate student, and **Aimee Velez**, candidate for J.D. from the Dedman School of Law, can be read on page 4. We all thank Senior Associate **Dean Peter Moore** of Dedman College, **Professor Caroline Brettell**, director of the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute, and **Dean José Bowen** of the Meadows School of the Arts, all of whom

contributed to our travel expenses—as did program donors **Suzanne Schmidt '67** and her husband **Dan Jones**, through their kind annual gift. I am grateful to them all.

This newsletter marks the last one I will contribute to as Director; my term ends this summer. Negotiations for my successor are still ongoing as I write. I have enjoyed my six years directing WGS, writing this column, and hearing from some of you!

Sincerely,



Beth Newman

WGS Students Make a Difference through Internships

Family Outreach Dallas: Teenage Parenthood in Dallas

Nancy Fuentes '13



During the spring semester of 2013, I interned for Family Outreach Dallas, completing 200 on-site hours in the Teen Pregnancy and Parenting Program. Under the supervision of a licensed social worker, I was able to attend home visits in the East Dallas area.

I quickly realized that adolescent mothers lead different lives—some are married, some live with their parents, some are single parents, some are stay-at-home mothers, some are in school and others are working. Because of this, home visitations were usually scheduled in the evening, when teen parents arrive home from school, day care centers, or work.

One evening during a home visit, my internship suddenly became personal. About a year ago, I got orthodontic braces. I continued my daily routine without thinking much about them. This changed when I was introduced to a teen mother (of two children) who was wearing braces.

I felt a rush of self-awareness not only about my appearance (my braces) but also my present circumstances and future aspirations. I couldn't stop myself from comparing my reality with hers.

This experience made me realize that *the personal really is political*, and my training in WGS made me question my own assumptions about teen mothers. I am so glad to have participated in the WGS internship. I will carry this experience with me for many years to come.

Nancy Fuentes, a Betty Maynard Scholar for 2012-2013, works for Cigna in Dallas.

Igniting a Passion for politics

Whitney Harp '14

This year I interned for IGNITE, a non-profit that works in local communities and schools to prepare women for leadership roles in political office. The program seeks to uplift girls in underprivileged neighborhoods and give them a political voice. Through my work with IGNITE, I finally understood the need to train students for leadership, and I found a role in furthering the cause. My internship with IGNITE CEO **Merriott Terry**, and my role as a facilitator of the IGNITE program, have been two of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

During the initial stages of my internship, I focused on shadowing Terry, a distinguished, dynamic woman who is passionate about women's involvement in politics. I learned to advocate for IGNITE's mission, articulate its successes and ask for funding. The fundraising skills I learned will undoubtedly benefit my future career and prepare me to manage political campaigns.

Additionally, I gained experience conducting board meetings and networking on behalf of an organization. I learned

how executive boards function and how a CEO functions in relationship to the Chairman of the Board; I learned how to successfully present financial information for executive approval. But my biggest task was developing the IGNITE College Council and serving as its Chairwoman. I spent hours developing a mission statement, drafting agendas, securing student leadership on the council, and planning events.

But the heart of IGNITE is its high school training program, which provided an experience I will never forget as a facilitator of the program at the Judge Barefoot Sanders Dallas ISD Law Magnet. During the two-semester program, participants learn fundamentals of American government, develop leadership and team building skills, identify current social and political issues, and develop strategies for addressing issues facing



Former mayor Laura Miller meets with IGNITE students

their community. Each week I presented the curriculum to my students and facilitated group discussion of the topic. The course encouraged more student engagement in community issues and current events.

In her book *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*, Peggy Orenstein argues that young girls grow up in a society that does not recognize that they are “are competent, strong, creative or smart”; instead they learn that “every little girl wants – or should want – to be the Fairest of Them All.” Schools like Law Magnet acknowledge their female students’ potential academically, but do not encourage them to enter the male-dominated field of politics. There is much work still to be done.

Whitney Harp is a History Major and a Maynard Scholar.

Two Internships with Planned Parenthood

Alex Day, '15

Last fall I had the pleasure of spending a semester working as the Campus Outreach Intern for Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas. There, I learned about the importance of preventive, primary health care and its long term effects on reducing poverty in families. Many people don't realize that medical bills are one of the top causes of personal bankruptcy. At Planned Parenthood, I was able to educate and increase awareness in the community about what Planned Parenthood actually does.

My responsibilities included tabling at my home campus, speaking at group and club meetings, and coordinating and staffing volunteer events and phone banks. I met incredibly passionate people, and along the way I learned that I was passionate about public health policy (not the most glamorous of causes, but one that has a huge impact on the community). As if that wasn't enough, I also established connections with members of the community who have since helped me get other jobs and opportunities. I gained so much from my short time as an intern. I would highly recommend the position for any student interested in public policy, communications, public health, and reproductive justice.

Alex Day is double majoring in English and Psychology as well as minoring in WGS, and she is a Maynard Scholar who has also won the Ann Early Award for 2014.

Amelia Johns, '14

This semester, I worked as an Affordable Care Act Organizing Intern with Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas. During my time with PPGT, I became authorized as a Certified Application Counselor and worked directly with consumers to help them acquire health insurance through the Marketplace. Being a part of this effort, which culminated in a final enrollment count of 8 million people, was personally rewarding, and opened up some great opportunities. I even participated in morale-boosting conference calls with the Vice President and the First Lady.

I also organized a tabling effort on campus and was pleasantly surprised by the turnout of supporters and generally positive response to our presence. I planned a PPGT Pub Crawl on Lower Greenville that was wildly successful—we gained 192 supporters in a little over two hours. I’ve also been able to mobilize support in the community (especially at SMU) and have successfully led a few volunteer training sessions.

It has been a joy to work with an organization that is so committed to the people of Texas (especially women) and the work I’ve been able to do with PPGT has ignited my passion for community outreach and advocacy.

Amelia Johns is a senior majoring in Theatre with minors in Women’s & Gender Studies and English. She is a Maynard Scholar.

Feminist Boot Camp

Whitney Harp, '14

Thanks to the Women’s and Gender Studies Program and the Women’s Center for Gender and Pride Initiatives, I spent a week in New York City over the holiday break honing my skills as a feminist activist and advocate. Amy Richards and Jennifer Baumgardner, the authors of *Manifesta*, organize a seven-day intensive program they call “Feminist Boot-Camp” that works to connect young feminists with non-profit organizations in the areas of reproductive justice, LGBTQ rights, feminist media, sex education, and other forms of harm reduction. Thanks to the connections Amy and Jennifer have established in NYC, womies, as we were lovingly referred to, were mentored by the founders, interns and other activists engaged in feminist work.



As a future lawyer planning to work in the field of reproductive justice, I know I will find the connections I made at The Doula Project, National Advocates for Pregnant Women, Choices in Childbirth and the Ms. Foundation will be invaluable. Without a doubt, the highlight of my trip was the dinner hosted by Gloria Steinem in her apartment on the upper-east side. Ms. Steinem welcomed the “womies” warmly to her home, and imparted wisdom that will likely go unrivaled in my life. Attending Feminist Camp was definitely among the most memorable experiences of my life, and certainly the most engaging of my college career.

Note: we were so impressed by Whitney’s experience that the WGS Council voted this spring to give the choice to winners of the Ann Early Award between a cash award or a payment of half the tuition to feminist boot-camp. We will give the award to a junior, who will, we hope, come back fired up to make good things happen on campus or in Dallas. –BSN

Report from the Eighth Annual Feminist Theory Workshop at Duke University

The Duke Feminist Theory Workshop offered participants an invaluable opportunity to think deeply and critically about feminist theory – both its current state and its intellectual history. Four keynote lectures were followed by smaller seminar discussions and a closing roundtable. This format facilitated an open exchange of ideas between new and established scholars from various countries, disciplines, and institutions.

The four keynote addresses revealed the ways feminist theory has both drawn upon and affected diverse academic discourses, including philosophy, quantum physics, genetics, and international law. Penelope Deutscher, Professor of Philosophy, Comparative Literature Studies, and Science in Human Culture at Northwestern University, examined intersections between the work of the late Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault through an exploration of Victor Hugo’s writings against the death penalty. Hugo’s argument hinged on the special horror of the idea of executing a

pregnant woman. Her talk asked, what does this emphasis on the pregnant woman tell us about our inherited ideas and language about women, and about the death penalty?

Karen Barad, Professor of Feminist Studies, Philosophy, and History of Consciousness at U.C. Santa Cruz, drew upon quantum physics and queer theory in a project that she defined as “troubling the nature of the empirical while producing empirical evidence.” The peculiarities of matter at the quantum level provided metaphors through which to re-imagine key concepts of self, subject, object, and even justice.

Alondra Nelson, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality at Columbia University, illustrated the goals of the African Burial Ground Project, which linked the ancestors of an African American burial ground to their living descendants. She also explored the use of DNA testing to establish African ancestry, and the resulting repatriation ceremonies that some descendants of African peoples attend. She explored the way this work both contributes to and complicates ideas of identity, and reinforces heteronormative family structures.

Karen Engle, Minerva House Drysdale Regents Chair in Law at the University of Texas, discussed the influence of feminists on the United Nations resolutions addressing wartime rape. The United Nations has focused on criminalization, but some feminists have pointed out that punishing a perpetrator may not be the most important or only necessary response. Raped women in war-torn nations often want to be returned to their homes and reunited with their families more than they want to see their rapists prosecuted. Wartime rape affects women, families, and communities. The danger is in “narrowly tailoring” U.N. resolutions in a counterproductive way that imposes first-world attitudes where a less individualistic, more community-oriented response is needed.

Lauren Miskin, a Ph.D. candidate in English who is earning the graduate certificate in WGS, and Aimee Velez, a J.D. candidate at the Dedman School of Law, contributed to this report.

“One of my students, in her final exam, wrote about being raped and said this course enabled her to come to terms with it for the first time and find the language to not blame herself while thinking through ways to combat it for others. So humbling and amazing to get this response!”

-- Julie Mavity Maddalena, WGS Graduate Certificate student and Instructor of WGST 2322: Gender: Images and Perspectives

How My Work in the WGS Certificate Program Informs My Ministry

By Christina Cavener, Minister of Formation, Grace United Methodist Church, Dallas

[Editor’s note: this article is excerpted and adapted from a talk that Ms. Cavener gave last fall at the Perkins School of Theology.]

For a year at Grace United Methodist, I was inspired to hold feminist worship services. I wrote feminist liturgies which included the feminine divine among other images of God.

We often think of God in such narrow ways that we alienate people who walk in the doors to our services. If we only refer to God as Father, how will someone who has experienced violence from her father feel about God? If we only refer to God in male terms, girls in my youth ministry feel that they are somehow less in the image of God than boys.

Language for the divine has not always been exclusive. The bible is chock-full of various names and images--both feminine and masculine--for God, and they have been used in worship. Sexism has caused society to eradicate or ignore them. When we label the divine exclusively as Father, King, or Lord, we limit the ways we can express the multiplicity that God really is. The more names we use to describe the divine, the further we are from idolatry. Instead, we should create as many names and images as we can conceive, including the divine feminine, to describe a multifaceted God beyond our linguistic comprehension.

I serve on a non-profit board for an organization called Not at My Church, which provides training and education to



help local congregations create a domestic violence ministry. Grace Methodist recently began a relationship violence ministry. We will write a Sunday school curriculum, leading a worship service, and hold conference events to address the issue. We will provide survivors with resources.

As a youth and children’s minister, I am constantly challenging my kids to look at things in a different way, not the predominant way of thinking. As a feminist, I believe it is important to acknowledge the intersections of all oppressions (sexism, racism, heterosexism, ableism, etc). Perkins taught me how to examine and analyze the ways in which oppressions are linked. As Martin Luther King said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” One lesson I did with my young people used the song “Same Love,” which was playing all over the radio. It demonstrates the concept of

interlocking oppressions well.

Because of what I learned at Perkins and in the Women’s and Gender Studies program I am more inclined to egalitarian methods of teaching and discussion-oriented lessons, rather than an authoritarian method. I want to foster an environment in which all persons feel safe to express themselves. My Perkins education and my work toward the graduate certificate in Women’s and Gender Studies have permeated my entire life.

Christina Cavener graduated in 2011 from SMU’s Perkins School of Theology with a Master of Theological Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Gender and Women’s Studies.

In Memoriam Margareta N. Deschner, 1920-2014

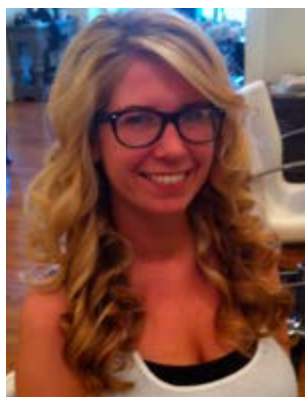
The SMU Women’s and Gender Studies Programs notes with sadness the passing of Margareta Deschner, Professor Emerita of German, on August 26, 2013. Dr. Deschner is the namesake of the Margareta Deschner Teaching Award given by the Women’s and Gender Studies program. She fought on the front lines as a member of the women’s auxiliary corps in the two wars that Finland fought against the Soviet Union during the Second World War. She then completed an M.A. in literature and languages at the University of Helsinki before emigrating to the United States in 1949. She continued her study of literature in the U.S., earning a doctorate in German literature at the University of Colorado in 1966. She was one of the founding faculty members of SMU’s Women’s Studies Program, which began offering courses in 1975. She retired in 1986.

Scholarship and Award Winners



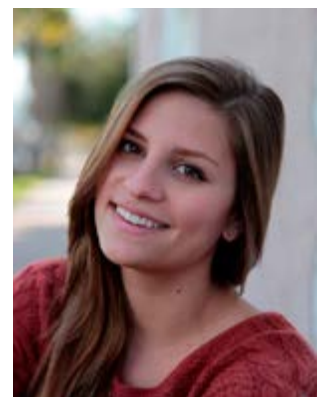
Alex Day

Betty Maynard Scholar
Ann Early Award



Whitney Harp

Betty Maynard Scholar



Amelia Johns

Betty Maynard Scholar



Ruby Kim

Betty Maynard Scholar



Melissa Maguire

Betty Maynard Scholar



Sammi Partida

Betty Maynard Scholar



Erica Renstrom

Betty Maynard Scholar

News

Alumnae news

Emily Reagan '13 writes that she will soon depart for “somewhere in the Pacific Island nations of Micronesia and Palau” as a Peace Corps volunteer.

Other News

Ruby Kim '14 will enter a Ph.D. program in American Studies at Washington State University, in its Department of Critical Culture, Gender, and Race Studies.

Sammi Partida '15 will blog as *LGBTQ Insider* for the Dallas Morning News' new LGBTQ blogging project. <http://lgbtqblog.dallasnews.com>

Rebecca Swarm '14 will enter a masters program in social work at Washington University in St. Louis this fall, after spending a summer working in the teen leadership program of St. Louis's Wyman Center.

Jessica Lott '16 is a Graduate Certificate student who completed a fellowship at the Smithsonian last summer. She brought a poster presentation based on her work entitled “Critical intersections: Histories of Latinos/as, Reproduction, and Disability” to both Anthropology and Interdisciplinary conferences this year. Read more about her project at bit.ly/LottNMAH and bit.ly/LottSMUAdventures

Send us your news! womnstud@smu.edu

Women's and Gender Studies Network
Southern Methodist University
P.O. Box 750227
Dallas, TX 75275-0227

This Newsletter is produced by the SMU Women's and Gender Studies Program. Please help us continue this project by becoming a subscriber (\$5.00) or renew your subscription payable to:

SMU Women's and Gender Studies Program
P.O. Box 750227, Dallas 75275

Alternatively, you may donate to our newsletter and our other programs by visiting our website at <http://smu.edu/giving/womgenstudies.asp>.