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WOMEN'S DUKE STUDIES

Spring 2004 Newsletter



Robyn Edridge

Keith Gill

Reflect with Tiffany Speaks in *GOING "HOME"*, page 11.

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“ Life-changing, rewarding, rejuvenating, unique, necessary, powerful, fun, eye-opening, unforgettable, and inspiring. ”

Student participant comment about the Common Ground Fall Retreat

UNDERGRADS FIND COMMON GROUND

Christopher Scoville

During the Fall 2003 break, a group of students launched the first-ever Common Ground retreat at Camp Don Lee in Arapahoe, North Carolina. Common Ground is Duke's new diversity immersion program—a compilation of ideas from the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), Duke's Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), the Center for Multicultural Affairs, Duke student leaders, and faculty, with a curriculum molded to Duke's needs.

Its official vision is that one day, Duke's community will be one of inclusion and respect, which recognizes, accepts, and values differences among individuals. Common Ground was conceived and founded by Duke juniors Amanda Earp, Maital Guttman, Amy Lazarus, and Christopher Scoville, and directed by Amy, Amanda, Christopher, Dinushika Mohottige, a sophomore, and Elizabeth Phillips, a junior. Thirty-five students diverse by race, gender, sexuality,

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Director's Column

Dear Friends,

We're all aware of the proliferation of news stories about the death of feminism which link perceptions of campus apathy to the speculation that the current generation of students believes that gender equality has been achieved. These reports, I think, greatly exaggerate the conditions of politics on campuses in the present, and they certainly do not adequately reflect the importance our students attach to social justice questions in their activities in Women's Studies at Duke.

One way we measure our students' commitment is through their interest in our classes, which has been steadily increasing for the past three years. Currently, there are 202 undergraduates enrolled in Women's Studies courses, an increase of almost fifty percent over Fall 2000. Among graduate students, we've seen a thirty percent increase, with the number of our certificate earners rising at nearly the same pace. These numbers are especially gratifying because our revisions of

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Women's Studies Celebrates Its Faculty Authors, page 5.

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both the undergraduate Major and the Certificate program require more from our students- more courses, more writing, more rigorous engagement with interdisciplinary study.

At the same time that Duke students demonstrate a growing interest in our courses, they also develop, organize, and participate in their own social justice projects. Student groups have been essential to the ongoing work of the Women's Initiative. Through official representative bodies and in organizations they crafted from their own agency, these groups offer leadership on key issues of student life and help recreate gender relations on campus. This year a student-initiated project, Common Ground, formed itself under the auspices of the Center for Race Relations, to address the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality. I had the pleasure of being a faculty participant in this group's first meeting last fall. As you will read in the article contributed by Christopher Scoville, a 2005 Public Policy Studies major and Women's Studies minor, the retreat had a powerful impact on students' understanding of identity issues and on their commitment to ongoing deliberation on the relationship between identity, difference, and democratic social change. Women's Studies was proud to host a reunion dinner for retreat participants this spring.

On the national front, the Ford Foundation's Knowledge, Creativity and Freedom Program is developing an initiative entitled "Replenishing Democracy," geared toward supporting progressive student activist efforts on campuses in the U.S. I'm delighted to be a member of the group of scholars invited to develop a curriculum for a series of seminars for student leaders across the nation. In addition to the Ford project, I recently participated, at the invitation of Duke alumnae Lisa Lee (Duke, 1999), in a conversation among academics, activists, and students about feminist activism at The Public Square, a Chicago non-profit center for intellectual work and public life. That event also featured a plenary discussion with Eleanor Smeal (Duke, 1961), Susan Faludi, and bell hooks.

Feminism, like activism, takes many forms. Brian Carr, a PhD candidate in Literature and a Women's Studies Graduate Certificate holder, reports here on our co-sponsored conference last November with the Program on Law and Social Thought at Harvard Law School, where the debate focused on whether it is necessary for legal theorists to "take a break from feminism." This provocative conference was a great opportunity to explore a more open-ended consideration of theories of gender/sexuality in applied fields like the law.

My new graduate seminar, Foundations in Feminist Theory, introduces students to just such a range of theoretical and political perspectives. I had the pleasure of accompanying students from the class to a February conference at the University of Chicago called "Back to the Future: Generations of Feminism," which provided them with an overview of both women's activist projects and the theoretical positions on which they have been based. Speakers there included Gayatri Spivak, Kate Millett, Aiwha Ong, Sharon Holland, Judith Halberstam, and Dorothy Allison. Student participation was made possible by funds from our discretionary endowment.

“

All of this work, on campus and off, encourages me to think that commitment to social justice is not only not dead, but in fact feminism in its various forms- as political movement and as academic project- will outlive us all.

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In addition to student activities organized around questions of social justice, this issue of the newsletter introduces you to two scholars highly committed in both their research and teaching to global perspectives on the situation of women. Diane Nelson (Associate Professor, Cultural Anthropology), a recent addition to the associated Women's Studies faculty, is featured in our Faculty Focus. Ranjana Khanna (Assistant Professor, English and Literature and associated faculty in Women's Studies) offers an account of a conference she attended in Cairo which enabled scholars from around the world to discuss important questions about theory and praxis, language and semantics, and global and feminist politics. Martha Reeves (Visiting Assistant Professor, Sociology and Women's Studies) describes a trip to Geneva with students in the Duke in Geneva Program, which, she reports, raised student consciousness of global politics, culture, and economics.

In their work and daily lives, alumnae of our program and of Duke carry forward the kinds of social justice projects that ground many of the activities described here. Tiffany Speaks' travel memoir describes a journey to Africa, which became a revelation about the status of women around the world. Joanne Mazurki's column on the work of the Council on Women's Studies brings women's issues home as she describes the efforts of the Council to address the findings of the Women's Initiative. Along with Joanne, I represented the Council and Women's Studies at meetings this spring in New York, and Chicago. All of this work, on campus and off, encourages me to think that commitment to social justice is not only not dead, but in fact feminism in its various forms- as political movement and as academic project- will outlive us all.

All the best-

Robyn Wiegman

The Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Women's Studies

Students Talk About

“EFFORTLESS PERFECTION”

On February 17, 2004, eight members of the Women's Studies Graduate Scholars Group, led by Director of Graduate Studies Tina Camp, met with an invited group of 28 undergraduate women and men to discuss the recent Report of the Steering Committee for the Women's Initiative at Duke University. The participants were selected from classes taught by both Professor Camp and participating Graduate Scholars. Although the Report also discussed faculty, staff, and graduate and professional students at Duke, the meeting focused on gender issues within undergraduate culture, aiming to glean new insights into “effortless perfection” and other questions related to undergraduate life on campus.

Graduate Scholar Eden Osucha, a PhD candidate in English and Women's Studies Graduate Certificate holder, noted that “the undergraduate group revealed a complex understanding of gender issues, both in how they defined the problems described in the Women's Initiative Report and in how they interpret the Report's response. It was a multiracial as well as international group, much more diverse than, in my experience, would normally assemble on campus outside of academic contexts. The group's opinions and analyses reflected that diversity.”

For instance, according to Osucha, some students said they perceived the idealized image of femininity within the notion of “effortless perfection” as essentially white, but there was a wide range of interpretations in the discussion. Many students were critical of the popular view that “effortless perfection” is universal for undergraduate women, overlooking how this concept is not only racialized but class-specific and so neglects many students' concerns and experiences. However, some students of color (including those from outside the U.S.) saw “effortless perfection” as a viable analytic concept, suggesting that it might be used to describe racially specific sets of cultural norms, such as gendered standards of beauty, career achievement, and sexuality, not captured by the Report's discussion of these issues. To the question of whether “effortless perfection” applied to men on campus, some suggested that men experience a different set of pressures, with less compulsion to hide their effort.

A few students considered the Report problematic for LGBT students, because its analysis assumes heterosexuality and other students were critical of how the report's analysis of heterosexual culture on campus seemed to exaggerate the relative positions of women and men. Some believed that the focus on beauty ideals and body issues ultimately pointed to demands on women to either conform to tradition or pursue their educational and professional goals and ideals, implying that career success and having a traditional family are mutually exclusive. These students said such a choice is not only undesirable but, for reasons of class and culture, is simply not an option. Other students viewed this as a unique set of pressures on women that accurately reflected their experience.

One of the central issues discussed was the status of feminism in the Women's Initiative Report and on Duke's campus more broadly. Students were asked whether or not they self-identified as feminists and to describe their relation to feminism. There was general anxiety about embracing the label. Despite their claim to values that are consistent with feminist aims, many were unwilling to identify themselves as feminists. For some, it meant forcing a choice between a race- and/or culture-based identity and their gender identity. A few students spoke of Black feminism as a way of thinking the interconnectedness of race, class, and gender. Others expressed concern that embracing feminism as an identity claim challenged their investments in the pleasures and duties of the traditional female roles of homemaking, care-taking and heterosexual desire. Some participants addressed this anxiety by ascribing it to anti-feminist myth and attempted to offer definitions of feminism that were more supportive of diverse life choices and desires. Along these lines, one student offered her personal definition of feminism as a political commitment that simply “means supporting other women.”

Although this coalition of undergraduate and graduate students is challenged by their lack of consensus on what “effortless perfection” at Duke really means, its diversity of opinion offers a complex understanding of the problems addressed in the Women's Initiative Report. The group is eager to continue their conversation in both large- and small-group sessions.

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

On May 7, Women's Studies will hold its 2004 Commencement Celebration with guest speaker, Duke University Trustee, Kimberly Jenkins. Jenkins began her career in 1983 at Microsoft as a software developer and later became director of mar-



ket development for NeXT. She earned bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees in education from Duke, and currently serves on the university's Washington Regional Campaign Council, Trinity College Board of Visitors, and the Advisory Committee on the Future of Information Technology in Teaching and Research. She is a past member of the University's Council on Women's Studies. Jenkins is former president of the Internet Policy Institute. The Kimberly J. Jenkins Professorship in New Technologies and Society was established by Duke University in 1999. The graduation ceremony will be held in the Nelson Music Room at 6:45 PM followed by a buffet dinner in the East Duke Parlors.

Congratulations to this year's Women's Studies Majors, Minors and Graduate Certificate holders!

1st Major: Ishar Tamille Carmichael, Catherine Elizabeth Sullivan, and Joanna Fisher Tyson (Fall 2003 graduate).

2nd Major: Jennifer Melissa Lopez, Njeri Earle McAllister, Nicole Maltz (Fall 2003 graduate), Brooke Lindsay Palmer, Kelly Quirk (Fall 2003 graduate).

Minor: Mary Lauren Carr, Stephanie Crissy, Lauren Hooker (Fall, 2003 graduate) Andrea Mangones, Katharine Mitchell, Candace Marie Ryals, and Marilyn Martha Seide (Fall 2003 graduate).

Graduate Certificate Recipients: Amy Carroll (Literature, Duke); Charles Grief (Liberal Studies, Duke), Shannon Johnson (EdD in Higher Education Administration, NC State), Alejandra Ortiz (Duke Program in International Development Policy), Cybelle Wilkens (Romance Studies, Duke), and Gwen Wright (EdD in Higher Education Administration, NC State).

Undergrads find Common Ground continued from page 1

ethnicity, class, and faith participated in the program Common Ground guided by thirteen trained student facilitators. With a \$14,000 dollar budget, Common Ground's funding came from several sources, most notably from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and the Hewlett Foundation. With the support of several organizations, Common Grounders intensely explored the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, faith, culture, and ethnicity over Fall break.

Through student-facilitated dialogues, professor-led sessions, and experiential activities, participants investigated how social identifiers inform their interpersonal interactions and their understandings of their own identities. For example, in one of the first activities, the Privilege Walk, students stood in a straight line and were asked to step forward or backwards in response to questions about privilege. Questions ranged from, "have you ever been verbally harassed because of your race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or religion?" to "were there more than fifty books in your household during childhood?" After about thirty questions, the participants found themselves standing along a wide spectrum of privilege. The visual impact of the exercise was powerful for students, as they could tangibly "see" how notions of race, gender, sexuality, and class determined their status in a power-privilege hierarchy.

Director of Women's Studies Robyn Wiegman led two sessions on gender and sexuality. Her discussion with students evolved into a critical moment during the retreat. The retreat started with issues of class, race, and culture, comfortable issues for students that evoked rather clichéd responses to the topics. Dr. Wiegman adeptly shoved students out of their comfort zones to make them think about how their gender and sexuality are no more essentially determined than their race or class. This led many students to note how rigid notions of these two social identifiers often lead to sexist and homophobic belief systems. One student in particular felt very uncomfortable with the discussion, but later disclosed in the large group discussion that his brother is gay. He admitted that Dr. Wiegman's words helped him understand his brother's sexual orientation and also why he had felt so uncomfortable showing affection towards his brother, a fact that distressed him immensely. Dr. Wiegman's session led another student to re-think expectations placed on heterosexual men and to deconstruct his own ingrained notions of marriage, children, and the role of breadwinner for a possible future family. Moving beyond comfort zones at this point in the retreat allowed students to reflect on earlier conversations about race and culture with greater honesty and emotional intensity and without the veneer of sterile academic discourse.

Some students experienced remarkable cognitive shifts vis-à-vis their perceptions of themselves and their interpersonal interactions. Many grappled with personal issues of identification for the first time, from being bi-racial and bi-sexual to understanding the responsibilities of privilege. The energy of the group returning to Duke is palpable in their new friendships, a unique willingness to transcend traditional barriers to social interaction, and a desire to impart a newfound knowledge with fellow students. As soon as the



Women's Studies Director Robyn Wiegman (Center) with Common Ground students.



This was so difficult. I wasn't ready for it... It scares me that I can't go back to the way I was... I couldn't appreciate it more. I have grown. I have lived. I have gained an ounce of understanding... a huge ounce.

The best thing I can come up with is revolutionary.



Student participants comments about the Common Ground Fall Retreat

program secures annual funding, Common Ground will become a staple experience on campus, and hopefully one that will continue to fundamentally alter the belief systems of Duke students as they become engaged citizens in an increasingly pluralistic and internationalized world community.

In addition to changing students' attitudes, the retreat produced other salient outcomes. Common Ground is now an arm of the Center for Race Relations, under the Center for Multicultural Affairs. Retreat participants are coming back to be trained as future Common Ground facilitators and to facilitate dialogues in the Center for Race Relations. Dr. Wiegman will participate in a mini-Common Ground retreat planned for the future and Women's Studies at Duke hosted a reunion dinner this semester. There is now a great deal of interest in taking Women's Studies courses and three students have planned a house course for next semester that will tackle issues of the "hook-up" culture and how it is influenced by sexual orientation, power on campus (particularly fraternities), as well as race, class and gender. The Center for Race Relations runs a house course called "Black, White, and Shades of Gray." The syllabus has been revised to include more discussion of gender and sexuality.

Funders for the Fall break project included: John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute and the Andrew Mellon Foundation's "Making the Humanities Central" grant; Enterprising Leadership Incubator of the Hart Leadership Program; Duke Division of Student Affairs; Theta Nu Xi Sorority scholarship fund; Kenan Institute for Ethics; Duke Women's Center; Freeman Center for Jewish Life.

Christopher Scoville is a 2005 Public Policy Studies Major and Women's Studies minor, who is now considering majoring in Women's Studies. He is also pursuing a Sexualities Studies Certificate.

NEW FALL COURSES

Kathy Rudy (Associate Professor, Women's Studies) will teach two new undergraduate courses in fall 2004. She received a course development grant from the Center for Genome Ethics, Law, and Policy for her course, "The Good Mother: Feminism, Reproduction and Genetic Information." This class will examine the relatively new frontiers of pregnancy intervention and genetic detection, with particular attention to how the two fields of inquiry support and control each other. Students will examine the growing cases and literatures about women who are charged with endangering the life of their fetus through alcohol and illegal drug consumption and developments in genetic research in testing for various diseases. Using various modalities of feminist theory, the course will examine these two practices for their real effects on gendered realities.

Professor Rudy will also teach "Gender and Popular Culture – Saving Women: Gender, Vocation and Film," exploring the role of film in the formation of race, class and gender. The course will investigate the ways that feminist scholarship has used a wide range of interdisciplinary critical frameworks to think about issues of representation and interpretation in culture, including the complex ways that religion both hampers and sustains those powers and characteristics specifically granted to women.

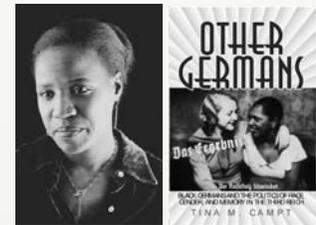
Claudia Koonz (Professor, History and Women's Studies) will lead next fall's Women's Studies Interdisciplinary Debates, an annual seminar that was created to provide interdisciplinary training for faculty and advanced graduate students. Focusing on "Gender and Ethnic Violence," the course will examine the relationship between the title's central terms through scholarship in three different disciplines: history, political science and literature. The Center for International Studies has provided funds for a lecture series to complement the course.

Ranjana Khanna (Associated Women's Studies Faculty and Assistant Professor, English and Literature) will teach "International Feminism" a new fall 2004 undergraduate Selected Topics course. The course will examine the distinction for feminism among the terms "transnational," "globalization" and "internationalism." Students will consider the politics and ethics of feminism across borders, and will research feminist movements in various countries. The course will be interdisciplinary and includes a segment on representations of the woman terrorist.

Graduate Students will teach a series of undergraduate courses funded by Women's Studies Teaching endowments. Courses and graduate instructors include "Gender, Science, Technology and Society" (Susanne Sreedhar, Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy at UNC), "Women and the Political Process" (Thomas Scotto, Ph.D. candidate in Political Science), and Selected Topics courses: "Women and Comparative Colonial Contacts in North America" (Genna Miller, Ph.D. in History), "Contemporary American Masculinities" (Amy Carroll, Ph.D. candidate in Literature), and "Asian American Feminisms" (Paul Lai, Ph.D. candidate in English at UNC).

WOMEN'S STUDIES CELEBRATES ITS FACULTY AUTHORS

Women's Studies celebrated the recent publication of three books by members of its faculty with a reading and reception held on Feb 10, 2004 in the Women's Studies Parlors. Tina Campt (Associate Professor, Women's Studies), Claudia Koonz (Associated Women's Studies faculty and Professor, History) and Ranjana Khanna (Associated Women's Studies faculty and Assistant Professor, English and Literature) read sections from their books, each of which boldly theorized new ways of thinking about social, cultural and political history.



Tina Campt, *Other Germans: The Politics of Race, Gender and Memory in the Third Reich* (University of Michigan Press, 2003)



Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Duke University Press, 2003)



Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Harvard University Press, 2003)

The Humanities & The Human Genome Sciences

Last fall, **Priscilla Wald** (Associate Professor, English and Associated faculty, Women's Studies) participated in the organization of a symposium on Race and the Genome Sciences jointly sponsored by the Center for Genome Ethics, Law and Policy and the Duke Common Fund group on "Race, Gender, Sexuality and the Cultural Study of Medicine," and co sponsored by Women's Studies, African and African American Studies and the Mary Lou Williams Center. Wald says, "there was a lively discussion, with some fairly powerful (but cordial) disagreements about how genomics is influencing discussions about race and human diversity and about the role of racism in those discussions."

This year, Wald is one of twelve professors who will share a two-year \$100,000 grant from the National Human Genome Research Institute of the National Institutes of Health to analyze portrayals of genetic science in art and literature. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, the members of the research team are the first professors doing literary criticism ever to receive a grant from the NIH.

GENDERED BODIES, TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS: MODERNITIES RECONSIDERED

Ranjana Khanna

As a representative for Women's Studies and Duke, I attended the "Gendered Bodies, Transnational Politics: Modernities Reconsidered" workshop held at the American University in Cairo, Egypt December 12-14, 2003. The conference was organized jointly by Women's Studies at the American University in Cairo (AUC), and The Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality (CSGS) at NYU. There were approximately sixty participants. The idea of the conference was to draw feminist scholars from many different sites around the globe, particularly from Central and West Asia, in order to discuss the concept of modernity as understood through gender and sexuality. Participants came from Egypt, the US, Brazil, Sudan, Lebanon, India, Morocco, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, U.K., Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Georgia. All of us collected a dossier of each other's contributions on the subject of gender and modernity.

Various debates arose. One was familiar to all scholars working within a "political" framework, the debate between theory and practice. Some scholars wanted each participant to clarify the political investments in their scholarly approaches, as well as, to state their stand on such issues as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, and Palestinian sovereignty more generally. Other scholars, while sympathetic to these concerns, were less convinced that the political was so readily knowable. While these skeptics had their own political views and acted on them accordingly, they proposed that feminist academics needed to reconceptualize the political at this moment, especially as most forms of activism proved less successful today than initially imagined.

Samia Mehrez (AUC) gave a fascinating plenary on the subject of translation. Behind the scenes of the conference, there had obviously been debate about language. While abstracts had been solicited in both English and Arabic, the workshop itself was held in English. Mehrez addressed this through a careful and quite brilliant discussion of the difficulty in translating the term "gender" into Arabic. She went on to discuss how we should not mourn the inevitable loss of the original in the act of translation, but should rather embrace the difference that emerged. New forms of "gender studies" would have to ensue as a result. Some scholars questioned whether the type of language translated would make a difference. For example, one could understand a pleasurable and useful change in meaning construction from English to Arabic, but simply celebrating language change when translating from a subordinated language (for example, Tamazigh) into a regionally dominant language (like Modern Standard Arabic or Cairene Arabic) would have a different political meaning and consequence.

Carolyn Dinshaw, in her opening comments, used her own medievalist literary training to discuss the manner in which the term "medieval" had been employed by the US government about the status of women in the Arab world since September 2001. She hoped that the conference itself would help to destroy the egregious conflation of geographical distance with European temporal distinctions employed by the Bush regime. This underscored the importance of understanding different modernities. Rabab Abdulhadi discussed how we may begin to understand "situated knowledge" differently while being seated in Cairo rather than New York. She hoped that we could move away from a structure of knowledge within which Arab women were always objects of inquiry, or measures of more generalized progress and development by funding agencies. If feminism in the US sits quietly while Estee Lauder's donation of makeup to Afghani women is deemed an important measure of the success of a bombing campaign, how are we to think of feminism today? Is it to be rejected? Is it to be criticized for ignoring concerns about the persecution of, for example, male prisoners and the suspension of rule of law? What can feminism do and not do for us today?

I found the workshop useful, and met many people from Egypt, the US, and from elsewhere with whom I'm sure I will maintain contact. Perhaps something as relatively tame as a willingness to be in Cairo and roam its streets with an international group concerned with feminism seems more radical than it ought to be in the current climate of paranoid political contempt for the Arab World.

Ranjana Khanna is Assistant Professor in English, The Program in Literature, and Women's Studies.

FACULTY *focus* **DIANE NELSON**

Diane Nelson is Associate Professor in Cultural Anthropology and holds a secondary appointment in Women's Studies. In May 2003, she received the Duke University Thomas Langford Lectureship Award. Nelson is the author of A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincenntennial Guatemala (University of California Press, 1999).

Nelson is effusive about how important women have been in her professional development. "My first work as an anthropologist was as part of a team of extraordinary women. After graduating from college in 1985, I was invited to become the research-assistant to my teacher, Beatriz Manz, a Chilean-born anthropologist and human rights activist. She had a grant to study the effects of the civil war on highland indigenous communities in Guatemala and in the refugee camps in Chiapas Mexico, where some 300,000 mostly Mayan people were living after being forced from their homes by army massacres. She received a death threat in Guatemala, so although she could only cover our expenses, another student and I were happy to go in her place. Another team member, who was living in exile in Mexico City and remains anonymous for her protection, later wrote the United Nations Truth Commission Report in 1999 that accused the Guatemalan governments of genocide in the 1980s, opening the way for litigation. The last member of our team was Jennifer Harbury, who married a Guatemalan indigenous man, Efraín Bámaca Velásquez, who was in the guerrillas. He was captured, tortured and killed by the Guatemalan government. She undertook three hunger strikes- two in Guatemala and one in the U.S.- to force compliance with the Geneva Convention. The Guatemalan colonel, who was responsible for Bámaca's death, was on the CIA payroll and Jennifer's struggles led to the first ever Congressional investigation and censure of CIA tactics.

"Through these women I met other amazing people. We interviewed members of the Mutual Support Group, wives, mothers, and sisters of men who had been disappeared by the Guatemalan military. From 1954 to 1985, almost all of Guatemala's governments were military dictatorships. To this day 40,000 people remain disappeared in Guatemala, joining tens of thousands throughout Latin America, victims of 'dirty wars.' Although one of their leaders was murdered with her children in April 1985, just a few months before we met them, these women continued to demonstrate and mutually support each other, even though they lived in constant fear for their own lives." Nelson describes a massacre in one town and says she has always been inspired by the dignity of the single survivor, whom she interviewed.

Nelson has returned to Guatemala almost every year since 1985. She wrote her dissertation at Stanford on the events surrounding 1992, the 500-year anniversary of the Columbus voyages. She focused on the competing claims for the Guatemalan nation made by the Mayan revitalization movement, the revolutionary organizations, and the reactions of the Guatemalan state and non-indigenous Guatemalans to these demands for ethnic and social justice. In *A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincenntennial Guatemala*, she explored the role

of gender and sexuality in understandings of national and ethnic identity. One chapter focuses on the reactions in Guatemala when the indigenous woman Rigoberta Menchú Tum, the youngest person to ever be so honored, won the Nobel Peace Prize in October 1992. "It was a huge, huge deal when she won! It was like a litmus test for how people felt about the country," Nelson says. Indigenous people and the church celebrated and felt vindicated; the Mayan organizations were amazed; and the left was energized. "The powerful classes, however, were horrified. In their minds, Guatemala couldn't be represented on the international stage by an indigenous person and worse yet, a woman! The President came down with a hysterical earache and couldn't respond to the news he didn't want to hear!" Nelson noticed and analyzed another reaction, the odd development of offensive jokes that Menchú Tum's detractors and supporters both told about her. She was relieved when the Nobel Prize winner was amused by the collection and analysis of these jokes.



Following graduate school, Nelson taught for six years at Lewis and Clark College in Portland Oregon and continued her work in Guatemala. After the publication of her book, she began doing new fieldwork in a highland indigenous village on the peace process following the treaty signed in 1996. She came to Duke in September 2001 on the heels of the events of September 11. Having attended Wellesley College, Nelson could claim Nannerl Keohane as her president twice. After teaching at a "little hippy school," she found the culture at Duke "conservative, interesting and challenging." Nelson teaches courses in Cultural Anthropology and Women's Studies, including several on Latin America, "Myth, Ritual, Symbol," and "Cyborgs." The latter, cross-listed with Women's Studies, explores her new interests in science and technology studies and the machine-human interface. In Fall 2004, she will teach a new graduate course called "Anthropology and the 'Facts' of 'Life'" that will deal with emerging understandings of "life itself" as well as knowledge production about this slippery topic. These courses dovetail with her new research project on malaria in Latin America.

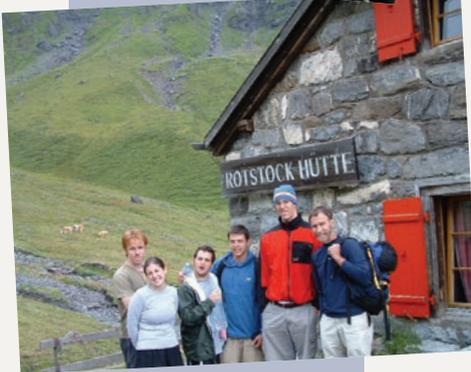
"I've always been interested in power and the body. I began work in Guatemala looking at the violent ways power was imposed on the body, through wounding and death, through racing and gendering bodies so they internalized their own oppression. In thinking about post-war Guatemala I've become very interested in histories of power working productively on bodies, by promising to help them, make them stronger and healthier. Malaria as an illness and the history of the national and global attempts to eradicate it is a fascinating place to look at not only power and bodies, but the whole environment in which those struggles occur." Nelson recently began fieldwork in Venezuela and may begin branching out of Latin America towards Africa as this project develops

DUKE IN GENEVA

Martha Reeves

In the summer of 2003, Alex Rosenberg (The C. Taylor Cole Professor of Philosophy) and I teamed to offer the Duke in Geneva program "Globalization: Issues in Business Management and Political Philosophy." The six-week program included two courses focusing on international business and the political, ethical and public policy issues of globalization – all areas of concern to women around the world.

Geneva is a center for international and non-governmental organizations that deal with the work and domestic lives of women in developed and developing countries. One important field trip was to The International Labour Office (ILO), a United Nations agency, which seeks to promote social justice and labor rights for both men and women. The ILO brings workers, employers and governments together to discuss critical employment issues and to agree on policy important to workers and employers. During our field trip, students met with speakers from three different units of the ILO: one that focuses on protection of part-time workers, the unit on corporate social responsibility, and the gender equity unit. Among the speakers was Emily Sims, a 1988 Duke graduate who has worked with Palestinian families in Israel, studied at the London School of Economics, and now is a permanent international civil servant in the ILO's Gender Equity office.



The lake picture (top): from left Ben Berchuck, Carlee Hobbs, Chris Sundberg, Prof. Martha Reeves, Chris Heim, Lindsay Keister, Jessica Wolf...two in front: James Pickett, Donny Platner...back: Nick Vivion, Lane Compton, Caitlen Sherry, Adam Katz

The Alps picture from left: James Pickett, Jessica Wolf, Brian Katz, Donny Platner, Chris Sundberg, Professor Alex Rosenberg

Students were impressed by the extent of protection part-time workers and women in the labor force require, especially in countries other than the United States. They also found it interesting that the ILO has to carefully tread between a country's own culture and value system and the ILO agency members' notions of ethical behavior. Another field trip took us to the World Trade Organization. Students raised questions with WTO representatives about international labor standards, particularly in newly industrializing countries where women constitute the largest segment of the new labor force. The group also visited the International Red Cross, a humanitarian and impartial organization that provides aid to victims (both civilians and soldiers) of war. Students learned about the International Red Cross' efforts to reunite families who have become separated as the result of conflict. The Duke in Geneva Program also spent four days in Berlin. We explored the city's twentieth century history, first as the capital of a fascist state, then as the hub of a centrally planned economy, and finally as the most rapidly growing urban area on the intersection of western and eastern Europe.

Martha Reeves is an Affiliated Women's Studies faculty member and Visiting Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department at Duke. She previously served as a Program Director in Executive Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Kenan-Flagler Business School.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Women's Studies and the History department co-sponsored six Women's History Month events. On March 4, 2004, Kathleen Canning (University of Michigan) delivered the keynote address on "The Practice of Gender History: Meanings, Methods, and Metanarratives," followed by a panel on gender, national belonging and citizenship with Professor Canning, Carolyn Eastman (University of Texas at Austin), and Jocelyn Olcott (Duke, moderator). Pamela Scully delivered the Ann Firor Scott lecture on March 18 and on March 19 participated in the Duke Working Group in Feminism and History.

Laura Micham, Sally Bingham archivist, spoke on March 23 about the extensive collection of documents housed in the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture. On March 25, Laura Edwards (History, Duke) moderated a panel on "Gender and Labor," featuring Elizabeth Hutchison (University of New Mexico) and Daina Ramey-Berry (Duke visiting scholar). The final event of the month was a panel on March 31 on "Gender, Erotics and Embodiment," moderated by Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy (National Humanities Center, moderator) and including Gabriela Cano (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Iztapalapa) and Adrienne Davis (University of North Carolina).

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

DUKE AT HARVARD LAW

Brian Carr

Last November, Duke Women's Studies collaborated with Harvard's Program on Law and Social Thought for a two day conference on "Injury and Distribution: An Inquiry into the State of Our Art on Sex, Sexuality, Gender, and the Family." The Conference was preceded by a public debate, organized by Harvard's Women's Studies program, featuring Robyn Wiegman (Women's Studies and Literature, Duke) and Janet Halley (Law, Harvard). The debate was based on an exchange between Halley and other scholars, including Wiegman, in a forthcoming issue of the Duke Journal of Gender, Law, and Policy. The idea for the special issue began when Halley delivered an earlier version of her paper, "Taking a Break from Feminism," at the Duke Law School in fall 2001.

The public debate at Harvard drew an audience of over seventy people and offered a rarely executed display of serious intellectual engagement, pointed disagreement, mindfulness, and sincerity. The main thread of debate concerned Halley's thesis that critical thought today would do well to "take a break from feminism," since feminism has become over-committed to becoming a new "governance project." Because feminism, in Halley's view, assumes "m/f"—in which masculinity or male is "over" or subordinates femininity or female— as the framework for apprehending sexuality and the social realm, it obscures the complexity of injury and redress in most legal cases and fails to understand sexuality itself. Queer theory, Halley argues, parts with feminism's misgivings, providing a more flexible model for understanding sexual relations.

Wiegman agrees with Halley on many points, sharing Halley's concerns that feminism's desire to legislate on the basis of its social theory of power involves it in acts of governing that it rarely wants to own. But Wiegman argues that the problems Halley diagnoses are neither proper to feminism in all its forms or fully absent from queer theory. Pinpointing where both feminism and queer theory lose their commitments to open-ended thought, Wiegman showed how Halley's description of "feminism" is keyed to a specific form of feminism—governance feminism—that is part of the apparatus of feminist legal work and is not endemic to feminism as a whole. For Wiegman, taking a break from feminism would give too much authority to those projects within feminism that must be resisted by feminists,

and it was her belief that Halley's rigorous refusal to concede to feminism was a necessary, even provocative way of bringing this point home.

The Conference that followed featured two days of workshops on a range of topics by scholars from across the United States. Unique topical seminars, placed between or after the workshops, focused on a specific object—from Nietzsche to the film "Capturing the Friedmans"—around which collective discussions were organized. The dinners and social gatherings maintained the buzz of heated debate and genuine scholarly interest. Jody Greene (from UC-Santa Cruz, but at that time visiting in English at Duke) and I attended the conference as part of a small group of humanities based scholars representing Duke. She and Wiegman gave presentations in one of the workshops on the role of queer theory in contemporary academic inquiry.

Disciplinary commitments, often unconsciously active, surfaced

at points in interesting ways. Because so few of the attendees had substantial training in literary studies, the clash between a humanities-based inquiry and that of law was as decisive as it was productive. But this encounter between scholars and students from different institutional locations was precisely one of

"The conference offered a fascinating look into how the categories that have been central to Women's Studies – gender, sexuality, injury – were understood by legal scholars."

the points of the events: to allow us to consider the role of knowledge production more generally as one of the stakes of the conversation about feminism. For me, the conference offered a fascinating look into how the categories that have been central to Women's Studies—gender, sexuality, injury—were understood by legal scholars. Janet Halley, whose work I respect and admire, said to me—in her exclamatory style—that the Harvard Law School has tried several times to engage with humanities scholars. This venture, she lamented, usually failed. She was excited, however, by the success of this event and shortly began conversations with Wiegman about a collaboration in 2004–05 on dignity and shame. Then Halley confessed what she thought was the real achievement, likening the whole experience to a good game of tennis: "You all could just come play tennis with us! We just want people who can keep the game alive! We don't have to agree or be best friends tomorrow, right?" I promptly agreed.

Brian Carr is a PhD candidate in Literature and a Women's Studies Graduate Certificate holder.

Going "Home"

By Tiffany Speaks

In South Africa the youth hostel's cleaner entered my room and smiled. "Where are you from?" she asked. Looking at her brown cheerful face I replied, "New York." She walked towards me, an African-American woman, and said, "Welcome home."

What a different way for me to examine my decision to venture to Africa. Was it really just a fated return trip to my native land? Breaking out of the office and the world of deadlines, I pursued my dream to visit the seven continents. It seems life after Duke doesn't always have to be on a corporate ladder, tenure track or any type of straight path. My own journey has led me to a teaching gig in Japan, temp secretary in London, research associate in Switzerland and most recently an editorship in New York. Perhaps no one with budgetary sense leaves their place of employment to travel the world, but I think life is too short to let bills and student loan payments push dreams aside. Plus, being in New York on September 11 was a sobering reminder that life is to be cherished and appreciated each day.

From Namibia's sand dunes, canoeing out for Christmas in Botswana's Okavango Delta, New Year's at a cheetah farm, and standing humbly before Nelson Mandela's cell, I had a fantastic time. A twenty-one day camping trip was a blast traveling with nine women from around the world. We bonded and laughed while constantly wondering why we were foolish enough to sleep outside with jackals, death spiders and scorpions

wandering between our tents. Toilets, electricity and hot showers

were luxury items. And more than once I thought, I left New York for this?

In addition, my experience came at the cost of missing my first official Women's Studies council meeting that was held in November 2003. But I'm looking forward to my two-year term and sharing my new perspectives. In fact, my feminist understandings are heightened by my travels. I was thrilled that opportunities are available for women like Jasmine, a twenty-nine year old restaurant owner in Scotland who opens the restaurant 6 months a year and travels the remainder of the time. And I was surprised that a black female police officer allowed me to avoid a traffic fine. Tapping her arm, she said, "We share the same flesh," and let me continue along my route to Kruger National Park. But, I'm also wondering about the countless women who told me of South Africa's high unemployment and HIV rates. And I was speechless when a black woman domestic worker with limited English told me she had to do something for "Master." I stood in shock. I had my own negative connotations regarding the word "master," but being at least twenty-five years her junior with no job, a bunch of passport stamps and living a life of leisure, it seemed out of place to say anything. I only wished I had the language skills to communicate my queries in a non-offensive way. Moments like these have reawakened my acknowledgment of our "first world" successes. In short, I can temporarily enter a woman's world of servitude but she doesn't have the means to see mine. While I sat in Cape Town lured by the warm weather, other women couldn't afford to escape the heat.

This journey was encouraging but it also made me feel frozen. Where to start in the understanding of women's rights and opportunities? How to hear the stories and tell the tales are both overwhelming. For a journalist it is almost too much to describe: the way that grandmothers raise grandchildren because daughters have died; the lives of HIV positive prostitutes; townships where tin roofs are held down with tires, barbells and anything that won't fly away; women

who welcome you into their huts and offer a meal they have made without the good fortune of electricity. It's humbling, but it's not hopeless.

When I left my job, I planned to travel to Africa, Australia, Antarctica and South America, the four continents I haven't lived in, but I'm so comfortable with Africa or "home" that I may have to push the others back a bit since I have a Council on Women's Studies meeting soon and my 10-year Duke reunion in April. But I'll pick up this journey again I'm sure. I'm enjoying the adventure, the soul-searching and the stories. It's a bit like Introduction to Women's Studies all over again.

Tiffany Speaks, T'94, earned her Women's Studies certificate in 1994 and is a member of the Council on Women's Studies. She worked for Newsweek Japan before leaving for her transcontinental adventure.



Nelson Mandela's jail cell.



Keith Gill



Robyn Eldridge

(Top) Getting water in Shantytown.
(Bottom) Addo elephants cooling by a watering hole

Council On Women's Studies

The Council on Women's Studies and the Duke Alumni Association, in the first of what we hope will be many collaborations between our organizations, came together late last year to urge the Women's Initiative Steering Committee (WISC) to reach out to alumni in seven major cities with a report on the committee's findings, their implications for the Duke community, and recommendations for actions.

The first event gathered several hundred alumni in New York on February 23. It featured an address by Duke President Nan Keohane, who launched the Women's Initiative on May 2002 to understand more fully the experiences and needs of women at Duke and to develop strategies to address the challenges women face as students, faculty, and staff. She also announced a plan to create a new alumnae advisory board on women's issues—an idea that the Council fully supports.

At the same time, the Executive Committee of the Council launched a survey of current and former Council members, a group of alumnae who have played a historical role in supporting women, women's issues, and the academic mission of the Women's Studies Program at Duke. The survey results summary, which will be shared with President Keohane and the WISC, promises to shed light on the specific interests, motivations, and talents of Council members.

The Council will continue to play a leadership role in this important work at Duke, adapting as opportunities are identified and information is gathered. There is no doubt that this is a critical moment in Duke's history, and we plan to play a vital role in shaping it.

Editor's Note: Joanne Mazurki, Trinity '74, is Chair of the Duke University Council on Women's Studies.

YOUR GIFT TO WOMEN'S STUDIES DOES A LOT!

Each year your gifts to Women's Studies fund student travel and research, lecture series, institutional collaborations, faculty research and many joint projects with other Duke departments and programs. This year, donor dollars allowed students to do many exciting things.

Undergraduate and graduate students

traveled to conferences, including the "Back to the Future: Generations of Feminism" Conference at the University of Chicago, the Diversity and Difference in France conference in Tallahassee, Florida, "Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s) at Ohio State University, and the National Women's Studies Conference in New Orleans. A Law student was funded to do research in Madagascar on the legal status of Malagasy women and an undergraduate group was able to create a publication on sexual assault. Students received merit awards for their work on race and gender, history, the cultural construction of gender, science and gender, gender and psychology, and community service.

Your gifts also supported a wide array of program research initiatives and co sponsorships. These included the Women's Studies "Across the Disciplines" lecture series, the second UNC-Duke Annual Women's Studies Lecture, and numerous co sponsorships for such projects as "Race, Genetics, and Human Diversity;" "Romancing the Humanities;" "Argentina Autonomist Project;" and "Trans Figurations: Exploring, Exposing, Explicating LGBTQ Life." Your donations also allowed Women's Studies to support the "Constructing Images of the Self" conference and the Bassett Symposium on academic freedom, and to collaborate with other institutions, such as Harvard Law School, Barnard College, and the London School of Economics. Your gifts brought Alice Walker to the Blackburn Literary Festival at Duke and they supported the Ms. Film Festival, the Hip-Hop Festival, and a performance by Split Britches Theater Company.

Thank you for your continuing support of Women's Studies at Duke!

OTHER COUNCIL NEWS

For more than 15 years, the Council on Women's Studies, a volunteer board, has worked toward the development of resources and greater visibility for Women's Studies, both on campus and nationally. Women's Studies and members of the Council wish to thank retiring members who have provided valued service. They are: Sarah Rosen, who served from 1993-1998 and was 2000-03 Chair; Marjorie Bekaert Thomas (2000-03); Anne F. Simpson (2001-03); and Barbara Corwin, Amy Reid and Tracy Nayer, who were 1998-2003 members. Nine new nominees are expected to be appointed formally later this year.