

Summer 2004

## Women's Research Institute of Nevada Newsletter

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## WRIN Celebrates Five Years of Success

We have come a long way and created a great resource for the state.

"Every major research university has a branch of its research infrastructure dedicated to the study of women and girls," said Dr. Joanne Goodwin.

In a state like Nevada, with a research university on either end of the state and a rapidly expanding population in Las Vegas, the time for the Institute

lar branch (the Department of Women's Studies), but needed the third part dedicated to research.

"In my field," said Goodwin, "the history of Las Vegas was being published but women were invisible."

Two other reasons make the need clear. First, any number of disciplines from medicine to political science, psychology to business have found the

importance of asking how particular circumstances impact men and women differently. One only needs to look at the most recent research

on heart attacks to understand this in practical terms.

Second, a research institute offers students practical experiences in which to apply their studies under the guidance of a faculty mentor. To conduct research and apply it to real problems is invaluable in learning.

The first research projects brought into the Institute were Goodwin's archival and oral history projects. The History Department provided major assistance by allowing graduate students the opportunity to work on those archival and oral history projects. Additional programs with visiting scholars and faculty presentations rounded out the programs during the first two years.

"We wanted to expand our research beyond the field of history," said Dziedziak, "and first did so in August 2001 with the Expanding Technology for Women and Girls Forum." WRIN worked with the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau and organizations in several other western states to collect information on the particular obstacles to and opportunities for technology education of women and girls.

Collaborative research projects with national and regional partners has allowed the Institute to accomplish its research mission.

This is the second year of the NEW Leadership program with Rutgers University which is designed to encourage college students to become more engaged in their communities (see inside story).

The status of women and girls in the state is the focus of two other WRIN partnerships. The Institute for Women's Policy Research, based in Washington D.C. conducts national studies of all 50 states and will release their Nevada status study this fall. And the Nevada Woman's Fund is in the process of a multi-year study that will explain in greater depth and specificity the indicators affecting the women and girls in the state. That study, due for release in the late summer, will provide businesses, educators and policy makers information currently unavailable anywhere else.

### *The budget cuts of the last two legislative sessions eliminated funding for statewide programs like WRIN.*

"We are pleased with the response by the community to our partnerships. They are bringing new resources into Nevada to give our students opportunities they otherwise could not have," said Goodwin.

While Goodwin and Dziedziak recognize their progress, no rest is in sight.

The initial proposal for the Women's Research Institute planned on statewide funding by year five. Yet, the budget cuts of the last two legislative sessions have eliminated funding for statewide programs.

WRIN has delivered on its state-wide agenda. Our staff and supporters will continue to work for the institutional support necessary to continue our work.

### *We are giving our students unique opportunities they otherwise would not have.*

had come. Five years ago this May, the UCCSN Board of Regents approved a plan to establish the state's first research institute with the specific goal of improving research and education on women.

Caryll Dziedziak and Joanne Goodwin have been with the institute from its inception. They worked with former State Legislator, Jean Ford, to create the Nevada Women's Archives, which are now fully incorporated into Special Collections at the Lied Library at UNLV. Goodwin also expanded the documentation of women's lives with the Las Vegas Women Oral History Project based out of the History Department. That undertaking of over 100 life histories and the prospects for additional interdisciplinary projects, proved to Goodwin and Dziedziak the need for an institutional commitment.

The idea for the Women's Research Institute of Nevada took root.

No existing unit within the university had a dedicated research mission to explore the impact of gender on the health, education, employment, and political participation of women. UNLV did have a service unit for women students (the Jean Nidetch Women's Center) as well as a curricu-





# FOCUS on NEW Leadership Nevada

## Alums Gather for Reunion

Graduates of NEW Leadership Nevada Class of 2003 reunited recently for a dinner with NEW Leadership and Women's Research Institute of Nevada staff on the UNLV campus.

The follow-up session asked alums to discuss how they have incorporated the knowledge and skills gained from NEW Leadership into their lives. It provided a great opportunity for participants to catch up, talk about the projects they had initiated (see below), and share ideas about leadership.

The following day, several 2003 alums joined WRIN staff at the Nevada Women's Summit on March 20th to explore issues affecting women and families in the state of Nevada.

Highlights of the day-long program included a panel discussion on reproductive rights, as well as workshops on health care in Nevada, the socioeconomic status of women and families in Nevada, and issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered individuals. NEW Leadership Nevada hopes to continue to involve graduates in events as part of the ongoing NEW Leadership educational process.

2003 NEW Leadership Alums (left to right) Evelyn Garcia, Anna Pollman, Crystal Jackson, and Natalie Obeso. Crystal and Natalie are currently WRIN interns.



## Grants Help Alums Take NEW Leadership Home

One component of NEW Leadership is called Taking NEW Leadership Home. Alums apply for competitive seed grants for projects in their communities that apply the lessons of the summer institute. Students have the opportunity to design a proposal, write it up with a budget, and create evaluation procedures. If selected, the student receives "seed money" for the project and promises to submit a report to WRIN upon completion. The following are a few selections.

**Evelyn Garcia** is on her second project: to reduce teen pregnancy in Clark County. With community partners Planned Parenthood, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the YMCA, she has created a game called This is My Life designed to expand the ideas of young people (ages 11-15) about the realities and responsibilities of parenthood. The game has been tested in a pilot program and she has received a UNLV Undergraduate Research Award to test the project.

**Lidia Hoffman's** TMCC Political Science professor, Paul Davis, encouraged her to attend NEW Leadership Nevada. By the end of the week, Lidia found that her ideas and behavior began to change. "I began to speak up for my ideas and started believing in myself." She successfully applied for a "seed grant" to create a pilot project questionnaire for political science students on influences that lead women to become politically active. The survey is not yet completed, but once finished, Lidia would like to apply it at this summer's NEW Leadership conference.

**Robbi Phillips & Ashley Hickey** are working with other campus groups to register student voters this fall. The 18-25 age group has the lowest voter participation rate of any age group and these two want to help change that. Their proposal is focused on taking action to help create change in their part of Nevada.

Thanks to the Nevada Women's Agenda for providing scholarships that helped our alums attend the 2004 Women's Summit.

*A special  
thank you  
to*

*U.S. Senator Harry Reid  
for his support of our grant  
from the Department of  
Education to fund NEW  
Leadership Nevada 2004.*



## Julianna Ormsby joins WRIN staff to Coordinate NEW Leadership

Julianna Ormsby first cultivated her passion for women's studies at the University of Maryland Baltimore County where she earned her B.A. in American Studies with an emphasis in Women's Studies.

She eventually returned to Las Vegas and enrolled in UNLV's Master of Social Work (MSW) program where she received her MSW in 2002. She worked with

foster children for the State of Nevada's Division of Child and Family Services before joining WRIN in March of 2004.

In addition to her WRIN and NEW Leadership Nevada duties, Julianna also teaches in the Department of Women's Studies at UNLV.



*Julianna Ormsby, NEW Leadership Nevada Program Manager*

### KUDOS TO 2003 ALUMS

**Merietta Oviatt** is a candidate for Clark County School District Trustee in District C.

**Jennifer Parmeley** finished her first year in law school and is working with the family court self-help center in Washoe County.

**Brandi Powell** will be one of MTV's political correspondents covering Las Vegas during the fall campaigns. This summer she is in NYC as an intern with Dateline NBC.

**Jennifer Meredith** finished her first year of law school and is working at WRIN on NEW Leadership 2004. She received the UNLV Student Leader of the Month Award for April 2004.

**Robbi Phillips** was elected as the Student Body Vice-President of Great Basin College. She and Ashley have been recruiting for 2004 students.

**Natalie Obeso** has worked all year at WRIN as the Recruitment and Development Officer and doing a wonderful job.

**Jennifer Benedict** completed her Masters of Social Work at Columbia University and is looking for an internship in Las Vegas. And speaking of social work...

**Linda Anderson** is working in London as a social worker this year.

**Crystal Jackson** finished her second year in the Sociology MA program at UNLV. She is an intern at WRIN this summer.

### Former U.S. Representative Barbara Vucanovich, Justice Miriam Shearing, and Regent Thalia Dondero Featured Speakers at NEW Leadership 2004

One of the objectives of NEW Leadership is to encourage dialogue between college students and Nevada leaders. Our state provides particular opportunities for this because of its size. This summer we are honored to bring three women who truly broke new ground through their public activities.

**Former U.S. Representative Barbara Vucanovich** served Nevada's 2nd District in Congress for seven terms from 1982 to 1996. Vucanovich was the first woman to be elected to a federal office from Nevada. She was the first representative for Nevada's Second Congressional District. She was the first Nevadan to serve in a leadership position in the U.S. House of Representatives as Republican Conference Secretary for the 104th Congress.

She said it wasn't easy trekking the U.S. Capitol in her high heels. But she loved every minute of those 14 years.

When Vucanovich first went to Congress she was one of 19 women who held the 435 seats. "It was different," Vucanovich said. "The number has increased since then, but we're still a minority."

Prior to her House of Representatives service, she served as District Repre-

sentative in Northern Nevada for U. S. Senator Paul Laxalt from 1974 to 1981.

**State Supreme Court Justice Miriam Shearing** presents the keynote address to this year's students. The first woman to serve on the Nevada Supreme Court and to preside as its Chief Justice, Shearing retires this year. Her judicial career has been one of "firsts" for 25 years. She practiced law in Las Vegas from 1969 to 1976 when she became the first woman elected as justice of the peace in Las Vegas. In 1982, she became the first woman elected as a District Court judge in Nevada, serving a decade on the Clark County bench with three of those years spent as juvenile judge. Then in 1992, she was elected to the Supreme Court and re-elected in 1998.

**Regent Thalia Dondero** has a long career in public service to Clark County and the state. Elected to the Board of Regents in 1996, she served twice as that body's chair and as an advocate for the creation of Nevada State College. Ms Dondero was the first woman elected to the Clark County Board of Commissioners. During her 20 years of service for Clark County, she served as Chair for three terms and worked with every facet of the metropolitan area's growth. Among her many contributions, she takes most pride in her efforts to protect Red Rock as a Conservation Area and her planning work on the McCarran Airport and the Southern Nevada Water Authority.



# UPDATE on Research Projects

## Status of Women and Girls in Nevada

### WRIN joins National and State partnerships on Study

News stories often compare Nevada to other states on indicators of income, education and health. Did you ever wonder how that information applied to women and girls? A multi-year study on the *Status of Women and Girls in Nevada* will answer many of those questions.

Every ten years, the Institute for Women's Policy Research in Washington, D.C. compiles federal data on women in every state. Their Nevada report will be out fall 2004 and WRIN will be help to spread the information of its findings.

A study of far greater detail and specificity on Nevada has been in process for several years conducted by Jill Winter (UNR, Center for Applied Research) and funded by the Nevada Women's Fund. The report will provide information on individual counties as well as variations across the state on dozens of indicators of well-being. From employment to civic engagement, from health to education and citizenship, Nevada's businesses, educators, and policymakers will have a tool to understand statewide issues as never before.

WRIN director, Joanne Goodwin, worked with Jill Winter on the project and will continue with an analysis of employment data for the publication due out late summer.



## Florence McClure Honored

Florence McClure, co-founder of the Rape Crisis Center in Las Vegas and advocate for prison reform, received WRIN's nomination as a Citizen of Distinction at the Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow Luncheon last April.



Florence McClure (r) with daughter Carolyn McClure Dunn

## Las Vegas Women

### Oral History Project

The oral history project produced three volumes in the past year; two on women working in the casino industry and one community builder.

Gail McQuary had an opportunity to dance in Las Vegas straight from the California state fair. She danced for years at the Sahara, raising a family at the same time. After she left the showroom, she started selling real estate which she continues to this day.

Bernice Jaeger moved to Las Vegas in the early 1960s with her family and approximately sixty other families from the Cincinnati area. They were all involved in gambling and came to Las Vegas where they could work legitimately. After raising her children, Bernice went back to school at UNLV and moved into hotel management.

Fran Montes has been involved with numerous activities building the Latino community. Past president of the Latino Chamber of Commerce and of Hispanics in Politics, Montes received a Community Achievement Award from the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce in recognition of her work. She also serves on the WRIN and NEW Leadership Advisory groups.

## In the News

Our students and staff had numerous opportunities to tell the public about the work we do and in particular, the NEW Leadership program.

In November, Caryll Dziedziak, Jennifer Merideth, and Jennifer Parmeley spoke on KNPR for the community news program, *Ideas in the Air*. In April, Jennifer M. and Julianna Ormsby taped a sequence for *Observations with Bob Fisher*, a public policy program viewed in Northern Nevada. Joanne spoke with Gwen Castaldi on KNPR's *State of Nevada* about the importance of conducting research on women.

We have also received print coverage. *Nevada Woman* featured our programs in the May/June issue. WRIN director Joanne Goodwin was quoted in a recent article on women in Las Vegas for the *New York Times*. The UNLV Foundation publication *It's Academic* featured the NEW Leadership program as an example of work done at UNLV that benefit from President Harter's support.

Please let these companies know that you are glad to see them cover our work.



## Thank you to our supporters -- individual, organization, corporate, and government [July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004] \* designates multiple year gifts

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UNLV, Office of the President, Office of the Vice-President for Administration, College of Liberal Arts, Student Leadership Services.

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## Q & A about Donations

**Do you receive all of the money that I send as a gift?** "Almost." The UNLV Foundation collects all gifts given to the university. They recently initiated a 5% fee for handling any and all gifts. So, for every dollar gifted to WRIN, five cents goes to the Foundation.

**I recently received a call asking me to renew my gift to the College of Liberal Arts. What does this have to do with WRIN?** We are a research unit within the College of Liberal Arts even though we deliver services to the entire state. When you make a gift to WRIN, the College receives a notice of your gift and includes you on the College donor list. If you make a pledge, and want funds to go directly to WRIN, send the check to us first and designate that it is for WRIN. Otherwise, your gift will go into the general fund for UNLV.

**I sent a gift check to WRIN and my husband got the thank you letter. What's up with that?** Try as we might, and we do constantly, the UNLV Foundation tells us they cannot change this. (We don't understand why, either).

**Where does WRIN gets its funding?** UNLV provides substantial "in-kind" benefits to WRIN including the director's time, graduate student assistants, and office space. All other funding that is used for operations, programs, and student wages comes from grants, contracts and gifts. University funding is increasingly reliant on private gifts as public funding decreases. Private and corporate gifts make up a significant part of our funding for WRIN.

WRIN *should* receive part of its funding from the state budget as a "statewide program." But funding in this area has been cut from the state budget in the last three sessions. We will continue to work with the university administration to keep WRIN on the funding priority list and work with the legislature to make this a reality.

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