

Fall 2005

## Women's Research Institute of Nevada Newsletter

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Women's Research Institute of Nevada

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## Persistence prevails. WRIN receives funding for 2005-2007

### Director's Message

by Joanne Goodwin

2005 marked the sixth year of WRIN's work as a statewide research and education institute. It also marked the third legislative session at which our supporters attempted to gain a measure of funding. Persistence worked. In this issue of our newsletter, we acknowledge the help of our friends and share news of research underway that will improve the lives of all Nevadans.

#### Legislature

Several statewide entities including the Center for Basque Studies, the Oral History Program, and the Film and Video Library (all located at UNR) are included in the state budget. We believe that WRIN's mission and programs have a place there as well. The university has agreed and put us on the funding list. Thanks to the energetic support of friends and allies, WRIN joined those programs temporarily with an appropriation for the biennium 2005-2007. We will pursue our three main projects: the civic engagement program *NEW Leadership Nevada*, documentation on the historic contributions of women in the state, and dissemination of information on the *Status of Women in Nevada*.

At the opening hearing for the education budget, Senator Dina Titus and Assemblywoman Kathy McClain raised the issue of funding for WRIN. McClain submitted AB172 to fund WRIN with co-signers Koivisto, Giunchigliani, Smith, Parnell, Buckley, Claborn, Conklin, Denis, Gerhardt, Kirkpatrick, Leslie, Ohrenschall, Pierce, Weber, Titus, Wiener, and Carlton. During the session, we received additional support from Raggio, Cegavske, Coffin, Perkins, Allen, Gansert and Arberry as well as friends from across the state. It was a group effort

by those who understand the importance of what we do. And it came just in time.

#### Research

Many states already recognize the value of a research institute with the mission to explore the impact of gender on the health, education, employment and political participation of women. This issue of our newsletter highlights some of our research projects.

Two studies focusing on the status of women in Nevada are the newest initiative of the institute. Collaborating with the Institute for Women's Policy Research in Washington, D.C., WRIN helped make the report, *Status of Women in Nevada*, available. A more in-depth study directed by Jill Winter and produced by the Nevada Women's Fund is due for release this fall. UNLV's Center for Business and Economic Research and WRIN collaborated on that project over the last several years. Copies will be available through our office.

The documentation of women's historic and contemporary roles in the development of the state continues with the completion of our oral history on Nancy Houssels. No other entity in the state consistently records the accomplishments of our female leaders and community builders. WRIN Assistant Director, Caryll Dzedziak has worked with Houssels for several years on this collaborative memoir described in her article.

Going strong for three years, the National Education for Women's (NEW) Leadership program continues to bring unprecedented opportunities to the state's college students. Program Manager

Julianna Ormsby provides some of the highlights of this year's program and the new areas of outreach undertaken this year. Within a few months, we will be able to provide a preliminary assessment of the leadership program's impact from surveys produced and compiled by Dr. Cathy Hanks of UNLV's Political Science department.

We are introducing two new vehicles for research on women. The WRIN website is undergoing a major revision that will allow visitors to gain a clearer understanding of who we are and what we do. It will also provide excerpts from our original research on Nevada women as well as a statistical spotlight on data on women and girls. Secondly, we will communicate information on gender research with the Research Roundtable series and our lecture series. The first features UNLV faculty's original research on gender subjects. The second brings nationally renowned speakers to the campus to share pertinent information on women and gender. See our calendar for this fall's offerings.

As always, we welcome your support and ideas.

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# Status of Women in Nevada

## Research Collaboration on the Status of Women in Nevada

Every ten years, the **Institute for Women's Policy Research** ([www.IWPR.org](http://www.IWPR.org)) in Washington, D.C. compiles federal data on women in every state. In 2004, WRIN affiliated with IWPR to review material on women's health, education, social welfare, employment, and political involvement & representation. *The Status of Women in Nevada* report was released in November 2004. WRIN helped to make the publication available to researchers, policymakers, and community members.

Nevada rates very well in women's reproductive rights (13<sup>th</sup> out of the fifty states plus the District of Columbia) and women in elected office (9<sup>th</sup>). However, the state ranks last in the rate of women's suicide (51<sup>st</sup>) and death as a result of lung cancer (51<sup>st</sup>). Nevada women earn \$29,800 annually, while men have a median annual income of

\$38,700 (see Nevada Women's Earnings table). Nevada ranks 7<sup>th</sup> nationally in the percentage of women living above the poverty line. For more information on how Nevada ranks nationally, an online version of the report is available through IWPR: [www.iwpr.org/States2004/PDFs/Nevada.pdf](http://www.iwpr.org/States2004/PDFs/Nevada.pdf)

To better understand how women and girls fare in Nevada, WRIN partnered with the **Nevada Women's Fund** on a more detailed study. Over the last two years, over 200 indicators of status in health, education, employment, and politics were devised and then compared across the state. The first report is due for release this fall. *The Status of Women and Girls in Nevada* will be an invaluable tool for Nevada businesses, educators, and policymakers interested in women's and girls' issues and rights.

## Nevada Women's Annual Earnings

*Nevada ranks 19<sup>th</sup>\* nationally for women's median annual earnings.*

	Nevada	United States
<b>full-time female worker (median)</b>	<b>\$29,800</b>	<b>\$29,800</b>
African American	\$27,600	\$27,600
Asian American	\$27,600	\$33,100
Hispanic	\$22,100	\$23,200
Native American	\$27,400	\$25,500
White	\$32,000	\$30,900
Other/Two or More	\$27,600	\$28,400
<b>full-time male worker (median)</b>	<b>\$38,700</b>	<b>\$40,900</b>

\*All national statistics consist of the fifty states plus the District of Columbia. See Section 3 and Appendix V, *The Status of Women in Nevada*, for further information about medial annual incomes.

## Thank you to our supporters!

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 Western Nevada Community College  
 WRIN Community Advisory Board  
 WRIN NEW Leadership Advisory Council



WRIN 2005 Spring Reception, left to right: Natalie Obeso, Gwen Dally, Jennifer Merideth, Caryll Dzedziak (seated), Dr. Joanne Goodwin (seated), Crystal Jackson, Julianna Ormsby, Alma Castro.

## Meet Our Staff!

Dr. Joanne Goodwin, Director, WRIN; Associate Professor, History Department, UNLV  
 Caryll Dzedziak, Assistant Director, WRIN; Ph.D. candidate, History Department, UNLV  
 Julianna Ormsby, NEW Leadership Program Manager; MSW  
 Jennifer Merideth, Graduate Assistant; 3<sup>rd</sup> year law student, Boyd School of Law, UNLV  
 Crystal Jackson, WRIN Graduate Assistant; Women's Studies Graduate Certificate, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Master's student, Sociology, UNLV  
 Alma Castro, WRIN Student Worker; junior, Political Science & Women's Studies, UNLV

# NEW Leadership Nevada



*NEW Leadership Nevada 2005 students & Faculty-in-Residence Beth Naccarato (top, far left) enjoy a break between sessions.*

## NEW Leadership Nevada Celebrates Third Year

*By Julianna Ormsby, NEW Leadership Nevada Program Manager*

National Education for Women's (NEW) Leadership Nevada came into existence to enhance women's participation in all aspects of public life. According to the Center for American Women and Politics, women hold only 81 out of 535 seats in the U.S. Congress (15.1%). In state legislatures, women hold 1,666 out of 7,382 seats (22.6%). Nevada ranks high, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation (tied with Vermont, Washington, and Arizona) for the number of women in the state legislature, holding 21 of 63 (33.3%) seats. NEW Leadership Nevada is also working to increase women's leadership in a number of other areas. In 2004, Nevada ranked 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the number of women who hold professional or managerial positions and 21<sup>st</sup> for women-owned businesses. We know from our interactions with students that it is important for them to see women in leadership roles. As we move into our 4<sup>th</sup> year of educating and empowering women to take on leadership roles, we are proud to continue to offer this innovative and exciting program in Nevada.

In June 2005, we welcomed 31 students from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Great Basin College, Truckee Meadows Community College, Western Nevada Community College, University of Nevada, Reno, (and a Las Vegas resident attending Wellesley College in Massachusetts). Students converged on the UNLV campus and met with some of Nevada's most accomplished leaders, including Assemblywomen Francis Allen, Kathy McClain, & Valerie Weber, former Congresswoman Barbara Vucanovich, and community activists such

as Linda Rivera, Fran Montes and Marlene Monteolivo, to learn about women's leadership in Nevada. Our featured Keynote Speaker was former Nevada Attorney General Frankie Sue Del Papa, who inspired students and addressed a record number of guests at our signature event.

As a program of the Women's Research Institute of Nevada, NEW Leadership Nevada provides a unique opportunity to explore leadership and civic engagement. Students are encouraged to take on community projects, wherever they see a need. Current and past projects have focused on such issues as domestic violence, voter education and registration, research on gender voting differences, diversity in leadership for Latina students, teen pregnancy prevention outreach & research, sexual violence awareness and prevention, childhood obesity and health awareness, and children's participation in the arts.

### *Building a Network Across Nevada*

In just three short years, NEW Leadership Nevada has connected with students statewide to build a network of emerging leaders. Since 2003, 77 students have attended NEW Leadership Nevada. All of the institutions in the Nevada System of Higher Education have been represented, including students from University of Nevada, Las Vegas, University of Nevada, Reno, Great Basin College, Truckee Meadows Community College, Western Nevada Community College, Community College of Southern Nevada, and Nevada State College. This group of students is diverse in many ways. According to self-reported information, 8 students identified as African-American, 5 as Asian Pacific Islander, 38 as Caucasian, 16 as Latina, 2 as Native American, and 8 reported "other" or did not report. Students also represent several countries, including Romania, Poland, Brazil, Argentina, Russia, Mexico, and Japan. Almost twelve percent of our students are from rural Nevada communities. Students represent a wide range of ages, from 18 to 50+, reflecting women just beginning their studies to those returning to school. Academic majors and career interests also vary widely, including Political Science, Nursing, Spanish, German, Forensic Science, Mathematics, Pre-Med, Women's Studies, Journalism, Criminal Justice, Communications, Business, Computer Information Systems, Education, Psychology, Marketing and Advertising, Anthropology, African American Studies,

Music, Art History, Hotel Management, and Biochemistry. In 2006, NEW Leadership Nevada will continue its commitment to attract a wide variety of students in order to reflect the growing diversity of our state and the greater community.

As we move into our third year of providing this innovative and inspiring program to students, we are particularly excited to be able to track the progress of our graduates and the efficacy of our program. In 2004, we began collaborating with a research consultant to assess the goals of our program and ultimately ascertain whether the program meets the needs of our students. We have collected data on all three groups of students and are continuing to capture data at 6-, 12-, and 18-month intervals. We hope to publish our findings after compiling the data at a future point. We believe that our unique program, while modeled after Rutgers' University's NEW Leadership program, has become an innovative model itself for educating and empowering a new generation of Nevada leaders. Thank you for your continued support!

For more information about the program, please visit [www.unlv.edu/institutes/wrinunlv/new\\_leadership.html](http://www.unlv.edu/institutes/wrinunlv/new_leadership.html)

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## *Facts About Leadership And Women In Nevada*

Did you know...?

- ... Nevada has not yet had a woman governor. In 2005, only eight women hold the position of governor nationwide.<sup>a</sup>
- ... Nevada has had no women Senators and only two Congresswomen—Congresswoman Barbara Vucanovich (R-Reno) served from 1983-1997 and current Nevada Congresswoman Shelley Berkley (D-Las Vegas) was elected in 1999.<sup>b</sup>
- ... Nevada ranks 50<sup>th</sup> (26.9%) in the nation for the number of women who hold professional and managerial positions.<sup>c</sup>
- ... Nevada ranks 21<sup>st</sup> (25.7%) in the nation for the number of women-owned businesses.<sup>c</sup>
- ... Women in Nevada are among the least likely to have a college education.<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Women in Statewide Elective Executive Office 2005, Center for American Women and Politics, <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp/>

<sup>b</sup> Women in Elected Office- Historical Summary (Nevada), Center for American Women and Politics, <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp/>

<sup>c</sup> The 2004 Status of Women in the States report, Institute of Women's Policy Research, [www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org)

# Update on Research Projects

## Research Roundtable Series

The Research Roundtable Series reflects WRIN's mission to stimulate, communicate, and coordinate research among faculty conducting gender research. The spring 2005 semester marked the first two Research Roundtables. Dr. Marta Meana, Psychology, presented research focused on heterosexual female sexual desire. Dr. Naoko Takemaru, Foreign Languages,

presented her research investigating Japanese women's perception of sexism in language. Both faculty members are preparing their research for publication. Roundtable attendees included faculty members from various departments, including History, Sociology, & Women's Studies, as well as graduate and undergraduate students from a variety of departments.



### Nancy Houssels: A Collaborative Memoir

By Caryll Batt Dziedzic

Over the past six years, I have had the privilege of working with Nancy Houssels on a collaborative memoir of her life.

Set for publication in September 2005, a copy of this memoir will be available for the public's use in the Special Collections Department of Lied Library at UNLV. This work is part of WRIN's Las Vegas Women Oral History Project, a series that chronicles the lives of women who have made significant contributions to the Las Vegas community. As with the lives of so many other women, Housel's personal story is a wonderful example of how our community has benefited from the diverse backgrounds of the people who call Las Vegas home.

There is little doubt that dance has shaped Nancy's life. Born in Piedmont, California, Nancy began dancing at the early age of three, filling her childhood years with dance and synchronized swimming. After attaining a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theatre Arts from UCLA in 1957, Nancy and her dance partner, Francois Szony, toured Europe for two and a half years as the *Szony and Claire* adagio dance team. They returned to the states to perform along the East coast before heading to Las Vegas in 1966. They performed in Las

Vegas for the next two years, appearing with the *Casino de Paris* at the Dunes Hotel and the *Folies Bergere* at the Tropicana Hotel.

Nancy met and shortly thereafter married J. Kell Houssels, Jr.; then the president of the Tropicana Hotel. Although her days as a professional dancer ended, Nancy never relinquished her love of dance. In 1972, she joined Vassili Sulich in founding the Nevada Dance Theatre. Renamed the Nevada Ballet Theatre in 1998, the company continues to serve not only as a leading force for live performing arts, but also as a source of community outreach programs for children.

Nancy has also worked diligently as a member of the Las Vegas Performing Arts Center Foundation to bring a world-class performing arts center to our community. She believes that a performing arts center will invigorate Las Vegas' civic pride and sense of community. Set to open in 2007, The Smith Performing Arts Center will be the highlight of the sixty-one acre master planned downtown.

Nancy has worked tirelessly to enrich the cultural arts for the enjoyment of all Southern Nevadans. She believes her life experience reflects both the viewpoint of the artist and that of the audience. Indeed, her visionary leadership and love of dance has not only shaped her life but nurtured the development of the cultural arts in Southern Nevada.

### Thank you to our individual supporters!

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## Fall 2005 Research Roundtable Series Calendar

**September 19** 12:00-1:30  
**MSU Fireside Lounge**  
Report from the UNLV Status of Women Committee on Faculty Retention and Family and Medical Leave.

**October 5** 12:00-1:30  
**MSU Fireside Lounge**  
Sociology professors Barb Brents and Kate Hausbeck discuss their research on Nevada prostitution and the release of their book.

**November 30** 12:00-1:30  
**MSU 202**  
Political Science professor Michele Kuenzi discusses her research on non-formal education in Senegal and its positive impact on women's civic engagement.

## Gender Research Lecture

November 4, 2005  
Lecture 3:00-4:30 • MSU 203  
Reception 5:00-6:00  
Special Collections, Lied Library

**Annelise Orleck** discusses her newly published book *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Mothers Fought their own War on Poverty*.

The War on Poverty promised to eliminate poverty from the U.S., but why would Nevada, the land of opportunity and seemingly endless employment, need a welfare rights movement? Orleck answers this question with an in-depth examination of the twenty year history of Operation Life, Las Vegas' anti-poverty organization. Operation Life provided Las Vegas a center for job training, medical screening, daycare, and a library of African American history. Based on numerous interviews with participants, Orleck weaves their own stories into the national history of welfare reform.

Join the author and many of the book's subjects at a reception immediately following the lecture.

Dr. Orleck is associate professor history at Dartmouth College and the author of two other books and numerous articles.

# An Interview with Frances Montes...Speaking with Passion



Frances "Fran" Montes' life story includes lessons in culture, history, geography, political science, and philosophy. It is the evolution of a *barrio* niña to a woman of distinction. Fran is one of the first in her family to graduate from high school and continue on to become a scholar with a master's degree. A child of a San Antonio, Texas *barrio*, Fran is one of five daughters

raised by a single mother in a very traditional neighborhood. After graduation from high school, she entered the business world as a secretary. Her marriage to Jerry Montes, who was in the Air Force, led her to Europe. The couple returned to the United States when Jerry was assigned to Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, Nevada. Today, Ms. Montes describes herself as a community activist and a diversity practitioner. She is a past president of Hispanics in Politics, the first woman to hold that position, and currently serves on the Southern Nevada Hispanic Employment Program Scholarship Committee. Fran was awarded the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce's 2002 Humanitarian Award for her work in the community and continues to serve as a mediator for the Neighborhood Justice Center. Fran's oral history, conducted by Barbara Agonia, was completed in 2004 and is available in Special Collections, UNLV.

1. As a third year WRIN Community Advisory Board (CAB) member, what is your favorite part of being a the position? What challenges, if any, are unique to your position at WRIN as compared to other community activist positions? Why is it important to you to be a WRIN CAB member?

My favorite part of being a CAB member is, of course, coming in contact with the young students. They are so alive and full of promise. WRIN is working to develop our young women into leaders and individual thinkers. That is one way to help prepare our young women to look beyond traditional occupations and to expand their capabilities.

Women are entering the workplace in greater numbers and yet we still do not command equal pay. More women are

participating in higher education. Our entrance into the workplace has also brought more quality of life issues that need to be addressed. Who better to address these questions than us, the same women who have to deal with these issues? As a WRIN CAB member, the challenge is that after all these years women still struggle to ensure that our programs and issues are given the recognition and financial support they deserve.

2. As a community activist, what other organizations and groups do you work with besides WRIN?

One of my pet projects has been the Southern Nevada Hispanic Employment Program (SNHEP). SNHEP was established to address employment issues relevant to Federal Hispanic employees and Federal contractor employees. We have since expanded our membership to include the private sector, students and anyone interested in making our community more inclusive. Employers need to focus on developing, training and educating their workforce. Women are a very large part of the emerging workforce. How do we equip women to become more successful and competitive, maximizing their contributions for the success of both women and business? This is only one of the questions SNHEP works to address. For women, education is an important key to success, as a parent, employee, or even as a member of our community. SNHEP works at developing partnerships with our schools, universities and colleges and provides scholarships to our community.

Politics is the arena where women's issues can best be addressed and resolved. Consequently I have enjoyed my membership in Hispanic in Politics (HIP). As past president of this organization and now a member, I closely identify with HIP's mission: to empower the Hispanic community to become active in the political process. Constantly I work at whatever avenues are available to get the message out: registering people to vote, questioning our political leaders, and participating in identifying new and emerging leaders in our community.

As a Community Activist I was invited to sit on a roundtable with the Clark County School Superintendent to discuss educational issues relevant to the Hispanic community. We work to provide an awareness of our

community's issues inherent in our culture with regard to family and education.

For a number of years I served on the City of Las Vegas Child Care Licensing Board because it was important to ensure that our community's diversity was reflected on the board. As a member and Chair of this board, I worked to develop an awareness of the many services available to our community and the importance of ensuring the safety and health of our children.

As a diversity practitioner, I also volunteer as a mediator for the Neighborhood Justice Center. The tremendous growth of the Hispanic community has triggered a need to provide bilingual services to our very diverse community. My objective is to assist the parties involved to focus on their commonalities and help bridge the differences that often have led to the cause of the conflict.

3. As an accomplished and supportive member of the Las Vegas and Nevada communities, what advice can you offer to other local community activists, particularly activists interested in women's and feminist issues?

Find what in the women's arena sparks your interest. What triggers your passion? Then find an organization that focuses on that specific issue, goal, or objective and become one of the voices that bring that message to our community. We all have friends, people that trust us; if we speak with honesty and passion they will hear our message.

## Contact us about these opportunities!

### on campus:

student internships  
author's receptions  
visiting scholars  
research roundtables  
affiliate faculty research directory

### in the community:

information on women and girls in the state  
histories of women in Nevada  
statewide network of gender scholars  
resources and publications for educators and policymakers



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Frankie Sue Del Papa  
 Barbara Vucanovich

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# Join the Women's Research Institute of Nevada!

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- |                                          |                                             |
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