

Fall 2006

Women's Research Institute of Nevada Newsletter

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Women's Research Institute of Nevada

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Recommended Citation

Goodwin, Joanne and Women's Research Institute of Nevada, "Women's Research Institute of Nevada Newsletter" (2006). *Newsletters*. 4.

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WRIN joins the National Council for Research on Women

Director's Message

by Joanne Goodwin



Gender research continues to reveal important trends in U.S. education and the economy. A recent report by the Pell Institute noted that women are overtaking men in college enrollments and receiving more honors degrees at elite schools (NYT, July 9, 2006). While some commentators have called this a crisis for U.S. boys, a deeper look reveals different attitudes about school and employment between the sexes as well as different economic results relative to education. Lower income students and those from Hispanic and African American backgrounds still trail the averages. To see how these trends apply in Nevada, please see the *Status of Women and Girls in Nevada* reports noted in our publications section.

Joining NCRW. This past June, Nevada was represented for the first time at the annual conference for member centers of the National Council for Research on Women in New York City. This is a major milestone not only for the institute, but for the resources it brings to UNLV and the system of higher education in Nevada. WRIN has built a strong foundation from which to promote the work of faculty. A network like NCRW expands the potential to publicize that research nationally and internationally. All faculty are invited to contact us for ways to participate.

Research Initiatives. As you will read in these pages, WRIN has continued its three research initiatives—Las Vegas women's oral histories, the status of women in the state, and NEW Leadership Nevada—throughout 2006. Five oral histories are underway covering the lives of Stella Butterfield, Naomi Millisor, Bea Ratliffe, Harriet Trudell, and Claudine Williams. In addition, WRIN acquired interviews with social activists of the 1970s from L.A. filmmaker Mollie Gregory.

Julianna Ormsby's evaluation of college women's leadership will be available at the end of the year and we look forward to distributing this important information.

In addition to conducting research, our mission includes extending the audience for faculty research on gender. WRIN concluded the second year of the *Gender Research Roundtable* series and the fall schedule of presentations is listed inside.

Director in absentia. I would like to extend a public thank you to Caryll Dzedziak for stepping in and keeping the daily activities of WRIN on a clear path while I have been on medical and sabbatical leaves. We have an excellent and dedicated staff in place this year and Caryll's leadership has been superb.

New Quarters & new AA. After seven years on the physical margins of the UNLV campus, WRIN is back on central campus with a suite of offices on the 5th floor in the Flora Dungan Humanities (FDH) building. Our enthusiasm for being back in the heart of the campus is unrestrained and we offer a special thanks to Dean Ed Shoben who made this possible. Last, but not least, we are thrilled to have Annette Amdal as our first and only administrative assistant. Please come and see our new offices during our fall open house September 20 from 3:00 to 4:30 at the WRIN offices, FDH, 5th floor.

New Report on Women's Status

While Nevada continues to grow and diversify, tangible social and economic barriers inhibit women's and girls' daily lives. To better understand how women and girls fare in Nevada, WRIN affiliated with the Nevada Women's Fund and partnered with the Center for Business and Economic

Research at UNLV and the Center for Applied Research at the University of Nevada, Reno to complete an in-depth study on women's health, education, social welfare, employment, and political involvement statewide. The *Status of Women and Girls in Nevada* compares over 200 indicators of health, education, employment, and politics across the state in the first comprehensive statewide report of its kind.

Highlights. While Nevada experienced the greatest growth of women-owned businesses in the nation between 1997 and 2004, full-time working women still earned almost \$9,000 annually less than their male counterparts. The state also does poorly in terms of domestic violence and domestic homicide, ranking fourth nationally in the rate of female-victimization homicide. In 2003, in cases where the relationship between the female victim and the murderer were identifiable, all 27 victims were killed by men they knew, not strangers.

The report is an invaluable tool for Nevada businesses, educators, non-profit organizations, and policymakers interested in women's and girls' issues and rights. Copies of *The Status of Women and Girls in Nevada* are available through our office for twenty dollars or free with a membership to WRIN.

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Research Briefs

Sue Wagner Speaks About Politics & Women in Nevada



Standing (left to right): Caryll Dziedziak, Victoria Ford, Joanne Goodwin. Sue Wagner (seated).

This past May, WRIN was pleased to host a book signing reception for former Lieutenant Governor Sue Wagner. Wagner, who is also an honorary member of WRIN's Community Advisory Board, has been a longtime advocate for our institute and programs including NEW Leadership Nevada. *Through the Glass Ceiling: A Life in Nevada Politics*, by Sue Wagner with oral historian Victoria Ford, chronicles Wagner's life as a state politician and champion of legislation for improving women's lives. Wagner and Ford spoke to a crowd of approximately fifty community members and academics about the process of compiling the oral history. Wagner also offered insightful and humorous reflections on her tenure in Nevada politics. A joint effort of the Nevada Women's History Project and the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP), *Through the Glass Ceiling* is a must read for anyone interested in Nevada's history and is available through UNOHP for \$29.95 at UNOHP, Mail Stop 324, Reno, NV 89557-0099.

WRIN has a new website!

Coming this fall

<http://wrin.unlv.edu>

Nevada Women's Health: Annual Cancer Incidence Rates (per 100,000 population) by for Nevada Women: 1997-2001

	Nevada	Clark	Washoe	All Other Counties
Type of Cancer				
All Cancers	423.0	428.8	450.6	369.3
Breast Cancer	135.2	134.4	154.3	118.0
Lung Cancer	71.7	74.9	66.6	63.7

**See Table 5.6, The Status of Women and Girls in Nevada.*

Los Angeles Filmmaker, Mollie Gregory, donates interviews

If you think social activism in Nevada is something new, a collection of interviews preserved and indexed by WRIN for the Nevada Women's Archives will change your mind.

Los Angeles filmmaker and author, Mollie Gregory, contacted WRIN Director Joanne Goodwin two years ago to ask if UNLV would be interested in her interviews with anti-poverty and women's rights leaders from Nevada during the 1970s. "I jumped at the chance to acquire new sources because historical records are so rare for that period," said Goodwin. Gregory sent approximately 146 reels of mostly audio and a few film interviews that needed first to be preserved on compact discs and then carefully indexed. During the next three semesters, Sociology graduate student Crystal Jackson headed up the major effort assisted by History graduate student Marilyn Shelby.

Mollie Gregory began her career writing and producing documentary films. Her 1977 feature-length documentary *Off the Edge* was nominated for an Academy Award. While covering a variety of film subjects, women's rights and social justice

have been a consistent interest. She is a past president of Women in Film, a past president of the international writers' organization P.E.N. West, and she was a member of the Writer's Guild of America where she chaired its Women's Committee, 1979-81. She is a trustee of the Women in Film Foundation where she helped originate its Film Finishing Fund competition. In 1997, she created and chaired the Annette Welles History Preservation Plan. Gregory is also an author having published two non-fiction works, seven novels, and several film adaptations. Her most recent book, *Women Who Run The Show: How A Brilliant and Creative New Generation Stormed Hollywood*, is based on 125 interviews with women in Hollywood's film and television workplace from 1970 to 2000.

"This collection enriches the holdings on women's contributions to Nevada," said Goodwin. "It took a lot of extra effort, but the sources are now ready for students and researchers." For more information on the Mollie Gregory collection, contact Special Collections at the Lied Library, (702) 895-2234.

Research Briefs

Claudine Williams completes oral history



Claudine Williams, a gaming and banking pioneer in Nevada, has concluded her oral history conducted by Dr. Joanne Goodwin. A child of the depression,

Williams went to work at an early age and talked her way into working in a Texas club as a teen. She was a quick learner and hard worker. By the time she was 19, she and a partner operated their own club. She moved to Las Vegas in 1963 with her husband Shelby to develop the Silver Slipper. Within a few years, they bought the land and built the Holiday Casino which we know today as Harrah's. In addition to being a female pioneer in strip casino ownership, she was the first president of a Nevada bank, and held leadership positions in the LVCVA and the Chamber of Commerce. For many years she has been a major philanthropist in the Las Vegas valley believing strongly in the ethic of giving back to the community in which she did business.

Harriet Trudell: Activist Extraordinaire

“Just show me the fight.”



While oral histories do provide a critical method for documenting local history, there's a perk for the historian that we don't always share: we

get to listen to *fabulous* storytelling! Caryll Dzedziak had the pleasure of interviewing Harriet Trudell for her oral history and in the process became mesmerized with her life stories.

Born during the depression years in the segregated South, Harriet spent her childhood years in St. Petersburg, Florida and Mobile, Alabama. Daughter to a blue collar union organizer and 'rabid Democrat,' she recalls her father saying, "Remember children, there's meat on your plate because there's a man named Roosevelt."

Unsurprisingly, she grew up thinking Roosevelt was God.

In 1948, sixteen-year-old Harriet accompanied her father, an Alabama Delegate, to the Democratic National Convention. Hearing Hubert Humphrey's Civil Rights speech changed her life. "I came home from that convention a *wild* woman," says Harriet. She had suddenly recognized the pervasive racial divide of her community and thus began a lifelong quest for social change.

By her early twenties, Harriet was organizing unions for the State AFL-CIO in Florida. Marriage and children soon followed. By 1962, Harriet and her young family relocated to Las Vegas. After a brief trip in 1965 back to Selma, Alabama marching with Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet focused her activism within Nevada. In the years that followed, she worked on behalf of school integration, welfare rights, the Equal Rights Amendment, Campaign for Choice; while running political campaigns or working for state and federal politicians and national organizations.

Harriet has continued her work in Democratic politics and local activism. Her political acumen has indeed earned the respect of both local voters and noted legislators. She continues to be energized by politics and show no signs of slowing down. For on any given day, should you drop in at the Democratic Headquarters off Maryland Parkway, you'll find Harriet...doing politics...as usual.

Law Professor Examines Sexual Harassment

In her Spring semester Gender Research Roundtable presentation, *Harassment of Sex(y) Workers*, Professor Ann McGinley, William S. Boyd Professor of Law, discussed her research on customer sexual harassment of women working in sexualized industries.

McGinley challenged the assumption that women who work in sexualized environments or sell sex for a living assume the risk of sexual harassment and do not deserve the law's protection. She examined social science definitions of the

gendered nature of work and analyzed the work environments of women black jack dealers, cocktail waitresses, exotic dancers, and brothel prostitutes. By comparing the jobs to one another and to those of women in non-sexualized industries, McGinley examined the commodification that nearly all women experience at work and posited that drawing lines between sex(y) workers and other working women is problematic. She proposed that Title VII should protect a woman from harassment that alters the terms and conditions of employment and explained how courts should determine whether this alteration occurs in a sexualized workplace.

For a wider discussion of her ideas, please see her publications *Harassing Girls at the Hard Rock: Masculinities in Sexualized Environments*, accepted for publication by the UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LAW REVIEW, and *Harassment of Sex(y) Workers: Applying Title VII to Sexualized Industries*, recently published in the YALE JOURNAL OF LAW AND FEMINISM.

Re-Visioning Prostitution Policy Conference

This summer, academics and activists gathered in Las Vegas for a conference exploring the criminalization and stigmatization of prostitution. Several leading academics in the study of commercial sex presented their research, including Fran Shaver, Concordia University (Canada); Emily van der Meulen, York University (Canada); Laura Agustin, University of Liverpool (UK); and UNLV professors Kate Hausbeck and Barb Brents. Presentations addressed demystifying of the sex industry, Hausbeck and Brents, along with Women's Studies undergraduate Aleta Baldwin and NEW Leadership Nevada alumna Crystal Jackson, helped coordinate the conference with the Desiree Alliance, a rights-based organization. Nevada's brothels confer the unique status of being the only state in the U.S. with legal prostitution, making it an ideal location for the conference.

New Leadership Nevada

WRIN Celebrates 4th Year of NEW Leadership Nevada

In June 2006 we welcomed a new class of graduates, who join the ranks of close to 100 alumnae statewide. The NEW Leadership program was designed by Rutgers's Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) to encourage younger women's

civic participation. In 2003, WRIN was chosen by CAWP to host this program, and with the generous support of many in the community, we continue to ensure that this important program is available to Nevada students. Each year, we convene a new group of approximately 25 students for a week on the UNLV campus where they are connected with some of Nevada's most recognized and accomplished women leaders. These leaders represent a diversity of career fields, including politics, law, business, education, and community activism.

Highlights of our 2006 program included our signature Keynote Dinner, featuring an inspiring speech by Jan Jones. Ms. Jones, who is an honorary member of the WRIN Community Advisory Board, shared her leadership experiences with students, including her work as the former mayor of

Las Vegas and her current role as Senior VP of Communications & Government Relations for Harrah's. Students also had the rare opportunity to meet some truly inspiring women who helped to bring attention to the local and national welfare rights movement. Alversha Beals, Ruby Duncan, Essie Henderson, and Mary Wesley joined students for a discussion

"I believe that my time as mayor also demonstrated to both men and women that women can lead. I was the CEO of the city. They had to deal with me, whether they wanted to or not- I had to be at the table."

Keynote Speaker Jan Jones



NEW Leadership student Carmen Ortiz shakes hands with keynote speaker former Mayor Jan Jones.

of their efforts with the 1970s local activist group Operation Life. Dartmouth historian Annelise Orleck recently captured their stories in the book, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*.

Our students take what they learn from NEW Leadership Nevada and put their leadership skills to work in much-needed projects in

their communities, internships with state and federal elected officials, employment in the public and private sectors, and graduate, law, and medical school. This year also marks the 3rd year of an intensive research study that will analyze the long-term effects of NEW Leadership Nevada. We know from our students that NEW Leadership is often a "life-changing" experience and we plan to publish the results of our preliminary findings by the end of the year.

NEW Leadership Participants Initiating Change

Evelyn Garcia (2003 alumna, UNLV) is the new Program Coordinator for the National Hispanic Leadership Institute in Arlington, VA.

Patty Jones (2004 NEW Leadership Nevada alumna, Great Basin College) is running for School Board in Elko, Nevada.

Bori Kovacs (2004 alumna, Truckee Meadows Community College) organized the first Ladyfest ever held in Romania. Ladyfest Timisoara 2005 featured local women in the arts.

Melody Nelson (2004 alumna, UNLV) founded a sexuality educational organization focused on the Las Vegas community.

Julieta Marquez (2005 alumna, UNR) in Reno and UNLV students Alma Castro (2005), Evelyn Flores (2005), recent 2006 graduates Ivette Sanchez and Kenia Morales, and NEW Leadership NV Faculty-in-Residence and UNLV Women's Studies professor Dr. Anita Revilla in Las Vegas helped organize the historic *A Day Without Immigrants* marches. The May 1st demonstration was one of the largest marches ever held on the Las Vegas strip.

Emily Powers (2005 alumna, UNLV) created the Art Smarts program, which engages children in a local domestic violence shelter in art projects.

Cindy Serrato (2005 alumna, UNLV) is heading to Rutgers University, home of the Center for American Women and Politics and NEW Leadership, to begin graduate studies in the Women's Studies Department.

Students who participated in NEW Leadership Nevada (2004-2006) reported their own improvement in leadership skills as measured before and after the weeklong institute.

- *Understanding of Leadership* reported as *high* or *very high* jumped from 43% pre-attendance to 99% post-attendance.
- *Students' Confidence in Own Ability to Lead* moved from 46% *high* or *very high* confidence pre-attendance to 93% *high* or *very high* confidence post-attendance.
- *Students' Confidence in Their Ability to Create Community Change* improved dramatically from 15% pre-attendance to 71% post-attendance who indicated a *very high* level of confidence.

WRIN Announcements

Annette Amdal: WRIN's First Administrative Assistant

I feel very fortunate to have joined the team at the Women's Research Institute of Nevada this year. The atmosphere is truly one of growth and education. There is a real sense of extended family with the staff and I often feel like the housemother to a group of incredibly talented and intelligent women who are poised to do great things. I transferred to UNLV in November 2005 and now spend my days typing oral histories, keeping track of schedules, processing payment vouchers and helping to coordinate events for WRIN. I have been privileged to meet a great many interesting and focused women who continue to make conditions for women in Nevada better than they have ever been before.

I lost my precious husband of thirty-three years earlier this year to the ravages of diabetes and kidney disease. It is my goal and my dream to advocate for families like us who face these difficult and challenging diseases. I am also planning to actively participate in helping to change health care laws in this country. I look forward to the future at the Women's Research Institute of Nevada. The passion for women's voices to be heard is building and gaining momentum. I am thrilled to be a part of the process.

Remembering Maya Miller



Maya Miller, longtime activist and philanthropist in Nevada, died May 31, 2006, leaving a legacy of dedication to women's

and children's rights, welfare rights, and environmental activism. She was 90. Miller was a supporter of WRIN from the earliest stages of the institute's development. Please visit www.mayamiller.com to read stories about Miller's inspirational life and to share your own. A memorial is planned for Sunday, September 3rd, from 3:00-7:00 p.m. at her home, Orchard House, in Washoe County, Nevada. Please contact Jan Gilbert to RSVP and for more information, jjgilbert@planevada.org.

Meet Our Staff!

Dr. Joanne Goodwin,
Director, WRIN; Associate Professor, History Department, UNLV

Caryll Dzedziak, *Assistant Director, WRIN; PhD candidate, History Department, UNLV*

Julianna Ormsby, *NEW Leadership Program Manager; MSW*

Annette Amdal, *Administrative Assistant*

Crystal Jackson, *Graduate Assistant, WRIN; Women's Studies Graduate Certificate and Sociology Ph.D fast-track student, UNLV*

Teri Farmer, *NEW Leadership Nevada Program Assistant; Senior, Spanish Language with Literature Emphasis; Bachelor of Liberal Arts, UNLV*

Nicole Anderson, *Student Worker, Meeting and Event Management, Hotel College, UNLV*



From left to right: Caryll Dzedziak, Crystal Jackson, Julianna Ormsby, Teri Farmer, Annette Amdal

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Publications Available from WRIN

The following publications are available for the cost of reproduction, handling, and postage from our offices. Please contact WRIN if you would like copies. Phone 702-895-4931, fax 702-895-4930, or e-mail wrin@unlv.edu.

The Status of Women and Girls in Nevada (2005), Nevada Women's Fund with chapter contributions from Joanne Goodwin, Ph.D. and the Center for Business and Economic Research at UNLV. \$20.

The Status of Women in Nevada (2004), Institute for Women's Policy Research. \$20.

Nevada: People and Stories from Nevada's History, Nevada Institute for Children, a 4th grade history supplement with contributions from Caryll Dziedziak. \$5.

Nevada Pioneers: The Women of Operation Life. The DVD of the NEW Leadership Nevada 2006 panel featuring Ruby Duncan, Mary Wesley, Alversa Beals, and Essie Henderson. \$15.

Looking Back at Nevada Women, a 2-part video series with mini-documentaries on women's contributions to the state. \$20.

Upcoming Events

September 20th, 3:00-4:30 **Open House**
WRIN, room 552, FDH

Join WRIN as we host our joint Open House with the Department of Women's Studies and the Jean Nidetch Women's Center.

October 11, 12:00-1:30pm **Gender Research Roundtable**
MSU 211

Dr. Lois Helmbold presents "Making Choices, Making Do: Survival Strategies of Black and White Working Class Women During the Great Depression."

November 15, 12:00-1:30pm **Gender Research Roundtable**
MSU 211

Dr. Farrokh Saba presents "Women in Mathematics: Struggle and Achievement."

Save the Date:

January 20, 2007 **Nevada Women's Summit** **UNLV**
The Nevada Women's Agenda and WRIN, along with other community partners, host a statewide summit highlighting local issues affecting the lives of women and girls.

Spring 2007 **Gender Research Roundtable**
Michelle Tusan presents, "Imperialism and Feminism: The Case of Britain and India." Faculty interested in presenting this spring should contact Dr. Goodwin, joanne.goodwin@unlv.edu.