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Women's Research Institute of Nevada Newsletter

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Women's Research Institute of Nevada

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NEW Leadership Reaches Fifth Year

Director's Message

by Joanne Goodwin



WRIN continues to move forward building our research and outreach programs.

This year the Governor included WRIN in his budget as a statewide program. In the prior three sessions we never made it this far despite our statewide programs and research. Nevertheless, as the legislature cut money out of the governor's budget, WRIN was cut.

Our friends in the legislature did some fancy footwork to ensure our ongoing support and we are happy to report that we are funded for two more years. We have wide support, but a special thanks goes to Assemblywomen McClain, Koivisto, and Allen. We will keep working with all of our supporters to finally achieve our place in the state budget as a statewide program.

WRIN's publications list (see back page) continues to grow with the addition of our first published oral history *Claudine Williams: a Life in Gaming*. Two oral histories are nearing completion and we welcome the addition of Suzanne Becker who will be conducting long-awaited interviews for us this fall.

One of WRIN's oldest projects, biographies of women in southern Nevada, has gone public on our website (<http://wrin.unlv.edu>). Angela Moor put the finishing touches on this research effort with final editing this spring. We hope students and the public at large will take advantage of the resource.

We had the most competitive year of NEW Leadership applications this fifth year and a great program thanks to the program management of Crystal Jackson, the oversight of Caryll Dziedziak, and the logistics of Nicole Anderson and staff. Inside you will read more about this year's leaders as well as two important conferences we helped bring to UNLV this fall.

National Council explores Diversity in Higher Education

Over the last forty years, historic efforts to expand access to higher education have been implemented, but with mixed results. More women fill the ranks of undergraduates across groups, yet women continue to be underrepresented in the hard sciences and technology. Women also remain scarce as full professors and in higher administration. With support from the Ford Foundation, the National Council for Research on Women undertook a study of eight campuses to explore the impact of leadership on diversity in higher education. (WRIN is an institutional affiliate of the NCRW).

The study revealed significant developments in educational efforts surrounding diversity. First, institutions vary in their definition of diversity. The local and historical context significantly shape an institution's diversity plans. The meaning of diversity

has expanded beyond race and sex to include categories such as social and economic class, religion, sexuality, and able-ness. In addition, globalization and significant populations of non-native U.S. students have created "new priorities for funding and other resources."

Second, the institution's president holds significant power in establishing and maintaining diversity initiatives. While multiple sites for leadership on diversity exist within higher education, it is essential that the message come from the highest levels.

Third, the study found that interdisciplinary research programs provide special sites for diversity education outside of the formal hierarchy. Specifically, they provide a place to provide support, mentoring and enrichment for diversity goals. To read the entire report go to <http://www.ncrw.org/research/diversity.htm>.

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Nevada's ERA Campaign: Lessons for Future Activists

The Equal Rights Amendment has proved to be one of the most contentiously debated proposed additions to the U.S. Constitution. First introduced to Congress in 1923, the amendment languished for forty-nine years before finally being sent out to the states for ratification in March 1972.

Nevada remains one of the fifteen states that refused to ratify the ERA, leading to its ultimate defeat in 1982. WRIN's Assistant Director and History Department PhD Candidate, Caryll Dziedziak, is writing about Nevada's ERA campaign as the subject of her doctoral dissertation. Her research has shown that, as elsewhere across the nation, the ERA Campaign in Nevada fell victim to powerful rhetoric that transformed the understanding of the amendment from a call for legal equality into an attack on traditional notions of womanhood and family.

While polls consistently showed that a majority of citizens favored this amendment, Dziedziak's research has shown that a decade of obstructionist tactics at the Nevada legislature, coupled with an incredibly forceful counterattack by the Mormon Church membership led to the amendment's ultimate defeat.

By interviewing activists, researching newspaper databases, and exploring archival materials, Dziedziak's research reveals a blurred divide between politics and religion in Nevada during this period. While ERA activists bemoaned Church involvement in political matters, Dziedziak argues that the Mormon Church skillfully justified their involvement by redefining the ERA from a political issue to one of a moral nature. Church leaders then mobilized their membership in an effective

Anti-ERA movement to save the moral fabric of the community. Likewise, at the Nevada legislature, powerful legislative leaders of the Mormon faith successfully halted ERA hearings session after session until the amendments ratification time limit expired in 1982.

In hindsight, the grassroots efforts of Pro-ERA activists were hardly a match for the efficient mobilization of committed Church members. However, by investigating this failed campaign, Dziedziak hopes to provide instructive lessons for future activists.

If you lived in Nevada during this period and were involved in this campaign, we want to hear from you. Please call our office or email Caryll Dziedziak at: cdziedziak@cox.net.



Caryll Dziedziak (L) with ERA activists (L-R): Renee Diamond, Harriett Trudell, Renee Rampton.

Dorothy Eisenberg: Champion Volunteer for Social Change



The Las Vegas Women Oral History Project continues to document the lives of women whose lives add a rich dimension to the history of the Las Vegas community. This past year, Caryll Dziedziak had the pleasure of interviewing Dorothy Eisenberg.

Dorothy's decades of activism in Nevada presents an example of dignified persistence for social justice. Her childhood years in Philadelphia during the Great Depression left her with an appreciation for the strength of family and community caring of each other during harsh times.

Dorothy recalls her high school years at the South Philadelphia School for Girls with great love. Here she experienced the richness of a diverse student population, where the girls acknowledged the religious, racial, and economic differences of their peers with the acceptance of friends.

Dorothy graduated in 1946 and marriage and family soon followed. However, in 1960, the sudden death of her husband, Ralph Weinstein, left her with four young daughters to care for. Dorothy believed that education was the means of security for her family. She subsequently enrolled at Temple University and spent the next few years completing her B.S. in Education.

In 1964, Dorothy and her new husband, Paul Eisenberg, moved with their girls to Las Vegas to begin a new life together. Dorothy quickly became involved in the League of Women voters and spent the next decade addressing such issues as: environmental pollution, fair housing, and city/county consolidation. As League President in the early 1970s, Dorothy led the fight for integrating the Clark County schools. She quips that she is from the last generation of "full-time volunteers," as her community involvement continued unabated for the next few decades.

In 1991, The Dorothy Eisenberg Elementary School was named in Dorothy's honor as a tribute to her lifetime of service to our community. Indeed, her years of dedication to the improvement of our community have made Las Vegas a better home for us today.

New Publication from WRIN

Claudine Williams has a long list of firsts in her life. She was the first female executive to lead a major



casino, to serve as chair of a bank board of directors in Nevada, and to hold the office of president at the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. It

is only fitting that WRIN has chosen her oral history as its first publication.

Claudine Williams: a Life in Gaming recounts her experiences in Louisiana, Texas, and Nevada literally coming of age in the world of gaming. The oral history has been edited for easy reading and includes a number of photo images from her personal collection that have never been published. Copies are available at the WRIN for \$20.

Women's Biographies on website

We are happy to announce that we have launched a section of the WRIN website dedicated to brief biographical sketches on women in Las Vegas and Nevada history. The 45 profiles, drawn from a variety of sources, offer an overview of the individual's life, her image, and a source from which additional information may be gleaned. As resources become available, we intend to keep expanding this section. These profiles and those provided through the Las Vegas Women Oral History Project present documentation on the activities and contributions of nearly 100 women.

AAUW research explores the wage gap

Over the past century, the difference in wages received by men and women in similar jobs has been the subject of scholarly research. Despite enormous changes that have taken place in the workplace since the 1970s, the wage gap persists. Do the choices women make account for the difference or does discrimination still exist?

A new study by the American Association of University Women addresses the question of persistent wage gaps by looking at college graduates. "One year out of college, women working full time earn only 80 percent as much as their male colleagues earn." After ten years, that gap increases to 69 percent.

Why the persistent gap? Choice is a part of the answer. Majoring in a field that is not dominated by female students (education, health, psychology) or choosing a higher-paying field (engineering, math, physical sciences) helps increase women's pay.

But choosing a different major will not eliminate the gap entirely. The study found that women in math earned only 76 percent as much as male peers. Early career choices also will determine earnings and women tend to take jobs in nonprofit or local government areas where wages are lower. Parenting also had a negative impact on women's wages, because mothers tend to work part time or take a break from the workforce.

When all considerations are taken into account, the unexplained portion of the wage gap "is 5 percent one year after graduation and 12 percent 10 years after graduation." The study indicated that this area remains attributable to discrimination. A complete copy of the report may be found at www.aauw.org/research/behindPayGap.cfm.

City Life covers NEW Leadership

Commitment to improving one's community is one of the cornerstones of NEW Leadership Nevada.

A May 17 article in *City Life* by Emmily Bristol covered several of our program's alums and their remarkable achievements. Crystal Jackson, Diana Rhodes, Evelyn Garcia, Jennifer Lopez, Evelyn Flores, Trudy Parks, and Emily Powers were interviewed for the article and discussed their innovative work.

Local projects that emerged out of specific needs include Art Smart at Shade Tree, LadyFest Las Vegas, NeXt Step: Xposure to Life Group Home, and the United Coalition for Immigrant Rights. In addition, three alumnae discussed their continuing education on a national level with work at the National Hispana Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C., Senator Harry Reid's D.C. Office, and the Desiree Alliance.

New Leadership Nevada

WRIN Celebrates 5th Year of NEW Leadership Nevada

Our fifth year of NEW Leadership Nevada was a huge success! We had the largest pool of student applicants to date. All the applicants were very strong, thanks in part to our partners at Truckee Meadows Community College, Great Basin College, Western Nevada College, University of Nevada, Reno, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the College of Southern Nevada.

Since the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University chose WRIN and UNLV to be the only southwest site of the National Education for Women's (NEW) Leadership program in 2003, we have graduated 122 alumnae. The NEW Leadership program helps develop students as community leaders and encourages civic engagement through intensive workshops and panels with established women leaders. By emphasizing mentorship, students are connected with women in business, education, gaming, non-profits, and politics. Twenty to twenty-five students from across the state (and Nevada residents attending school outside of Nevada) are chosen, through a competitive application process, to attend the six-day residential program.

Students this year met an amazing range of women leaders, such as Clark County Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani, Henderson City Councilwoman Gerri Schroder, and chief deputy district attorney for Clark County Nancy Becker. Students heard from the women of emergeNevada and the Silver State Leadership Series who teach other women how to run for political office.

Mountain Institute and UNLV President Emerita, was the highlight of the week. One student commented that she "learned the importance of hard work, integrity, and self-confidence through Dr. Harter's encouraging speech."

Students confidently emerge from the program with the networking skills and leadership training to successfully enter business, education, and community leadership positions. We continue to develop our alumnae after they graduate from the six day long program. Two alumnae, Diana Rhodes (2006 alumna) and Patty Jones (2004), returned to the program as Faculty-in-Residences (FIRs) to facilitate discussion and mentorship between the students and the speakers.



Dr. Harter told students, "I have discovered over time that there is no substitute for hard work and just plain competence at what you do."

Alumnae in Action

Where are they now?

Patty Jones (2004) was elected to the Elko County School Board of Trustees in 2007. She credits the NEW Leadership program with giving her the skills and confidence to run.

Mardell Wilkins (2005) was elected to the Board of Directors for the Elko Chamber of Commerce for the January 2007 - December 2008 term.

Gosia "Maggie" Sylwestrazak (2005) is a Management Analyst for the state. She recently prepared the Budget

Division's forecast of state revenues for the coming biennium (over \$2 billion a year) and presented it to the Nevada Economic Forum.

Jennifer Benedict (2003) is the Public Policy Analyst for Great Basin Primary Care Association in Carson City. She sometimes works with Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, whom she first met at NEW Leadership Nevada. Assemblywoman Smith was a Faculty-in-Residence in 2003.

Jessica Totens (2003) is a social work graduate student at Sacramento State University in California. Jessica says, "NEW Leadership Nevada really helped me grow professionally. I have been involved with policy making and changing issues because of the training."

Chata Holt (2006) and Sepi Sayedna (2004) are both entering the William S. Boyd School of Law at UNLV this fall.

Trudy Parks (2005) founded "NeXt Step: Xposure to Life" group home, a home for at-risk girls who fall through the social service cracks in Southern Nevada.

Aurora Buffington (2005) is enrolled in graduate school at UNLV and has an assistantship with the 3-Square Project, a project to feed Las Vegas' hungry people.



Students (L-R) Sara Bruene, Adria Palmer, Judi Brown, Lindsey Burrows, Nancy Quintero, and Tamara Silvernail-Johnston pose with their FIR group leader, Patty Jones (2004 alumna), in the center.

WRIN Announcements

WRIN helps bring Two Conferences to UNLV

What is Real Beauty?

Dove brings its Campaign for Real Beauty to the UNLV campus on December 1 and invites all members of the Las Vegas community to attend this free event.

The day begins at 10 a.m. with a keynote by Naomi Wolf, author of *The Beauty Myth*, on "Beauty and Self-Esteem in Society: Freeing Ourselves and the Next Generation." The afternoon offers four workshops on financial literacy, ethical leadership, negotiation, and op-ed writing facilitated by associates of the Woodhull Institute for Ethical Leadership. The conference was brought to the UNLV campus by WRIN and the Jean Niedech Women's Center.

Leadership in Higher Education

The American Council on Education, Office of Women in Higher Education (OWHE) will hold its statewide conference at UNLV this September 21. The theme for this year's all-day event is "Effective Leadership Communication for Women." Attendees will have the opportunity to choose among workshops on Negotiating Skills, Effective Facilitation and Communication Techniques, and Balancing Work and Family. The conference coordinators for this year are the directors of the Women's Research Institute and the Jean Niedech Women's Center. For more information and to register for the conference, please go to www.unr.edu/womenhighered/index.html

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT Christina Donelson



This past June, we welcomed Christina Donelson to our Community Advisory Board. Christina willingly stepped in to fill the vacancy left when CAB member, Christina Worden,

left Nevada for a new employment opportunity in Washington, D.C.

Christina Donelson is currently the Director of Leadership Services for Harrah's Entertainment, Inc., a leader in the gaming entertainment industry with over 40 casinos in three countries, primarily under the Harrah's, Caesars and Horseshoe brands. As such, she focuses on the identification and development of emerging leaders across all functions within the organization.

Christina is a graduate of the University of Texas – Arlington (B.A., 1996) and the University of Oklahoma (M.A., 1999).

Christina has already brought fresh enthusiasm and energy to our board. We all look forward to her involvement as the board works to enhance WRIN's visibility in our community and across the state.

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NEW Leadership Nevada Alumnae Internship

Internship at Harrah's Entertainment, Inc. Business Education: Giving Back to UNLV



Harrah's Entertainment has been one of the foremost supporters of our NEW Leadership Nevada program. Since the program's initiation in 2003, Harrah's has continually looked for ways to increase their commitment to furthering young women's leadership capabilities.

This year, we are pleased to announce the launch of a paid internship position at Harrah's for a NEW Leadership Alumna. This experience will provide hands-on education about the business world, particularly the intersections between business and politics. The student intern will work for 12 weeks in Harrah's Government Relations/Communications Department housed at Caesars Palace beginning in September 2007.

A graduate of our 2007 NEW Leadership Nevada program, Judi Brown, has been selected as the NEW Leadership Intern at Harrah's Entertainment. As recent graduate of UNLV with a degree in Political Science, Judi's academic background will provide her with a wonderful grounding for this position. Congratulations to Judi and our thanks to Harrah's for their continued support!

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2007 NEW Leadership NV

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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 at 702/895-4931 or wrin@unlv.edu.

Claudine Williams: a Life in Gaming. An Oral History conducted with and edited by Joanne L. Goodwin (Las Vegas, NV: WRIN, 2007). \$20.

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, Alversha Beals, and Essie Henderson. \$15.

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

Upcoming Events

September 21, 8:00-5:30

Effective Leadership Communication for Women
Student Union, UNLV

November 1, 7:00 pm

Student Union, UNLV

bell hooks

December 1, 10:00-4:00

Student Union, UNLV

Naomi Wolf

Save the Date:

TBA

Nevada Women's Summit

The Nevada Women's Agenda hosts a statewide summit highlighting local issues affecting the lives of women and girls.

Spring 2008

WRIN's Gender Research Roundtable series will be postponed during the fall term. Faculty interested in presenting a Gender Research Roundtable during the Spring 2008 semester should e-mail Joanne Goodwin, joanne.goodwin@unlv.edu.