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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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Oral Histories to go Online

Director's Message

by Dr. Joanne Goodwin



Anyone interested in the lives of women in Las Vegas will be able to access much more information from the WRIN website thanks to a grant from the Eleanor Kagi Foundation, a Lynn M. Bennett Legacy. Since 1996, we have been recording the oral histories of women in southern Nevada to preserve a record of their contributions to the development of the area.

The collection of over fifty narratives includes well-known community leaders such as Nancy Houssels, Claudine Williams, and Sarann Knight Preddy. Not all of the interviewees are widely known or "female firsts" however, because the project sought to include the experiences of community members who worked and raised families in the area.

The grant will be used to make the breadth of this collection available to an international audience with text, audio, and visual materials. Researchers who wish to acquire the entire transcript will be able to get one from the Institute. A pilot project demonstrating the potential of an enhanced site was completed last year by history graduate student Layne Karafantis. The make-over will be supervised by doctoral student Angela Moor with input from many sources.

While the methodology of oral history has been in use since the 1940s, more scholars are relying on the form as a resource for information about people and events not otherwise preserved. WRIN's oral history website and biography web pages have provided a valuable source to individuals, schools, and businesses seeking this information not available elsewhere. Now, with the Eleanor Kagi Foundation gift this information will be more widely known and accessible.

Stanford Scholar Addresses Gender and Science

What does Gender have to do with science? Professor Londa Schiebinger of Stanford University illustrated numerous answers to this question in her talk entitled, "*Gendered Innovations in Science, Medicine, and Engineering*." The 2010 WRIN Visiting Scholar, Schiebinger, and other Stanford scholars are looking at how asking questions from a gender analysis can change how we think about problems and solutions. Offering examples to make her point, Schiebinger discussed the body of research on endocrine disruptors which have raised awareness about high level of estrogens in our environment and its impact on health and fertility. Another example from the field of medicine is the work done on "the gendered knee." This work has drawn the connection between women's hip angles and corresponding knee angles to help prevent injuries in women athletes. The example that continued to be discussed for weeks afterward, however, was the example of seat belts for pregnant women. The three point seat belt—the standard in

cars—not only does not fit the pregnant form, but could cause severe damage to the fetus if involved in an accident. Gendering the question of automobile safety created a new view and a new product for pregnant travelers.

For more information on the project and its results at Stanford University, please visit: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/gender/GenderedInnovations>.



A seat belt adjusted for the pregnant traveler.



The three-point seat belt.

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Research Briefs

WRIN Adds Three More Oral Histories

Irene Porter's oral history represents a valuable addition to the Las Vegas Women's Oral History Project.



In her history, she recalled her most significant achievements as her 49-year marriage and her daughter, Sherry. For Irene, it was never a matter of choosing between home and family, instead she believed she could balance both. Her life story reflects a woman who felt determined to overcome any obstacles in her way, while at the same time working to improve the quality of life in southern Nevada.

Born into a military family, Irene Porter spent most of her childhood on air force bases. She later moved to Las Vegas with her parents and attended Rancho High School. After her marriage to Dick Porter, the family moved to Boston for a short time where she gave birth to their only child, Sherry.

After the Porters returned to southern Nevada, Irene began working for the Clark County Planning Department, quickly rising through the ranks. When it became apparent she would never be named the head of the department, she left and began working for the City of North Las Vegas. In North Las Vegas, she was named the Planning Director, one of only five females in the nation to hold that position. She later worked on the development of Green Valley as the first female project director on a project of that scope.

Following her work in Green Valley, Irene Porter went to work for the Southern Nevada Homebuilders Association where she has worked for over 32 years. She currently serves as their director/CEO.

Irene Porter's oral history offers invaluable insight into the development of southern Nevada and the critical importance of planning in the region. She also illustrates the possibilities of a can-do attitude and a belief in one's self to open closed doors and create opportunities. Her life serves as a testament to the power of hard work, dedication, and perseverance to all.

Layne Karafantis completed two more oral histories for WRIN during the 2009-2010 academic year, before departing for a doctoral program at John Hopkins University. The two histories, one of Lilliam Hickey and one of Linda Rivera, are now part of the Las Vegas Women's Oral History Project. Both histories covered the history of Las Vegas over the last forty years and the ability of determined women to affect positive political change.

Linda Rivera was born in a small mining town in Arizona. She later moved to southern Nevada where she worked to promote educational opportunities, especially within the Hispanic community.

She married Felix Rivera and following the birth of their two children, the family moved to Montana where Felix worked for the Bureau of Reclamation at the Yellowtail Dam. Linda later also began working for the Bureau in an administrative position. In 1986, the Riveras moved to southern Nevada where they continued to work for the Bureau of Reclamation on the Hoover Dam.

At the Bureau of Reclamation Office in Boulder City, Linda quickly rose through the ranks, and was put in charge of the affirmative action program for the office. In that position, she realized that there were few Hispanics employed by the Bureau of Reclamation. After attempting outreach efforts in the Hispanic community, she learned that few Hispanics were given the opportunity to acquire needed educational training to work for the Bureau of Reclamation. She then began to work with the Southern Nevada Hispanic Employment Program to develop scholarship opportunities for Hispanics to pursue educational and training opportunities. She also worked with the Bureau of Reclamation to develop an internal scholarship program for employees looking to go back to school.

Linda Rivera's activism spread to the community as well. She developed a Family Leadership Module for parents to help them navigate the bureaucracy of the Clark County School District. She continues to remain active in the community and has been recognized with a number of awards and accolades.

Lilliam Lujan Hickey made significant contributions to the education system in southern Nevada. As testament to her dedication, the Clark County School District named a school in her honor. She continues to work to support the causes she believes in including preschool education for the underprivileged, preparing youth for the workforce, and helping Hispanics run for office.

Hickey was born in Havana, Cuba and studied at French Dominican School. Following Castro's takeover in 1959, Hickey moved to the United States with her husband at the time, Enrique Lujan, and their three children. The family lost their wealth and moved to San Diego, California and later to Las Vegas. Her first husband passed away suddenly in 1972, leaving her a widowed mother with four children.

In 1981, she married Tom Hickey and soon after became active in local politics and ran for the State Board of Education. She won the election and served for two additional terms. During her time at the State Board of Education, she worked to improve educational opportunities for all students. She also co-founded the Classroom on Wheels (COW) program. Following her service on the State Board of Education, she continued to work for local causes including the Latin Chamber of Commerce, the League of Women Voters, and the Boy Scouts. Her story illustrates the experiences of Cuban refugees in the United States as well as the importance of the Hispanic community to the development of southern Nevada.

Research Briefs

WRIN Leadership Award goes to Thalia Dondero

The WRIN Leadership Award recognizes a woman from the Nevada community who has 1) achieved *distinction* in her field of endeavor; 2) had a *positive impact* on the development of southern Nevada; and 3) who has demonstrated her *dedication to mentor* the next generation of women leaders. The 2010 WRIN Leadership Award was presented to Thalia Dondero who in the words of

one who nominated her has “mentored generations of women in politics, business, and civic life.”

A resident of southern Nevada since 1943, Dondero became involved in the community through the PTA and the Frontier Council of Girl Scouts while raising her children. Then in 1974, she entered politics running for and winning a seat on the Clark County Commission.

She shaped public policy from a position on over 60 boards and most recently her seat on the Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education. She was toasted and lightly roasted by 2009 awardee Pat Mulroy, Ann Lynch, and former Senator Richard Bryan. The Eleanor Kagi Foundation, a Lynn M. Bennett Legacy has underwritten the event for two years.



Thalia Dondero receives the 2010 WRIN Leadership Award.



College of Liberal Arts Dean Chris Hudgins congratulates Thalia Dondero, 2010 WRIN Leadership Awardee. Dr. Joanne Goodwin and daughter Judy Habbeshaw (r) look on.



Laura Taylor, Thalia Dondero, Kitty Rodman (l to r)



Trustees of the Eleanor Kagi Foundation, a Lynn M. Bennett Legacy (l to r) John Mackall, Kimberly Rick, and Bryan Dziedzic.



WRIN Leadership Award honorees Pat Mulroy (2009) and Thalia Dondero (2010).

Photos for this article by Elke Rose.

Research Award Recipients

Each year WRIN has the responsibility to determine the winner for two research awards. The Carol Corbett Award recognizes the best work on the history of Las Vegas preferably before 1945. The competition this year was particularly strong with excellent submissions. A committee of faculty read the papers and judged the winner. The award went to Marie Rowley, a graduate student pursuing a Master's degree in History at UNLV. She won the award for “The

Restricted District”: Prostitution and Place in Las Vegas, 1905-1946.” In particular, the committee appreciated her strong argument, creative use of sources, and analysis. Rowley will present the paper this fall at the Urban History Association conference in Las Vegas.

The second award is the WRIN Award for best research by an undergraduate in the field of Women's Studies. It was created to recognize the contributions of Caryll Dziedzic, the founding

Associate Director of WRIN. This year's award went to Katie Eubanks, who graduated in 2009 with a degree from Women's Studies. Her study “Combining Environmental and Reproductive Justice: Examining the Context of Nail Salon Workers Organizing in California” explored the intersections of gender and immigration with an examination of the health hazards of nail salon workers who are largely Vietnamese immigrant women.

New Leadership Nevada

WRIN hosts another successful year of NEW Leadership Nevada

The National Education for Women's (NEW) Leadership Nevada program enjoyed its 8th successful year during June 2010. Representing each institution in the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), twenty additional students have joined the growing NEW Leadership Nevada alumnae network, putting the total number of graduates at 190.

The NEW Leadership program helps develop students as community leaders and encourages civic engagement through intensive workshops and panels with established women leaders. With an emphasis on networking and mentorship, students are connected with women in politics, business, gaming, academia, law, and the non-profit sector.

This year, the students met a range of successful women leaders in a number of fields, including a one-on-one session with UNLV's Sustainability Coordinator, Tara Pike-Nordstrom, and a "Women's Leadership Luncheon" hosted by Southern Nevada Home Builders Association President, Irene Porter. Students learned about the impact women have made in the state of Nevada through educational workshops and panels. This included a panel titled, "Nevada Pioneers", that featured trailblazing women such as Harriet Trudell, Dorothy Eisenberg, Renee Diamond, and Ruby Diamond.

Rose McKinney-James, Managing Principal of Energy Works LLC, offered the Keynote speech at the keynote dinner. The Keynote Reception and Dinner is the only public event during the program. She spoke about her professional background, paths and choices she had made during her career, and the importance of mentorship. Her vast background is what led her to be such an impactful leader and speaker to the students.

Rose is a former commissioner with the Nevada Public Utility Commission and served as the Director of the Nevada Department of Business and Industry.

She has been an active advocate for energy policy development in the state for over two decades. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Energy Foundation and the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. On top of that, she was selected to participate as a member of the Obama-Biden Transition Team and served as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Lead.



Left to Right: Elena Espinoza (FIR), Ivette Sanchez (Alumna), Judi Brown (FIR), Keynote speaker Rose McKinney-James, Diana Rhodes (former Program Director), Karoline Khamis (FIR), Monique Sulls (Program Assistant).

The students were surprised to find that even though Rose has a plethora of accomplishments under her belt, that she still dealt with everyday struggles, many of which, the students themselves understood. Balancing family and work, insecurity, failure, and fear of rejection were all mentioned; but with an emphasis of not letting circumstances and outside forces affect you too negatively.

The students really shined during the Networking Reception preceding the Dinner. Each student received a box of personalized NEW Leadership Nevada business cards and attended an interactive networking workshop earlier that day. By the Reception, the students were excited to test out their newly-learned networking skills and managed to impress, not only the WRIN staff, but the community leaders in attendance.

Roughly two hundred people attended the dinner which was underwritten by Harrah's Entertainment. It meant a lot to the participants and supporters that university and community members attended, including UNLV Executive Vice President and Provost, Dr. Michael Bowers; Dean Christopher Hudgins, College of Liberal Arts; Associate Dean Christine Smith, William S. Boyd School of Law; Assemblywomen Marilyn Loop Dondero and Ellen Spiegel; Regent Jack Lund Schofield; and former Regent and 2010 WRIN Leadership Award Honoree Thalia Dondero.

Students emerge from NEW Leadership Nevada with a sharper sense of their leadership potential having gained a number of skills from networking to résumé building to public speaking. Along with skill-building and learning from community leaders, the students also leave with a sense of commitment to civic engagement and personal success.

We continue to develop our alumnae after they graduate from the six-day program. Two alumnae, Judi Brown (2007) and Karoline Khamis (2004) returned to the program as a Faculty-in-Residence (FIR) to facilitate discussion and mentorship among students and speakers. The WRIN staff was also pleased to have Ivette Sanchez (2006) and Monique Sulls (2007) work as Program Assistants during this year's conference.



NEW Leadership Nevada students with WRIN Director, Dr. Joanne Goodwin Left to Right: Zoe Anne Ouchi, Brandy Nielsen, Dr. Joanne Goodwin, Kristin Guthrie.

New Leadership Nevada

Green Themes by Speaker:

2010's NEW Leadership Nevada program featured several presentations on sustainability and environmental advocacy. With the rise of sustainability-focused academic departments, many of our students were focusing on the issue as well.

This year's "One-on-One Session" featured Tara Pike-Nordstrom, UNLV's Sustainability Coordinator and Solid Waste / Recycling Manager. The "One-on-One Session," is an integral session where a community leader shares her story in an intimate and personal setting. Past speakers have been Assemblywoman Barbara Buckley and Marybel Batjer, V.P. for Public Policy and Communication at Harrah's.

Tara Pike-Nordstrom received a B.A. in Environmental Studies and a minor in Biological Sciences at UNLV. In 1991, UNLV did not have a recycling program. So, she decided to research the feasibility of starting a campus-wide recycling program. After three and a half years of researching other university programs, performing waste stream assessments, collecting surveys, and attempting to determine the amount of trash generated by campus, Tara finished her senior project. She decided to not let all the research go to waste and worked with her advisor and other faculty to establish the campus recycling program. With the Board of Regents approval, The UNLV Rebel Recycling Program was created on July 1, 1995. The story is a perfect example of taking good ideas and figuring out how to make them a reality.

Over the past 15 years, under Tara's leadership, the program has expanded from traditional recycled materials to include a confidential material shredding program, reusable office supplies, items from the residence hall move out, landscape and wood waste, and styrofoam. She also started a drive-up and drop-off program.

Tara's focus on hard work and determination made an impression on the students. "Nothing comes easy; you have to work harder than you'd ever expect to reach certain goals," she reminded them.

NEW Leadership Partners with Harrah's To Create Opportunities

In 2007, Harrah's Entertainment Inc. partnered with us to create one of the most prestigious opportunities for alumnae. Through a competitive process, one alumna was chosen to gain a hands-on education about the business world, particularly the intersections between business and politics. In 2009, Harrah's expanded the opportunities for our alumnae by expanding the program by opening three internships in the following departments: Government Affairs/Corporate Social Responsibility, National Diversity Relations, and Communications. Mentoring with strong women leaders in the business world is one way NEW Leadership Nevada participants continue to practice what they learn during our six-day program.

We are pleased to collaborate with a number of community organizations and businesses in Nevada to foster the relationship between Nevada System of Higher Education schools and their communities. If your organization is interested in partnering with students on community projects or internship opportunities, we would love to hear from you.

Testimonials from 2010 Alumnae

That no matter what background you come from, there is always a chance for growth.

I learned that opportunities will come to you and that you have to take them and reach your goals.

When you're passionate enough about something, you can make a difference!

Alumnae in Action

Gregan Wingert (2009) is the newest intern through a partnership between WRIN and Harrah's Entertainment and is currently working in the Internal Communications Department. In addition, Gregan had the chance to work with the Nevada Community Foundation on special research projects. As a journalist major, she also works for CLASS! Magazine where she hires, organizes, mentors, and manages twenty high school students who aid in the creation of the monthly magazine.

Maylssa Essex (2010) is currently an intern at the Rape Crisis Center (RCC). A recent graduate of NEW Leadership, she managed to impress one of the (RCC) staff so much that a unique and personalized internship was created. Essentially, she will be shadowing management and learning program development, coalition building, and direct victim services.

Alma Castro (2005) is attending NYU Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and will be receiving a MPA in International Development Policy in May 2011. She has been interning for UNIFEM (UN Women) since February 2010 for their "Say NO – UniTE Against Violence Against Women" campaign. Previously, she worked for Girl Scouts of USA Headquarters as their Global Action Coordinator writing a Peer Education Curriculum titled, "HIV-Free Generation."

Applications for the 2011 NEW Leadership Nevada program will be available on the WRIN website, www.wrin.unlv.edu during the spring semester.

WRIN Announcements

Upcoming Reception & Talk

"The Other Sex Work: The Stigma of Sexuality Research in American Culture," Janice M. Irvine (University of Massachusetts).

November 3, 2010, Marjorie Barrick Museum Auditorium, 7:30 pm.

Sexual science has a long history of controversy in the United States. At the same time, broad public interest fuels ongoing demand for sexuality research. This paradox—the simultaneous importance and stigmatization of an occupation—is the essence of what some sociologists call "dirty work." Over the last century, sexuality researchers have produced scientific data in areas central to public health and social policy, for example surveys of sexual behavior, physiological research on sexual functioning, and ethnographic studies of sexual communities. Yet from the early censorship of books by European sex researchers, to the Nazi destruction of German sexology in 1933, to the myriad controversies over mid-20th century sex researchers such as Alfred C. Kinsey, sexuality research has had a hard time establishing scientific legitimacy, not only among certain members of the public but also with key funding sources, and with some in the broader scientific community. Even today, sexuality research can be controversial. This talk examines the history of sexuality research, the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge in the United States, and the lives of sex researchers who have often been treated as "dirty workers." WRIN will sponsor a reception preceding the talk at 6 pm in the Barrick Museum.

Hello from Summer Burke

[Educational Outreach]

Hello! My name is Summer Burke. I am thrilled to be joining the WRIN family and taking on a new exciting position at UNLV. I was born in Castle Rock, Colorado but I consider the Southwest to be my home, since I grew up in Phoenix, AZ. I am new to Las Vegas, this is only my second year living in Southern Nevada. I moved here to pursue a Ph.D. in the field of History from UNLV, focusing on Civil Rights in the West. Currently, I hold a Master's Degree in History and Women's Studies from Northern Arizona University. I join WRIN with over ten years experience working with college students in a variety of aspects, and a long-term commitment to women's leadership and women's issues. I look forward to meeting you!

Hello from Kelly Lewis

[Administrative Assistant]

I was born in Southern California and moved to Henderson when I was eight years old. I very much enjoy the small town aspect of Henderson, especially the Water Street District. I graduated from Foothill High school in 2003. A few months later I started working for the Child Care and Development Program, which led me into my current position with WRIN. I met my husband, Thomas, in 2002 and we married in 2006. I have two children, Thomas, Jr. and Hunter, who I love more than words can express. I hope one day to own my own business and I am looking into starting school in Fall 2011. In my free time, I listen to music, dance with my kids, go out with friends, or just relax at home with a great book or movie.

Eleanor M. Kagi Foundation Gift

The Eleanor Kagi Foundation made a three-year commitment to WRIN to continue the Leadership Award Event (see page 3). The foundation, which has as one of its goals to concentrate on organizations with an impact on the lives of women, was founded by Lynn M. Bennett in honor of her mother. In addition, the foundation provided a gift to enable an expansion of the WRIN website and the oral histories the organization has produced (see page 1). The generosity of the foundation has helped WRIN expand its reach literally through the annual major event which has been renamed for Eleanor Kagi. It will also help expand the reach virtually with greater materials provided online to those around the world who seek accurate information on women in Las Vegas. Thank you Kagi Trustees.

Gender Research Roundtable presentation

Dr. Lynn Comella (Women's Studies Department) will talk about her research as part of the Spring 2011 series on gender research at UNLV. Her talk, "From Crass to Class: Gender, Sexual Respectability, and the Marketplace," explores the complicated set of discourses mobilized by women-friendly sex toy retailers as they attempt to move from 'crass' to 'class' in order to appeal to female consumers and, simultaneously, garner a degree of social legitimacy not readily bestowed on more traditional adult-oriented businesses. For more information about location, date, and time call 895-4931.

Scholarship recognized

Angela Moor has worked with WRIN for several years while pursuing graduate studies in U.S. History. This past spring, she received the university's Harold L. Boyer and Judith Boyer History Student Scholarship for the second time. At WRIN, Angela has learned skills in oral history from the background research necessary before the interviews, to this term's assignment—working with a web designer to make the oral histories more accessible to the public.

Thank you to our sponsors!

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WRIN Announcements

Advisory Board Members Spotlight



Cyndy Ortiz Gustafson, Chair of the WRIN Advisory Board, is a native Nevadan who has worked in public service and community development since her graduation from Washington State University with a Masters degree in Political Science with an emphasis in Public Law in 1998. She was also awarded a fellowship with the Women's Research and Education Institute

in Washington DC, which is the national equivalent to WRIN on the local level. During her fellowship year she worked as a Legislative Aide for Senator Dianne Feinstein.

For the last ten years Ms. Ortiz Gustafson has been running her own business in Southern Nevada. As owner and principal strategist of Strategic Progress, LLC, Ms. Ortiz Gustafson provides strategic organizational and fund development consulting, as well as government and public affairs consulting to a variety of non-profit and governmental agencies and programs.

Over the last eight years, she has helped her clients raise over \$18 million in grant and program funding. In the last two years alone, she helped her clients to raise over \$6.4 million in grant funding from private and governmental sources.

Ms. Ortiz Gustafson also works on regional planning initiatives around child welfare in partnership with Casey Family Programs, and homelessness and at risk youth issues in partnership with the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition.

The Women's Research Institute of Nevada wishes Cyndy luck in her move to Reno. She will be stepping down as chair, but continue as part of the Community Advisory Board.

Deborah Campbell offers public affairs, public relations, and philanthropy strategy consultation services; specializing in key stakeholder identification and engagement, developing ideas from concept to implementation, and leveraging social capital.

Her diverse, yet complementary background as a nonprofit executive, television journalist, and civic volunteer leader serves as her foundation for effective strategic positioning consultation. Ms. Campbell helps organize people and their ideas by engaging stakeholders, facilitating development and implementation of business plans, conducting relevance studies, facilitating strategic planning, managing collaborative partnerships and initiatives, and developing public relations and marketing strategies.

Ms. Campbell understands the Nevada business, social service and political environments and has access to key business, association, nonprofit, political and philanthropy leaders in Nevada. She is known for her unique ability to communicate, collaborate and connect across a variety of sectors.

Recognized as a '2009 Woman to Watch' by *In Business Las Vegas*, Deborah is currently working with public and private sector organizations to ensure maximum relevance and accountability to their stakeholders.

Prior to launching Deborah Campbell and Associates LLC, Ms. Campbell led two leading nonprofits in Southern Nevada. She has served as Vice President & Executive Director of the St. Rose Dominican Health Foundation which supports three hospitals in the Henderson-Las Vegas area; and, prior to St. Rose, as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of United Way of Southern Nevada, where for nearly a decade Deborah managed staff, and helped dozens of social service organizations develop the capacity to improve program delivery.

Her communications background includes 16 years of news, public affairs and morning show anchor duties at television stations in Chico, California and Las Vegas, Nevada.



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Goodbye

We said goodbye to two employees and one grad student this summer. Annette Amdal (Admin IV) moved to a much livelier job in the Department of History at UNLV. WRIN owes a debt of thanks to Annette for initiating our annual award dinner. Diana Rhodes (Educational Outreach) enrolls at George Washington University at Washington, DC in graduate studies in Gender and Public Policy. She ably led the NEW Leadership Nevada program for the past 2.5 years. She writes of her new adventure, "my new route to school has me walking right by the White House, World Bank, and IMF as I approach campus." Layne Karafantis who worked on the Las Vegas Women Oral History Project for two successive years at WRIN is moving to Johns Hopkins University for graduate studies in the History of Science. It is wonderful to see good things come to smart women.

Gifts of Tribute

Give someone special in your life recognition and help WRIN at the same time. Make a donation to WRIN in honor of or in memory of a significant person. Your donation will be recognized in our newsletter and webpage.

Thank you.