



# Gender & Women's Studies

## Spring 2012 News & Updates

### Report from the Interim Head, Dr. Miranda Joseph

As I write from my temporary post as Interim Department Head, the Gender & Women's Studies Department is in the midst of an incredibly busy and exciting semester. We have undertaken a national search for the next permanent Head and are incredibly gratified to have received a large number of applications from superbly qualified candidates. This is a tribute to our outstanding work and reputation and a reason for great confidence in our future.

We have experienced a number of transitions in the faculty. Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy has retired (read more about Kennedy on p5). Laura Briggs, Caryl Flinn and Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernández have all moved on to other universities, and we wish them the best in their new faculty positions. Meanwhile, we are thrilled to welcome Susan Stryker, internationally renowned scholar and founder of the field of Transgender Studies, to the UA as a faculty member in Gender & Women's Studies and Director of the Institute for LGBT Studies.

We are also pleased to have become the home for *Feminist Formations*. This important venue for the publication of feminist scholarship is now co-edited by GWS faculty member, Sandra K. Soto, and Adela C. Licona, GWS affiliate and faculty in Rhetoric Composition and the Teaching of English (RCTE). Our PhD candidate Erin Durban-Albrecht serves as Managing Editor and Londie Martin (PhD candidate in RCTE) as Editorial Assistant.

Our PhD program is going strong with our first three students—November Papaleo, Shannon Randall and Erin Durban-Albrecht—passing their comprehensive exams and advancing to candidacy. Turn the page for a full report on the program and our fabulous students.

Meanwhile, we have worked to educate ourselves and our community in response to the attacks on Ethnic Studies and, specifically, the Tucson Unified School District's Mexican American Studies program. The department's Anti-Racism Task Force has organized a series of presentations, workshops and colloquia addressing topics such as the history of political struggles initiating Ethnic Studies and the practice of feminist anti-racist pedagogy. Laura Pulido, Professor of American Studies & Ethnicity and Geography at University of Southern California, gave a presentation entitled "Popularizing Ethnic Studies through Alternative Tourism" to a large and enthusiastic audience. We hosted Bettina Aptheker, Professor of Feminist Studies and History at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where she taught her acclaimed

Introduction to Feminisms lecture course for decades. She led a workshop on pedagogy, gave a lecture from her new scholarship on LGBT people in the Communist Left, and spent a dinner with Honor's College students, talking with them about her own life story, which she has narrated in her recent memoir, *Intimate Politics: How I Grew Up Red, Fought for Free Speech and Became a Feminist Rebel*.

As always, our community supporters have been busy at work: as you'll read on p4, the Women's Plaza of Honor marked key achievements with the dedications of two arches this year. Meanwhile, the Women's Studies Advisory Council has organized a number of great events, including Women Who Lead and LunaFest, that bring friends and funds to our department.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter, which is intended to be the first in an ongoing series to keep you up-to-date on our activities and accomplishments. Thank you so much for your interest and support.



2

PhD Student Profiles

3

Graduate Program;  
Alumna Profile

4

Women's Plaza of  
Honor Dedications

5

Kennedy: Working with  
the Wounaan

**FACULTY**

Jennifer Croissant

Adam Geary

Miranda Joseph

Eithne Luibhéid

Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy

Patricia Macquodale

Kari McBride

Sandra K. Soto

Sally Stevens

Susan Stryker

Judy Temple

**STAFF**Terry Mullin, *Business Manager*Lupita Loftus, *Accounting Specialist*Darcy Roman-Felix,  
*Academic Program Coordinator*Laura Caywood Barker,  
*Administrative Assistant***Women's Studies Advisory Council (WOSAC)**Betsy Bolding, *Board President*Leigh Spencer, *Program Coordinator***PhD Student Profiles:  
Lisa Logan & Mari Galup**

**Lisa Logan** recently transferred to our department from Indiana University, Bloomington's Gender Studies PhD program when her mentor, Susan Stryker, was hired to be the director of the UA Institute for LGBT Studies. "The thing I appreciate most about our program is that people here are highly committed to a feminist ethic and many integrate their scholarship and activism. I feel at home here because I am able to build on my life experience as a feminist activist while getting a priceless interdisciplinary education from world-class professors."

Lisa is working on a Master's Paper titled "Posthuman Birth" that combines interests from her years as a homebirth activist with the theory she has learned about gender, technology, and the body. She researches childbirth patient simulators commonly used in medical training and how they blur the boundaries between the human and non-human and challenge the meaning of "woman." Despite being in the department less than a year, Lisa is highly active on campus—she is a graduate assistant at the Institute for LGBT Studies and is involved with Feminist Action Research in Rhetoric. She reports that her biggest accomplishment is working toward



earning a PhD while raising three children.



**Mari Galup** is a third year PhD student in Gender & Women's Studies with a minor in Geography. After completing an MA in our department with a thesis focused on women, intimacy, and domestic labor in Latin America, Mari has shifted her research focus to gender and relationships to the land in food justice, food sovereignty, and related collective movements in the Americas. She was drawn to the department because it supports a wide variety of projects and also because "getting a PhD in a feminist program offers the opportunity to learn, see, and be in the world in a different way."

For example, while studying for her comprehensive examinations in the areas of Transnational Feminisms, Immigration, and Food Studies, Mari remains active in several community projects that combine her interests in social justice for immigrants and communities of color in the United States and sustainable agriculture. She describes these projects as a vibrant milieu that provides an ongoing learning opportunity. "Their dedication to social justice is an example that I seek to follow in any work that I do."

Early on in the program, GWS faculty asked me, 'What is at stake in the work you do?' For me, this is a salient question that keeps me grounded, that makes me think about how the work I engage in is meaningful and can make a material contribution in the lives of people locally and elsewhere in the Americas."

~ Mari Galup

## Supporting New Generations of Feminist Scholars: The GWS Graduate Program

Our new and still growing PhD program in Gender and Women's Studies currently supports 16 PhD students as well as an MA/JD student and many more graduate minor and certificate students from across the university. Our students have a wide variety of research interests in women's, gender, and sexuality studies that use feminist approaches to topics such as social movements,

oral histories, theory and philosophy, social networking, and performance, literature, media, and other forms of cultural production. In the fall, three of our students were funded by WOSAC to present their work at conferences. Angela Stoutenburgh gave her paper, "University as Intellectual Commons - Reprioritizing and Respatializing Public Education" at the 8th Annual Historical Materialism Conference in London. Jenna Vinson presented "Teenage

Mom Counter-Narratives Within and Without the Web: Theorizing Web-Based Feminist Narrative Analysis" at Feminisms and Rhetorics in Mankato, MN. Finally, Erin Durban-Albrecht gave "Bristling with the Desire to Confront Injustice: Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy's Queer Contributions to Transnational Feminism" at the American Studies Association conference in Baltimore.

### Alumna Profile: Agatha Beins, PhD

Agatha Beins, who received her MA from our department in 2003, recently returned to the southwest as an assistant professor of women's studies at Texas Woman's University after earning her PhD in Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers in 2011. We interviewed her about her career and current projects, which include turning her dissertation on 1970s U.S. feminist periodicals into a book, working as an editorial collective member for *Films for the Feminist Classroom*, and volunteering weekly for a local farm. Here are some of the things she had to say:

"[T]he MA gave me the language to articulate why I wanted to keep learning in a feminist way and why I wanted to do so in an interdisciplinary women's studies program. Working on [the book] *Women's Studies for the Future* with Liz [Lapovsky Kennedy] really clarified that applying to PhD programs in Women's Studies was not just about my intellectual interests; it was also a political commitment I

wanted to make . . . . Though I did not start the program with a particular trajectory in mind—that is, I did not narrate a Master's degree as an initial step on my way to a PhD/academic career—looking back I can see that a significant part of my MA in Women's Studies was being treated from the very first day as a scholar. The classes I took challenged me through the range of readings, the density of the theories, and the expectation that I could (and would) contribute to the conversation."

"I found my dissertation topic in the basement of the UA library while doing research inspired by my thesis topic . . . . I wanted to locate feminist publications that circulated under the radar of popular media and that might fit into the DIY ethic. Sitting in the University of Arizona library, running through rolls of microfilm I came across four different feminist periodicals published in the 1970s: *Ain't I a*



GWS folks on the 2012 annual recruitment weekend hike led by Liz Kennedy.

...Continued on page 5



## The Women's Plaza of Honor Arch Dedications

The Women's Plaza of Honor continues to celebrate women's lives and accomplishments with dedications this year of three major areas of the Plaza.

In October, the Tribute to Hispanic Women event honored women across the region through the dedication of the southern plaza. The Tribute was the result of nearly a year's planning by a large committee, coordinated by long-time Plaza Executive Board member Edie Auslander. A boulder engraved for the Tribute was unveiled by a multi-generational group of Hispanic women, demonstrating the Plaza's commitment to honoring women's past, present, future. Funds raised from this event will go towards scholarships awarded by

the UA Hispanic Alumni Club.

The African American Women's Arch was dedicated in February. Nearly one hundred community members gathered in celebration, with honorees traveling from as far away as Austin, TX, to participate. Completed in 2011 under the leadership of Saunie Taylor and Daisy Jenkins, the arch collectively honors the lives of dozens of individual women as well as members of the Links Inc. of Tucson and the Tucson Alumnae Chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

On April 13<sup>th</sup>, an arch honoring Native American women from each of Arizona's 22 federally recognized tribes will be dedicated

with a blessing, notable speakers, and music performed by renowned Yaqui classical guitarist Gabriel Ayala. Speakers at the event will include Tohono O'odham Chairman Ned Norris, Jr., and Arizona Board of Regents member LuAnn Leonard, the first Native American Arizonan appointed to the Board.

Funds generated from these and other naming opportunities in the Plaza support the Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy Endowment, which provides fellowships for graduate students in Gender and Women's Studies. If you would like more information about the Women's Plaza of Honor, please visit <http://womensplaza.arizona.edu> or call 621-5656.

## The Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy Endowment

Building on our success in raising an endowed PhD fellowship through the Women's Plaza of Honor campaign, we have embarked on a campaign to endow a second fellowship designed to honor Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy for her extraordinary contributions to our department and field. It will be awarded to students whose interests sustain and develop Kennedy's own intellectual and political passions. A phenomenal international group of scholars have stepped up to serve on an advisory board that will work with our local fundraising committee to reach out to those who have been touched in various ways by Liz and her work as a scholar and institution-builder. The campaign was launched with gifts by all of the GWS faculty and staff. We hope you will join our growing group of generous donors by making your contribution today.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
FOUNDATION

Give Today!

### *Beins, Continued from page 3*

*Woman?* from Iowa City, *off our backs* from Washington D.C., *Rat* from New York City, and *It Ain't Me, Babe* from Berkeley.... The authors were angry, they were trying to imagine and produce alternative ways of seeing and living in the world, and they published to call attention to injustice not to make a profit. ... [T]hese publications were grappling not only with gender but also with the complexities of race, class, sexuality, and globalization in a way that belies the dominant narratives about

feminism in the 1970s.”

Agatha Beins will spend her summer conducting additional archival research about 1970s women of color periodicals in Oakland at the Third World Women's Alliance Papers and at Simon Fraser University, whose archives contain papers donated by feminists who helped plan the Indochinese Women's Conference in Vancouver in 1971.

For more information about Dr. Beins, check out her faculty profile:  
<http://www.twu.edu/ws/beins.asp>

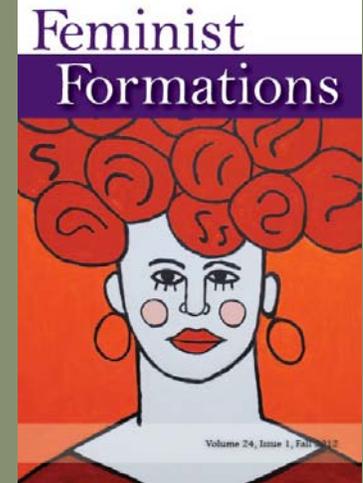
## **Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy: Working with the Wounaan**

The indomitable Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy retired from UA Gender & Women's Studies in spring 2011 but she remains as active as ever. While Kennedy will continue to be involved in the department, she decided that official retirement would give her the opportunity to spend more time with family, friends, and her partner Bobbi Prebis. She is also working on two major projects that demand her attention: a book about Julia Boyer Reinstein (stay turned to future issues of the GWS newsletter for more information) and a return to her 1964-1966 fieldwork with the Wounaan, an indigenous nation in northwest South America.

Kennedy explains that there are three things driving her current work with the Wounaan, which is funded by the National Science Foundation through summer 2013. She wants to give her original research— films, noted and recorded stories, and her dissertation—back to the Wounaan now that this return

does not exacerbate the colonization of their land and livelihood. Kennedy is committed to collaborative research, a remarkable quality that has set apart her career, and in that spirit wants to undertake cultural recovery research with the Wounaan and another US collaborator, Dr. Julia Valezquz-Runk. She notes that there have been many challenges working together, but that all of the collaborators have persisted and have decided to apply for supplemental funding to bring five Wounaan to Arizona to attend the American Indian Language Development Institute. Last but not least, Kennedy explains that major impetus for her work is the desire to understand the international situation for indigenous peoples and to be able to participate in decolonial efforts by educating people in the U.S. about, for instance, ongoing struggles over land rights.

Kennedy screened her film, “Wounaan: A People of the Rainforest” on March 27<sup>th</sup> to a large



Feminist Formations, the international journal of women's, gender, and sexuality studies, is now located at the University of Arizona.

<http://feministformations.arizona.edu>

audience in the Gender & Women's Studies conference room at the University of Arizona. Kennedy discussed her 1960s research with the Wounaan in more detail along with how her experiences in women's studies and American Indian studies changed some of the interpretations she had of her time in Colombia with the Wounaan.

She additionally mentioned the Wounaan's largely positive reactions to the screening of the film in Panama this past January. Kennedy is currently fundraising to get the remaining two ethnographic films from this research digitized and translated into Spanish.

