



## *New Growth*

Not only is the Women's Studies Department about to be in physical motion as we contemplate our impending move from the second to the seventh floor of the Jefferson Building, but as we complete the 2000-2001 academic year we find ourselves on the threshold of major programmatic development. After three years of being in the curious position of offering a doctoral program but no undergraduate major, the department's proposal for a BA in Women's Studies was approved by the Regents at its March meeting. The major will become a formal reality in the fall of 2001 as some of the existing Women's Studies minors shift into the major and new students decide to major in Women's Studies either on its own or in combination with another major or minor.

Why did we take so long to establish an undergraduate major? No one factor explains the timing of the decision, though a number of developments clearly made this year the right time to make this proposal.

First, the department finally feels on sufficiently solid footing vis-à-vis faculty strength to be able to staff the undergraduate courses necessary to offer a major. Making a major work demands not only teachers, but faculty available to serve as advisors and planners, faculty who are prepared to devise innovative connections between the classroom and the "world" through internships, study-abroad options, and other opportunities for students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-life issues.

Second, the possibility of proposing this major grew directly out of the gains Women's Studies has made over the past decade or so, as the field has come to be viewed less as an esoteric fad than as a legitimate field of academic inquiry that merits inclusion in any sound undergraduate institution. The longstanding rule that the three Regents universities—the UI, UNI, and ISU—should not compete with one another or duplicate each others' offerings clearly breaks down when it comes to students who want to major in history, English, or psychology. Yet the argument put forward for many years for why the UI shouldn't offer a major in Women's Studies was that just such a major was already available at ISU. Insofar as our state-supported institutions are always alert to possible budgetary frivolity, two women's studies majors just seemed like too much.

But that policy no longer makes sense. As many noted two years ago at the celebration of Women's Studies' 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at The University of Iowa, the "fad" has continued, forever changing the shape of inquiry at least in the liberal arts. Women's Studies has contributed to so many fields of academic endeavor, and the doctoral degree in Women's Studies makes sense in these early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a way that few would have predicted even ten years ago. It is under these conditions that the absence of a Women's Studies major at The University of Iowa finally became unthinkable, a lack that would mark the University as out of step with current academic trends.

We're excited about the new major, not only because it marks the increasing legitimacy and respect accorded to our field, but because of the new opportunities the major will provide for reaching students across the University. Not only Women's Studies majors but other undergraduates will benefit in the long run from the expansion of offerings in the department, particularly once some of our courses are approved for general education credit, the next step we need to take in solidifying our position. Such expansion will mean that graduate students, as well, will have increased opportunities to work with undergraduate students, either as TAs or as instructors after they have completed their comprehensive exams and advanced to candidacy. In view of the budgetary constraints that will be affecting us for the next few years, such growth will of necessity be gradual, but there is no reason to think that we won't be able to grow and develop over the next decade, becoming something that few of us would have imagined when the revolutionary concept of women's studies first made an appearance.

# *A Tribute to Margery Wolf*

By Jillian Duquaine

Last week, Laura Kastens, Women's Studies Newsletter Editor extraordinaire, put out a request for a Women's Studies graduate student to craft an article honoring Margery Wolf. I volunteered and intended to reflect on the April 13 reception in the Senate Chamber of Old Capitol where Margery read from her upcoming novel. I, along with many other students, colleagues, and friends from across campus and the larger Iowa City community, attended the reading, listening as several members of the university community praised Margery before she shared one chapter, "Sekiak and the Anthropologist."

Margery's gift for storytelling was abundantly clear, particularly her attention to vivid detail and description. But as I sat down to write this essay, it seemed inappropriate to pay tribute to Margery by focusing on her novel. While the finished novel will undoubtedly be a compelling read—I am particularly interested in the time shifts which are central to the plot—that's not going to be what I'll remember when I think of Margery. Instead, I'll remember her warm personality and sound advice as well as her remarkable teaching style.

I first met Margery a little over two years ago, in late January of 1999, when I was a graduate student in another Ph.D. program here at UI and she was Chair of the Women's Studies program. To be honest, I was struggling to find my "intellectual groove" in grad school and was interested in transferring to the Women's Studies Ph.D. program to make feminist theory a central component of my work. With the application deadline less than a week away, I walked toward Margery's corner office. I hadn't made an appointment with her, but when I knocked on the open door, Margery looked up and greeted me with a warm smile. The clutter on her desk made it clear that she was terribly busy. I nervously blurted out something to the effect of "I-want-to-transfer-to-the-Women's-Studies-grad-program-and-I'd-like-to-talk-to-you-about-it-but-you-look-really-busy-so-I-can-just-come-back-some-other-time." Margery reached for her mouse, saved whatever document she had been composing on her computer, walked over and shook my hand. "That other stuff can wait—have a seat," she said. Breathing a sigh of relief, I shrugged my backpack to the ground, and took off my coat. I liked Margery immediately.

We talked for a while and Margery's skills as an anthropologist quickly surfaced: she was a great listener, asked the right questions, and knew how to strike a balance between the two. Although she was attentive as I described my academic goals, Margery was interested in more than that—she asked about my background and when she found out that I was a single mother, inquired about my daughter. We eventually got around to talking about the Ph.D. program and she established that although she could make "no promises" regarding admission, I should certainly apply: "You'll never know unless you try." Encouraged by our conversation as well as Margery's pleasant personality and her advice, I applied to the program and the rest, as they say, is history.

My first impressions of Margery were confirmed when I took her Feminist Ethnography Seminar. I was familiar with her work, particularly *Thrice Told Tale* and *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*, which I had read in other courses and seen cited throughout the feminist anthropological literature and elsewhere. I was thrilled to have an opportunity to learn from such a skilled scholar. The seminar was demanding but enjoyable, challenging simplistic notions of feminist scholarship and using a broad range of ethnographies as vehicles for exploring the nuances of feminist ethnography.

Margery's teaching style was central to the success of the course. She began the semester by telling us about herself, including her rather untraditional CV which she warned us "not to try at home." As we worked our way through the semester, it became increasingly clear that Margery enjoyed working with students and was genuinely interested in their work. She was a guiding presence in the classroom, encouraging students to discuss and disagree among themselves and struggle to make meaning of the materials. However, Margery also knew precisely when to offer direction and support. She never dictated the "right" way to think about a particular issue or dilemma but, instead, offered suggestions or asked us to consider other perspectives. The result was a course that gave all seminar participants many more "tools" for their intellectual "toolboxes" and earned Margery highest marks as an instructor.

I am thrilled that Margery is returning to her first love, fiction, and after being privy to one chapter of her novel-in-progress, I am anxious to read the rest. But like many others, I can't help being a little sad at her leaving. Margery has been an amazing presence not only in the Women's Studies and Anthropology Departments, but also across the UI campus. She is truly a role model for many of us feminist-scholars-in-training. Her influence has not only helped feminist scholarship take root here, but has helped to create an environment where it can continue to grow and flourish. With that in mind, perhaps the best

way to honor Margery on the occasion of her retirement is not by reflecting on the past through speeches or essays but, instead, by looking forward: building upon the foundation that she has played a central role in shaping, continuing along the path she has so expertly helped to fashion.

Best of luck, Margery, and thank you for everything!

(Jillian Duquine is a second-year PhD student.)

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## Congratulations

**Fiona Young** will be married on June 16<sup>th</sup> in Margate, England to William Nichols (Nic) Brown. After the wedding they will be living in Lexington, Kentucky.

## Student News

**Sandi Solis** will be teaching a Saturday and Evening class in the fall. The course is called 'Contemporary American Indian Women's Writing' and its being offered by the American Indian/Native Studies Program.

**Fiona Young** has been awarded a Stanley Fellowship for Graduate Study Abroad to help support her proposed dissertation research addressing infertility in Japan.



**Florence Babb** "This spring I am beginning a term as Chair of the Anthropology Department and I have also been promoted to Full Professor. I am participating in a seminar this spring with a group of faculty and students from UI and

Grinnell College who will travel to Cuba in June and later hold a conference in the fall.

This Bridging Project is focusing on Cuban culture and globalization since 1990. I also have articles in press in *the Journal of Latin American Anthropology and Latin American Perspectives* and my book, After Revolution: Mapping Gender and Cultural Politics in Neoliberal Nicaragua (U of Texas Press) is due to be out in the fall."

**Susan Birrell** "My book, Reading Sport: Critical Essays on Power and Representation, co-edited with Mary McDonald, has been named an Outstanding Academic Title for 2000. The annual selections are made by Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries, which is a publication of the American Library Association. Mary

McDonald is a grad of the Health, Leisure, and Sport Studies program in sport studies and she is an associate professor at Miami University."

**Anne Donadey** Anne's long-awaited book, Recasting Postcolonialism: Women Writing Between Worlds, is slated for publication this July (Heinemann). Details may be found on the website at:

<http://info.greenwood.com/books/0325070/0325070229.html>.

She also was invited to write the foreword for the English translation of a collection of short stories edited by Franco-Algerian writer Leila Sebbar, An Algerian Childhood: A Collection of Autobiographical Narratives. The collection was translated by Marjolijn de Jager and was published by Ruminator Press (St Paul, MN) this April.

Her invited article, "Anamnesis and National Reconciliation: Re-Membering October 17, 1961" has just appeared in the book collection Immigrant Narratives in Contemporary France, edited by Susan Ireland and Patrice J. Proulx (Greenwood Press). Anne recently presented a portion of that essay, "From Historical Amnesia to Literary Anamnesis: Leila Sebbar's La Seine était rouge," at the Twenty-First Century French Studies colloquium, which was held this year at the University of California-Davis.

**Rosemarie Scullion** has been quite busy this year. She organized a panel at the 2000 Modern Language Association: *Good Writers/ Bad Politics: Literati as Losers*; organized a panel at the XXth and XXIst century French Studies Colloquium at UC-Davis: "Documentary Filmmaking in France and Quebec;" delivered a paper at XXth and XXIst century French Studies Colloquium titled "Uncovering the Covert: Chris Marker's L'Ambassade;" will be delivering a paper at the Western Society for French Historical Studies, "Adapting (to) History: Albert Camus's and Luis Puenzo's The Plague". In addition, Rosemarie is currently serving on the Executive Council of the Modern Language Association, and is a Member of the Organizing Committee of the Modern Language Association Delegate Assembly. In April she organized an

Ida Beam Visiting Professorship for Susan Rubin Suleiman, C. Douglas Dillon Professor of the Civilization of France and Comparative Literature. Suleiman one of the founders of the Women's Studies Program at Harvard University.

**Jael Silliman** "I am just completing a very productive research leave. This semester I documented the histories of three women of color organizations in the field of reproductive rights. This is part of a larger research project entitled *Women of Color: The Politics of Inclusion* that is being supported by a grant from the Open Society Institute. I am developing a new course entitled "Girl Speak: Voices From Around the World" that will be offered for the first time in Spring 2002. The course will introduce first- and second-year undergraduates to issues of gender equity, feminist scholarship and activism through an examination of the social and political issues that young women are taking up around the world. My book, *Jewish Portraits, Indian Frames: Women's Narratives From A Diaspora of Hope* will be published in fall (2001) in the Brandeis Series on Jewish Women, University Press of New England.

**Margery Wolf** What will I be doing next year? I will continue to work on *Coyote's Land*, the historical ethnography that has occupied me for the last few years. I will try to finish the novel from which I read a few weeks ago at the truly grand retirement party Women's Studies and Anthropology gave me. I will be stripping wallpaper, painting (and painting and painting), restoring a neglected garden, and generally exhibiting nesting behavior. I will be getting back into community work of one sort or another. I will walk the beaches; I will eat Dungeness crabs; I will read and read and read. And then a new research project or new writing project will catch me and I will be off in a new direction.

Where will I be doing all that? I will be doing it in Santa Rosa, California—my hometown. You can reach me through the old uiowa email address. After August 30, my home address will be 1617 Hexem Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. No phone number yet. Let me know if you are going to be out our way (Mac is on sabbatical in the Fall) and we will feast together on some of the sweetest crabs on earth!

Thank you, Women's Studies, for a great sixteen years. I learned so much from you and I will miss you, each and every one of you. But the lure of home, mild winters, redwood trees and the beautiful blue Pacific can no longer be resisted.

## *Scholarships Awarded*

The Women's Studies Program presented three student scholarships at the Celebration of Excellence and Achievement Among Women on March 27, 2001. The **Ada Johnson/Otilia Maria Fernandez** scholarship, a \$1000 award, is given to a woman student of color who has taken courses in the Women's Studies Program or whose academic interests include some aspect of women's culture or experience. This year it was awarded to **Morgan Hoosman**, a third year undergraduate student majoring in Geography, with certificates in both International Business and Global Health. She is centrally concerned with issues that affect women and children, particularly those in the domain of health—nutrition and body image, to mention two central questions—and in the multiple roles many women must manage in educational, political, and maternal domains.

This year's recipients of the **Jane A. Weiss Memorial Dissertation Scholarship** are **Carol Lauhon**, English Department, and **Nancy Wairimu Muturi**, a Ph.D. student in Mass Communication. This \$2,000 award is given to a University of Iowa Ph.D. candidate whose dissertation focuses on issues pertaining to women. Carol's dissertation, "Capitola!; or, Our American Dream: The Hidden Hand in American Culture, 1859-1929" is centered upon a recently revived novel by a writer who was probably the most widely read U.S. novelist of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth. Carol's work embraces a novel revived by feminist literary scholarship and opens it to feminist economic understandings of its meaning and value for the culture at large. Nancy's dissertation, "A Reproductive Health Approach to Family Planning: Toward Strategic Communication for Development in Kenya" deals with women's reproductive health in rural Kenya, and will pay particular attention to the way in which family planning messages are communicated.

**Congratulations to these fine women!!**

## *A Great Year for Guest Speakers!*

Women's Studies had an impressive list of guest speakers this year, many of them part of the *Reproduction, Motherhood, and Women's Health: Issues for the 21st Century* series. **RW Connell**, Ida Beam Visiting Professor from The University of Sydney (Australia) spoke on

September 21 on "Understanding Men: The New International Research on Masculinity." **Izabela Filipiak**, University of Warsaw (Poland) was here on September 25 to speak about "Transgressions of art and gender in the life of Maria Komornicka (Piotr Wlast)." **Molly Ladd-Taylor**, University of York (Toronto), followed on October 12 with "Eugenics and the Baby Boom: From Coercion to Therapy." **Margaret Lock**, Ida Beam Visiting Professor, McGill University, appeared on October 19 with the topic "Twice Dead: Organ Transplants and the Commodification of the Good-as-Dead." **Jacqueline Litt**, Iowa State University, October 27, talked about "The Social Meanings of Ritalin: Mothers' Perspectives on Attention Deficit Disorder." **Gigi Durham**, Journalism and Mass Communication, The University of Iowa, was the guest on November 3 to talk about "Mass Media and the Sexy Girl: Articulating Adolescent Girls' Negotiations of Media Messages About the Body." **Rosemarie Scullion**, French and Italian, The University of Iowa, spoke on November 8 with the topic "On the Waterfront: Class Action and Anti-Colonial Engagement in Paul Capita's *Le Rendezvous des Quais*." **Dorothy Roberts**, Northwestern University School of Law, told us about "Black Women and the Politics of Reproduction" on March 23. **Loretta Ross**, executive director of the National Center for Human Rights Education, was here on April 6 to speak on "Bringing Human Rights Home." **Margery Wolf**, University of Iowa Women's Studies and Anthropology Departments, read from her forthcoming novel "Sekiak and the Anthropologist" on April 13. Finally, **Rosalind Petchesky**, professor of Women's Studies and Political Science at Hunter College and the Graduate Center of CUNY, and founder of the International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group was here on April 27 with the topic "Women and Global Power."

connections, and the future implications and possibilities of the doctoral degree in women's studies will be discussed.

The number of institutions granting doctoral degrees in Women's Studies has grown from none to two to ten or twelve and beyond. The conference be dedicated to discussions of this important development and its implications for all levels of women's studies education. These conversations have already begun at various locations. This meeting will bring together individuals from many different sites within and outside women's studies to share information and consider the future of graduate education. At this working conference—envisioned as the first of a series—all attendees will be active participants and contributors. It is expected that a publication will develop out of this working conference.

The conference will be structured around three themes: Roles and Scope of Women's Studies Ph.D. Education Articulations within Women's; Studies and Connections with Other Interdisciplinary Studies and Sites of Knowledge-Production; and Implications and Possibilities for Women's Studies as a Field.

The conference is being structured to maximize opportunities for discussion and exchange with few formal presentations. Not all participants will make presentations, but all attendees will contribute to conference discussions and recommendations. Conference attendees will be asked to serve as respondents, facilitators, discussion and group leaders, and to be active participants in the dialogue throughout. **Jillian M. Duquaine** will be co-leading one of the breakout sessions, "Articulating with the Job Market: Implications for Pedagogy, Curriculum, Theory, and Practice," which will focus on graduate student perspectives. **Fiona Young** will be involved in planning a session tentatively titled Working in the Present, Planning for the Future: Women's Studies Ph.D. Students and Graduates Talk about Implications for Pedagogy, Curriculum, Theory, and Praxis. **Ellen Lewin** will serve on a panel, the focus of which is on the design of the PhD curriculum, the theoretical and methodological perspectives within the program, the way disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge is balanced, the types of research undertaken by students, and For more information, visit the conference website at [www.depts.drew.edu/wmst/ws\\_phd](http://www.depts.drew.edu/wmst/ws_phd)

## Conferences and Calls for Papers

Emory University in Atlanta will be hosting the conference, "**The PhD in Women's Studies: Implications and Articulations**," October 12-14, 2001. According to the organizers, the conference will be a *working* conference. It will bring together a relatively small number of people with professional attachments to the field of women's studies and a stake in the success of the field's maturation—marked in part by the development of new PhD programs in the last five years, including at The University of Iowa. The current role and scope, the ongoing articulations and

Our new address as of  
June 1, 2001  
will be  
701 Jefferson Building.  
Telephone and fax numbers  
will remain the same.

## KEEP US POSTED

If you have information that you would like to pass on to The University of Iowa Women's Studies Department, please consider this your invitation to share the news.

Your Name:

Date:

1. Have you received any honors, made a presentation, or had an article or book published recently? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you attended any conferences, or do you know of any that may be of interest to Women's Studies?
3. Do you have information about possible fellowships, grants, or employment opportunities?
4. Would you write a paragraph or two to review or recommend music, a book, or a film?
5. What research are you currently involved in that you'd like the Women's Studies community to know about?

Feel free to respond to any or all questions by mail,  
e-mail ([laura-kastens@uiowa.edu](mailto:laura-kastens@uiowa.edu)) or fax (319/335-0314).

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