



june 2013

CSWupdate







This is our last newsletter for the year. We'll start up again in October. Hope you have a great summer!

— Rachel Lee



**Chandra Ford is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Health Sciences at the Fielding School of Public Health at UCLA. Her areas of expertise are in the social determinants of HIV/AIDS disparities, the health of sexual minority populations, and Critical Race Theory. She earned her Ph.D. from the Gillings School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina.**



# Q&A with Chandra Ford

*Director of the Center for Public Health Critical Race Praxis talks about her research on social inequity and health disparities*

**What has your recent work on social inequity and health disparities revealed about the multiple roles that racism plays in affecting health outcomes related to HIV/AIDS? Is distrust of the medical establishment caused by knowledge of historical medical malpractice compounded by continuing institutional and structural racism?**

To answer these questions, it's important to first have an understanding of the types of racism prevalent in today's world. For example, racism might occur everyday at work. Another, more pervasive type of racism may not be experienced firsthand but affects systems and processes. We can look

at a specific type of racism and then begin to assess how racism in that occurrence affects health outcomes. There already is a lot of work on the relationship between racism and non-infectious diseases—blood pressure, mental health outcomes, and adverse birth- or pregnancy-related outcomes, such as having a child prematurely. Much less work has been done on the effects of racism on the transmission of infectious diseases or on access to services to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases. My work helps to fill that gap.

That said, I have learned that the relationship between racism and HIV testing and other prevention-related outcomes is pretty complex, more complex than some data

would suggest. My work primarily examines preventive behaviors, but most HIV prevention work focuses on risk behaviors. This risk orientation emphasizes how behaviors increase risk. Based on my findings to date, I am beginning to consider the possibility that, when taking racism into account, preventive behaviors may function differently than risk behaviors. We do know that one of the factors that motivates behaviors is the knowledge that one is receiving a benefit. This is often obscured for those undertaking preventive measures.

Most of my work is focused on people who have very low incomes, who rely on public health clinics and resources, and who are in

high HIV-prevalence or -risk populations. Often, they have multiple health or social issues. Those who use clinics specializing in the treatment of sexually transmitted disease (STD) are considered at high risk for HIV for two reasons. First, if they're engaging in behaviors that place them at risk for an STD like gonorrhea, they are, by definition, engaging in behaviors that also place them at risk for HIV. Secondly, because HIV prevalence is higher in these networks, opportunities to acquire or transmit HIV are many.

My work to date offers several interesting findings. In some of my qualitative work, we found that people from these disadvantaged populations generally do not have racial preferences regarding their health provider's background. They do, however, feel very strongly about having a provider who treats them like a person. Many believe that providers may treat them poorly because they are minorities. A growing body of work suggests that racial concordance between the patient and provider may influence patient behaviors in clinical settings. In one small study I conducted, African American women seeking STD screening—a population the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends automatically undergo HIV testing during visits—were more likely to do so if they were seen by a

black provider. Even though African American providers in this context made up only one-fourth of the provider pool, approximately 80% of the African American women who obtained an HIV test were tested by an African American provider. We need to do more studies with larger, more representative samples to understand these relationships better and to determine if racial concordance might facilitate earlier diagnosis of any HIV infection among African Americans, whose rates of HIV/AIDS remain higher than any other U.S. racial/ethnic group.

Another interesting finding from my research has to do with how people, especially African Americans, respond when they perceive everyday kinds of racism (that is, "racial microaggressions"). Racial microaggressions are the little things that, by themselves, seem silly and insignificant, but derive meaning because they occur so regularly in one's life that they become chronic stressors. As an example, think of the black person who goes to a nice store and is followed by the sales people to make sure nothing is stolen.

We explored whether people perceive this kind of racism as pervasive in society. We then compared people who believe it pervasive and those who do not—to see how those perceptions related to their HIV-testing behaviors

in STD clinics. For African American STD clinic patients who believed this kind of racism is pervasive, the more they believe it, the more inclined they are to test for HIV infection during an STD clinic visit. That finding was consistent with other studies primarily focused on preventive outcomes. We conjectured that perceiving these microaggressions might be a marker of self-awareness or awareness of one's social environment. A higher level of awareness, including race consciousness, might actually help people respond more assertively, more proactively, to perceived potential threats if they believe they can do something to address the threats. We also thought that these people might be more proactive about HIV testing because they want to avoid becoming reliant on a system they don't completely trust or don't want to unknowingly contract HIV and pass it on to their loved ones.

Currently, I'm beginning to examine what happens when people experience racism, especially in a health care setting. I am asking the research question, "When controlling for other relevant considerations, does an experience of racism influence HIV testing in this high HIV-prevalence setting?" Our preliminary data suggest that it does and that this relationship might actually create a barrier, but that's a very preliminary conclusion.



*Since 2010, when we first published our public health critical race praxis, we have begun to see marks of progress in the use of this model. One is that scientists are trying to standardize the approaches they use in quantitative and qualitative empirical research to address race, ethnicity, and/or racism-related factors. This, I think, is pretty exciting! It means we are placing a greater emphasis on explicitly naming racism. And, while explicitly naming racism is not new to what we are doing, we are now providing tools that allow researchers to do so in more refined and more nuanced ways.*

**What has your study of older (50+) adults and HIV testing shown about the effects of conspiracy theories and mistrust of the government?**

Interestingly, the relationship we found between HIV testing and endorsement of HIV conspiracy theories among older adults was similar to the relationship we found between everyday pervasive racism and HIV testing. Both findings remind us that people exercise agency in their lives, that they have resilience, and that even socially marginalized communities have some resources. The findings remind us to pose our research questions such that they do not frame community perspectives as illogical. We need to understand that these communities may have important reasons for their concerns or for endorsing conspiracies. And, in their estimation, addressing these concerns and beliefs will protect and enhance their health.

To put this concept in context relative to other work on racism and health, this approach suggests we need to think in more nuanced ways about racism. To give you an example, members of focus groups I conducted several years ago had very negative *attitudes*, which appeared to be propelled by their personal experiences with racism. Their *behaviors*, however, were not affected in the same way.

For instance, several reported being treated very badly, but nevertheless declared that, despite feeling terrible because of how clinical staff treated them, “If I need services, I’m going to demand that I get what I need.”

As I mentioned earlier, much less is known about the role of racism on preventive behaviors vs. risk behaviors. It’s important that we begin or continue asking the questions: “How does experiencing racism relate to someone seeking HIV testing?” “What are the implications when we’re thinking about racism in high- versus low-HIV-prevalence populations?” This is important because we know that, although high-risk groups undergo HIV testing more than any other groups do, it still does not occur at the levels we would hope for, given the even higher levels of HIV in these populations.

So, thinking about whether racism limits HIV testing in a population is not enough. We need to think about it relative to HIV/AIDS rates in the population and with regard to how groups differ in their relationship to HIV testing in general.

**How has critical race theory changed the conceptualization of racism in the field of public health? How can it help to develop more successful strategies for reducing health disparities and achieving health equity?**

For generations, scientists in public health and biomedicine have conducted research to counter medical racism and address racial/ethnic inequities in health. I am fortunate to be able to draw on their findings, and the expertise of my colleague, Collins Airhihenbuwa, to continue the work on critical race theory and, specifically, our novel contribution, the public health critical race praxis (PHCR), which is not just a reduction and extraction of critical race theory. Instead, it is an engagement with both critical race theory as it exists outside of the public health context and as what Camara Jones at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls “an organic public health critical race theory.”

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means we are placing a greater emphasis on explicitly naming racism. And, while explicitly naming racism is not new to what we are doing, we are now providing tools that allow researchers to do so in more refined and more nuanced ways.

In terms of the literature, in the past, it has often been difficult to publish peer-reviewed articles addressing racism. And, while we are gaining some momentum in scholarly publication, we continue to be challenged by the fact that critical race scholarship is not well understood within the mainstream of the field.

Yet, another positive thing is happening: researchers are beginning to incorporate explicit self-awareness, self-consciousness, and reflexivity in their quantitative research. This is really quite notable because objective science is not typically a place where researchers talk about how their own subjectivities influence the research questions they ask, the methods they use, the interpretations they make of the findings, or other considerations. So this, again, I find to be very exciting.

Several efforts are underway to shift how researchers investigate and address social determinants of health and health equity. For instance, the University of Maryland’s Center for Health Equity has called for a fourth generation of health disparities research to

be based entirely on the public health critical race praxis. They argue that three orientations to health disparities have existed; by pursuing their PHCR-based research they will capitalize on this critical race direction to study health disparities and to promote critical race praxis on the ground through public health practice in communities.

We’re also thinking about how to layer on more explicit, critical, racialized analyses into approaches that are already working in the field, such as community-based participatory research (CBPR). With a CBPR approach, communities and researchers partner in truly equal ways—at all levels of the research continuum—to conduct the study and then to use the findings to improve the community. This process is not driven by researchers coming up with ideas and then receiving community input on them. Rather, it is the whole community, including the researchers, that creates the ideas and drives the research effort.

Within this framework, we call for a more sustained and explicit consideration of how racialization might be at work in CBPR projects. To facilitate this, we help to provide a vocabulary grounded in critical race theory to draw public health efforts into conversation with critical race scholarship outside our field. I believe this can help to legitimate public health

critical race approaches. Our model emphasizes not only studying health disparities, but also studying ways that racialization within our field might inadvertently contribute to the disparities. This involves examining our methods and conventions. One paper that is now being referenced widely is one that Nina Harawa and I published in *Social Sciences and Medicine* on conceptualizing and measuring ethnicity in the United States. We talk about race all the time, but what does ethnicity mean in the United States? This question is fundamental to the field of public health because we routinely use these variables all the time. Given the social construction of ethnicity, we urge empirical researchers to define it in ways that underscore how specific social inequalities are linked to ethnicity.

### **What drew you to participating in the Life (Un)Ltd. working group?**

I'm interested in engaging critical race theory and feminist theory relative to public health research and practice, and to exploring how critical scholarship might be applied to real-life public health problems. We often find a disconnect between applied scholarship and theory-based academic work. I'd like to marry the two to see if we can better our understanding of health disparities, improve people's wellness, and increase knowledge.

I'm also interested in how critical feminist scholarship, among other critical scholarships, can benefit from what's going on in public health. I am concerned that critical feminist and other critical studies do not sufficiently engage with and critique knowledge production occurring within biomedicine and public health. While there may be some engagement with it, failure to truly engage with these fields may leave them unchecked and may even reinforce presumptions that the fields are beyond critique from non-scientists.

### **Has having an M.L.I.S. in addition to an M.P.H. and Ph.D. affected your approach to research?**

Absolutely. It informs how I think about the causes of disparities and how I go about my own research. My training in library and information studies was focused on health information, especially disparities in accessing health information. For many years, I also focused on how information tools, including the Internet and other media, might be used to reduce disparities. In terms of knowledge production, having an M.L.I.S. shapes how I carry out my own work. Moreover, it informs one of the central focuses of the public health critical race praxis—the role of racialization in knowledge production about disparities.



**life (un)ltd**  
SPECIAL ISSUE  
of THE SCHOLAR  
and FEMINIST

LAUNCH PARTY  
OCT, 14, 2013  
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**SAVE THE DATE!**





*The CSW Awards Luncheon, which took place this year on June 5, is a happy occasion when we recognize another group of amazing scholars and activists.*



## Penny Kanner

### HER SUPPORT PROVIDES RECOGNITION AND RESEARCH FUNDS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

**B**ARBARA “PENNY” KANNER received a Ph.D. in the Department of History at UCLA. Kanner has taught at UCLA Extension, Mount St. Mary’s College, Occidental College, and held a faculty appointment at UCLA. She has been a Research Scholar at the Center for the Study of Women since 1990. She authored a number of works on British women’s autobiographies including *Women in Context: Two Hundred Years of British Women Autobiographers, a Reference Guide and Reader* (Prentice Hall, 1997). In her essay, “Growing into History” in *Voices of Women Historians* (Indiana University Press, 1999), she noted that she endowed the Mary Wollstonecraft Award at the Center for the Study of Women in 1983 after “seeing that professional encouragement for women graduate students was pitifully inadequate in all disciplines.” She also endowed the George Eliot Dissertation Award and the Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D., Awards. Recently, she agreed to combine the Eliot and Wollstonecraft Awards into a single award: Penny Kanner Dissertation Research Fellowship, which honors her long-standing commitment to graduate students

# Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D., Award

ANNE E. FEHRENBACHER AND MICHELLE RAZAVI

Anne E. Fehrenbacher is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Community Health Sciences in the Fielding School of Public Health. She is a trainee at the California Center for Population Research with support from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Her research focuses on the intersections of race, gender, and legal status in the lives of exploited migrant workers. Her dissertation investigates why some migrants who suffer exploitation in the workplace are classified as victims while others are regarded as deserving of poor treatment. She is cofounder of the UCLA Anti-Trafficking and Human Rights Coalition.



Michelle Razavi is a third-year Political Science major and Spanish minor. Raised in a multilingual household by a single mother, she developed her passion for international affairs and female empowerment at an early age. She just received a global internship with Hyundai Capital in Seoul, South Korea, where she will be living and working for the summer. She is a campus tour guide for UCLA and enjoys kickboxing, running, Pilates, and yoga in her spare time. She hopes to work for an international company after graduation and pursue an M.B.A. after gaining several years of work experience.



# *Penny Kanner Dissertation Research Fellowship*

LISA SLOAN

*Lisa Sloan with her advisor,  
Professor Sue-Ellen Case*



*Lisa Sloan* is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Theater and Performance Studies. Her dissertation is tentatively titled "Performing Lesbian Feminism in the '80s and '90s." The project examines this embattled period in feminism's history through lesbian performance and performativity, including political actions and academic debates as well as theatrical performances, films, and photography. This summer, Lisa will travel to New York to conduct archival research at the Barnard Center for Research on Women as well as the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. Though her academic pursuits focus on historical lesbian performance, she also appreciates contemporary lesbian performance. An avid theatergoer, she has been known to drive six hours to see a lesbian play.



# Jean Stone

## HER GENEROSITY FUNDS THE DISSERTATION RESEARCH OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF FEMINIST SCHOLARS

**J**EAN STONE, born Jean Factor, collaborated with her husband, Irving Stone, as a researcher and editor on eighteen biographical novels. Her relationship with CSW began with her participation in the Friends of CSW in the late 1980s. Stone, who passed away in 2004, cared deeply about the graduate students whose research on women embodied the promise of the next generation of women scholars. Her commitment to graduate students is reflected in the dissertation fellowships she established. On more than one occasion, she noted how much pleasure she derived from supporting stellar young scholars and their research. She established two fellowship programs: The Jean Stone Research Fellowship, which funds a doctoral student engaged in research on women and/or gender, and The Paula Stone Legal Research Fellowship, which honors her daughter and which helps fund a promising law or graduate student advanced research project focusing on women and the law. In addition to the fellowships she established during her life, her legacy to UCLA now includes the Irving and Jean Stone Dissertation Year Fellowships.

# Irving and Jean Stone Dissertation Year Fellowship

MARY ANN BRONSON AND STEPHANIE D. SANTOS

Mary Ann Bronson is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Economics. Her dissertation, currently titled “Degrees are Forever: Educational Investment, Marriage, and Lifecycle Labor Decisions of Men and Women.” examines why women have made up the majority of college students, despite lower college wage premiums and labor force participation rates than men. It asks why, while outpacing men in college attendance, women have consistently continued to select systematically lower-return majors since 1980. Her study is the first in the economics literature to provide a unified explanation for these two sets of patterns of educational investment choices by gender over time. It is also the first to tie them to marriage market changes, particularly falling marriage and rising divorce rates.



Stephanie D. Santos is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Gender Studies. Her dissertation examines contemporary discourses of governmentality and development in the Philippines, focusing on the displacement, dispossession, and other forms of material violence engendered by neoliberal development strategies on vulnerable Filipina women. She has worked as a journalist in the Philippines and was previously assistant editor at *Amerasia Journal*.



# *Jean Stone Dissertation Research Fellowship*

**MAYA MONTAÑEZ SMUKLER**



*Maya Montañez Smukler* is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Cinema and Media Studies at UCLA, where she is completing her dissertation “Liberating Hollywood: Women Directors of the 1970s.” She has been on the faculty of The New School’s Media Studies program since 2002.



# Constance Coiner Ana Duarte-Coiner

## COINER AWARDS HONOR THEIR MEMORY



CONSTANCE COINER, 48, and her daughter, Ana Duarte-Coiner 12, were among the passengers who perished on TWA flight 800. Coiner designed her own individual Ph.D. program in American Studies at UCLA, bringing together her interests in working-class literature and history. Her dissertation, which she completed in 1987, received the very first CSW Mary Wollstonecraft Dissertation Award. Since 1988, she had been on the faculty at the State University of New York, Binghamton. Born while Constance was completing her doctorate, Ana Duarte-Coiner helped lead her team to a city softball championship in 1995, excelled as a student, was a reporter on a children's television program, and was an accomplished pianist and member of her school's varsity tennis team.

## Constance Coiner Awards

EILEEN GNEHM, SUSILA GURUSAM, JEWEL PEREYRA, AND MALLORY VALENZUELA



*Eileen Gnehm* recently completed her undergraduate degree at UCLA with a major in African American Studies, a concentration in Sociology, and a minor in Education. She enjoys participating in third sector/not-for-profit social entrepreneurial ventures and has direct experience in building programs, advocacy, crisis intervention, fundraising, management of organizational resources, and grant writing. She is also a trained mediator working with the Institute for Nonviolence in Los Angeles, teaching K-12 students conflict resolution in the Los Angeles Unified School District. In 2010, her efforts in the field of social work and student development earned her

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: *Susila Gurusam, Mallory Valenzuela, Jewel Pereyra, and Eileen Gnehm, Virginia Coiner Classick, sister of Constance Coiner*



West Los Angeles College's first annual Humanitarian Award, an honor bestowed upon her by the college's students and faculty.

*Susila Gurusami* is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology. Her dissertation project explores the ways that women with precarious legal claims to mothering—because of non-biological kinship status or incarceration history—negotiate their rights to motherhood. She is incredibly grateful to the undergraduates she has worked with in her capacity as a teaching assistant and graduate student researcher in the Department of Sociology and the Intergroup Relations Program. Their engagement with social justice and knowledge-building is her daily source of motivation. She aims to integrate this spirit of colearning into her dissertation through the use of participatory action methods in tandem with traditional qualitative approaches, and she hopes the work generated by the participants for her dissertation will provide community-produced materials for mobilization against the Prison-Industrial Complex. *Jewel Pereyra* was born in Okinawa, Japan, and grew up in Oceanside, California. She is a fourth-year

honors student double-majoring in Gender Studies and American Literature and Culture. She works as a Residential Assistant for the Office of Residential Life and has been actively involved in the residential community for three years. Passionate about social justice, feminism, and LGBT rights, she cofounded UCLA's first "Gender, Sexuality, and Society" themed-floor community that, along with gender-neutral housing, will be a housing option for students in AY 2013-14. She is also a writer for *Fem* newsmagazine, a volunteer for UCLA's Creative Minds Project, and a programmer and past performer in *The Vagina Monologues* at UCLA. She is completing her honors thesis under the mentorship of Professors Jenny Sharpe and Harryette Mullen. Her research explores European colonial travel narratives, post-colonial counter-narratives and myths, and the intersections among the nation, erotics, and the queer diaspora in Caribbean and African American women's literature from the 1980s to the present.

*Mallory Valenzuela* is a fourth-year undergraduate student in Asian American Studies and Sociology. Her academic career has been shaped by her in-

volvement in Samahang Pilipino, Samahang Pilipino Advancing Community Empowerment, the UCLA Student Fee Advisory Committee, and the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship. Her family grounds her in her studies, and much reflection concerning her childhood and her family history has shaped her current research topic. Her engagement with her research topic began at a young age when she visited family members in nursing homes in the Bay Area. Her research focuses on migrant Pilipina women working as caregivers in nursing homes.



# Myrna A. Hant

## HER GENEROSITY REWARDS THE REBIRTH OF ACADEMIC ASPIRATIONS

**M**YRNA A. HANT received her Ph.D. in Education from UCLA with a dissertation entitled “Life Satisfaction of the Well Elderly.” She had previously completed two Master’s degrees, one in English Literature and the other in Business Administration. Dr. Hant was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Delta Kappa for her Bachelor’s in Sociology from UCLA. She also received a Certificate in Gerontology from the University of Southern California. She was a college administrator at Chapman University as well as an instructor in Women’s Studies. Presently she teaches Women’s Studies courses as well as courses focusing on later life issues. She has been a CSW Research Scholar since 2001. She is also Chair of the Board of P.A.T.H. (People Assisting the Homeless). In 2006, she established the Renaissance Award, an undergraduate scholarship that rewards the rebirth of academic aspirations among women whose college careers were interrupted or delayed by family and/or career obligations and that encourages achievement in the pursuit of a bachelor’s degree at UCLA.

# Renaissance Award

JOSEPHINE H. FLORES, ILIANA GARCIA, AND JANE PARK



LEFT TO RIGHT: Jane Park, Josephine H. Flores, Myrna Hant, and Iliana Garcia





*Josephine Flores  
with her husband*



*Iliana Garcia with Myrna Hant*



*Jane Park with her daughter*

*Josephine H. Flores* was accepted to UCLA in 1983. As the eldest of six children, she considered attending college an honor and a great responsibility, but work and an unforeseen medical crisis interrupted her academic career. She refocused her time and energy into a career in the banking industry. Her children became her inspiration to return to school. In 2007, she resumed her studies at Moorpark College. In May of 2011, she received an Associate of Arts degree in Natural Sciences and graduated with honors. This achievement encouraged her to return to UCLA to obtain a B.A. in Sociology, which she will receive in June 2013. While at UCLA, she was the recipient

of the Myrtle Hickey DeLuce Memorial Scholarship in 2011 and 2012. She is a member of the Academic Advancement Program and of Students with Dependents at UCLA. She hopes to pursue an M.B.A.

*Iliana Aurora Garcia* will soon complete her undergraduate degree at UCLA with a major in Applied Linguistics and a concentration in Teaching and Education. As a full-time student and parent of two children, she embraces each challenge, embodying true Bruin values as a community leader and scholar. She lobbies at both the state and federal level by giving voice to the barriers facing students navigating higher education. She is also an active

volunteer for Venice Family Clinic as an interpreter and translator.

*Jane Park* is an undergraduate in the Department of Geography/Environmental Studies. She dropped out of high school but her love of books and reading made it possible for her to get a GED. She entered community college several times but as a single mother she would have to drop out because of work or childcare responsibilities. With the help of her family, she was finally able to attend and graduate from Pierce College. In 2011 she was accepted to UCLA as an undergraduate and was identified as a UCLA Achievement Scholar.

# Policy Brief Prize

LAURA CARTER, JENNIFER FREHN, KAREN LAI, KATSUME STONEHAM, AND ECHO ZEN

**T**HE POLICY BRIEF PRIZE recognizes outstanding applied feminist scholarship by graduate students. This year, we selected “Women’s Reproductive Health Policy in California” as the theme for this year’s briefs. We were pleased to receive submissions from graduate students in both the Luskin School of Public Affairs and the Fielding School of Public Health. We are pleased to recognize five briefs, which will be published on the CSW website, and on the CSW site at the California Digital Library.



*Laura Carter* is an M.P.H. candidate in the Department of Community Health Sciences in the Fielding School of Public Health. As a candidate for the Global Health Certificate in the Center for Global

and Immigrant Health, she aims to address health disparities, gender inequity, and social injustice in domestic and global populations. She has assisted an orphanage and women’s refuge shelter in West Africa and researched methods for designing programs to reduce maternal mortality in Badakhshan, the most isolated province in rural Afghanistan. She has been involved with the Male Violence Prevention Project, a program of Sojourn Services for Battered Women

and their Children. This program consists of Santa Monica organizations that challenge the traditional masculine values that result in harm to women, children and other men. She also interns with the Planned Parenthood Advocacy Project, advocating for enhanced reproductive healthcare access and lobbying state legislators in Sacramento.



*Jennifer Frehn* is an M.P.H. candidate in the Department of Community Health Sciences in the Fielding School of Public Health. In 2009 she volunteered in Peru as an English profes-

sor. As a master’s student, she spent her summer internship increasing access to oral health care for

Los Angeles Unified School District students. She is currently works for the Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities, where her work has focused on school-based health centers. Other research interests include nutrition policy and access to healthy foods, maternal health, and aligning systems and programs in a community so that children and families can thrive.



*Karen Lai* is completing her M.P.H. in the Department of Health Policy and Management in the Fielding School of Public Health and is pursuing an M.D. She hopes to work in the area of child and adolescent mental health. She is interested in learning about and changing the course of the development of mental disorders not only from a pathophysiological standpoint but also from a public health, systems-based perspective. Through her courses, she has become more cognizant of and passionate about influencing, via research and policy, the various social conditions

that shape children's and families' well-being.



*Katsume Stoneham* is an M.P.H. candidate in Community Health Sciences in the Fielding School of Public Health. She holds a B.A. in Molecular Biology from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her geographic area of interest is sub-Saharan Africa, where she has worked twice: first in South Africa, evaluating HIV and AIDS education programs for OneVoice South Africa, and second in Uganda, designing a research project and documenting final activities for the Stop Malaria Project. Currently she interns in the Systems Redesign Office at the VA-Greater Los Angeles campus, looking for ways to improve patient access to care and the efficient delivery of that care. She also volunteers as a photographer and yoga teacher with CoachArt, an organization linking chronically and terminally ill children with local artists and athletes.



*Echo Zen* is a feminist artist, blogger, speaker, and sexual health advocate working to counter the influence of politicians who enable violence against women. He studied communication, theater, and gender at UC San Diego, integrating the fields into media projects to engage audiences around sexual health and safety. The feminist values he absorbed from his sister Tisha and her peers and his year-long term as copresident of UCSD Voices for Planned Parenthood were key influences on his decision to study sexual and reproductive health at UCLA. The Bixby Center recruited him to help oversee the rebrand of its Reproductive Health Interest Group satellite, where he now advises on advancing health through social media. In his spare time, he teaches sex ed, does ad consulting for birth control, and tries to pass enough classes to obtain his M.P.H. His role model is Cecile Richards, CEO extraordinaire of Planned Parenthood. He also bakes pastries.



Kathleen Sheldon has been a CSW Research Scholar since 1989. She received her Ph.D. in history from UCLA in 1988. Her books include *The A to Z of Women in Sub-Saharan Africa*. She is an editor on the listserv H-Luso-Africa, which focuses on the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa.



# **Migration and Sociopolitical Mobility in Africa and the African Diaspora** Conference Honors the Career of Ned Alpers *by Kathleen Sheldon*

**Many former  
graduate students and current  
colleagues met at UCLA on  
April 11 and 12 to honor a mentor  
and fellow scholar.**

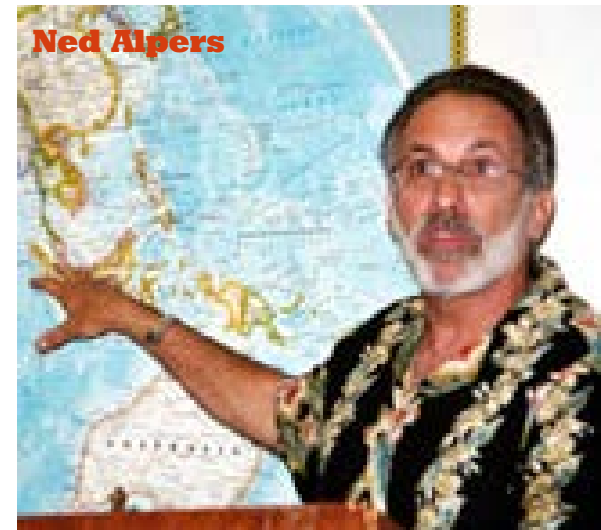
**M**ANY former graduate students and current colleagues met at UCLA on April 11 and 12 to participate in “Migration and Sociopolitical Mobility in Africa and the African Diasporas,” a conference honoring the career of history professor Ned Alpers on his retirement after 45 years on the faculty at UCLA. During two days of panels, twenty papers were presented concerning African women’s history, Indian Ocean history, African Diaspora, slavery, and a range of related topics, all followed by lively discussion with dozens of audience members. Participants traveled from across North America and included several Canadians as well as Thomas Vernet, a French historian now based at the Sorbonne.

Reflecting Ned’s commitment to women’s history and support of female scholars, the Center for the Study of Women was one of many backers. In the early 1980s he served on the Faculty Advisory Committee of what was then the Women’s Studies Program and played a key role in advocating for a research center on women. That became a reality with the Center beginning its work in 1984 under Prof. Karen Rowe. On a personal note, as a graduate student who had just returned from two years research in Mozambique, I was employed

as the first CSW Research Assistant due to his recommendation. At that time there was no CSW office, and Karen Rowe, other staff, and I all worked out of her office in the English Department.

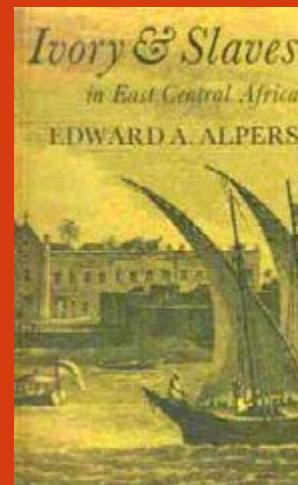
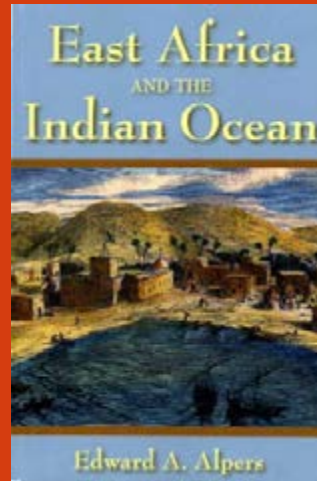
Women and women’s history were a strong presence on the conference program, with a panel on “Women, Gender and Sexuality in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa.” Nwando Achebe, now at Michigan State University, chaired and presented an intriguing paper that dealt in part with the practice of polyandry in a small area in Nigeria. The audience was particularly engaged with her report of a society where women were expected to marry multiple men and there was much discussion about how and why that practice operated. Also on the panel were Jamie Monson (Macalaster College) reporting on a document found in Chinese archives that detailed the 1960s visit of a delegation of Tanzanian women to China, Phoebe Musandu (finishing her Ph.D. at UCLA) discussing the early presence of African women on colonial legislative bodies in Kenya, and my own paper looking at the historiography of African market women’s work.

Peg Strobel (now retired from University of Illinois, Chicago), who finished her degree in 1974 as Ned’s second Ph.D. student, served



as discussant. She recalled preparing to travel to Kenya in the late 1960s to pursue her doctoral research but being uncertain about how to focus that work. At the same time, she was increasingly active in progressive politics including the developing women’s movement. As she and Ned both recall, Ned came to her and suggested that she consider focusing on African women’s history. During a year’s hiatus before she went to Kenya she was able to develop a women-centered research project. The book that came from her dissertation, one of the first monographs on African women to emerge from the modern feminist movement, was published by Yale University Press in 1979. *Muslim Women in Mombasa, 1890-1975* won the Herskovits Book Award from the African Studies Association.

Other panels included Shobana Shankar (Georgetown University) talking about the Ahmadiyya, a religious organization originally from Pakistan that spread through many parts of Africa influencing Islamic beliefs and practices; José Curto's (York University) paper debating the coastal or inland origins of slaves in West Central Africa; Emily Musil Church (a former CSW Research Scholar and now at Lafayette College) looking at identity issues related to race and nationality in colonial Francophone Caribbean and West African communities; and T. J. Desch-Obi (Baruch College CUNY) on the eastward spread of martial arts practices in central Africa. A panel on rural and urban histories included Willis Okech Oyugi, currently finishing his Ph.D. on Maasai cattle-herding and land tenure under British colonialism in Kenya, Ruby Bell-Gam (UCLA Africanist librarian) on the impact of oil drilling in the Niger Delta, Shimelis Bonsa Gulema (SUNY-Stony Brook) on urban history in Ethiopia, Hideiko Suzuki (McGill University) describing the 19th century commercial history of Kachchhi Bhatiya who traveled from South Asia to Zanzibar and along the East African coast, and Allison Shutt (Hendrix College) with an analysis of ideas about defamation as seen in court documents from Southern Rhodesia



**EDWARD A. (NED) ALPERS** received his Ph.D. from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in 1966. In addition to teaching at UCLA and the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, he has served as President of the African Studies Association (1994) and Chair of its National Program Committee (2001). His research and writing focus on the political economy of international trade in eastern Africa through the nineteenth century, including the cultural dimensions of this exchange system and its impact on gender relations, with special attention to the wider world of the western Indian Ocean. His books include *East Africa and the Indian Ocean*, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa* (1975), and *History, Memory and Identity* (with Vijayalakshmi Teelock), as well as many book chapters and scholarly articles, and has coedited several books. He is currently writing a political economy of eastern Tanzania in the nineteenth century and is engaged in a long-term study of the African diaspora in the Indian Ocean.



(Zimbabwe). Many of these papers showcased Ned's emphasis on finding and incorporating the voices of Africans, an approach that was innovative when he began his research in the 1960s, and is now essential to any respected work in African history.

The last morning was enlivened by presentations on the Indian Ocean, including Jeremy Prestholdt (UC San Diego) with an overview of global commerce and the Indian Ocean, Matthew Hopper (Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo) on African labor in the date and pearl industries of the Arabian Gulf, Anthony Lee (UCLA) with recovered histories of African slave women in Iran, Karen Flint (University of North Carolina, Charlotte) looking at health issues of indentured servants from India who were working in 19th century South Africa, and Thomas Vernet (Université Paris, Sorbonne) on the late 18th-century history of slavery and clove plantations on Zanzibar.

On Thursday evening conference participants were joined by many of Ned's colleagues from UCLA as the History Department sponsored a reception on the Royce Hall balcony, with numerous stories told about Ned's own travels and teaching years in Tanzania and Somalia. Ghislaine Lydon spoke about his

many influential publications, including his 1975 book on *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa*, his dozens of articles that looked closely at a huge range of topics related to slavery, trade, migration, politics, and community in East Africa, and his work in editing important volumes on slavery and the Indian Ocean. Andrew Apter (UCLA History and Anthropology) explained the three Neds: Ned the Marxist, in recognition of his days at the University of Dar es Salaam, when it was a hotbed of Marxist historiography, and of his deep friendship with Guyanese historian Walter Rodney; Ned the anthropologist, reflecting his training in Africanist social anthropology as a history graduate student at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies; and Ned the Dude, recognizing Ned's easy-going personality and openness to new people and new experiences.

In addition to his role at UCLA related to the Center for the Study of Women, Ned served as Dean of Honors and Undergraduate Programs for more than a decade (1985-1996), and he was chair of the History Department from 2005 to 2010. Over his decades at UCLA he supervised 60 Ph.D. dissertations, including two that will be completed later this year.

Many of those former students were able to participate in the conference, and all enjoyed the chance to catch up with old friends and reconnect with now-dispersed colleagues.

Ned's wife Annie was acknowledged by everyone as an important part of his success, and she and their daughter Leila were both able to attend the conference as well (their son, Joel, had a prior commitment). Awet Weldemichael (University of Kentucky), the indefatigable organizer of the conference, spoke at the end and related a story that was well-known to all in attendance. When Ned was a young scholar, a senior historian asked him about his research. Ned replied at length with great detail about the sources he was using and the particular kinds of information he was discovering. When he finished, the senior historian turned to Annie and asked, "What is Ned researching?" Annie famously and succinctly replied, "The history of trade in East Africa." And the history of trade in East Africa remained a focus of Ned's work for the next several decades, including the forthcoming *The Indian Ocean in World History* (Oxford University Press), and will continue in his retirement as he completes several more works-in-progress.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH ANN GIAGNI

*President of the Board recalls how her history and the Mazer's intertwined*



**Celebration of the launch of the partnership between UCLA Center for the Study of Women, UCLA Library, and the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, November, 2009: left to right, Kathleen McHugh; Ann Giagni; Sheila J. Kuehl; Abbe Land; Gary E. Strong; and April De Stefano.**

**A**NN GIAGNI demonstrated many talents and had various careers before becoming president of the board of the June Mazer Lesbian Archives in 1996: she trained as a ballerina throughout high school, studied math and English at New York University, and directed a production of “Berlin to Broadway with Kurt Weill” that was nominated for a Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award in 1986. However, Giagni traces her interest in archival work to her love of libraries as a child, which eventually led to a 10-year stint as a children’s librarian, including three years at the Alma Reaves Woods–Watts Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library.

“I loved that. . . that was a fabulous job,” says Giagni during an interview over coffee at Literati Café in Santa Monica. “And that’s sort of where my interest in joining the Archives board came from: my experience being a librarian.

And I just had an affinity for libraries, even as a kid. I used to spend a lot of time in them. I just liked the environment.”

Although Giagni, an avid reader, was drawn to the quiet spaces and free books offered by libraries, her work in Watts helped her discover the library as a place of social engagement and a way to interact with new communities. “[We started] doing activities for the kids because we had a lot of kids that were latchkey kids, so they would hang out. . . . There was a housing project across the street, so a lot of the kids from the housing project would just hang out with us because it was safe and something to do. We would keep them occupied. It was a very, very enriching experience for me, and I think it was good for the kids, too.”

Giagni became even more intertwined with the communities of South Central and East Los Angeles when she operated a book mobile in those areas, which she describes as “one of the most fun jobs I’ve ever had.”

“When you go to the community sites, you’re only there for an hour or two,” says Giagni. “For that little piece of time you become one thread in the fabric of that community,



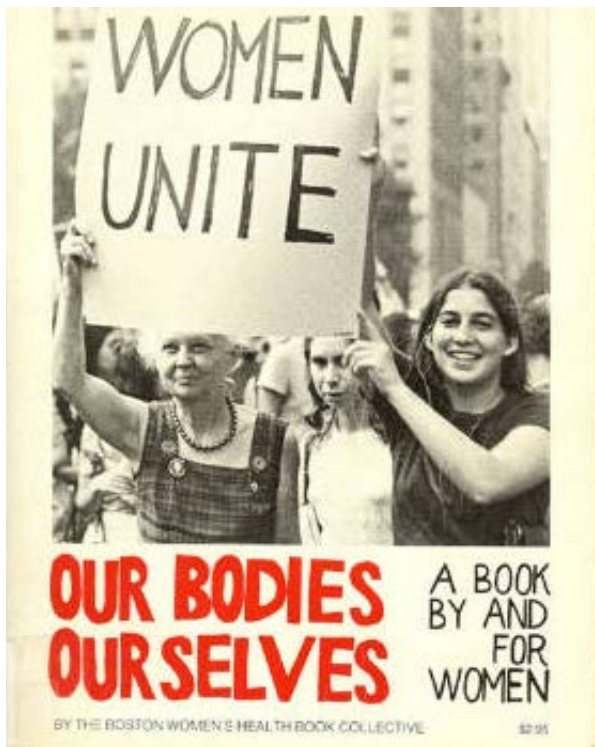
and I still remember that. There would be a crowd of people waiting for us when we pulled up. They were regulars, and we got to know them and we knew what they liked. So we were always looking for books: oh, this book for so-and-so at this stop, and this book for so-and-so at that stop. It was a very personalized service, but I got to know L.A. really, really well.”

These combined interests in working with communities and archiving and disseminating meaningful stories



**Giagni’s love of books and libraries led her to work for the Los Angeles Public Library, including three years at the Alma Reaves Woods–Watts Branch (above right) and to operate a bookmobile in South Central and East Los Angeles.**





made the Archives an ideal venue for Giagni to find meaningful work and community. Giagni, who was born in 1948, also found herself invested in the Mazer Archives because she remembered a time when lesbians and lesbian history seemed to be invisible.

"I grew up in a theater family; my dad is a choreogra-



pher. I knew about gay guys because my parents would have gay male couples over for dinner. I was aware of that as a little kid. I just never knew that two women could love each other," says Giagni. "It was not anywhere, it was not visible at all. They were not apparent in the general culture. The invisibility was stunning. I was vaguely aware



**Giagni came into her own as a lesbian and an activist during the boom of feminism and LGBT activism that took place in the 1970s.**

that Tim and Hugh were together. They lived together, they came to dinner together, they did things together, I was aware of that, but I never saw two women in the same union.”

Giagni was at NYU when Stonewall, one of the major events to raise cultural consciousness about gay men, lesbians, and the Gay Liberation Movement, took place. However, she wasn’t “out or aware of [her]self” at the time. Giagni came into her own as a lesbian and an activist during the boom of feminism and LGBT activism that took place in the 1970s.

“There was just an explosion. There’s no other way to describe it,” says Giagni. “It was kind of like the Big Bang starting the universe. There was nothing, and then there was everything. It was just like that. One of the catalysts was *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, out of the Boston [Women’s Health Book] Collective, and there was a lot of interest in women’s health and the way the medical community was mistreating us. So there was women’s health, and then there was women’s publishing, and then there was

women’s music, and then there were women’s bookstores, and then there were collectives everywhere. There was a lot of what was called “consciousness raising.” It went from nothing to everything so fast. It was breathtaking, it was very, very exhilarating to live through that.”

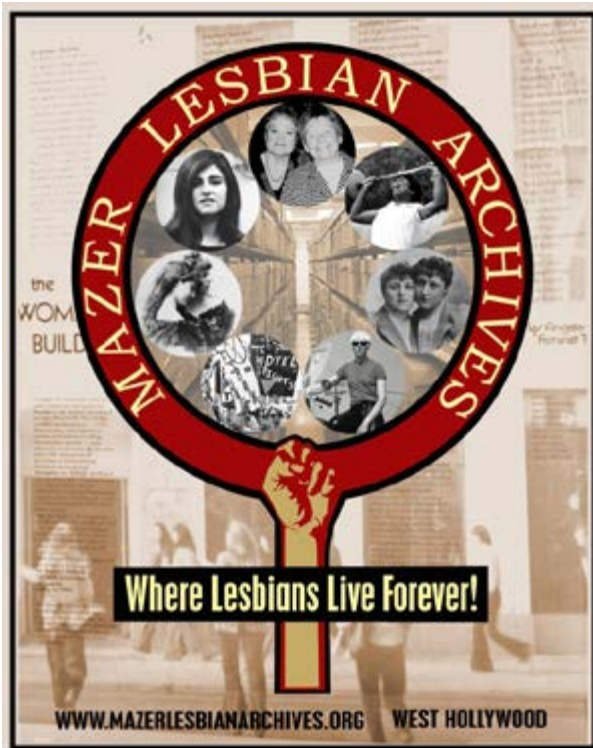
Giagni points out that this boom also led to the birth of the June L. Mazer Archives, originally called the West Coast Lesbian Collections, which were founded in 1981 in Oakland, CA. Lillian Faderman describes its origin on [www.mazerlesbianarchives.org](http://www.mazerlesbianarchives.org): “In the 1970s, the lesbian world began to change. We realized, as we dreamt of the Lesbian Nation, that we could and must make our lesbian communities strong. Part of our struggle was to fight the erasure that had always been used to keep us weak. We had to proclaim not only our immediate presence but the fact that many went before us, that we did indeed have a history. It was in this climate that the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives was created.”

In the 1980s, many of the lesbian and feminist organizations that flourished in the 1970s began to wane.

Giagni attributes this waning to several factors. Perhaps primarily, lesbians began to pool their resources to help, fight for, and fight with gay men who were dying of AIDS while the government and population at large stigmatized and neglected them. “It was the lesbian community at the very beginning that stepped in to help,” says Giagni. “And that, I think, really diverted a lot of our money and our energy into saying, ‘Wake up world. You can’t let these people die.’ And that was a long effort.”

Groups and organizations also began to fade simply because it is difficult to maintain grassroots organizations over a long period of time: financial resources run out, staff members come and go, and group’s goals lose and gain momentum as culture changes. “Creation and maintenance have two different skill sets,” says Giagni. “One is very exhilarating, and the other is a lot of hard work.”

Giagni also stopped her work as an activist when she fell ill in 1984. After recovering from an illness in the mid 1990s, she sought to rejoin the activist community. She was shocked to find how much it had diminished.



**June L. Mazer Archives, originally called the West Coast Lesbian Collections, was founded in 1981 in Oakland, CA. Six years later it moved to Los Angeles. The Archives acquired its present name after the death of June Mazer, to honor her work as a community activist and invaluable supporter of the Archives.**

“When I got well enough and I was ready to re-enter being active . . . it was like everything had disappeared!” says Giagni. “It was like, ‘Well, where is everything?’ . . . I was just stunned that so much that had been there when I had to drop out just wasn’t there anymore. So I talked to some friends of mine and asked ‘What’s around? I’d like to reconnect. I’d like to get involved again.’”

Through her contacts, Giagni discovered the Celebration Theatre in West Hollywood, which allowed her to draw on her experiences in the theater, and the Mazer Archives, which fulfilled the passion that was born in libraries. Both organizations satisfied Giagni’s desire to be an active part of Los Angeles’s LGBTQ community. She joined the board in 1996.

“I had a friend of mine call somebody on the board of the archives. She said, ‘Well, I know this person, and she’s interested in joining the board.’ Because I had decided that I wanted to be involved at the board level, not as a volunteer,” says Giagni. “They didn’t call for a

really, really long time . . . So, finally, they called me, and I came in, they interviewed me, and I was accepted onto the board.”

Giagni’s interview, also her first board meeting, brought with it a big surprise. “At the same meeting they said, ‘Now, who will be our president?’ Because the gal who was going to be the president was going off the board, and they all looked at me,” says Giagni. “I said, ‘I can’t be your president, you don’t even know me!’ And I became president at that meeting. I was the only one, nobody else would do it, and I was just the new kid in town, and I said, ‘Well, this is ridiculous.’ So I was copresident for three months, to sort of get me acquainted. And there I was, and here I am.” Giagni has remained president of the board for 17 years.

Given her lengthy tenure with the Mazer Archives, Giagni seems uniquely equipped to assess why the Archives have managed to stay open and succeed in the decades during which other lesbian institutions and organizations founded during the same period shut

their doors. Giagni highlights several potential reasons for the organization's longevity, the first being its long-term, timeless mission.

"I was in a collective and our goal was to provide an alternative to the bars on Friday night. We ultimately stopped doing what we were doing . . . because there was so much going on that that need was being met and the attendance at our activities was declining. So we thought, 'Well, they don't need us anymore. Mission accomplished!' Who would have thought its mission would still be valid decades later? One [reason for the archive's longevity] is that the purpose of the Archives, just by its nature, is long term. It's to collect and preserve lesbian history and feminist history. It's a mission that goes on forever."

The support of the City of West Hollywood has been fundamental to the success of the Archives. "We have a space [from the city of West Hollywood], and we don't pay for it; it's rent-free. That, has allowed us to stay afloat. We went through a very difficult time; at one point, there were only three people left on the board,

and we had to rebuild ourselves from that."

Giagni points out that, while the Archives always tries to attract young people to its board and as volunteers, the organization has thrived because of the dedication of a group of women who are established in their careers, who have made Los Angeles their permanent home, and who have a deep personal investment in the maintenance of lesbian history (partly because they remember when it was impossible to find).

"[Younger women often] come in, they're very enthusiastic, they finish school, and they move out of town. So our board is made up of older women . . . who have a career now or are retired. And we're on the board because we have a commitment to the mission. We've been very clear that we are a working board.. We've developed a process where we invite on to the board people that we've gotten to know, people who have exhibited, independent of us, an interest in and a caring for the Archives and for the whole concept of

preserving history. I think we've been very fortunate that, as a board, we have been able to conduct activities and grow the Archives in a way that has attracted other responsible lesbians."

In 2007, the Mazer Archives formed a relationship with the UCLA Center for the Study of Women, a union that has also contributed to the Archives' longevity and supported its growth. Board member Ann Powell, affiliated with UCLA's Department of Education at the time, set up meetings with various campus organizations. CSW learned of the interest and contacted them.

"Originally we were going to catalogue about five collections," says Giagni. "We knew that Outfest had a relationship with UCLA, where they deposited their moving images in the UCLA Film & Television Archive. So I said to [CSW Director] Kathleen [McHugh], 'Could we have something like that, where we put our materials on file?' Because I knew that our space was limited. We had stuff in garages, we had [boxes] and



we didn't even know what was in them, and we didn't have any of the proper conditions for maintaining material over time."

McHugh arranged a meeting with UCLA's University Librarian, Gary Strong, and several other library administrators, to discuss a possible collaboration between CSW, UCLA Library, and the Mazer Archives.

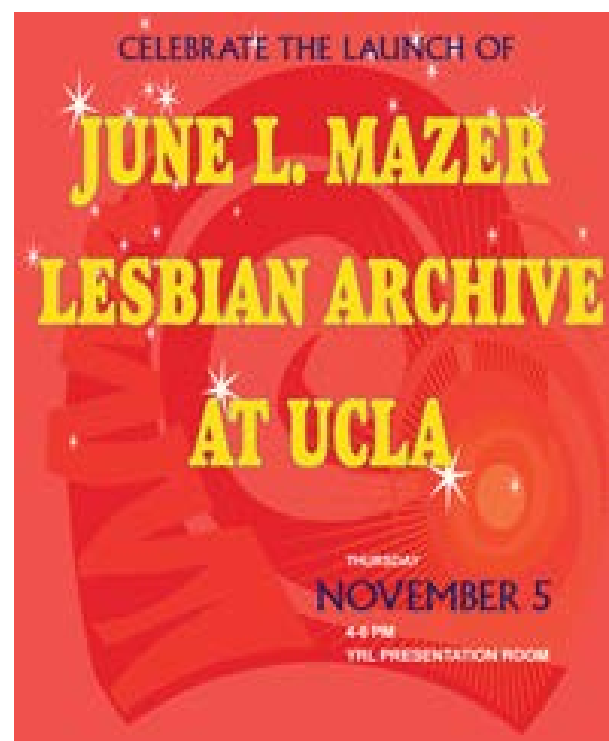
"We had a conversation in which they asked us what we were interested in, and I laid out what I knew about the Outfest relationship, and he told us why he couldn't do that and gave all the reasons. At the end of the meeting he said, 'Well, what you should do is go back and think about what you really want, and we can meet one more time and see if anything comes of it.' Later, after things were going well, we each acknowledged to each other that when I left and when he left we both thought to ourselves, 'This is never going to work.'"

However, Giagni and the members of the board met and came up with a list of goals that they hoped to achieve through a potential relationship with UCLA.

"We wanted our materials preserved properly, and we wanted the expanded space," says Giagni. "What was most critical to us was that the material not disappear, that it stay in L.A., and that it get processed. If it stayed unprocessed, that would be a form of disappearing it."

Giagni and her colleagues had another meeting with Strong, Sharon Farb, Associate University Librarian for Collection Management and Scholarly Communication, and McHugh. The group began a discussion that led to the agreement that the three units have today.

In 2007, the UCLA Center for Community Partnerships awarded a two-year Competitive Support for Campus Partners grant to McHugh and CSW—"The 'Access Mazer' Project: Organizing and Digitizing the Lesbian-Feminist Archive in Los Angeles—to inventory, organize, preserve, and digitize several key Los Angeles-themed collections. During the first year of the project, CSW collaborated with the UCLA University Archives and the University Librarian's office on the processing of the five collections; the CSW project staff worked with the Mazer to assess,



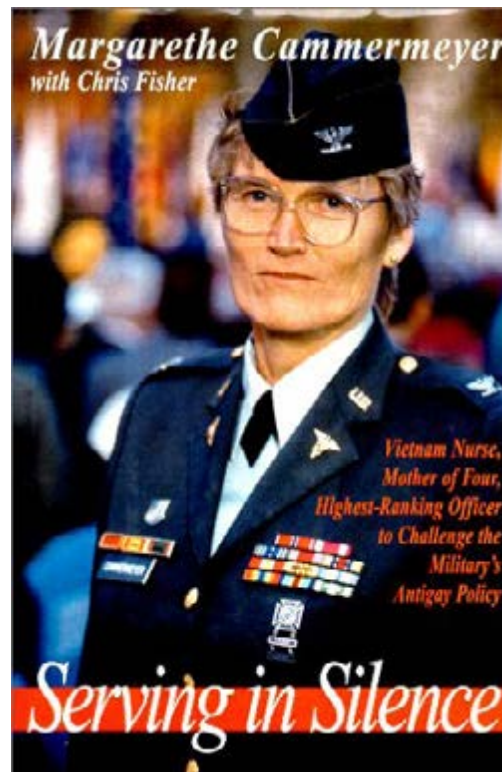
organize, and create extensive finding aids for the Connexus/Centro de Mujeres Collection, Margaret Cruikshank Papers, the Lillian Faderman Papers, the Southern California Women for Understanding Collection, and the Women Against Violence Against Women Collection.

"[CSW and the board] agreed that we want to keep the relationship going," says Giagni. "We think that it's

been very beneficial to us. Giagni has particularly valued board members' one-to-one relationships with CSW's administrators and staff. "Sharon [Farb] and Kathleen [McHugh] have been our liaisons with UCLA, and myself and Angela [Brinskele] have been the Mazer's liaisons, so that foursome is where most of the communications and decisions get made. At worst, it's been merely cordial, but most of the time it's fun and we have a great time and it works really well."

In 2011, CSW applied for and received a National Endowment for the Humanities grant for another Mazer project, titled "Making Invisible Histories Visible: Preserving the Legacy of Lesbian Feminist Activism and Writing in Los Angeles." Over three years, CSW archivists will arrange, describe, digitize, and make physically and electronically accessible two major clusters of Mazer Archives collections related to West Coast lesbian/feminist activism and writing since the 1930s.

In addition to helping the Mazer Archives board members achieve the goals they set out in their early



meetings, their partnership with UCLA has also led to the expansion of their collections. "We've gotten gifts because of the UCLA connection," says Giagni. "We got a gift from a woman, Beverly Hickok, up in the San Francisco area. Margarethe Cammermeyer, the lesbian officer [featured in the movie *Serving in Silence*, starring Glenn Close] gave


us her collection, including a uniform. We've gotten some other important collections because of the UCLA relationship, and we can go out and really urge people to give to us because we don't have the space limitations. That has been a real gift out of this relationship."

The relationship with UCLA has been mutually beneficial. Giagni emphasizes that the Mazer Archives board's role in curating and maintaining the Archives and encouraging acquisitions is as strong as ever. The partnership has also allowed the Mazer Archives to grow in productive new directions, increasing projects geared toward community outreach and education. Recent events have included a reading of *Aleta's Stories* by Angela Bowen—a dancer, teacher, mother, activist, professor, and author—accompanied by a documentary in progress about Bowen by Jennifer Abod; a celebration of the life and work of activist and Lesbian News founder Jinx Beers in celebration of her 80th year; and an open house to introduce the public to the Mazer Archives board, inform them of current and future

Please join us in Celebrating the life and times of **Angela Bowen**; *Dancer, Teacher, Mother, Activist, Professor, Author*

**Mazer Lesbian Archives**  
Autographed books will be sold and Angela Bowen will be available for photographs.

Readings from *Aleta's Stories* and Screening of *The Passionate Pursuits of Angela Bowen* a film in progress by award winning documentarian, Jennifer Abod



**WHEN**  
Sunday, April 14, 2013  
3pm-5pm

**WHERE**  
Mazer Lesbian Archives  
626 N. Robertson Blvd.  
West Hollywood, CA 90069  
TEL: 310 659-2478  
www.mazerlesbianarchives.org  
Requested donation \$10.00

For more information about the book or film please contact Jennifer at [jabod@jenniferabod.com](mailto:jabod@jenniferabod.com)


*A Great Example of 'Living A Life' in All its Complexities!*  
Marie Cartier Professor Film Media Women's Studies  
Cal State Northridge

*I Was Captivated. The Film is Rich Visually and in Content*  
Dan Castanon Verizon Service Rep

*An Extraordinary Collection of Short Fiction*  
Beverly Guy-Shetall Professor Spelman College

*Aleta's Stories are Vividly Drawn and Intensely Cinematic*  
Vivian Price Professor CSU Dominguez Hills

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activities, and encourage community building.

Giagni and the board have also worked on building relationships internationally. In May of 2011, the Mazer Archives hosted "ALMS 2011: Highlighting Archives, Libraries, Museums and Special Collections: An International LGBT Conference," which was organized by

survives unchanged. Last year, Giagni arranged to send two board members to "LGBTI ALMS 2012: The Future of LGBTI Histories," which took place in Amsterdam.

Giagni and the Mazer Archives continue working to contribute to the future of LGBTI histories. Board member Angela Brinskele and CSW's student archivists currently work on digitizing the collection in order to expand its reach. The Mazer Archives board continues to do a great deal of productive fundraising. Giagni points out that they had a higher income last year than the year before, an impressive feat for a not-for-profit organization in the current challenging economy.

"I think I would say primarily that our goals these days are to survive and to expand, both in terms of the materials coming in and the education programs that we can do," says Giagni. "Just survival is success. So we're focused on that. We try to put a lot of time, attention, and self-training into learning how to be more sophisticated in fundraising, and to really nurture the giving of materials to us."

the Mazer Archives in association with the City of West Hollywood, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women, and the UCLA Library. This conference was the third international conference focused on public, private, academic, and grassroots archives collecting and preserving materials of all types from LGBT communities to ensure the history



Giagni is perhaps most passionate about her role, through the Mazer Archives, in interacting with the community and encouraging archival donations by insisting on the vital importance of the lives of “ordinary” lesbians. “We don’t know elite lesbians,” says Giagni. “We don’t know stars, we don’t know mega-scientists. We don’t know those folks. We know the teachers, and the nurses, and the electrical workers. That’s who we know as a board. Our responsibility is that if there isn’t somebody out there talking to ordinary, ‘unexciting’ lesbians, telling them that their lives are important, and that the material from their lives, their letters, their photos, their diaries, their personally-created memorabilia, are important, if there isn’t somebody out there telling these women, ‘Actually, your life is really important, and someday 10 years from now a researcher is going to be thrilled to look at your photos,’ they’ll throw them away. So that’s our role, and we’re trying to expand how we reach out to women to let them know. . . We really feel that to have an accurate understanding of what the lesbian life was, you



need to hear from people who had to work for a living, and who struggled with family, and were or were not involved with other activities. So we think that our role is really to be that link between people who don’t necessarily see themselves as important, as historically significant, and the concept that they are. The more we can collect from people, grassroots people, for future generations,

**Many of the materials in the Mazer Archives reflect a collection policy that seeks to document the lives of “ordinary” lesbians**





## MAKING INVISIBLE HISTORIES VISIBLE

*collection notes from the NEH/Mazer project*



particularly for younger lesbians who are trying to understand “What’s our history?” the more complete and accurate the history will be.”

– Ben Sher

*Ben Sher is doctoral student in the Department of Cinema and Media Studies and a writer for CSW Update.*

*Principal Investigators for the ongoing CSW research project, “Making Invisible Histories Visible: Preserving the Legacy of Lesbian Feminist Activism and Writing in Los Angeles,” are Kathleen McHugh, CSW Director and Professor in the Departments of English and Cinema and Media Studies at UCLA (on sabbatical until July, 2013) and Gary Strong, University Librarian at UCLA. Funded in part by an NEH grant, the project is a three-year project to arrange, describe, digitize, and make physically and electronically accessible two major clusters of June Mazer Lesbian Archive collections related to West Coast lesbian/feminist activism and writing since the 1930s.*

*For more information on this project, visit <http://www.csw.ucla.edu/research/projects/making-invisible-histories-visible>  
For more information on the activities of the Mazer, visit <http://www.mazerlesbianarchives.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-June-Mazer-Lesbian-Archives/51347743934?fref=ts>*

## CULTURAL POLITICS OF SEEDS VIDEOS NOW ON YOUTUBE

ON May 17, 2013, CSW hosted “Cultural Politics of Seeds,” a symposium organized by Allison Carruth, Assistant Professor in the Department of English at UCLA, and Rachel Lee, CSW Interim Director and Associate Professor in the Departments of English and Gender Studies at UCLA. The symposium looked at how gender, ethnicity, and race have shaped contemporary cultural and political movements related to seeds.

These presentations are now available on UCLA's YouTube Channel:

David Cleveland, *What Farmers Know: Local Seeds and Knowledge in a Globalized World*

Allison Carruth, *Seed Banks and Seed Networks: Narratives, Images, Infrastructure*

Anne-Lise François, “*The Loves of the Plants*”: *Rereading Romantic Botany in an Age of Honeybee Colony Collapse*

Daniela Soleri and Lucilia Martínez, *Maize and Migration, One Family's Story*

Tezozomoc, *Xinachtli: Myth and Life in the Meso-American Diaspora*

Lindsay Naylor, *Sowing the Seeds of Resistance: Maiz Criollo in Highland Chiapas*

Matias Viegner, *Feral, Wild, Domestic, and Social*

Stephen S. Jones, *Kicking the Commodity Habit: The Value of Being Grown Out of Place*



*Summer's just around the corner! If you're looking to picnic, try out reusable dishes and utensils rather than disposables or Styrofoam. If disposables are necessary, check out some compostable options that leave less of an impact. You can bring your own homegrown veggies and fruits to your picnic! Even without a yard, you can keep a medium-sized flowerpot inside your home near a window. If you're thinking about bringing barbecue, try out propane. It has much less of an impact on the environment than wood or charcoal briquettes. Look into sunscreen and bug repellent that are produced with fewer, less toxic chemicals that are safer for you.*

*– Rylan Ross*



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