

# VOICES

## The Women's Center Newsletter

University of Connecticut

February/March 2002

### The Women's Center Celebrates 30 Years

By Joy Pachla

#### Part 1 of a 4 part series

For the past 30 years, the UConn Women's Center has been working on its mission to educate the UConn community on women's issues and to provide support for women's equity at the university. The struggle for women's equality at the university started with a group of women dedicated to the cause, and who fought for the survival of the Women's Center. Without the courage and persistence of its first supporters, and every subsequent supporter, the Women's Center may not have survived to celebrate its 30th anniversary.

#### "Herstory" of the UConn Women's Center

In 1969, in the midst of the second wave of the Women's Movement, a group of feminists on the UConn campus were united by their concept for an organized Women's Center on campus. Their goals were to promote feminist ideology and activism at the university. It was not until the spring of 1972, however, that any formal organizing was done. The Free Women's Collective was formed, which would eventually evolve into the Women's Center as it is known today.

The Free Women's Collective had its first headquarters in the office of Elizabeth Roper, Director of the Office of Continuing Education for Women. Roper, who is considered one of the key founders of the Women's Center, shared her office space with the Free Women's Collective in the Bishop's Center. In September of 1972, the Women's Center moved to a room that was only 10 by 28 feet, in the Commons.

The Women's Center had been surviving on individual contributions, but soon realized that it would need a consistent source of funding if it were to survive. After discussing financial support with the Office of

Student Affairs (OSA), the Women's Center became a program under the administration of the OSA. Today, the Women's Center is a University department, and no longer a student organization. It receives funding from the university and has paid positions, while many women's centers remain student run or have limited staffing.

By 1973, the Women's Center was growing and was in need of more space and funding. The Center was serving the needs of over 9,000 women at the university, and a one room facility was inadequate for the number of services that the Women's Center now provided. Two dozen demonstrators presented eight demands to the UConn President at the time, Edward V. Gant. Thanks to the protests of women students, the Center was moved to a four-room facility.

By 1974, the Women's Center had become officially affiliated with Continuing Education for Women and was ready for another move. At 10 Gilbert Road the Women's Center found a new home. However, within a few months a fire destroyed the Gilbert Road building. Both the Women's Center and Continuing Education for Women lost records and files in the fire.

The Women's Center made its third move in 1975 to its present location at 417 Whitney Road. It is now a separate department administered under the auspices of the Vice Provost for Multicultural Affairs. The staff consists of four full-time positions: the Director, Associate Director, Violence Against Women Prevention Program Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant, plus students who work either on a paid basis, as interns or volunteers.

Today, the Women's Center continues in its mission to advocate, educate and provide support services for

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#### SNEAK PEEK

*A Quick Guide to What's Inside*

Check out upcoming events sponsored by the Women's Center

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March is Women's History Month. Find out which women will be honored this year.  
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Read about the petitions that are circulating to make abortion illegal.  
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Check out the Women's sports schedule for this spring  
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# Calendar of Events

## March — Women's History Month

- 4 Women's History Month Opening with Christy Haubegger**  
Christy Haubegger is the founder of *Latina Magazine*, the first bilingual magazine catering exclusively to Hispanic women in the United States. She is the dynamic personality opening doors for Latinas in the American media since May 1996. Co-sponsored with the Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center, SUBOG and Lambda Theta Phi Inc. Monday, 4 pm, Konover Auditorium, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center
- 5 Guided Meditation Part of the Life Balance Series**  
Join Kevin Sullivan, from Counseling Services, for an evening of relaxation! Co-sponsored with Health Education, Student Health Services. Tuesday, 6:30 pm, Women's Center Lounge
- 6 Confronting Poverty in Connecticut**  
A panel of invited speakers will address hunger, homelessness, and the effects of welfare reform. Co-sponsored with the Sociology Department, Women's Studies, and School of Family Studies. Wednesday, 3:30 pm - 5 pm, Konover Auditorium, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center
- 8 International Women's Day**  
Join us for a day of celebrating women's contributions to the Arts worldwide. Co-sponsored with the cultural centers and SUBOG. Friday, noon, African America Cultural Center - panel discussion. 7 pm, Student Union Ballroom - Dramatic Reading, Indian Dance and Music from the Sudan.
- 12 "He Said/She Said" Gender Communication Workshop**  
A presentation and discussion about how men and women communicate in the classroom, the workplace and social situations. Co-sponsored with Career Services. Tuesday, 2 pm, Women's Center Lounge
- 12 Feminist Discussion Group**  
Co-sponsored with ECSU Women's Center and CT NOW. *This group will rotate locations.* Contact the Women's Center at 486-4738 for transportation. Tuesday, 6 pm, ECSU Women's Center
- 14 Powerful Sisters - Black Women Moving from the Margins - Nell Irvin Painter**  
Nell Painter is the Edwards professor of American History at Princeton University and has written extensively about the black experience in America during the 19th century. Co-sponsored with the Institute for African American Studies. Thursday, 2 pm, Konover Auditorium, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center
- 14 Smells Like Gefilte Fish**  
Part of "Eve's Daughters" – A Jewish Women's Series for everyone to enjoy on the night of the New Moon. Before you go out with the gals tonight, stop by for coffee talk and *Gefilte Fish*, a fun, 25-minute film on several generations of Jewish women making gefilte fish. Just in time for Passover... Co-sponsored with Hillel. Thursday, 7 pm, Women's Center Lounge
- 26 Lecture by Emi Koyama**  
Co-Sponsored with the Rainbow Center and the Asian American Cultural Center. Tuesday, 7 pm, Asian American Cultural Center
- 27 Women Elders – A Thoroughly Global View with Max Dashú**  
Max Dashú is a scholar of global women's history and will present a slide show on the suppressed history of women elders; the culture makers, medicine women, ritual leader, storytellers, clan leaders, and craftswomen. Wednesday, 4 - 5:30 pm, Konover Auditorium, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center
- 28 Brown Bag Lunch – Non-Sexist Child Rearing**  
Are you concerned about how different aspects of society influence your ability to raise your child with a non-sexist philosophy? Join us for an enlightened discussion with Kate Donnelly, a working mother, activist and feminist. Thursday, noon - 1 pm, Women's Center Lounge
- 28 Thursday Night at the Movies – All Kinds of Families**  
What is a family, and who has a right to define such a thing? Those very questions are explored in this documentary. Thursday, 6:30 pm, Women's Center Lounge

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the equity of women at the university. The Center focuses special attention on women who may face additional challenges due to their race, nationality, class, sexual identity, religion, age and physical or mental ability. The center sponsors monthly events that range from lectures and movies to meditation classes. Ongoing groups, such as the Sexual Assault Survivors Group and the Women's Book Club meet at the Women's Center. The Violence Against Women Prevention Program is a program within the Center that seeks to educate students on the issues of violence against women, through workshops and peer advocates.

### Celebrating Our 30th Anniversary

Plans are in progress for the 30th anniversary celebrations which will begin in September. However, in March, which is Women's History Month, the Women's Center will be celebrating the herstory of all women. On March 4, the month's celebrations kick off with Christy Haubegger, the founder of *Latina Magazine*. Making history in her own right, Haubegger successfully created the first bilingual magazine targeted to Hispanic women in the U.S. Haubegger has since become a leading business figure and inspiration to women entrepreneurs.

### March is Women's History Month

The theme for National Women's History Month 2002 is "Women Sustaining the American Spirit." The goal is to showcase the women who helped create and affirm the American spirit and tell their stories. The National Women's History Project honors six women this year whose lives exemplify the American Spirit. The honorees are:

- **Alice Coachman** - the first African American woman to win an Olympic gold medal in track and field in 1948.
- **Dorothy Height** - has worked as President of the National Council of Negro Women for over 40 years.
- **Dolores Huerta** - co-founder of the United Farm Workers Union, which helps create better working conditions for migrant farm workers.
- **Gerda Lerner** - the first woman in fifty years to be elected president of the Organization of American Historians.
- **Congresswoman Patsy T. Mink** - the first Asian American woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.
- **Mary Louise Defender Wilson** - celebrating and keeping alive the spirit of the Dakotah/Hidatsa people through storytelling.

Be sure to visit [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org) for more information on Women's History month and the six honorees.

## The Women's Center receives Maria Miller Stewart Award

By Joy Pachla

In late October, the UConn Women's Center, along with nine other Connecticut campus-based women's centers, was honored with the Maria Miller Stewart Award at the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) 15th Annual Awards Event. The theme of the event was "Celebrating Feminist Activism: Honoring the Women's Centers of Connecticut's Colleges and Universities." Women's Center Director, Kathleen Holgerson attended the awards, held at the West Hartford Town Hall, along with over 200 people, including current and former directors of the centers, as well as students and school administrators.

Holgerson said the event was important because it brought together women affiliated with women's centers across the state. Although there is a regional network, "it was nice to focus on the state of Connecticut," she said. "Also, the event acknowledged the places where women activists come from—the women who are supporting women's rights on the national and statewide level have connections to the women's centers in the state."

Also in attendance to support the event were US Representative John Larson, CT Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, State Comptroller Nancy Wyman, State Senator George Jepson and State Representative Denise Merrill. The evening consisted of a silent auction, an impromptu auction for lunch in Washington with Congressman Larson and a video presentation featuring each women's center honored.

The women's centers honored at the awards event came from state universities, private colleges and community colleges and differed in not only age but also funding and resources. The women's centers ranged from 3 to almost 30 years old, with UConn representing the oldest women's center. Also, some centers enjoy sufficient funding and have many programs, while others have limited resources, which they focus on targeted areas. CWEALF stated in its newsletter that "what binds the centers together are the words commonly used to describe the mission of each Center—words such as educate, advocate, support and enrich."

The nine other women's centers that received the Maria Miller Stewart Award were: Ruthe Boyea Women's Center at Central Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Housatonic Community College, Manchester Community College, Northwestern Connecticut Community College, Southern Connecticut University, Trinity College, the University of Hartford and Yale University.

## What the Petitions are Really About

In her letter to the editor, entitled "Recent Petitions Calling for the Creation of a Double Murder Law Are Deceptive," Jessica Mikes, a UConn student, educated the campus community about petitions circulating the university which could be misleading to the people who signed it. Her editorial was published in the Feb. 25 edition of *The Daily Campus* as follows:

Students of the University of Connecticut, I regret that I must inform you that you've been had. You've been tricked, deceived and scammed. Your soft hearts have been taken advantage of and used in a most unethical way.

You probably don't even know it.

I speak of a petition that you may have seen on campus this week. The petitions have been popping up at the library and at various cash-ops on campus. The petition sits next to a seemingly harmless poster that you've probably read. It tells a sad story of a young woman recently murdered. What makes this story even more horrible is that the poor woman was 9 months pregnant at the time. The poster begs you to find it in your heart to sign a petition that will create a law to charge criminals with a double murder if they are heartless enough to take two lives by killing a woman who is pregnant. If you read this story you were probably deeply saddened. You most likely signed the petition.

What you don't know, is that you've been had.

This petition has a definite political agenda. It calls for "protection for unborn children still in the womb." This deceptively worded act is called the Unborn Victims of Violence Act and the passing of it would imply for the first time by Federal or Connecticut law that a fetus is a person with rights equal to a person who is already born. The act begins at conception. Consequently, this would make an abortion a murder. A woman's right to choose would become illegal.

I'm not attempting to convince you one way or the other on the issue of abortion. I'm sure each of you have already made up your minds. I'm simply pointing out the obviously unethical way that someone is trying to get your signature to support a bill that may very well be against your beliefs. Please take a stand against this immoral attack at your right to make up your own mind on this issue and let these people know you will not be deceived.

Specifically, what is left out of the information with the petitions is the fact that there are already enhanced laws protecting pregnant women who are victims of violence (CT General Statutes 53a-59a).

For additional information, contact the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence at 860/282-7899 and/or the National Abortion & Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) at 860/524-1086.

## The Women's Center Loses a Friend

**Maria-Luz (Daza) Samper**, born in Tunja, Colombia, S.A. Jan 17, 1943, died peacefully in her home in Storrs at the age of 59 on Thursday (February 7, 2002). She received her Ph.D. at the University of Connecticut in Supervision and Curriculum in 1978. She was first employed by the University of Connecticut in 1974, as a researcher and teacher, and continued her work with the Department of Labor Education until the present. Professor Samper taught a variety of courses in Adult Education, Comparative Education and Curriculum Development, both in the U.S. and abroad. Recently she focused on the problems of working women in the new world of technological development. Her expertise led to her invitation to several important international conferences, one in Nice, France in 1993 on Occupational Health, another in Vienna and Budapest on Information Technology in 1998. She was invited to teach a special course on Globalization at the Sorbonne, Paris, in 1999. She wrote not only on these subjects, but also profiled working women and men in Connecticut, analyzed Connecticut labor-management contracts in Connecticut, and wrote on occupational and reproductive hazards. She delivered conference papers in the U.S., Colombia, Australia, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Grenada, Ireland, and France. Her awards include having been selected as one of 30 women for "Portrait of Strength, Connecticut Women," Celebration of 100 years of Women at the University of Connecticut. She is survived by her daughter, Luz Adriana Samper, a senior in Neural Biology at the University of Pennsylvania; and by her brother, Cesar Ernesto Daza; her ex-husband, Jesus N. Samper; and by her many loving and admiring friends. Memorial services will be held Saturday, February 16, 2 p.m. at the Church of St. Thomas Aquinas, North Eagleville Rd., on the UConn Storrs Campus. Donations may be given to National Foundation for Cancer Research, Bethesda, MD 20814 and the Covenant Soup Kitchen (Isaiah 58) of Willimantic, CT 06226. Published in the Hartford Courant on 2/12/2002.

## Reminder

### April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

The Women's Center has a full calendar of events planned and we look forward to your support of our programs. For more information, please visit our website!

## Announcements . . .

### Advisory Board Member, Cora Lynn Deibler, named an Inspiring Woman in the UConn School of Fine Arts

As coordinator of the illustration area at UConn, Cora Lynn Deibler keeps to a very busy schedule of teaching, but in the past year she has also had her artwork appear in a variety of places and publications. Seven of her illustrations have been used in issues of *Cricketer Magazine* and *Spider Magazine*. She was invited to participate in a show sponsored by the Society of Illustrators, entitled My First Set of Wheels. For this, Deibler and 69 others were asked to create images of their first cars for a show. She was also invited to participate in Children's Book Illustrators Group at the Wilton Public Library in Wilton CT, and in *Women Illustrators Past and Present* for the Society of Illustrators Museum of American Illustration in New York. In the fall of 2000 Deibler was a finalist in the RSVP "Shadows" Competition.

- from UConn ARTSzine

### Join Our Listserv!

Want to keep up with the Women's Center on a weekly basis? Then join the U-WOMEN Listserv, a weekly updated e-mail featuring Women's Center events, on and off campus events, announcements and national/international news. For information on how to subscribe, e-mail [joypachla@hotmail.com](mailto:joypachla@hotmail.com).

### Check Out Our New Website

Be sure to visit our newly updated website at [www.womenscenter.uconn.edu](http://www.womenscenter.uconn.edu). You can find out about all our events for the spring 2002 semester, learn about our ongoing groups, get informed on issues such as dating violence and sexual assault and find out what resources we have at our library.

## VOICES

Kathleen Holgerson  
**Director**

Joy Pachla  
**Editor**

Kathy Fluckiger  
**Associate Director**

Carol Millette  
**Administrative Assistant**

**Phone:** 860-486-4738

**TDD:** 860-486-1546

**Fax:** 860-486-1104

**Email:** [wwwctr@uconnvm.uconn.edu](mailto:wwwctr@uconnvm.uconn.edu)

**Semester Hours:** M-Th: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
& F: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**Website:** [www.womenscenter.uconn.edu](http://www.womenscenter.uconn.edu)

## Winter/Spring Women's Sports Schedule

### Women's Basketball

March 2-5: BIG EAST @ New Jersey TBA

### Women's Ice Hockey

Mar. 1: Maine 7 p.m.  
Mar. 2: Maine 3 p.m.

### Women's Lacrosse

Mar. 6: Quinnipiac TBA  
Mar. 10: Lafayette TBA  
Apr. 6: Notre Dame TBA  
Apr. 13: Rutgers TBA  
Apr. 17: Umass TBA  
Apr. 27: Georgetown TBA  
Apr. 30: Boston University TBA

### Women's Track and Field

Apr. 6: CCSU, PC, BC, UVM, Umass TBA  
Apr. 20: Brown, Umass, SCSU, URI TBA  
May 3-5: BIG EAST @ Storrs TBA

## Vagina, Vagina, the Vagina Monologues

By Meredith Williams

The national V-Day campaign started by Eve Ensler, which is dedicated to stopping violence against women, was supported by UConn with the riveting performance of the *Vagina Monologues* on Wednesday, Feb. 20 at von der Mehdan. The event was co-sponsored by SUBOG and the UConn V-Day campaign, which is a new student organization. The monologues were performed by several students and a few staff members to a sold out crowd. The crowd got what they came for—a very entertaining show, with a lot of talk about vaginas. It was brilliantly directed by Valencia Louis, whose hard work and dedication paid off, entertaining a very pleased audience. The show combined many funny monologues, such as "My Angry Vagina" about a very upset vagina, as well as more somber monologues, such as "My Vagina Was My Village," which dealt with the serious subject of rape in war. In the end, the audience was left entertained and, hopefully, changed by their viewing of the play. At least everyone who left the event could say the word vagina!

Proceeds from the performance were donated to organizations that work towards preventing and eliminating violence against women: Domestic Violence Program of United Services Inc., the Women's Center of Northeastern Connecticut and the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan.

# VOICES

THE WOMEN'S CENTER...WHERE ALL THE PIECES COME TOGETHER

#289500  
University of Connecticut  
Women's Center  
417 Whitney Road, Unit 1118  
Storrs, CT 06269-1118