



Women's Voice

Illinois State University

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Women's Studies Loses a Friend: In Memory of Luellen Laurenti

By Val Moghadam and Sandra Harmon

Luellen Laurenti, friend of ISU's Women's Studies Program, a long-time stalwart in the women's movement, and an Illinois lobbyist for women's rights, died of cancer on 17 June. In this issue of *The Women's Voice*, which we dedicate to her memory, we pay tribute to Luellen Laurenti.

A native of West Virginia, Ms. Laurenti moved to central Illinois in 1963 to teach Spanish and to direct the foreign languages laboratory at ISU. She got her start as an activist pushing for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment in Illinois in the 1970s and later served as a Democratic state central committee-woman. She was married to Joseph Laurenti, a professor in ISU's Foreign Languages Department.

For three decades, Luellen Laurenti was a major force behind the women's movement in Illinois. She was executive director of the International Women's Year Conference in Bloomington in 1975, a major event that was attended by some 2,000 women. She also attended the International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City that year, the first of the U.N. conferences on women. She fought for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. As 44th District Equal Rights Coordinator, she conducted workshops, spoke to local groups, and organized lobbying

efforts in the district. And she was long associated with the National Organization for Women (NOW), the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the League of Women Voters, and the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women.

For two decades she was the State House lobbyist for the Illinois National Organization for Women (NOW), first as a part-time volunteer and eventually as an influential voice in many public debates on women and social issues. Ms. Laurenti fought to increase the availability of day-care, to improve educational and sports opportunities for women and girls, to advance reproductive rights, and to end violence against women. She also fought for gay rights. She was a tireless worker for women's equality and dedicated herself to legislative and electoral issues to advance the status of women and create opportunities for the next generation of women. Here at Women's Studies, we looked forward to her legislative updates, in recent years sent by e-mail, and her strong and passionate position on issues.

Patricia Ireland, NOW president, said of Ms. Laurenti: "... [S]he was the kind of leader that could keep bringing her experience to the work, but at the same time making room for new leadership. I don't think that's always easy.... [A] lot of people don't bring it off with the same grace that Luellen did." Ireland also said that Luellen "could be irascible, like any good feminist, which could also be helpful in the legislature, because she was not afraid to speak her mind."

Ms. Laurenti joined the Women's Studies program in the early 1980s as instructor for the Women Today class, the introductory women's studies course. She brought to her classes her experience as an organizer, activist and student of women's history and her enthusiasm for the subject. At her funeral, a former student remarked, "In class,

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Visit our website at: <http://www.cas.ilstu.edu/womenstudies>

ANNOUNCEMENTS/FEATURES

New Women's Studies Professor

Ann Haugo, who is an instructional assistant professor in the theatre department, will teach a section of Women, Gender, and Society for Women's Studies. She received a Ph.D. in Theatre with a graduate minor in Women's Studies from the University of Illinois in October 1999, and her masters in theatre history and literature in 1993. Her dissertation was titled "Staging Intervention: Native Women, Decolonization, and the American Theatre." She specializes in alternative methodologies for American theatre historiography and contemporary criticism through analyzing historical and contemporary performances by American Indian women and representations of American Indian women in mainstream theatre.

Dr. Haugo was previously a visiting lecturer in the Women's Studies Program at University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, where she taught Introduction to Women's Studies in the Social Sciences and Introduction to the Drama, Department of English among other teaching assignments. She has presented many conference papers and has published several articles, including: "Negotiating Hybridity: Native Women's Performance as Cultural Persistence" in *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, and "Interview with Lisa Mayo of Spiderwoman Theatre" in *Native Playwrights' Newsletter*. While at the University of Illinois, she directed "I Read about My Death in Vogue Magazine" by Lydia Sargent, and co-directed a postcolonial/feminist re-interpretation of Shakespeare's "The Tempest." She also acted in several feminist pieces, and recently acted in Caryl Churchill's "The Striker" playing the title role. Her roles extend beyond scholar, teacher, director and actor. As an activist, she advocates for student volunteerism and has participated in Take Back the Night marches in Urbana-Champaign and in Minnesota. ✍

Graduate Assistant Served in Ghana

By Veronica Howard

Women's Studies Graduate Assistant and Peace Corps Fellow

I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ghana West Africa for two years, 1996-1998. Although my official title was "Water and Sanitation Health Educator", I also functioned as a community development and site development worker. In addition, in my capacity as a Peace Corps Volunteer, I participated in President Clinton's visit to Africa.

Upon entering the village of Adomanu in the Ashanti Region, I designed and implemented a community health survey with my Ghanaian counterpart. It was determined that the lack of health education and sanitation facilities was the primary health problem. I conducted weekly health talks and workshops on the importance of personal hygiene and proper nutrition, family planning, HIV/AIDS, oral-fecal disease cycles, the importance of immunizations, malaria prevention, and the proper use of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS). I also planned and supervised the construction of a communal latrine and worked closely with the newly formed District Water and Sanitation Team in the training of local artisans in the launching of a community household latrine project. This resulted in the construction of twelve household toilets worth over \$2700 which was funded by the District Government Common Fund. In addition, I trained teachers in the School Health Education Program (SHEP). This program was sponsored by the Ministry of Health and designed to train teachers on introducing health education in the classroom.

Using Participatory Rural Appraisal Methods for community development, I coordinated a community-based proposal writing workshop. As a result, the community received over \$6500 to construct the Adomanu Junior Secondary School that will serve 150 students annually from three village communities. In a neighboring community, I helped secure funding from the Japanese Embassy and managed the construction of a primary school that will serve over 400 students a year from three communities. Lastly, I worked closely with traditional leaders and District and Regional Government Officials to implement the Electrification Project.

During President Clinton's historic visit to Ghana, I was selected to manage a Co-op Ghana Booth, which displayed many crafts made by local artisans. I was able to meet the President, the First Lady, the President of Ghana J.J. Rawlings and his wife, the Congressional Black Caucus and other dignitaries. While talking to Rev. Jesse Jackson, I stressed the need for better trade legislation for Africa and less foreign assistance in loans. ✍

Internship Opportunity

The Women's Studies Program maintains a listing of all announcements received regarding internships and independent study/professional practice positions, and they are available to view during regular office hours.

Chicago Foundation for Women

The Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) is one of the leading women's funds in the country, an innovative community foundation dedicated to expanding resources and opportunities for women and girls. Through fundraising, grantmaking and education, the Foundation works to increase the amount of money that goes to Chicago-area non-profits specifically serving women and girls.

CFW is currently accepting resumes for the Jessica Eve Patt internship, which is a one-year internship. The Jessica Eve Patt Internship is named in honor of a young woman who during her short life was committed to lifting up of women and girls, regardless of their circumstances. The internship provides a chance for a young woman, interested in women's issues, to experience firsthand the coming together of resources to provide solutions and promote opportunities for women and girls in Chicago. The intern works in the Development Department, and reports to the Director of Development. The internship will expose the intern to all the programs and projects of the Development Department as well as the Foundation.

For further information on job description and requirements, contact Cynthia LeVan, Chicago Foundation for Women, 230 W. Superior, 4th Floor, Chicago, IL 60610. You may also e-mail her at clv@cfw.org, or fax: 312-266-0990, or visit their web site at www.cfw.org. ✍

Volunteer Opportunities

In October of 1999, Community Action's Countering Domestic Violence program, with the help of BroMenn Hospital and St. Joe's Hospital, started a Medical Advocacy Program. The program is designed to promote awareness about domestic violence in health care settings and to provide crisis intervention to victims of domestic violence. The Medical Advocacy Program (MAP) has proven itself to be quite successful, and many crisis calls in the community have been attended to by the trained volunteers. As a result, individuals in need received safety planning assistance, domestic violence education, referrals to other community resources, and help navigating through the legal system. Those services could not have been provided without the support and dedication of the MAP volunteers. To learn more about becoming a volunteer, contact Kate Strack, Medical Advocate/Volunteer Coordinator, Community Action, at 309-829-0691 ext. 230. ✍

Former Speakers Interviewed

In May, Sajeda Hayat and Sehar Saba, members of Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) based in Pakistan, spoke at Global Review on the conditions of women in Afghanistan at the hands of the Taliban. Later in the month, they were interviewed by Katha Pollitt of the *New York Times Magazine*. The interview addressed the many dangers women face when they speak out against fundamentalists, not just the Taliban. RAWA was founded in 1977 as an organization of women who support women's rights and human rights for both men and women. Ms. Saba was quoted as stating that they are for education, health care, equality for women, and secular democracy. In Afghanistan, that's revolutionary. ✍

IN MEMORY OF LUELLEN LAURENTI

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I could have sworn she and Bella Abzug had just had lunch. And you would have thought she and Susan B. Anthony were mother and daughter. She had a wonderful way of making you believe." Susan B. Anthony was Ms. Laurenti's personal hero. Earlier, she had chosen to kick off local International Women's Year events with a Susan B. Anthony birthday party on February 15, 1975.

The Women's Studies Program benefited greatly from Ms. Laurenti's friendship and support. We invited her to attend our meetings, to speak to us about legislative issues, and to take part in our conferences. When we decided to hold a conference on women's employment issues and were looking for financial support, she mentioned our plans to a contact at Mitsubishi Motors Manufacturing here in Normal, and suggested we send our proposal to her. Our conference was indeed supported by Mitsubishi (as well as by State Farm Insurance Company, the AAUW, and local unions).



Ms. Laurenti (standing far right) with other participants of the Women and Employment Conference

Ms. Laurenti had a very busy schedule, but we were delighted when she agreed to take part in the conference, "Women and Employment: Linking Local and Global", which was held at ISU on 17-18 September 1999. Not only did she agree to speak at a roundtable discussion on women's social rights, but she also took part in at least one of our planning meetings, at which she suggested several other participants.

In her talk at the conference, she spoke of social change through legislation, litigation, and women's activism, underscoring the importance of the civil rights movement and of legislation on sex discrimination. She then spoke about NOW's commitment to comparable worth, pointing out the absurdity of an occupational hierarchy whereby "a dog trainer had a higher rating than a child care worker". She noted the difficulties in getting bills passed by the Illinois Senate, but stressed that the struggle for childcare was imperative for feminists. NOW, she explained, has looked at the financing of childcare in Europe, calls for a nation-wide network of subsidized

quality childcare centers, supports *paid* family leave, and has called on corporations to sign on to a family-friendly pledge.

The Chicago *Tribune* called her the matriarch of women's rights in Illinois and, indeed, she leaves a legacy of activism and accomplishments. We will miss her counsel and her friendship.

Ms. Laurenti during the
ERA Campaign in the 1970s

WOMEN'S STUDIES OUT AND ABOUT

Witnessing the Effects of Our Global Economy on Workers, Families, and Women in Nicaragua

By Meridith Kruse
Women's Studies Instructor

From July 21- August 3 I took part in a Witness for Peace delegation to Nicaragua to learn about "The Struggles and Successes of Nicaraguan Workers, Families, and Women." This opportunity was made possible with funding from AFSCME Local #3236, the ISU Women's Studies Program, and many family contributions.

Our delegation's two weeks in Nicaragua were intense! We began by doing a work project in Nueva Vida, a community the government forced to resettle in a remote area outside of Managua after hurricane Mitch destroyed their homes. While building a health clinic we met with residents and learned of their struggles. While sanitary conditions were good, many reported living in extreme poverty and being desperate for jobs, food, healthcare, and educational services.



Ms. Kruse (standing back left) helping to hoist a concrete block into place...future health clinic in Nueva Vida

The struggles faced by the residents of Nueva Vida are not dissimilar to the situation facing many Nicaraguans. With a \$6.4 billion external debt (the highest in Central America) Nicaragua has been forced to comply with IMF and World Bank structural adjustment policies to continue receiving loans. Under structural adjustment policies, Nicaragua has privatized government services, prioritized debt payment over social spending, and opened up the country to economic integration and global competition. Overall, this process has had disastrous consequences for Nicaragua's poor. For example, while global competition has created jobs in the Free Trade Zone maquila sector, these positions (80% held by women) rarely pay enough to purchase the country's Basic Basket of Goods (a concept comparable to US poverty line).



Workers going to work inside the Free Trade Zone

In addition to doing a work project, our delegation also met with representatives from women's health organizations, human rights groups, churches, schools, and labor unions. Consistently, individuals at these

organizations expressed concern about how policies aligned with the structural adjustment model weakened their ability to secure basic human rights. For example, viewing foreign investment as the major way to create jobs, the Nicaraguan government has offered 10 years tax-free status and 50% free utilities for companies residing in Managua's Free Trade Zone. While these incentives brought Chentex and Mil Colores (factories who make clothing for Kohl's & Target) to Nicaragua, the poor working conditions, pay, and mistreatment of workers in these factories led to much suffering. In response, several workers formed unions and engaged in strikes, even though the company discouraged this activity. We learned about the specifics of these workers' ongoing struggle while staying with women who had been fired from the Chentex and Mil Colores factories for union organizing. With international support, these women are currently pursuing legal means to regain employment and secure workers' freedom to organize within Free Trade Zone factories.



Delegation group outside a Free Trade Zone in Sebaco
Ms. Kruse (standing back left)

Despite setbacks, workers in Managua's Free Trade Zone are determined to improve their conditions and have requested a display of international solidarity to lend power to their cause. Knowing that a majority of workers in Free Trade Zones around the globe are women, this is a cause U.S. feminists should immediately embrace. I have included a list of several resources that provide ways for individuals to get involved in this struggle. Additionally, one could take immediate action by leafletting Bloomington/Normal very own Target and Kohl's stores to raise awareness about sweatshop abuses. Overall, it is important to remember that Nicaraguan workers, fearing companies might "cut and run," do not advocate a boycott of Target and Kohl's. Rather, they hope US citizens will raise consciousness about sweatshop abuses and hold company CEO's accountable. If anyone has further questions please call Meridith Kruse, ISU Women's Studies Dept., 438-2948.

Resources:

Witness For Peace Website: (action campaigns, resources, and future delegations!) witnessforpeace.org

National Labor Committee Website: (information about solidarity campaigns) www.nlc.org

Jubilee 2000 (calling for debt cancellation) Website: www.j2000usa.org



Delegation meeting with union organizer in the Managua Free Trade Zone
Ms. Kruse (sitting front second from left)

NEWS ABOUT WOMEN'S STUDIES STUDENTS AND FACULTY/STAFF

Women's Studies Alumni News

By Sandra Harmon

Anita Revelle (BS 95, MS 97 history) has accepted the position of Director of Senior Professionals at Illinois State University. A component of the Office of the Provost, Senior Professionals acts as a liaison between the community and the university. The program focuses on the contributions that retired professionals can provide the university. Members participate in mentoring honors students and the group offers scholarships. The office also facilitates the Academy of Seniors and Mornings with Professors classes taught by Illinois State University professors and open to all senior citizens in the area.

Kathryn Doyle and **Amanda White**, May graduates in Sociology, have received graduate assistantships and will continue their studies in sociology at Illinois State University.

Recent additions to the Women's Studies Resource Library

Carol Bohmer and Andrea Parrot. *Sexual Assault on Campus: The Problem and the Solution*. New York: Lexington Books, 1993.

Jill Kerr Conway, ed. *Written by Herself. Vol II: Women's Memoirs from Britain, Africa, Asia, and the United States*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

Kate Mulvey and Melissa Richards. *Decades of Beauty: The Changing Image of Women, 1890s to 1990s*. New York: Checkmark Books, 1998.

Shahra Razavi, ed. *Gendered Poverty and Well-Being*. Oxford: 2000.

Jean Swanson and Dean James. *By a Woman's Hand: A Guide to Mystery Fiction by Women*. New York: Berkley Books, 1994.

Marguerite R. Waller and Jennifer Rycenga, eds. *Frontline Feminisms: Women, War, and Resistance*. New York: Garland, 2000.

Women's Studies is a member of Amnesty International, and receives *Interact*, a bulletin about women's human rights. The bulletin reports on women's human rights at the United Nations, and around the world.

Visit Women's Studies library to view the new additions listed above, and the many other books and periodicals. Videos are also available to view in our library during regular office hours. The library has a study area for students, faculty, and other guests. For further information regarding the library, please contact Rozel White at 309-438-2947 or e-mail her at rwhite@ilstu.edu.

Faculty and Staff News

Dr. Valentine M. Moghadam, Director of Women's Studies, was a featured speaker at the annual conference of the National Women's Studies Association, held in June in Boston. She spoke at a panel on "Feminist Action and Intellect: Subverting the Gendered Politics of War and Peace", which was sponsored by the Radcliffe Graduate Consortium. Other speakers were Elise Boulding, Radha Kumar, and Betty Burkes. Dr. Moghadam's talk was entitled "Globalization, Militarism, and Women's Collective Action". She spoke about the history of women's peace action, about feminist ideas about militarism and peace, and about the activities of transnational feminist networks.

During the summer, Dr. Moghadam completed her URG-supported research on transnational feminist networks. She attended the annual meetings of two TFNs: Women in Development Europe (in Brussels in May) and the Association of Women of the Mediterranean Region (in Cyprus in July). She has completed a short article on her observations at the two meetings, which will appear in the September issue of *Women's Voice*, as well as other newsletters.

In mid-August, Dr. Moghadam attended the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association (ASA), held this year in Washington, D.C. She took part in an Author Meets the Critics panel. The author and book: Nitza Berkovitch, *From Motherhood to Citizenship: Women's Rights and International Organizations* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). Dr. Berkovitch and Dr. Moghadam were co-guest editors of a special issue of the journal *Social Politics* on feminist challenges to Middle East politics (vol. 6, no. 3, Fall 1999).

Dr. Cynthia Kukla, associate professor of Art, has just completed a one year sabbatical in which she resided in Covington, Kentucky, with a Visiting Professor appointment at Miami University of Ohio from August 1999-2000. During this time, she was commissioned by the Covington Education Foundation to create a large-scale original watercolor painting of the historic sites of Covington. A full-color commission of this type has never been done. Limited edition prints made from it will be used for fundraising for university scholarships by the Foundation.

She also created an exhibit of four former women graduate students and herself called "Mentor and Muse." The exhibit opened at the Foster Art Center, Peoria, Illinois, and travels to the Prairie Art Center, Schaumburg, Illinois on September 1-30, 2000. A reception for the artists will be held on September 22, from 6-8:30 p.m. Two of the women in this exhibit were honored by the National Museum of Women in Washington, D.C. Their graduate work from Illinois State University was included in an all-women show of Illinois artists which opened in Washington and will travel for two years around the state of Illinois. For further information, email Dr. Kukla at cmkukla@ilstu.edu.

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Governor's Commission on the Status of Women Schedule Meeting

Women's Studies will host an informational meeting on HB4407, the Illinois Gender Violence Act, Wednesday, September 20 from 2:30-4:30 in the 1st East Lounge of the Bone Student Center. A member of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women will present information about the bill and take questions. The bill, which was drafted by the Governor's Commission and is endorsed by Governor Ryan and Lieutenant Governor Woods, is stalled in the Illinois General Assembly. The law would allow victims of domestic violence and other violence based on gender or sexual orientation to sue their attackers. In endorsing the bill, Governor Ryan said, "With the Gender Violence Act in place, Illinois would become a true pioneer, a state with an antivolence law that empowers victims." Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women, praised the bill: "There is not another such bill, much less law, at the state level." NOW would like to see similar laws enacted in each state. Opposition to the bill comes primarily from its inclusion of violence based on sexual orientation. ✍

Feminist Writers Contest

The Northwest Suburban Chicago N.O.W. is currently taking submissions for the 11th Annual Feminist Writers Contest. Essays and short stories may be submitted by October 31, 2000, with \$100 prize to first-place in each category, and \$50 prize to second-place in fiction. The winning entries will be published on their website. For an entry form and complete contest rules, e-mail Kate Hutchinson at khutchin@achs.lake.k12.il.us. ✍

Women's Coalition Schedule Meeting

Women's Coalition is off to a good start this year. The Board Members, Erin Hale, Anne Semlak, Jen Day, Erin Zumwalt, and Amy Disabato, have a great semester planned. The kick-off meeting for Women's Coalition will be Thursday, August 31st, at 7 p.m. in Stevenson 221B. Take Back the Night, the Clothesline Project, and the Feminist Bake Sale are just a few topics that will be discussed at the meeting. For further information about the meetings please contact Amy Disabato or Erin Hale at 862-3714 or e-mail Women's Coalition at womynsco@hotmail.com. ✍

Women's Studies Resource and Documentation Center

Did you know that Women's Studies has a Resource and Documentation Center available to use for your research studies that focus on women's issues? We do not allow materials to be check out, however, you are welcome to use our study area to read or view videos. Photo copy service is available. Visit our website at www.cas.ilstu.edu/womenstudies to view the titles of the many books, periodicals, journals, and videos. New additions to the library are listed on Page 5. For further information, feel free to call 309-438-2947 for hours available or if you would want to schedule a study-group at Women's Studies. You may also email Rozel White at rwhite@ilstu.edu.

Women's Studies Minor

Have you considered a minor in Women's Studies? If you would like further information, you may contact Dr. Sandra Harmon, Academic Advisor for Women's Studies at 309-438-2947. She would be most happy to meet with you and review your plan of study. ✍