



Women's Voice

Illinois State University

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From the Director

Sandra D. Harmon, Acting Director

Women Building Chicago: Illinois State Normal University Connections

Last month I wrote about Sarah Hackett Stevenson, Margaret Haley, and Ella Flagg Young, all of whom are included in the new biographical dictionary *Women Building Chicago, 1790-1990** and all of whom had connections with the Illinois State Normal University. Four other women with ISNU connections, Emma Dryer, Lucy Gaston Page, Sister Dolores Schorsch, and Julia Thecla, are also included. While Stevenson, Haley, and Young are well known to historians of Chicago, the other four are lesser-known figures.

Emma Dryer (1835-1925), religious educator, charity worker, and Bible institute founder, was preceptress (something like a dean of women) and instructor in grammar and drawing at the ISNU from 1864 to 1870. In ISNU records she appears as Emaline Dryer. After leaving Normal, she moved to Chicago to work among "wayward" or "fallen" women. There she joined Dwight L. Moody's church, engaged in relief work following the Chicago Fire, and eventually found her calling in religious education. While superintendent of the Bible Work of Chicago, a Bible workers training school of the Chicago Avenue Church, she developed plans for a Bible workers' training institute or college. Unable to secure a commitment from Moody to establish a training school and eventually tired of the turmoil surrounding the issue, she resigned from Moody's Chicago Avenue Church in 1889. She took her Bible Work of Chicago to the Chicago Bible Society where it became a department of the organization. She retired in 1903. During her thirty-year career, she trained a "strong force of young women" to "serve among the immigrants of the city as well as in foreign missions." (Cynthia L. Ogorek, "Emma Dryer," pp. 230-232).

Lucy Gaston Page (1860-1924), anti-cigarette activist, attended the ISNU in 1881. According to her biographer, while she was a student "she led raids on local saloons and gambling halls, smashing fixtures in a style that her friend,

Carry Nation, the hatchet-wielding prohibitionist, would make famous." (p. 307) It was while she taught school in a number of small Illinois towns and saw boys sneaking smokes behind the schoolhouse, that she first became interested in cigarettes as a social issue. After she moved to the new temperance town of Harvey with her parents, she turned first to journalism, then temperance work in the WCTU, before staking out cigarette smoking as her paramount issue. In 1899 she became a full-time activist with the Anti-Cigarette League. Her goal was to legislate cigarettes out of existence. To that end she lobbied throughout the East and Midwest for legislative action and promoted a stop-smoking campaign. Increasingly, she adopted an intemperate tone that embarrassed her colleagues and she was forced to resign her position with the league in 1918. She continued her anti-cigarette campaign living on handouts from relatives and charities until her death in 1924. Gaston fought a losing battle. While she was "a key figure in a movement that succeeded in prohibiting the sale of cigarettes in fifteen states between 1893 and 1921," by the time of her death that number was down to one. (Cassandra Tate, "Lucy Gaston Page," pp. 307-309).

Sister Dolores (Alma Frances) Schorsch (1896-1984), educator, lecturer, author, "radically transformed the way in which . . . children in Catholic schools were given religious instruction." She "encouraged Catholic educators to abandon the rote methods of the past" (p. 785) and to use modern pedagogical theories. She attended the ISNU after graduating from the Morris, Illinois, public high school. By the age of seventeen she was a teacher in her own classroom, first in Morris and then in Chicago. She received two bachelors and one masters degrees from De Paul University and joined the Benedictine Sisters in 1922. She became a "teacher of teachers" and with her brother, Alexander Schorsch, a Vincentian and dean of the Graduate School of DePaul, wrote a curriculum for teaching religion in Catholic schools for grades one through eight that was adopted by the Archdiocese of Chicago and other dioceses throughout the country and abroad. She lectured and gave classes around the country, served in Chicago Catholic schools, earned an Ed.D from Loyola University in 1953, and taught at DePaul until 1969. (Mary Benet McKinney, OSB, "Sister Dolores (Alma Frances) Schorsch," pp. 785-787).

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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The last woman with an ISNU connection, Julia Thecla (1896-1973), artist, only attended one summer session after graduating from Delavan High School in 1913. She taught in a rural Tazewell County school until she moved to Chicago around the time of World War I. There she took classes at the School of the Art Institute and supported herself as an industrial artist, art restorer, and secretary. Her career as a painter began with her first exhibit in 1931. Employed by the WPA in the Federal Art Project from 1938-1942, she continued painting until the late 1960s. She was something of an eccentric on the Chicago art scene and her work has been described as "jewel-like, mystical, enchanted, and having a Victorian flavor." (Erica L. Holm, "Julia Thecla", p. 874).

Several things stand out in these biographical entries of Chicago women with ISNU connections. All of the women who attended the ISNU as students taught school after leaving the institution. By doing so they fulfilled the teaching requirement for free tuition. All of the women except Julia Thecla worked with other women in their professional lives and reform activities. Pioneering professionals such as Sarah Hackett Stevenson and Ella Flagg Young drew support from women's clubs and Sister Dolores Schorsch from her religious community, union activist Margaret Haley from her all-female union, Emma Dryer from her Bible Work colleagues and Lucy Gaston Page from the WCTU, at least in the beginning of her reform work. Only one of the women, Ella Flagg Young, was married and her marriage lasted less than four years before her husband died. Career-minded turn-of-the-century women often chose not to marry believing that marriage would severely curtail their ability to perform their work well. At least three of the women came to their work through religious convictions and all but the doctor and the artist entered fields that had been deemed female. However, they all pushed the boundaries of accepted female activities by becoming leaders and building organizations and institutions to further their missions. In the process they made contributions, large and small, to the history and culture of Chicago.

*Edited by Rima Lunin Schultz and Adele Hast. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. ■

Women's Studies Brown Bag Series

A Wednesday Women's Studies Brown Bag Series, "Status of Women in Traditionally Female Fields," will begin February 6, 2002. The programs will feature two presenters: one discussing how the field came to be a female-dominated one and the other discussing the current status and issues of women in the field. The programs will be on **Wednesday** from **12:00-1:00 p.m.** in the **Women's Studies Resource Room, Rachel Cooper 234**. Please bring your own lunch. We will provide coffee, tea, and juice. For further information, call 438-2947, or email wstudies@ilstu.edu.

February Programs

- February 6** Nursing with **Cindy Sullivan**, Mennonite College of Nursing, and **Sue Clark**, lobbyist for the Illinois Nurses Association
- February 13** Early Childhood Education with **Kyle Ciani**, History and **Eileen Borgia**, Curriculum and Instruction
- February 20** Elementary Education with **Sandra Harmon**, Women's Studies and History, and **Wayne Benensen**, Curriculum and Instruction
- February 27** Social Work with **Jeanne Howard** and **Tammy Thurman**, both Social Work

In Memory of Deborah Wiatt

By Sandra D. Harmon

Deborah Wiatt, founder of the McLean County Rape Crisis Center, died November 21 at the age of 50. Deborah worked for 28 years with the Rape Crisis Center which she helped to create in the mid-1970s as a volunteer agency of community women and men trained as advocates to aid victims of rape and to help in the fight to stop rape. She was also instrumental in the founding of Women Against Sexual Assault that eventually became the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA). She conducted training sessions for rape crisis center staffs all over the state and the ICASA recently honored her with a plaque commemorating her many contributions to the anti-rape movement in Illinois.

As an Illinois State University student in the early 1970s, Deborah enrolled in some of the early women's studies classes that were then being offered for the first time. Her career of feminist activism also began in the 1970s when she took up not only the anti-rape movement, but also the ERA campaign and fights for wage equity and safe working conditions. She served as newsletter editor for the Bloomington/Normal Chapter of NOW that was active in the 70s. Over the years she challenged workplace sexual harassment and was a pioneer in the lesbian and gay rights movement in Bloomington/Normal. She was particularly pleased when the Normal Town Council adopted an ordinance prohibiting discrimination in employment and housing based on sexual orientation in September of this year. She was a founder and supporter of the *Post Amerikan*, Bloomington-Normal's community based alternative bimonthly newspaper.

Deborah Wiatt will be remembered for the important contributions she made to the community and state especially through her years of dedication to the Rape Crisis Center and the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. ■



Wishing you
health and happiness
in the New Year!

WOMEN'S STUDIES FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS

Student and Alumni News

Women's Studies minor **Christy Eyre** was awarded a Tasher Senior Scholarship in History at the History Department Awards Ceremony on November 1. The Tasher Scholarship is the most prestigious history scholarship for undergraduate students offered by the department.

Women's Studies alumna **Diana Onken** is now the Maryland Regional Organizer with NARAL (National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League). Her duties are to implement the Choice for America campaign, a combined paid media and organizing campaign designed to reposition choice as a fundamental American value. She reports that it has been a good experience to do local organizing. She is still active with her former employer Peace Action by sitting on its Board of Directors. She lives in Silver Springs, Maryland. ■

Faculty News

Valentine M. Moghadam (Women's Studies), who is currently on sabbatical leave and a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington D.C., has delivered several talks this past semester. On 2 October she took part in a conference at the Woodrow Wilson Center on "Middle Eastern Women on the Move: Political Participation and the Struggle for Rights" and spoke on globalization and women in the Middle East. On 2 November she was a keynote speaker at the 26th annual Women's Studies conference of the University of Wisconsin system, and presented a paper entitled "Internationalizing and Mainstreaming Women's Studies". On 14 November she delivered a talk on gender, fundamentalisms and social change, at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City. And on 11 December she is scheduled to speak before an annual conference of the Georgetown University Law School in Washington. She will lecture on "Women, Gender, and Afghan Conflicts." Since the bombing of Afghanistan began, Dr. Moghadam has been interviewed twice on public radio regarding Afghan women.

She is one of the speakers featured in a transcript of "Meridians Roundtable on Peace, Harvard University, November 2002," published in the current issue of *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*.

Sandra Harmon (Women's Studies and History) gave the address at the initiation ceremony and luncheon of the Illinois State University Chapter of Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society on November 11. ■

Beverly Smith, (Criminal Justice Sciences), published a peer-reviewed article, "Ann Petry's In Darkness and Confusion and the Harlem Riot of 1943: Fictional Insights into the Causes and Nature of Collective Violence" in *Women and Criminal Justice*, Vol. 12. ■

New Faculty Profile: Kyle Ciani, Department of History

By Kate Moritz
Women's Studies
Graduate Assistant



Dr. Kyle Ciani

Professor Kyle Ciani joined the Department of History this fall. She received both her B.A. and M.A. degrees in History from the University of San Diego. At Michigan State University she became the first Ph.D. to specialize in Women's History. As a professor in the Department of History at Illinois State University, Ciani currently teaches Women in North America and United States History Since 1945. Next semester she will teach United States Women's History. She will also teach the course History of the Family for undergraduate and graduate students next year. She currently serves on the Women's Studies Programming Committee.

Her research interests include focusing on social policy especially within the realm of childcare. From this perspective, Ciani intends to look at the working options available for working parents with specific attention on women workers. In pursuing this research direction, she is currently writing a book about the comparative history of San Diego and Detroit in relation to childcare options available to workers since the 1880's. In looking to her future at Illinois State University, Ciani would like to incorporate a service learning approach through a women's history course in reference to education. She also hopes to evaluate how the advancement of women has changed over time. ■

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Anne Grethe Jantzen (center)
with Marilyn Boyd (International House)
and Ann Haugo (Women's Studies and Theatre)

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