

# WOMEN at the CENTER

Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library

Issue 7, Spring 2005

*Did You Know...*

- Our award-winning Web site makes a selection of our resources available world-wide.
- We offer research grants that enable scholars to travel to Duke to work with our collections.
- Anyone who presents a photo ID and completes our registration forms can use our collections.
- Many of our collections come as gifts from people such as Viki Ortiz, Jeanette Stokes, and Nancy Peeler Keppel.

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## Paula Kamen Has It Her Way

The Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture is pleased to announce the acquisition of the papers of author, journalist, and playwright Paula Kamen.

Paula Kamen's writings on feminism and young women are well-known. They have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Ms.*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and more than a dozen anthologies. Paula is the author of *Feminist Fatale: Voices from the 'Twentysomething' Generation Explore the Future of the 'Women's Movement'*, one of the first books to examine the so-called "third-wave" of feminism. She is also the author of *Her Way: Young Women Remake the Sexual Revolution*, based on interviews with more than a hundred women, and *Jane: Abortion and the Underground*, a play about the Chicago pre-Roe abortion service.



*All in My Head*, Paula's newest book, is about the epidemic of chronic pain and other invisible illnesses that are emerging now with unprecedented force. Barbara Seaman, co-founder of the National Women's Health

Network, writes, "The detail, the beautiful writing, the triumph of this young author's will over paralyzing pain will make you cry for her and adore her on the selfsame page."

Paula began her collection when she was a senior in college. She was required, by a journalism professor, to keep a "beat folder" on women's issues. She collected materials from conferences, as well as obscure grassroots publications, and feminist newsletters. Paula's papers also include interviews, drafts, correspondence, marketing materials, and research files on reproductive rights, sex information in the media, sexual assault and acquaintance rape, men's activism against rape, pornography, feminism in popular culture, lesbian rights, and teen girls.

The acquisition of the Paula Kamen Papers reflects the Bingham Center's commitment to documenting the latest iteration of the women's movement in the U.S. (For more about Paula's views on her collection, please turn to page 2 for an interview.)

## 2005-2006 Mary Lily Research Grants Awarded

The Bingham Center is pleased to announce the winners of this year's Mary Lily Research Grants, which support the work of students, scholars, and independent researchers who travel to Durham to make use of the Bingham Center's holdings. From an exceptional group of applicants, this year's grants have been

awarded to the following individuals:

**Lisa Diedrich**, Assist. Prof., Women's Studies Program, Stony Brook Univ., for work on an article about the continuities between the women's health movement in the 1970s and AIDS activism in the U.S. in the 1980s.

*(cont'd on p. 2)*

## An Email Interview with Author Paula Kamen



Bingham Center Director Laura Micham and Archivist Amy Leigh Hagardorn pack the Kamen collection for shipment back to Duke.



Paula Kamen surrounded by the fruits of her efforts.

**SBC:** *Prior to being approached by the Bingham Center, did you have some idea what might happen to your papers when they were no longer useful to you?*

**PK:** To be honest, I was thinking like a 35-year-old before that point about my papers—which means not really thinking about their future at all. But I've always known that I couldn't throw out any of my papers. Not a single one. I was privately wondering if this was some kind of obsessive-compulsive disorder, something you'd find in the DSM IV.

**SBC:** *What was it like for you to have two archivists going through your papers? What feelings did the process bring up? Were there any surprises there for you?*

**PK:** As an independent scholar, it was a very validating experience. So much research and writing is done in isolation. This experience showed me the importance of listening to my own voice. I had thought that young women's relationship to feminism was a good story, and it turned out that it was. It also showed me the importance of just plugging away over time. When I saw you go through the piles of articles that I've written and collected, I was pleasantly surprised by all I had done, despite periods of frustration and struggle. I realized it all adds up. I also felt relieved to have established this partnership. Even an independent voice needs

partnerships to make the most of her work. In my apartment, the papers' use was limited, to say the least. But at Duke, with archivists who get what they are all about, the papers have great potential for new lives and new uses.

**SBC:** *Have you ever used archives or special collections for your research? How do you view their role now that you have an insider's perspective on the work of archives and archivists?*

**PK:** For *Jane*, I used archives at Northwestern University's Special Collections Library. With my new insider's view, I have a whole new appreciation for the work of both archivists and those who use archives. It requires a lot of skill and independent thinking of both parties. I can't imagine the patience required of archivists to sift through the 27 boxes of my materials. And the scholars that use archives need to have that same trait. When you use archives, no one is flagging in advance that one paper in the pile that is most important to your research. You have to determine that yourself. Each person needs perseverance and an open mind to find the relevant nuggets and connect them to her own work. It's a challenging process, but the potential payoff—to discover lost history, and lost women's voices—is priceless.

## Mary Lily Research Grants (continued from page 1)

**Eric Gardner**, Assoc. Prof., Dept. of English, Saginaw Valley State Univ., for work on an article about Mary Wager Fisher and the African American literary community in Washington, D.C.

**Kimberly Hamlin**, Dept. of American Studies, Univ. of Texas at Austin, for work on her dissertation, which examines the impact of Darwin and evolutionary discourse on gender and feminist thought in the U.S., 1870-1925.

**Victoria Hesford**, lecturer, Women's Studies Program, Stony Brook Univ., for work on a book about the feminist as lesbian and the second wave women's movement, 1968-1974.

**Alison Piepmeier**, senior lecturer, Women's Studies Program, Vanderbilt Univ., for work on

an article that examines third wave feminist zines and corporate culture.

**Heather Prescott**, Prof., History Dept., Central Connecticut State Univ., for work on a book about the development of health services at institutions of higher education in the U.S. from the early 1800s to the present.

**Kijua Sanders-McMurtry**, Dept. of Educational Policy Studies, Georgia State Univ., for work on her dissertation about the Links, a black women's service organization.

**Sarah Stanton**, Dept. of Women's Studies, Emory Univ., for work on her dissertation on women's queer identities in the post-Stonewall U.S. South.



## Transgenerational Feminism in the Ortiz Family

The papers of Bobbye Ortiz (1918-1990) and her daughter, Viki (1942- ), document the personal lives and careers of two of our country's most dedicated feminists and social activists. The materials in both women's files are especially rich in the history of the international women's movements in Latin America, AIDS activism, sexual health, adoption rights, gay and lesbian parenting, and women's issues such as reproductive rights and economic status.

Bobbye Ortiz was an international feminist and Marxist activist who also served as editor of the magazine *Monthly Review* and was the founder of the organization WIRE (Women's International Resource Exchange). Bobbye's papers span the years 1919-1993 and consist chiefly of personal correspondence, extensive subject files on international political and cultural movements, photographs and slides, and over three hundred sound recordings of spoken voice and music.

Viki Ortiz is a social activist, author, attorney,

and scholar who has held major positions in institutions of higher education. She is currently on the faculty of the UC-Berkeley School of Law. Viki's papers reflect her involvement in the International Year of the Woman activities, as well as her interest in reproductive rights, definitions of family, and economic justice.

Bobbye and Viki's shared social values and political beliefs are well-reflected in their papers. Both maintained extensive collections of materials on international women's movements in Latin American nations. Viki's great interest in adoption and parenting, which grew out of her own experiences as a single adoptive parent of a Mexican child, is documented in her research files on adoptive parenting, international adoption, and gay/lesbian parenting. One of the products of this research is Viki's article, "Color Me Queer, Color Me Family," which will soon be published in *Critical Race Theory: Histories, Crossroads, Directions*.



*Viki Ortiz works with Karen Glynn, Visual Materials Archivist for the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at Duke University.*

## Equal Rites: Church Women at the Center

The Sallie Bingham Center has a rich collection of materials about the lives of religious women, starting with holdings that document nineteenth century women missionaries to Africa and the Far East and continuing to the present day. Inspired by the extensive holdings in the Special Collections Library that document the history of the Methodist Church and the rich collections of the Bingham Center on the history of feminist theory and activism, we are developing a growing body of material that maps the lives and work of women, both lay and ordained, who have transformed their denominations.

The records of the Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South are the foundation for this collecting activity. The Resource Center is a non-profit organization founded in 1977 to provide support for women

in ministry, persons of faith working for social justice in the South, and religious organizations that address women's needs. This collection came to the Bingham Center in 1992 from the Reverend Jeanette Stokes, the organization's founder.

Our particular interests are in the papers of ordained women in Protestant denominations, along with those of their lay minister sisters. We are very pleased to announce our most recent acquisition, the papers of Nancy Peeler Keppel. Keppel, a North Carolina native, was an author, pioneering lay minister in the United Church of Christ, and tireless activist, who worked on behalf of minority communities and the poor. Nancy's papers will be a wonderful resource for scholars as well as an inspiration for students, activists, and others.

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Sallie Bingham Center for  
Women's History and Culture

Rare Book, Manuscript, and  
Special Collections Library  
Durham, NC 27708-0185

Phone: 919-660-5967

Fax: 919-660-5934

Email: [sbcwhc@duke.edu](mailto:sbcwhc@duke.edu)

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## Having Their Say: Women & Electoral Politics

Women who participate in electoral politics have historically encountered barriers, such as disapproving public opinion, family demands, and sex discrimination. The glaring under-representation of women in electoral politics and continuing negative attitudes have given rise to a long history of women's activism in electoral system politics.

Women's clubs and organizations have facilitated the participation of women in all aspects of the electoral process. The first female anti-slavery organizations of the 1830s, the Equal Suffrage League and the National Womans' Party of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the League of Women Voters and other post-suffrage organizations of the 20th and 21st centuries are examples of women working to effect social change through political action. The Sallie Bingham Center holds a range of materials documenting the efforts of many people who have dedicated themselves to this process.

A selection of these materials was displayed last

fall in the exhibit, "Having Their Say: Women and Electoral Politics." Items on display included information about Carrie Chapman Catt, one of the best known leaders of the woman suffrage movement; Lucy Randolph Mason, a champion of women's rights, child labor reform, and workers' rights; Mary Wollstonecraft, writer of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, the first great feminist treatise; Mary Octavine Thompson Cowper, an active member in the N.C. League of Women Voters from 1922-1930; and Margaret Sanger, founder of the National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control.

On Sept. 28, 2004, the Bingham Center presented an evening of humorous and dramatic readings, culled from its collections, on women and politics. Members of the Duke community entertained a standing room only audience with readings ranging from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, by Mary Wollstonecraft, written in 1796, to "Dear Readers," a selection from *The Comp*, a zine by Allison Williams written in 2001.

