

WOMEN at the CENTER

Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture
Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library

Issue 15, Spring 2009

Proud Shoes: Pauli Murray's Life and Legacy

On March 1, the Sallie Bingham Center and the Durham County Public Library's North Carolina Collection hosted a panel discussion on the life and work of Pauli Murray. The panel included a range of people who have all done work related to Murray's life and



Panelists Davison Douglas, Anne Firor Scott, Barbara Lau, and Courtney Reid Eaton

legacy: Anne Firor Scott, professor emerita, Duke University Department of History; Barbara Lau, project director, Duke Human Rights Center; Courtney Reid Eaton, exhibitions director, Duke Center for Documentary Studies; and Davison Douglas, law professor at the College of William and Mary.

Born in Baltimore in 1910, Pauli Murray grew up in the Durham home of her maternal grandparents. She graduated

from Hillside High School in 1926, and attended Hunter College. In 1933, Murray was one of five African-American students in a graduating class of 250. The University of North Carolina denied Murray admission to graduate school on the basis of her race, so

she attended Howard University Law School, graduating in 1944, first in her class and the only female. Murray applied to Harvard Law School, but was not admitted due to gender. Despite setbacks, Murray achieved success as an American civil rights activist, feminist, lawyer, author, and college professor. Among her many accomplishments, Murray co-founded the National Organization for

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4th Biennial Symposium This Fall

On October 30th and 31st, 2009, the Bingham Center will host "What Does It Mean to Be an Educated Woman?" in honor of the 40-year career of Bingham Center co-founder, Professor Jean Fox O'Barr. The symposium will explore the question through a series of plenary sessions on scholarship, pedagogy, and activism. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Lisa Yun Lee, director of the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum in Chicago. Other speakers

will include librarians as well as Professor O'Barr's colleagues and former students.

As with previous symposia, the theme emanates from a collection strength. Our holdings include printed materials and manuscripts such as the papers of professional educators, schoolgirl diaries, and records of women's schools and women's educational organizations. *See page 4 for more details on how to register.*

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<http://library.duke.edu/specialcollections/bingham>

SALLIE BINGHAM CENTER
FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

New Acquisitions

Third Side Press Records, 1991-2003

The complete records of this small lesbian feminist press best known for its 1995 publication, *The Woman-Centered Economy: Ideals, Reality, and the Space in Between*, edited by Loraine Edwalds and press founder Midge Stocker.

Faith Holsaert Papers, 1950-2008

Correspondence, newsletters, publications, and other materials relating to Holsaert's participation in the civil rights movement including the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the women's movement.

Laura "Tibbie" Roberts Papers, ca. 1970-2008

Personal and professional papers documenting this 94-year-old North Carolina native's activist, civic, and Methodist church governance work on behalf of women's rights.

Susan Hill, An Uncommon Heroine

Susan Hill, who was a recipient of the 2007 Nancy Susan Reynolds Award, also called the "North Carolina Nobel Prize," likes to say that she has spent her life "bringing abortion to America." Hill, who grew up in Durham, North Carolina, graduated with a degree in social work from Meredith College in 1970. In the early 1970s, she moved to Florida and worked as a social worker in Brevard County. Minutes after the Supreme Court had announced its ruling in *Roe v. Wade* legalizing abortion in January of 1973, Hill received a call from physician Sam Barr, asking whether she would join him in opening the first abortion clinic in the state. Three weeks later, the clinic opened its doors to hundreds of women seeking legal abortions. In 1976, investors Joseph and Stuart Yacknowitz hired Susan Hill to run their four abortion clinics and open additional clinics for them. The group established the National Women's Health Organization [NWHO] in 1979. Hill became the organization's president and, by 1980, had opened six additional clinics across the country. The Susan Hill papers chronicle the history of the NWHO from the mid-1970s to the present.

From the very beginning, the NWHO sought to provide safe and compassionate abortion care to women in the most underserved areas of the country. Working to make abortion services a reality to women across the country, NWHO opened clinics on the east coast and in the Midwest and the South. Over the years, NWHO encountered every form of opposition, from zoning ordinances intended to block the opening of clinics to anti-abortion activists who vandalized and invaded clinics, fire bombed facilities, and murdered a clinic doctor. In the process, the NWHO laid the legal foundation for access to abortion

NWHO

National Women's Health Organization, 1979-2009

services, serving as plaintiff in over 30 federal and state lawsuits concerning abortion rights. For two decades, Hill coordinated NWHO clinics and the lawsuits fought on behalf of the clinics. In addition, she was a founding member of the two most prominent professional organizations for abortion providers, the National Abortion Federation and the National Coalition of Abortion Providers. In 1996, she bought the NWHO clinics from the Yacknowitzs and has since served as president and CEO of the organization which, to date, has provided abortion services to over 600,000 women and low cost reproductive services to another 600,000 women.

The Susan Hill papers consists of newspaper clippings chronicling the history of the NWHO clinics, in particular their experience with picketers and anti-abortion violence. In addition, there are extensive legal documents from the wide array of lawsuits fought on behalf of the NWHO. These include an extensive and recently added collection of depositions of individuals on both sides of the abortion debate, affidavits of patients and staff on the impact of anti-abortion activism, and testimonies from anti-abortion activists on their understanding of the fetus, pregnancy, and abortion. For anybody interested in a deeper understanding of the abortion debate, the Susan Hill papers offer a rich collection of documents telling the story from behind the scenes.

Contributed by Johanna Schoen, Associate Professor of History and Women's Studies, University of Iowa

More on Susan Hill:
2007 Nancy Susan Reynolds Award video
<http://tinyurl.com/reynoldsvideo>
WUNC State of Things appearance
<http://tinyurl.com/susanhill>

2009-2010 Mary Lily Research Grants Awarded

The Bingham Center is pleased to announce the recipients of this year's Mary Lily Research Grants. These grants allow scholars to travel to Durham to conduct research using the Bingham Center's collections.

Katherine McVane Armstrong, History, Emory University, for dissertation research on the cultural pressures and standards that influenced the grieving process of southern elite women following the death of a child.

Melissa Estes Blair, History, University of Georgia, for research for a book examining the role of women's organizations in Denver, Durham, and Indianapolis, from 1960-1980, in forming activist communities.

Caroline Kaltefleiter, Communication Studies, State University of New York-Cortland, for research on a book about the emergence of the Riot Grrrl movement, transgender activism, and Third Wave feminism.

Jessica Lingel, independent scholar, for research on a collection of essays about twentieth century American women writers' experiences with medical trauma exploring the ways illness impacted their writing and art.

Jeannie Ludlow, Women's Studies

and English, Eastern Illinois University, for research on an article and conference presentation about the political and sociocultural evolution of abortion and reproductive rights discourse during the past 40 years of the women's movement.

Ailecia Ruscin, American Studies, University of Kansas, for dissertation research on the fan culture of Riot Grrrl across the U.S. and its influence on the production of zines, films, photographs, and records.

Denise Shaw, English and Women's Studies, University of South Carolina, for research on a book about social and cultural constraints upon a single mother and her daughter, Virginia and Julia May, in the first half of the twentieth century.

Mary Tasillo, independent scholar, for creation of a zine and another publication about Third Wave feminism and women's self-production, based on an exploration of text and image relationships within artist books and zines.

Jamie Schmidt Wagman, American Studies, Saint Louis University, for dissertation research on production and consumption of birth control devices from 1958 to today, focusing on public attitudes towards contraception in feminist writings, zines, and advertisements.

<http://library.duke.edu/specialcollections/bingham/grants>

Proud Shoes: Pauli Murray's Life and Legacy *(continued from page 1)*

Women (1966) and became one of the first women and the first African-American woman ordained as an Episcopalian priest (1977).

Roughly 100 people attended the March 1 event, including library regulars, children and teenagers, Bingham Center constituents, Murray's former students, and members of Murray's family. One family member spoke of the continuing inspiration that Pauli Murray provides to

the family. A local man spoke of having read *Proud Shoes* ten times, learning something new every time. Panelists fielded a multitude of questions about Murray's life, discussing her public versus private personas, the impact of her writings and teachings on mid-20th century liberation movements, the ways her family history and growing up in Durham shaped her life choices, and her friendship and collaborations with Eleanor Roosevelt.

Recent Additions to Existing Collections

Robin Morgan Papers and Sisterhood is Global Institute Records, 1984-2006

Morgan, feminist leader and founder of SIGI, has recently made additions to both of these important collections. To her own papers she added, amongst other materials, her "Letters from Ground Zero," written in reaction to events of September 11, 2001. To the SIGI Records, Morgan added all of the files documenting the founding of the organization in 1984, along with a variety of administrative records through 2004.

Other Significant Additions

- Alison Amoroso
- Sallie Bingham
- Bitch Magazine
- Bust Magazine
- Front Page
- Elizabeth A. McMahan
- National Women's Studies Journal
- Outright
- Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South
- Sarabande Books

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Save the Date: What Does It Mean to Be an Educated Woman?

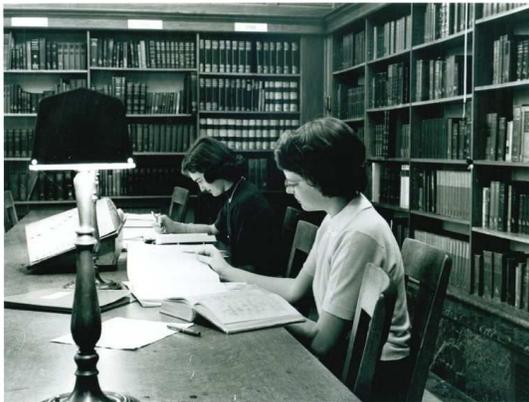


Photo courtesy of Duke University Archives

October 30th and 31st, 2009

Please join us for conversations on pedagogy, scholarship, and activism in women's education, and recognition of the career of Dr. Jean O'Barr.

For schedule, registration, and travel information please see:
<http://library.duke.edu/specialcollections/bingham/education-symposium>

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- 2) Subscribe to our email list: <https://lists.duke.edu/sympa/info/binghamcenter>
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