



*Failure is impossible!*  
- Susan B. Anthony

## Feminism and Family Studies Section Newsletter

National Council on Family Relations  
Kristine Baber, Editor  
Number 2 October, 1991

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### JESSIE BERNARD ENDOWMENT FUND

\$9100

SEND YOUR CHECKS NOW

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#### FROM THE CHAIR...

As we move through Fall and into Winter, there is a lot of gender-related activity on the national agenda. Who would have guessed, at the time of our last newsletter, that sexual harassment would have emerged in the way it did as a major topic of national concern? Some of us are discouraged, others are angry, many are being prodded into action! Scientists who study social movements claim that the outcome of the Thomas-Hill hearings will revitalize feminism in this country. Let's hope that prediction is accurate!

There are many positive developments in the FFS section to report: First, the review of the papers and proposals submitted for the section awards is completed. I'm pleased to report that Dr. Polly Fassinger of Concordia College submitted the paper that will receive the Outstanding Contribution to Feminist Research Paper Award and that Karen Blaisure of Virginia Tech will receive the award for the Outstanding Research Proposal from a Feminist Perspective. The awards will be presented on Wednesday, November 20 in a session titled "Feminist Pedagogy in Family Life Education" that is co-sponsored by FFS and the Education and Enrichment section. The session is scheduled for 9:45 AM. I hope that many of you will attend to show your support for these FFS members.

I'd like to thank the members of the Award Committee for their efforts in reviewing the papers and proposals: Elizabeth Bergen, Maureen Perry-Jenkins, Steven Marks, Brenda Seery, and Suzanna Smith.

Also, Donna Sollie, Chair of the Teaching Committee, has compiled a packet of teaching materials submitted by Section members. She will bring some of these to the meeting in Denver and will take orders for others. The fee for these materials will be determined at our Section

business meeting.

As I've reported in recent newsletters, the total in our Endowment Fund is inching toward the goal of \$10,000. I'd like to encourage everyone to donate another dollar or two to help push this over the top. Break into your coffee fund to find the extra money. You'll be helping the section and cutting down on your caffeine at the same time!

Finally, I'd like to call your attention to important activities that will be occurring in Denver. The section business meeting will be held on Sunday the 17th from 6:45 to 8:00 PM. Please come and volunteer your time and your good ideas to help the section thrive in the '90's. We don't want to lose the momentum that was built in the 1980's under the direction of Alexis and Karen and the officers and committee chairs who devoted so much of their time and energy to the section. The annual NCFR business meeting will be held the following day (Monday the 18th) at 6:15 PM. Everyone is invited -- in fact, encouraged-- to attend. Help shape the future of NCFR! Be an informed member.

Also at NCFR--the FFS section is sponsoring a symposium on the economic implications of divorce law on Sunday at 2:30. Karen Polonko will be discussing the remarks that our panelists, who are three lawyers/legal scholars, will present on this subject. Please attend!

Check your program for the many poster sessions and roundtables that our section is sponsoring. Highlights include Helena Z. Lopata discussing the Support Systems of Widows in Historical and Comparative Perspectives at a distinguished leader roundtable on Sunday at 4:00 PM. Michelle Clossick, last year's winner of the Outstanding Proposal from a Feminist Perspective, will also present

findings from her research at a roundtable on Monday, November 18th at 4:45.

So, join us in Denver. Bring friends, colleagues, students, and others who haven't yet become FFS members. I guarantee that you'll be invigorated by the contributions of our members!

Best Wishes!

Connie Shehan, Chair FFS

#### FROM THE ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR

In the last issue of the newsletter, Connie Shehan reported the exciting news that the Jessie Bernard Endowment Fund achieved 80% of the goal last year. We hope that your individual and departmental contributions will enable us to reach the \$10,000 goal by the annual meeting in November. Also, if your publisher has not yet made a contribution, please solicit one. We have received donations of \$500 to \$1,000 from publishing houses that support feminist scholarship.

Now, I am happy to tell you about yet another form of support for feminist scholarship. Dean Birkenkamp, Senior Editor of Westview Press, has offered \$250 value in complimentary books. We will use this donation to provide recognition to the author of the "Outstanding Contribution to Feminist Scholarship Paper Award." This award, to be given at the annual meeting in November, will parallel the monetary grant from the proceeds of the Jessie Bernard Endowment Fund that the Section provides to the recipient of the award for the "Outstanding Research Proposal from a Feminist Perspective." It is a pleasure to acknowledge Westview's generosity in helping the Section's award/endowment program mature.

Rosemary Blieszner

**THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

The United Nations has recently published a report entitled The World's Women 1970 - 1990: Trends and Statistics (1991). This publication is the first to compile indicators of women's status world wide and resulted from the World Conference of the International Women's Year held in Mexico City in 1975. Women leaders had proclaimed 1976 - 1985 as the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace and requested UN statistical services to gather and monitor indicators on women's family life, leadership and decision-making, health and childbearing, education, and economic life.

One of the consistent findings was that "major gaps in policy, investment and earnings prevent women from performing to their full potential in social, economic and political life" (p. 2). According to the report, governments fail to consider women's interests and concerns as they develop mainstream policies and do not consider much women's work to be economically productive. If women's "unpaid housework and family care were counted as productive outputs in national accounts, measures of global output would increase 25 to 30 per cent" (p. 2).

Women work as much or more than men, spend less time in activities that are officially counted as work, and make less money. "In every country having data, women's nonagricultural wage rates are lower than men's...The average gap is between 30 per cent and 40 per cent and there is no sign that it is substantially narrowing" (p. 5). Everywhere in the world work is segregated by sex according to the data, with women clustered in clerical, sales, caregiving, teaching, domestic services, and subsistence agriculture.

World wide, women hold little decision-making power. "Women make up less than 5 per cent of the world's heads of State, heads of major corporations and top positions in international organizations... Fifty United Nations member states have no women in any of their top echelons of government. Although women have made some incursions in the past 20 years in parliaments and at middle management levels, their representation in these areas still averages less than 10 percent and less than 20 per cent respectively" (p. 6).

The exceptions to this appear to have been in Scandinavian and eastern European and USSR parliaments. In 1987 for example, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark, women made up 34%, 32%,

29%, and 29% of parliamentary representation respectively. The situation in eastern European countries and USSR was more complicated as the result of significant political changes. For example, in 1987 women made up 34% of Romania's parliament; in 1990, their representation dropped to 4%. In the Supreme Soviet of the USSR women held 35% of the seats in 1987, but only 14% in 1990.

The agenda for action for the 1990s included in the report focuses on equality of opportunity for women to be brought about by change in policy in government, business, and in the household. Among the themes are the following:

- \* Quantify and assign an economic value to unpaid housework
- \* Measure women's paid work more effectively
- \* Dissagregate all main indicators by gender and improve compilation, analysis, and dissemination of available data
- \* Develop new laws and policies that accommodate women's access to credit, markets, training, and childcare
- \* Invest in women's economic productivity by improving nutrition, family planning, and health care
- \* Eliminate barriers to women's education and provide opportunities in all fields of study
- \* Develop and deliver time-saving technology for women's unpaid work
- \* Put an end to occupational segregation and wage discrimination and recognize women's unpaid work as economically productive.

In summary, this report advocates that "Investing in wider opportunities for women--in health, in education, in formal and informal work and in decision-making at all levels--is far more than an investment in women, for it is an investment in their families and societies. It is a way to lift people out of poverty" (p.8).

Kristine Baber

**FFS MENTORING PROGRAM**

All Section members are encouraged to participate in the Feminism and Family Studies Mentoring Program. Mentors and individuals wishing to be mentored will be paired for one year on the basis of interests and degree of assistance requested and offered. Mentors volunteer their services. Individuals who desire mentoring are asked to pay \$10 (if income is \$20,000/year or less) or \$20 (if income is over \$20,000/year).

If you have questions about the program, contact Leigh Leslie, Mentoring Program Coordinator. If you would like to participate in the program, please return the form below.



**Mentoring Program Interest Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in: \_\_\_\_\_ serving as a Mentor  
\_\_\_\_\_ being assigned a Mentor

**MAIL TO:** Leigh Leslie, Mentor Coordinator  
Department of Family and Community Development  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742

**BITNET #:** LALESLIE@UMD2



**CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS**

**THEORY CONSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH  
METHODOLOGY WORKSHOP**

Saturday, Nov. 16, 1991

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

**"Proposed Conceptual Framework for HIV  
Self-Risk Assessment in Women"**  
M. Katherine Hutchinson, Barbara Settles

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

**"Toward a Postmodern Feminist Construction  
of Women's Sexualities"**  
Kristine M. Baber, Katherine R. Allen

**"Feminist Theory and Black Women: An  
Afrocentric Perspective"**  
Norma Burgess

Sunday, Nov. 17, 1991

9:00 - 10:30 OPENING PLENARY SESSION

**"The Underclass as a Metaphor of Social  
Transformation"** Michael B. Katz

1:00 - 2:15 CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**"Life on the Edge: Work-Family Strain in  
Mother-Only Families"** Maureen A. Perry-  
Jenkins, Sally Gillman-Hanz

**"Work Related Overnight Travel for Mothers  
of Small Children"** Thomas W. Roberts

2:30 - 3:45 SYMPOSIA 1

Economic Implications of Divorce for Women  
and Children

**"Child Support in Colorado"** Jessica Person  
**"Economic Implications of Divorce Law"**  
Stephen J. Harhai  
**"Killing Us Softly: Divorce Mediation and  
the Politics of Power"** Penelope E. Bryan

Discussant: Karen A. Polonko  
Presider: Constance L. Shehan

4:00 - 5:15 DISTINGUISHED LEADER ROUND  
TABLES

**"Support Systems of Widows in Historical  
and Comparative Perspectives"** Helen Lopata

4:00 - 5:15 CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**"Exploring Relationship Between Rational/  
Emotional Expressiveness and Vulnerability in  
Men: Test of the Gilligan Model"** Jacqueline  
Olson, Richard Hanson

**"The Critical Issues of Gender and Family for  
Women at High Risk for AIDS"** Marie Withers  
Osmond, Kate Wombach, Dianne F. Harrison, Allen  
Imershein, Joseph Byers

**"The Construction of Gender in the Household"**  
Elizabeth Bergen

**"Exploring the Darkside of Courtship of Male  
Sexual Aggression"** F. Scott Christopher,  
Laura A. Owens, Heidi Londen

**"'To Do' and 'Not to Do': The Structuring of  
Women's Lives to Guard Against Male Violence"**  
Michelle L. Clossick, Brenda L. Seery

**"Family Therapists' Views of Domestic Violence:  
A Feminist Critique"** Kersti A. Yllo, Penny  
Grace, David Douglas, Fernando Mediros

6:45 - 8:00 SECTION BUSINESS MEETING  
Colorado Room

Monday, Nov. 18, 1991

9:30 - 10:45 PLENARY SESSION

**"Politics and Poverty in Contemporary America"**  
Frances Fox Piven

2:00 - 3:15 CONCURRENT SESSIONS

**"Perceptions of Family Quality of Life and  
the Presence of Pets"** Vicki Loyer-Carlson,  
Karen S. Headlee

**"Poverty of Rural Iowa Women in the Early  
Twentieth Century"** Mary Y. Morgan

3:30 - 4:30 BURGESS AWARD ADDRESS

**"We Can't Go Home Again: Women's Challenge to  
American Society"**  
Helen Z. Lopata

4:45 - 6:00 DISTINGUISHED LEADER ROUND  
TABLES

**"Feminism and Sexism in Clinical Decision  
Making: The Impact of Gender Coursework and  
Family Therapy"** Michelle L. Clossick

**"How Do Race, Class, and Gender Relate to  
Family Scholarship?"** Marie Withers Osmond

4:45 - 6:00 CONCURRENT PRESENTATIONS

**"Positive Outcomes of Caregiving for Mothers  
and Daughters"** Alexis J. Walker, Katherine  
R. Allen

**"Women's Experiences of Menopause: A  
Qualitative Approach"** Lyn Richards, Jeanne  
Daly

**"Dynamics of Women's Economic Distress as  
a Result of Divorce"** Beth S. Catlett,  
Patrick C. McKenry

Tuesday, Nov. 19, 1991

9:30 - 10:45 DUVALL PLENARY SESSION

**"Urban Poverty, Joblessness, and Social  
Isolation: Challenges to the Inner-City  
Ghetto Family"** William Julius Wilson

11:00 - 12:15 CONCURRENT PRESENTATIONS

**"The Impact of Closeting on Lesbian  
Couple Relationships"** Marjorie H. Ulin  
Sandra L. Caron

4:30 - 5:30 NCFR PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

**"Legal Perspectives on the American Family"**

Lynda Henley Walters

Wednesday, Nov. 20, 1991

9:45 - 11:15 SYMPOSIA VII

Feminist Pedagogy in Family Life Education

**"Use of Self and Self-Disclosure in the Classroom"** Katherine R. Allen

**"Feminist Contributions to the Structure, Methods, and Audience of Family Life Education"** Shelley M. MacDermid  
Joan Jurich

**"Survey of feminist teaching methods and Materials"** Donna L. Sollie

**"Using Feminist Principles in Family Life Education with Adult Populations"**  
Dena B. Targ

**PRESENTATION OF AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING RESEARCH PROPOSAL FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

**PRESENTATION OF AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP PAPER AWARD**

Presider: Joan Jurich

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***NCFR Feminism and Family Studies Section***

Connie Shehan	Chair
Katherine Allen	Vice-Chair
Polly Fassinger	Secretary-Treasurer
Kristine Baber	Newsletter Editor
Vicki Loyer-Carlson	Student/New Professional Representative
Maureen Perry-Jenkins	Student/New Professional Representative
Rosemary Blieszner	Endowment Committee Chair
Leigh Leslie	Mentoring Committee Chair
Donna Sollie	Teaching Committee Chair

***FFS MEMBERSHIP SURVEY***

The last issue of the newsletter included a questionnaire designed to gather information about members of the Feminism and Family Studies Section. Of the 375 questionnaires sent out, 35 were returned. All but one of the respondents were women. Another copy of the questionnaire is included in this newsletter for those who have not returned one. Please complete and return it TODAY.

Twenty-seven of those responding identified themselves as educators and indicated courses they taught which include a feminist perspective. Respondents named thirty-one different courses. These included not only courses such as **Gender and Class, Family Theory, Violence Against Women, and Work and Family Life**, but also courses like **Sociology Through Fiction, Cross-Cultural Family Perspectives, Community Health, and Demography**.

There is clearly a great resource among the membership for ideas about how to include a feminist perspective in the courses we teach. Hopefully, some of these individuals will share through the newsletter some of their suggestions for teaching these courses. This would supplement the packets of teaching materials that will be available in Denver.

All but one respondent to the survey listed research interests; most indicated two or more areas. Some indicated broad areas of interest such as "Feminism" or "Siblings" and others were very specific--"Functioning heterosexual families with feminist wives/mothers" and "The family life of Black South Africans". Collapsing categories would obscure the focus of many of the topics listed. Merely providing a long list of topics without names and addresses of those with these interests seems of little value. One way of sharing this information might be through a membership directory that includes research interests if there is support for such an idea among the section members. Future newsletters will include brief reports on members and their research.

Four members who are therapists responded to the survey and indicated the following specializations: "multiproblem" families, MR/DD clients, chronic illness, systems consultation, marital and family functioning, substance abuse and dependency, sexual and emotional abuse of children, women in transition, single parenting, gender issues.

In response to the question about current issues that are of greatest concern, most listed several. The most frequently named were discrimination/equity and reproductive health issues, each mentioned by 20% of those responding. Other general areas of concern were work and family issues (including policies such as parental leave and daycare, as well as the problem of balancing responsibilities), women's healthcare, violence, and poverty. Several respondents spoke about concern regarding the status of women both in society and in academe.

A variety of creative ideas were suggested for integrating section members interests and concerns into the newsletter. The success of many of these suggestions will depend on the participation of the membership. In addition to the type of material that has been included in the newsletter, members say they want:

- \* Dialogue and exchange on contemporary issues
- \* Information about each others research
- \* Personal stories related to feminist beliefs
- \* News about achievements of members
- \* Networking - people willing to review work, sharing research interests
- \* Identification of outstanding journal articles
- \* Ideas about feminist research issues
- \* Articles about teaching different topics
- \* Information about journals that publish feminist research
- \* Ideas about problem solving
- \* Film reviews
- \* Pieces on improving feminist scholarship and family studies
- \* Legislative up-date column
- \* Statistical tidbits on the family.

Make your contribution to the newsletter by sending your letters, information, personal stories, and news to the editor.

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS JANUARY 31**

Kristine M. Baber  
Dept. of Family Studies  
Petee Hall  
University of New Hampshire  
Durham, NH 03824-3599

FFS MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

There are currently 375 members of the Feminism and Family Studies Section. Other than names and addresses, we have no information about those who make up the membership. So that we have a better sense of who we are, our common interests, and how more people might become involved in Section activities, please complete and return this questionnaire.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years of professional experience working with families: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a researcher, what are your research interests?

If you are a therapist, what is/are your area(s) of specialization?

If you are an educator, what courses do you teach that include a feminist perspective?

As a feminist, what current issues are of greatest concern to you?

What kind of information would you most like to see included in the newsletter?

How would you like to become more involved with the Feminism and Family Studies Section?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working on the Jessie Bernard Endowment Fund Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Serving on the Awards Committee    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing for the newsletter                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Bring a mentor                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing proposals                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing teaching ideas & materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |   |

Please return to:

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