



WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWS

Fall, 2014

Volume 25, Number 1

You may like to know that...

- "Charged Up For Change! EXPO" returns in Spring 2015 (page 2).
- Fair pay activist Lilly Ledbetter met with students on campus earlier this year (page 4).

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New Name! The Women's and Gender Studies Program!

It is official! After several years of discussion and consideration, the Women's Studies Program Advisory Committee voted unanimously last fall to submit paperwork to change our name to the Women's and Gender Studies Program. This spring the change was approved by the Office of the Provost. We are now the Women's and Gender Studies Program!

Our new, combined name allows us to maintain our strong focus in

our courses on the multidisciplinary exploration of women's experiences, challenges, and agency in many areas of human endeavor.

At the same time, the new name encompasses our many courses that offer a broader analysis of how gender (including womanhood and manhood) is socially and culturally constructed, as well as the pervasive and often unacknowledged ways that gender is embedded within our social

institutions and interpersonal relationships.

We look forward to providing UAH students and the North Alabama community with continued strong academic enrichment and interesting and engaging public programming as we move forward with our new name.

For more information about the program and its course offerings contact molly.johnson@uah.edu.

Ragan Receives Rose Norman Scholarship in Action Award

The new recipient of the Rose Norman Award for Scholarship in Action is Sarah Ragan, who goes by "Ragan." Ragan graduated from UAH in 2008 with a B.A. in Sociology and Women's Studies minor. She earned an M.A. in Public Policy from UAH in 2010 and currently works on Redstone Arsenal.

While at UAH, Ragan, along with her partner and fellow Women's Studies minor Heather Harwell, made POWER, the Women's Studies student organization, into a highly effective, progressive agent for women and gender concerns on campus. Ragan conceived the idea for a career fair, "Take Yourself to Work Day," that benefitted women and targeted underserved professional areas. She

organized actions that promoted racial equality, participated in Habitat for Humanity activities, made the Women's Studies Resource Center a beautiful and usable space, represented POWER at campus functions, and served on the planning team for Holly Near's visit, organizing an arts and music festival around messages of equality and peace.

As Women's and Gender Studies staff assistant Erin Reid says, "Ragan was able to combine the rare ability to think critically and creatively, conceive of ways to make a difference on campus and in the community, and then put her ideas into action in collaboration with others. We always knew



Sarah Ragan (left) with fair pay activist Lilly Ledbetter (center) and Heather Harwell (right).

that if Ragan was involved that a project would get done, and done well."

Ragan has continued her work on behalf of equality by becoming involved in the Huntsville Branch of AAUW. She first became exposed to AAUW as an undergraduate student, attending their National Conference for College
(Continued page 7)

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWS

Message from the Director



Greetings from the Women's and Gender Studies Program at UAH!

In this newsletter, you can read about our coming events for fall, including a showing of the documentary, *The Second Cooler*, and the Coffeehouse Writers Series.



We also announce our name change to the Women's and Gender Studies Program and celebrate the most recent winner of the Rose Norman Award for Scholarship in Action, Sarah Ragan.



Thanks to all of you who attended our spring events, including "Human Trafficking 101," a presentation by Patricia A. McCay, Chair of the Huntsville-Madison County Human Trafficking Task Force; the spring performance of the Huntsville Feminist Chorus, "Spirit of the Dance"; and several get-togethers of the



Coffeehouse Writers Series. We also had the unexpected opportunity to feature the Women's and Gender Studies Program at the Madison County Courthouse



From top: Molly Johnson with Lilly Ledbetter at ALA-WSL; percussionists in the Huntsville Feminist Chorus; the chorus with students performing African dance; the Coweeta Poets at a spring Coffeehouse Writers reading; Women's History Month display at the downtown Courthouse.

for Women's History Month in March, and we served as a co-sponsor of the "Soaring for Social Justice" kite festival, sponsored by Asha Kiran and the City of Huntsville, also in March.

This has also been a big year for collaborations between Women's and Gender Studies and AAUW-Huntsville, including the Alabama Women Student Leaders Conference (ALA-WSL) and Tech Trek, both featured in articles on pages four and five.

Our big news for the coming year is that our "Charged Up For Change! EXPO" will be back! Stay tuned for further details on EXPO 2015, to be held spring semester at UAH. If you are interested in serving on our planning team or in making a financial contribution, please contact Molly Johnson.

Special thanks to those of you who made contributions to Women's and Gender Studies and to the Rose Norman Award for Scholarship in Action this past year. Please remember to check out our website at uah.edu/womensstudies and to "Like" "Women's and Gender Studies at UAH" on Facebook to keep up to date with us before the next newsletter goes out in the spring! You can also find current information about our events there.

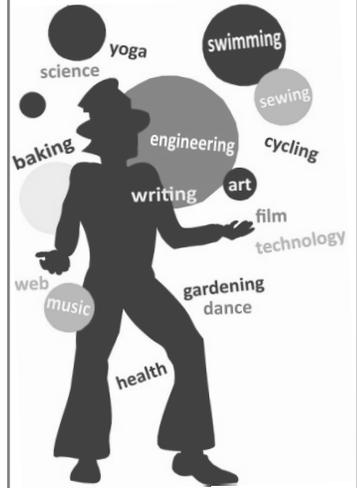
All the best,

Molly Wilkinson Johnson

Associate Professor of History

Director of Women's and Gender Studies

HOW CAN YOU HELP CHANGE THE WORLD?



Women's and Gender Studies needs YOUR help supporting "Charged Up For Change! EXPO," a community fair featuring...

- ▶ Creative projects, hobbies, and actions that promote social service and positive change.
- ▶ Individuals, community interest groups, grassroots collectives, established volunteer organizations, student clubs, alternative businesses, and more.
- ▶ Local musicians, actors, dancers, and performance artists.
- ▶ Refreshments, door prizes, and creative surprises.

If you would like to make a donation, please fill out the form on the back page and designate your gift for "Charged Up For Change! EXPO."



Migrant Justice Documentary *The Second Cooler* to Be Shown at UAH on September 25

Twelve million immigrants are in the U.S. illegally? Why? Who benefits? These questions, and many more, are explored in the migrant justice documentary *The Second Cooler*, to be shown on **Thursday, September 25, at 5:30 p.m.**, in UAH's Charger Union Theater. The showing will be followed by a question and answer session with Ellin Jimmerson, who directed, produced, wrote, and edited the film, under the auspices of the Huntsville Immigration Initiative, LLC, and in cooperative agreement with the Interfaith Mission Service.

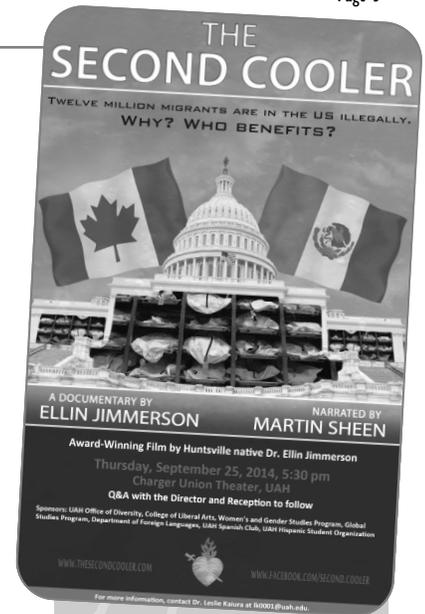
The Second Cooler, which speaks to both English and Spanish speaking audiences, is a documentary about illegal migration shot primarily in Alabama, Arizona, and in northern and central Mexico. The premise

is that Arizona is the new Alabama—the epicenter of an intense struggle for migrant justice. Those issues include the impact of free trade agreements on migration, the lack of a legal way for poor Latin Americans to come to the United States, the inherent abuses of the guest worker program, the fact that many migrants are indigenous people, anti-immigrant politics in Alabama, the thousands of migrant deaths at the border, and an escalating ideology of the border. Actor Martin Sheen narrates the film.

The Second Cooler was chosen as Best Feature Documentary for 2013 by the Peace on Earth Film Festival (Chicago, IL), and also received a Film 4 Change Award from the 2013 AMFM Fest in Cathedral City, CA, as well as a Film

Heals Award at the 2013 Manhattan Film Festival. The film was an official selection of the 22nd Arizona International Film Festival, the 2013 Red Rock International Film Festival, the 2013 Dominican Republic Global Film Festival, and the 2013 Boston Latino Independent Film Festival.

The UAH Women's and Gender Studies Program is co-sponsoring the showing, along with the Office of Diversity, College of Liberal Arts, Foreign Language Department, Global Studies Program, Spanish Club, and Hispanic Student Organization. Admission is free and open to the public. For further information, email leslie.kaiura@uah.edu or call 256-824-6426, or visit the film site at thesecondcooler.com.



Coffeehouse Writers Series Returns on September 30 with UAH Student Group The Writer's Block

Women's and Gender Studies continues the popular Coffeehouse Writers Series on **Tuesday, September 30, 6-7:30 p.m.**, with The Writer's Block, featuring Jessica Lockett.

The Writer's Block is UAH's official student-run creative writing organization, founded in 2013. The purpose of The Writer's Block is to promote the pursuit of creative writing, support creative writers in their endeavors, enrich the members' experiences and abilities, and aid the members' personal writing goals.

The Writer's Block accepts all types of creative writers, newcomers and veterans of the craft alike, to participate in their workshop meetings, events, and literary magazine.

Due to library renovations, the venue has been changed to the Wilson Hall Gallery, located on Ben Graves Drive next to the Business Administration Building off Holmes Ave. There is ample



parking in front of Wilson Hall. A campus map is available at uah.edu/map. Admission is free and open to the public. For information, contact Marylyn Coffey at (256) 824-6114 or email coffeymt@uah.edu.

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WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWS



Women's and Gender Studies and AAUW-Huntsville Collaborations: ALA-WSL Conference and Tech Trek



The Women's and Gender Studies Program and the Huntsville Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) have partnered on many events over the years, and this past year saw our biggest collaborations yet.



On April 4, 2014, AAUW-Huntsville and Women's and Gender Studies, with support



from UAH's Office of Diversity, held the first Alabama Women Student Leaders Conference (ALA-WSL, or "ala-whistle") in Wilson Hall at UAH. Close to seventy students attended from ten universities in the Huntsville and Birmingham area!



Local college women students learned valuable leadership skills at ALA-WSL and interacted with local women leaders and national figures such as Lilly Ledbetter.

ALA-WSL was inspired by the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL, or "nick-whistle"), AAUW's national leadership conference for college women, held in the DC area each year. AAUW-

Huntsville and Women's and Gender Studies cooperate every year to send several UAH students to NCCWSL (see sidebar for a feature on our 2014 representatives), and ALA-WSL served as a way to bring a taste of the NCCWSL experience to more college women both at UAH and at other Alabama colleges and universities.

The morning began with a workshop, "Stories and Teasers: Selling Your Skills in a Tight Market," developed and led by Carolyn Lord. Then, Delois Smith, Vice President for Diversity at UAH, spoke to the students at lunch on the topic, "Leaders Never Lose Their Focus: An Eye on Changing Diversity Demographics." Rebecca Zurn kicked off the afternoon with "Stress Reduction with Qigong," and then Regina Hyatt, Dean of Students and Associate Vice President for Student Affairs at UAH, led a workshop called "I See Your True Colors Shining Through." Kate Farrar, visiting from national AAUW and Vice President for Campus Leadership Programs, followed with a session on "AAUW 101." After a break and more Qigong, the final workshop featured Cindi Branham teaching the students about "Mind Mapping: The Solution to 'Too Much or Not Enough Information.'"

The capstone to the day featured fair pay advocate Lilly Ledbetter, the inspiration for the "Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act" of 2009, who gave a keynote lecture entitled "Equal Pay for

Equal Work: Lilly Ledbetter Tells Her Story" and also signed copies of her autobiography. Ledbetter was in Huntsville for AAUW of Alabama's state convention.

Women's and Gender Studies also supported Alabama's first "Tech Trek," a weeklong residential camp for rising eighth-grade girls, held at UAH in July and planned by a committee of UAH faculty, staff, and students as well as AAUW-Huntsville branch members. Tech Trek offered girls intensive hands-on experiments and activities in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Fifty girls from north and central Alabama attended the camp. Molly Johnson served on the planning committee as Marketing Coordinator, and Erin Reid offered graphic design support.

Tech Trek is an AAUW initiative that aims to encourage middle-school girls who have shown an early interest in and aptitude for STEM fields to increase their confidence in these areas at a critical age when research reveals that many begin to pull back from their interests in part due to cultural pressures. The involvement of Women's and Gender Studies in supporting this important program was an appropriate follow-on to our 2010 Campus Action Program, "Strengthening the Chain: Encouraging Women in Engineering at UAH," also co-sponsored by AAUW. Tech Trek at UAH featured a selection of core classes and workshops, including a NASA **(continued next page)**

Tech Trek at UAH

by AAUW

(continued from page 4)
Robotics Challenge, Destination Imagination instant challenges, training and experience developing mobile apps using MIT App Inventor, and the opportunity to design a sustainable village, Ecotopia. Participants also enjoyed an “Ultimate Math Field Trip” to the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, a visit to Dynetics’ manufacturing facility, and a Professional Women’s Night at the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology.

According to one camper, “Tech Trek has made me so excited and

makes me look forward to my future as a road filled with possibility. Thank you for this life-changing experience.”

For additional information on AAUW-Huntsville, including a schedule of upcoming events and meetings, please visit huntsville-al.aauw.net. Because UAH is an institutional member of AAUW, all UAH students are also eligible for free student membership as an e-affiliate in AAUW. For questions about joining AAUW email molly.johnson@uah.edu.



Students Erica Mendoza and Claudia Mesnil Report on NCCWSL

With the support of Women’s and Gender Studies and AAUW-Huntsville, and with scholarships received from AAUW national, UAH students Erica Mendoza and Claudia Mesnil attended the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL, or “nick-whistle”), sponsored by AAUW and NASPA, in early June 2014 in College Park, Maryland.

Erica, a senior at UAH majoring in chemistry, describes NCCWSL as a “wonderful experience” that “opened my eyes.” She particularly notes the empowering talks from distinguished women such as Chelsea Clinton, Hattie Kauffman, Lily Liu, Pamela Ann Melroy, DeRionne P. Pollard, and Judy Smith, who “each changed the world without stopping to have their obstacles get in their way.” States Erica, “Their determination rubbed off on me and let me know nothing could stop me from doing what I

wanted....Their goal was to empower the women attending to share their voice.” Following that lead, Erica realized while at NCCWSL that, of 900 women participants, she met only one other STEM major. She realized that her academic interest in STEM is “my unique gift that I will use to change the world.” Acting on this insight, Erica returned to UAH and chose work as a student counselor for the Tech Trek camp in order to inspire middle-school girls to sustain interest in the STEM fields. Erica says, “Even if I can make an impact in one person’s life I will feel accomplished. The conference was very empowering, and I am thankful for the experience.”

Claudia Mesnil, a sophomore education major at UAH, also attended NCCWSL. She says NCCWSL “helped me with many aspects of personal growth” and “provided me with many tools to solve the challeng-

es” of being an ethnic minority and a student with many responsibilities to self, school, activities, and family. Mesnil says that she learned that “life balance...is very important...for professional women.” She also learned to reflect on “the importance of personal identity when setting goals as a leader.” Mesnil’s biggest take-away was that “I understood that women need to build a network between themselves to aid each other and provide resources and information so that we can be professionally prepared and we can succeed in patriarchal environments.”

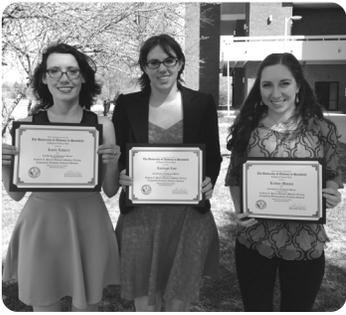
Like Erica, Claudia also came home from NCCWSL eager to continue and expand her work as a leader. One of her many activities for the year is helping coordinate the on-campus showing of the migrant justice documentary *The Second Cooler*.



Top: Middle-school girls enjoyed hands-on STEM projects at Tech Trek. Bottom: (left to right) Erica Mendoza and Claudia Mesnil were empowered as student leaders by attending NCCWSL.

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Harris Paper Contest Rewards Academic and Creative Writing



Women's and Gender Studies will sponsor the 15th annual Kathryn L. Harris Women's Studies Writing Competition, which awards cash prizes for undergraduate or graduate written work that deals substantially with women or women's issues. The contest accepts academic and creative submissions from students at UAH. The winners are honored at the College of Liberal Arts Honors Day.

Last year's winner in the undergraduate academic category was

Kristin Monaco, "Women and the French Revolution" for the course *World History Since 1500*.

The winners in the upper-division academic category were **Kayleigh Last**, "A Woman's Duty: Southern Women, Memorial Associations and the Creation of Lost Cause Culture," and **Kayla Lowery**, "Southern Women's Reminiscences: The Lost Cause Mythology and Its Effect on Memories of the Old South," for the course *Studies in Southern History*.

Entries for this year's contest are due by February 15, 2015, to Erin Reid, Women's and Gender Studies Program, 344 Morton Hall, reide@uah.edu. Contest coordinators are Anne Marie Choup, Department of Political Science, Nicole Pacino, Department of History, and Anna Foy, Department of English. Winning entries must follow competition guidelines in content and format.

For contest information, visit www.uah.edu/womensstudies.



Women's and Gender Studies Students Receive Honors and Awards

The Women's and Gender Studies Program awarded the 2014 Outstanding Undergraduate Achievement Award to **Deanna Nicholas**, a Psychology major and Women's Studies and Communication Arts minor.

The 2014 Women's Studies Outstanding Emerging Woman Artist Award, presented at the UAH Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition, went to Art major **Daisy Smith** for "Vanity Fair." The award of \$100 recognizes and supports emerging women artists

who show exceptional work. Daisy says this piece "is meant to engage its viewers in thought concerning what it means to be a woman. The exaggerated features of the subject (myself) are meant to draw attention to how societal pressures can make a woman feel; whereas, the background images of cogs, gears, pistons, and other mechanical parts are meant to remind the viewer that women are thinkers and doers, and that there is much more to a woman than physical beauty and vanity."

For more information, contact molly.johnson@uah.edu or (256) 824-2566.



From the top: Harris Competition winners (left to right) Kayla Lowery, Kayleigh Last, Kristin Monaco; Outstanding Undergraduate Deanna Nicholas (on right in photo); Outstanding Emerging Woman Artist Daisy Smith; Smith's winning piece, "Vanity Fair" (inset); Harris Scholarship recipient Adrienne Woodland.

Scholarships for Women and Women's and Gender Studies Students

The Kathryn L. Harris Scholarship in Women's Studies is awarded annually to a Women's Studies minor with demonstrated academic performance. Other considerations include participation in Women's Studies activities and clubs or in community activities that benefit women and girls.

The 2014 Harris Scholarship went to **Adrienne Woodland**, a His-

tory major and Women's Studies minor. The award is approximately \$700 each year. Application deadline for the upcoming year is December 1, 2014.

The Huntsville Woman's Club offers a \$1,000 renewable scholarship to a UAH student from the College of Liberal Arts or the College of Nursing. Preference is given to a returning student in

need of financial aid. The application deadline for the upcoming year is March 1, 2015.

The annual **NCCWSL Leadership Scholarship** aids student travel to the national leadership conference (see page 5).

For more information, contact molly.johnson@uah.edu or www.uah.edu/womensstudies.

Women's Studies Featured Faculty: Nicole Pacino

Dr. Nicole Pacino is an Assistant Professor of History at UAH. Nicole was born and raised in the suburbs of St. Louis, Missouri. When she was 18 she left the city for a cornfield in Indiana to attend DePauw University, where she received an interdisciplinary degree in Conflict Studies and a minor in Women's Studies. Her undergraduate studies sparked an interest in Latin America, and after working for a year as the Director of DePauw University's Peace and Justice Center, she moved to California to pursue graduate work in Latin American studies.

Nicole was fortunate enough to attend graduate school in one of the most beautiful places in the world—Santa Barbara, California. From the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) she received an M.A. in Latin American and Iberian Studies and a Ph.D. in Latin American History. When not completely distracted by the ocean and mountains, she completed additional coursework to add a Feminist Studies emphasis to her doctoral degree. Her doctoral research is based on interests in

revolutions and social movements, the social construction of race and gender, and the exercise of political power in the modern world. Her research looks at the National Revolutionary Movement in Bolivia, a left-of-center group of individuals that took power on April 9, 1952, in a genuine social revolution. Nicole investigates the revolutionary period, which lasted until 1964, specifically public health programs' role in helping the revolutionary government solicit political loyalty from its citizens, support promises to improve people's way of life, and expand political power into the country's rural regions.

In particular, Nicole is interested in the government's maternal and infant health campaigns and the way the revolutionaries envisioned women as essential to building a new society. She explores this topic in her forthcoming article, "Creating Madres Campesinas: Revolutionary Motherhood and the Gendered Politics of Nation Building in 1950s Bolivia," in the Spring 2015 edition of the *Journal of Women's History*.

Perhaps the biggest factor in Nicole's decision to pursue a Ph.D. in history was her love of being in the university classroom. She adores teaching and encouraging students to hone their critical thinking skills and challenge their established perspectives about the world. Before joining the UAH History faculty in 2013 she taught history and writing classes at UCSB, where she won departmental and campus-wide teaching awards and facilitated workshops for new graduate student teachers. At UAH she teaches classes in world and Latin American history, including the survey of world history 1500-present, Historical Methods, and Latin American history through film.

Her classes typically emphasize ordinary people's reactions to historical events to help students understand the diversity of human experience. This fall she is teaching a new class called Food in World History: The Cultural Politics of Eating and Drinking. In Spring 2015 she will teach a



Nicole Pacino joined the History faculty in 2013.

400/500 level class on Gender and Latin America. Besides teaching classes that overlap with Women's and Gender Studies, Nicole is also one of the judges of the annual Kathryn L. Harris Women's Studies Writing Competition.

When Nicole is not in her UAH office or classroom she spends time with her husband and two dogs. They enjoy hiking, biking, gardening, cooking, and sampling Huntsville's finest food and drink offerings. Nicole is also an avid traveler and has been to 18 countries on four different continents.

Ragan Receives Rose Norman Scholarship in Action Award (continued)

Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL). Committed to the importance of paying back AAUW for its support, as well as paying it forward to future girls and women, Ragan joined AAUW-Huntsville. She has served as Co-Chair for Funds, through which she helped raise money to send college women to NCCWSL, and is now serving as Co-President for the next two years.

Ragan was also the driving force behind the Alabama Women Student Leaders Conference (ALAWSL), held at UAH this past April. Although the actual planning of the event was a team effort, it was Ragan's idea to create a conference based on NCCWSL and bring it to local college women. Her enthusiasm and belief that such an ambitious endeavor was realizable provided the impetus

for Women's and Gender Studies and AAUW-Huntsville to take on the planning and organization. She also provided significant planning and coordination herself. According to Cindi Branham, outgoing Co-President of AAUW, "Sarah Ragan is an exemplary leader, who takes her role in life very seriously and acts on it very deliberately. Every request, every responsibility, every action: Ragan makes

very intentional consideration. She is aware that as women we serve an invaluable role in mentoring other women, and in seeking mentors ourselves. By taking these steps, Ragan is contributing to the network of supportive, aware women needed to make equality reality. Certainly Rose Norman was a mentor to Ragan, who is most deserving of the award named in Rose's honor."



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Become a Friend of Women's and Gender Studies!

Friends of Women's and Gender Studies (FWGS) is an organization of people who support the UAH Women's and Gender Studies Program. The goals of FWGS include:

- Supporting community involvement in Women's and Gender Studies events
- Sponsoring cultural activities and events that honor and empower women
- Supporting women scholars, artists, and performers
- Fostering discussion of issues affecting women's lives

Annual Contribution (October 1 – September 30)

- \$10-24 Individual \$25-49 Family \$50-99 Matron \$100-249 Sponsor
 \$250-\$499 Sustaining \$500 Lifetime Contributor \$1000 Benefactor

- I would like to contribute to the "Rose Norman Women's Studies Award for Scholarship in Action." \$
 I would like to contribute to "Charged Up For Change! EXPO" 2015. \$

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