



Carolina Women's Center



REFLECTIONS ON THE CAROLINA WOMEN'S CENTER'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

The 2017-2018 marked the Carolina Women's Center's 20th anniversary. The year was filled with both celebration and turmoil, particularly around the #metoo movement. In the midst of planning and facilitating anniversary events to commemorate achievements for women and gender equity here at Carolina, we simultaneously offered increased numbers of workshops and discussions about responding to and preventing sexual harassment on campus. We offered these workshops in collaboration with the University's Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office and the Orange County Rape Crisis Center, both critical partners in combatting gender-based and/or sexual harassment, discrimination and violence in our community.

We incorporated these important issues into our anniversary celebratory events. In September, we collaborated with the Playmakers Repertory Company to host a pre-show reception, viewing, and post-show discussion of *The Cake*. This play depicts a baker's dilemma: will her Christian faith allow her to make a wedding cake for her best friend's daughter's same sex wedding?

We built many of our anniversary events around funding we received from the Carolina Seminars program. This funding allowed us to offer three campus-wide discussions on topics relevant to the Women's Movement. Our first, in October, focused on the role of women's organizations in the modern-day Women's Movement. Held at the Friday Center, WUNC's Frank Stasio hosted the discussion, which was later broadcast on *The State of Things* and is available [here](#).

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on relevant topics in the year ahead.

We culminated our 20th anniversary with a celebratory open house and luncheon at the Sonja Haynes Stone

In January 2018, we hosted our second Carolina Seminar on human trafficking with UNC-CH's Project No Rest team, housed at the School of Social Work. And in March 2018, our third seminar brought together a panel of analysts, elected officials, and research scholars to discuss gender and politics. These discussions were so rich and informative that we definitely plan to continue with similar programming

Center, where our office is located. Many colleagues, students, friends and supporters stopped to help us commemorate the occasion. Each person in attendance received a hard copy of *The Carolina Women's Center 20 Years of Herstory* (available [here](#)), researched and written by Ansev Demirhan, a graduate student in history.

We especially thank and acknowledge all of our sponsors who provided financial support for our 20th anniversary events: Internal UNC-CH sponsors—Office of the Provost; Carolina Seminars; and William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education. External sponsors—Sun Trust Bank, Carolina Yoga Company, Vietri Italian designs for the table, home and garden; and Flyleaf Books. We could not have hosted such amazing events without their support.

Alongside our celebrations, we kept up with our usual programming, from the alternative break trips to information sessions for expecting parents, as well as

supporting survivors of gender and sexual violence. In fact, in this issue, Cassidy and Holly, our GVSCs, share about their role as confidential advocates.

Summer is always a period of reflection and regeneration, and we're already planning for the coming year. There's no shortage of work to be done in removing gender-based barriers so that everyone can thrive here at Carolina; and we are certain to celebrate the achievements we have made. We hope we can count on you to join us in these efforts.

Best,



Gloria D. Thomas, PhD
Director



A SPECIAL THANKS FOR AN UNEXPECTED GIFT TO CWC'S MOXIE PROJECT

In April 2018, Dr. Jagdish Bhagwati was invited to campus to give the Weatherspoon Lecture at the Kenan-Flagler Business School. Dr. Bhagwati is a University Professor at Columbia University and Director of the Raj Center on Indian Economic Policies. Kenan-Flagler's Blogpost on his talk noted, "Bhagwati interlaced issues of international trade under the Trump and Obama administrations, discussing the

origins of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and examining both the challenges and benefits of global trade...He also shared his recommendations on how to convey globalization benefits to people who don't understand them."

By all accounts, Dr. Bhagwati gave an informed and spirited talk on global trade issues for the audience, and he also left a very generous gift behind. Instead of accepting an honorarium for his lecture at the Business School, he asked that it be donated to a unit on campus that empowers women. Kenan Scholars Director of the Frank H. Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise and Carolina Women's Center Advisory Board member, Dr. Kim Allen, immediately thought of CWC. Thanks to them both, a very generous donation of \$5,000 has been added to the fund to support CWC's Moxie Scholars. The Moxie Project combines academic and community engagement to place UNC students who have completed coursework in women's activism into paid summer internships with community organizations. These experiences help the interns develop their own sense of activism and commitment to gender equity and other women's issues.

Many thanks to Dr. Bhagwati for his generosity and to Dr. Allen for suggesting the funds be directed our way!



2018 Moxie Interns during their visit to volunteer at Benevolence Farm, a non-profit organization that supports women transitioning from prison.

INTERVIEW WITH MICHELE RIVKIN-FISH, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ANTHROPOLOGY ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN RUSSIA



CWC Faculty Scholars Award. In the interview below, with Clare Counihan, CWC Program Coordinator for Faculty and Staff, she shares a bit about her research and the impact of the award.

How did you get interested in Russian history and more specifically in abortion culture?

I love studying foreign languages, and when I enrolled as a freshman in college in 1986, I decided to try Russian. I grew up during the Cold War, when fighting the “communist threat” preoccupied so much of US geopolitics. I was interested in figuring out what was actually going on in Russia and trying to understand the lives of people who lived there through their own language. When I began my PhD in Anthropology in 1991, the Soviet Union had just endured a coup and the future of the country was totally unclear, but

Russian people were finally being allowed to travel to the West. I saw a flyer hanging on the walls at Princeton advertising that a Russian visiting scholar was looking to improve his English, and in return, he would help a student practicing Russian. I contacted him and we became fast friends. His name was Andrej Popov, and he was a medical demographer studying abortion. His life goal was to promote contraceptive use as an alternative to the common Soviet practice of using abortion for fertility control. Andrej helped me see that struggles women experienced in the Soviet Union were entirely different from what we knew in the US. As an anthropologist fascinated by historical and cultural differences, and as a feminist committed to gender equality globally, I was deeply intrigued. My career has since focused on many aspects of women’s health and reproductive politics in Russia, from maternity care to sex education, and the consequences of state efforts to increase fertility. Over the last 15 years, the Russian state has been increasingly willing to establish restrictions on abortion, even as the use of the procedure has fallen dramatically. I decided to draw on my personal and professional knowledge of the enormous changes over the last decades to write a book exploring this history.

What did the Faculty Scholar funding enable you to do?

This fellowship has been tremendously significant for my

project. It allowed me to invite two important colleagues from Russia to UNC to meet with me and consult on my writing. In March, 2017, Dr. Lyubov Erofeeva, MD, the Director of the Russian Association for Population and Development, came to UNC for a week. She gave a talk on “Striving for Reproductive Rights and Health in Russia: Activism by the Russian Association for Population and Development,” which brought together faculty and students from the School of Public Health and Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies for a fascinating discussion. In October, 2017, Professor Anna Temkina, from the Departments of Sociology and Gender Studies at the European University of St. Petersburg, came to UNC for a week. She also gave a public presentation, “Russian Women as Mothers, Consumers and Citizens: Childbirth in St. Petersburg.” Both of these colleagues have provided me with feedback on my developing manuscript.

I also used the funding to hire a research assistant, which has been essential to making progress on my book. I worked with two different undergraduates and one graduate student (they worked at different times and left the position due to moving or not having more time). All were fluent in Russian but had not had opportunities to read medical and public health texts, particularly from the Soviet era. Working with me gave them experience in reading this kind of medical and public health

material, searching for data related to my research questions, summarizing key points from the texts (and typing them up in Russian). It's been wonderful working with them!

Why do you think this project is important for a US and non-Russian audience?

Abortion is one of the most controversial topics related to health and human rights that our society faces. It leads us, as Americans, to ask, what are the appropriate uses of state regulatory power? Of medical technologies? How can we ensure that women do not face systemic discrimination? How do we ensure that every person has the right to bodily autonomy? While these questions are relevant everywhere, many of the

specific political controversies that abortion can raise differ across the world. In the US, our specific concerns get expressed through questions over the ontological status of the fetus and its value compared to women. In everyday discourse, activists express their perspectives through arguments regarding the fetus's "right to life" and "women's right to choose." My research reveals that in Russia, abortion has long been framed as a matter of other issues, such as the demographic needs of the nation and the threat that unsafe abortion poses to women's lives. Abortion is always construed through cultural, ethical, and political concerns. Russia's history of abortion and family planning activism provides a compelling example for global health professionals and activists that understanding local history and

culture is absolutely imperative for the success of their work.

Where is the project now, a year after your time as a CWC Faculty Scholar?

I've drafted half of my book manuscript. I've written chapters on abortion in Russian literature and memoir, on Russian demographers' efforts to promote contraception as a substitute for abortion, and on the recent, exciting work of Russian feminist activism for abortion rights. I am now working on the final empirical chapters, which trace the history of the Russian Association of Family Planning. I greatly enjoy working on this book and am deeply grateful for the Carolina Women's Center's generous support. It's been invaluable!

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE CWC 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Adrienne Allison, EOC; Bob Pleasants, Writing & Learning Center; Elizabeth Hall, EOC; Kim Allen, Kenan Institute



Gloria Thomas, CWC



Kim Allen, Kenan Institute and
CWC Advisory Board member



INTRODUCING THE WORK OF THE GENDER VIOLENCE SERVICES COORDINATORS

Cassidy Johnson and Holly Lovern serve as the University's Gender Violence Services Coordinators (GVSCs), located at the Carolina Women's Center. Cassidy has served in this role for 4 years, and Holly for 2 years. Cassidy and Holly both say their favorite part of the work is the honor of working with the members of the University community that they get to serve.

The GVSCs provide confidential support and advocacy for students, faculty, staff, and postdoctoral fellows of all backgrounds and identities who have experienced or been impacted by sexual violence, interpersonal violence, stalking, or harassment.

THEY PROVIDE:

- emotional support
- assistance in understanding reporting options and navigating reporting processes
- accompaniment to meetings and hearings referrals to University and community resources
- safety planning
- assistance with requesting housing and academic accommodations
- information and education for University and community groups

Cassidy and Holly think that a benefit to speaking with a confidential resource like the GVSCs is that survivors can talk to a knowledgeable person and figure out options without having to take any additional steps forward if they don't want to. One person they served granted permission to share the comments posted below about the services received:

Holly and Cassidy provided me with the help I needed to empower myself to continue to succeed at Carolina while navigating the impact of gender-based violence and trauma on my life. I am deeply grateful for the service and compassionate support they have given me. I'm almost finished earning my degree at UNC, and Holly and Cassidy's support helped me to reach this point and keep moving forward.

GVSCs are the most important piece of the puzzle to livelihood on UNC's campus. They are warm, welcoming, and understanding that no one deserves to be in the dark when they don't have to be. They are the reason I am still at Carolina, but they are also the reason why I am alive, healing, and moving on.

To learn more about the work of the Gender Violence Services Coordinators, visit <https://womenscenter.unc.edu/resources/gender-violence-services/>.