If you were around at UNC Chapel Hill in the mid-1990s, you might recall the campus-wide discussions and advocacy for establishing a women’s center. This past summer, UNC Chapel Hill doctoral student, Ansev Demirhan, began digging through the archives to compile a brief history of the Carolina Women’s Center, which we expect to have available on our website by April 2018.

Since 1997, the CWC has had five directors. Marsha Collins and Diane Kjervick were part-time directors and UNC faculty; Donna Bickford was the first full-time director, followed by Christi Hurt. Gloria Thomas is the current director. Each director has brought her own expertise to the role, while the Center has consistently focused on childcare advocacy, support for survivors of sexual assault, sex and human trafficking, campus safety, mentorship, and diversity and inclusion.

To commemorate our 20-year milestone, the CWC planned three anniversary events. In September, we collaborated with the PlayMakers Repertory Company for a reception, show and discussion of the play, The Cake, and in October we partnered with WUNC Radio to host a panel discussion on the current women’s movement. On April 26th from 11 a.m.–2p.m. at the Stone Center, we will host a culminating celebration and CWC Open House with food, festivities, and fun for our campus constituents as well as friends and supporters. If you’re able to join us, we hope to see you for this final celebratory event!

Connie Eble has been an English professor at UNC Chapel Hill since 1971. Her teaching and research have focused on the structure and history of the English language. Her years of experience at UNC-CH, combined with her interest in history, inspire Connie’s vivid recollection and storytelling of women’s struggles for equity on this campus and the subsequent establishment of the Carolina Women’s Center in 1997. Connie recalls the campus-wide conversations that led to the creation of CWC: the trajectory from getting courses about women included in the curriculum as legitimate scholarship to a campus-wide center that could integrate and apply that knowledge was a long one. Her colleague, Margaret Anne O’Connor, introduced the first literature course focusing on women writers in 1972—but it had to be offered only provisionally as a “special topics” course. It took another quarter century for the the Women’s Center to open.

Connie’s fondest memories of the early years of the Carolina Women’s Center are of the women who worked relentlessly to bring it about, in particular Mary Turner Lane. Professor Turner Lane, who taught in the School of Education, had been active in the civil rights movement on campus and in the state in the 1960s, and she brought that same determined quest for justice to her advocacy for women. She was the guiding force behind the Women’s Center.

Since the Center’s founding, Connie has been among the CWC’s committed and loyal donors. When asked if her gifts during the Campaign for Carolina could be directed to the Moxie Project, Connie readily agreed. She said, “I am a strong supporter of the Moxie Project because it gives young women and men the opportunity to carry their knowledge about women that they have acquired in the classroom, library, and laboratories into the community. Our Moxie Interns are fulfilling President Edward Kidder Graham’s vision that the University take knowledge and learning beyond the campus to the borders of the state. President Graham would be proud that the current generation of Carolina students is preparing to make their educations beneficial even beyond the state, to the entire globe.”

Many thanks to Professor Connie Eble for her continuous and generous support of the Carolina Women’s Center!
Director’s Column

It’s quite fitting that the Carolina Women’s Center is celebrating its 20th anniversary in concert with the University’s launch of “For All Kind: The Campaign for Carolina.” The synergy of these two events provides the CWC with a reason to pause, reflect on our history and successes, and determine our priorities for the near and distant future.

Since 2013, The Moxie Project has been the Carolina Women’s Center’s signature program for empowering students and providing them with the knowledge and tools to serve as change agents for women and gender equity. The Moxie Project is a combined academic and community engagement initiative that places UNC students who take a course about women’s activism in paid summer internships with community non-profit groups and organizations to help them develop their own sense of meaning and purpose related to feminist activism.

At its start, The Moxie Project was fully funded by the Office of the Provost to pay student stipends and other incidentals. Now, we rely fully on donor support to make these pivotal experiences available to all students, regardless of income, every year. The Moxie Project is tops among the CWC’s campaign priorities.

The CWC is also enhancing its programming repertoire by collaborating even more with campus and community partners, all with an eye toward increasing education and awareness about gender inequities that continue to persist on campus, in the local community, and in society. In October, as a part of our 20th anniversary celebrations, we collaborated with WUNC Radio and the William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education to launch our Carolina Seminar series on the contemporary women’s movement. This Carolina Seminar series will continue in the spring with sessions on Human and Sex trafficking on Wednesday, January 24th, and Gender and Politics on Wednesday, March 28th, both at 5:15 in the Stone Center.

To bring this kind of programming to campus and local communities, we rely heavily on the support of our campus collaborators and cosponsors, grant funding, and donor support. We aim to strengthen these initiatives, at the same time that we continue our work in establishing, managing and maintaining lactation rooms across the campus; supporting survivors of gender and sexual violence; and a host of other student-focused programs for providing a lens toward greater gender equity. I hope we can count on you to assist us with this work.

Yours truly,
Gloria D. Thomas, Ph.D.
Director

Interview with Susan Harbage Page

By: Clare Counihan

Susan Harbage Page, an assistant professor in the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies, was a Faculty Scholar with the Carolina Women’s Center in 2014-2015. Her project, “Objects from the Borderlands,” documents items lost or left behind by people crossing the Mexico-U.S. border and creates an “anti-archive” of fragments from those individuals’ lives and experiences. You can see more about her U.S.-Mexico Border Project, as well as her other works, on her personal website. She also has a blog, where she posts about a range of topics. She also recently interviewed with Don’t You Lie to Me, a visual arts podcast.

Clare Counihan is the CWC’s Program Coordinator for faculty and staff, and she administers the Faculty Scholar Program.

Clare Counihan (CC): I’m really interested in how you moved from walking through the [U.S.-Mexico border] space and witnessing it to making these documentary photographs and specifically the kinds of images that you make. You do the on-site images, but then you also bring them back to your studio here, and you make these beautiful art photos. I’d love to hear you talk about what inspired that movement in your project.

Susan Harbage Page (SHP): So, there are three parts of the project. [First] I photograph the landscape and the objects that people leave behind as they’re coming to the United States. [Second] I pick up those objects, and I’ve created an anti-archive of the trauma that’s taking place on the U.S.-Mexico border, and the third part of the project is a series of site-specific interventions and actions. This part is my coming to understand my relationship to that border and what it means for me and how I question it from the position of an older white woman in the United States.

[The photographs are] a different way of looking at what’s happening in this liminal space, that place of...
transition, and I see the objects as portraits. They're portraits of the people who crossed the border. A portrait traditionally in photographic history is talking about something that's passed because once you make that image it's something that's passed, it's history preserved, a memory. I see them as icons. An icon for me really represents something that's still present. For me they're both portraits and icons, so they have this dual meaning, and I think you can't help but ask a question about an individual when you see somebody's pants or when you see their water bottle or when you see the comb with an A scratched in it. I also know that I can try to understand these stories, but they're not my story, and I think the objects do a better job than I can to tell those stories.

CC: How did the Faculty Scholars Grant help you with this project?

SHP: It was very helpful. The thing it really helped me do is move the project to the next place, and it really helped me do a lot of groundwork. It funded some travel to the border, but the most important thing to me was I had a backlog of objects that needed to be photographed and archived. I used the Faculty Scholar funding to get that in shape, which means now it's all ready to go, to really reach a bigger audience on the web and in books and in publications. There are more and more publications and articles coming out now about this work, and I don't think I could have done it without the Faculty Scholar Grant. I had all those objects, and they are emotionally difficult to archive, so it allowed me to get some help on the back end of things: lot of digital processing, a lot of color balancing stuff, a lot of technical things that had gotten backlogged.

It also helped with some other work that I've been doing in Italy on the production and gendered labor of textiles, handmade lace and early mechanical spindleloom production of textiles there. [The Faculty Scholar Grant] helped me push these two research projects forward and move them into other spaces where they'll really be able to have a much bigger voice.

CC: My last question is, how does this work fit with the CWC? How does this project, as a Faculty Scholar grant, support the Women's Center's mission to advance gender equity?

SHP: First I just want to say I am grateful for the funding because it helped me do my research, but I'm also grateful for the recognition because I think that's also an important thing: women, on campus and in general, I think are not as visible, so just giving the award is important and brings visibility to women scholars on campus.

I think it's important to unpack things in a big way, in macro and micro ways, and my hope is that this project [does that unpacking]. You first see this object, and it's a small thing. It's a woman's bra, but then you think about the gendered nature of crossing the border. You think about the gendered nature of being a woman at UNC. You think about, "Oh wow, this woman is crossing the border. Maybe she couldn't get work. Maybe she was raped. Maybe she has to leave because she's not safe because of something that's happening with the drug wars, and then she's going to come to the United States, and she's going to be part of the Latino community here in the United States. What job is she going to get? How much is she going to get paid?" I think [Latina women are paid less than almost any other worker except Native American women].

I think [unpacking in macro and micro ways] is what the Women's Center does: it helps us understand our personal narratives in terms of the larger systems in which we exist and how those systems are interrelated. The Women's Center has such a big job to do, there's so many people who need the support—individual students and faculty and staff—and the things that we all have to navigate are complex. I think it helps us think of our community here at UNC as complex, it's a group of women who are operating in a complex system of structures that affect each individual differently. We are each precarious in our own ways.

In the same way that I'm saying "See this," that's what you're doing at the Center. You're saying, "Here are these individuals working within the system. How can we support them? How are they vulnerable?" And you can't help anybody unless you see that they are vulnerable first. You have to see it.

I know from my students that the work of the Center is really important. I know it's a safe place for them. I know that they can go there and get support, and that is something that as faculty member I am very supportive of and grateful for because I know it's not always easy to find the safe place on campus that is confidential where you can get support when you need it. That's the thing that I hear from my students, but working on the whole system is what's also important and that's what I hear you doing.
Congratulations to the Moxie Scholars selected for Summer 2018 Internships!

Calissa Andersen, 2nd year, Sociology & Public Policy
Sophia Hutchens, 2nd year, Communication Studies & Anthropology
Olivia Neal, 3rd year, English & Women's & Gender Studies
Kathryn Otto, 3rd year, Communication Studies & Women's & Gender Studies
Alexandra Smith, 2nd year, Journalism & Hispanic Linguistics
Tessa Wood, 1st year, Political Sci. & Women's & Gender Studies

Reflections on the Moxie Project Experience
By: Kennedy Bridges

The first day I met Marena Groll she told me that I was the kind of person that needed to run for public office. Marena was my supervisor at the ERA-NC Alliance, the nonprofit I worked for during the summer portion of the Moxie Project, and she believed in me from the beginning. Being a Moxie Scholar helped me to better understand and value the intersection between grassroots activism and policy change. I discovered that social, cultural, and political issues are endlessly connected. The program opened my mind to different career paths I may be interested in because I could see the direct correlation between volunteers and legislators.

The class the Moxie Scholars took during the spring semester prepared me for my internship with an introduction to the history of the ERA movement, experience working with a local nonprofit, and an overview of the grassroots and political activism efforts throughout feminism in the U.S. The weekly seminars during the summer exposed me to the larger gender equity movement happening locally in North Carolina. I was introduced to social change organizations that I didn’t even know existed, like Benevolence Farm and Girls Rock NC. These organizations changed my ideas about how expression, art, environmentalism, and community can be integrated to advance feminist principles.

Many thanks to ALL of our donors who support our work with financial contributions. Without your support, we could not offer the education and awareness, advocacy, and support services, and sponsorship toward increased gender equity at UNC Chapel Hill.

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