

the communicator

THE NEWSLETTER OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION

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Presenting our 2011 Funding Recipients

The UUWF continues to walk its talk through our three funding programs, which support work related to our mission of advancing justice for women and girls and promoting their spiritual growth. This year, a total of \$29,000 in grants and scholarships were distributed.

“Thanks to the generous support of UU women’s groups and individual donors all over the country, we are able to continue to help fund justice-seeking programs for women and girls and projects promoting liberal religious spiritual growth from feminist perspectives,” says Rev. Marti Keller, President of the UUWF.

Equity and Justice Grants Program

This program funds justice projects that directly affect the lives of women and girls. Projects must be carried out by Unitarian Universalist organizations or groups with a significant number of UUs engaged in the project’s hands-on work. This year three grants of \$5,000 each will support:

- Start-up costs for “Virtual Pastoral Care for Liberal Religious Women,” an online and telephone-based counseling program of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, Unitarian Universalist.
- Wider promotion of the work of Connect and Breath, Inc., which provides women and girls who have ended pregnancies with resources to help them view their abortion decisions as caring and moral. This newly incorporated non-profit organization – founded, operated and largely staffed by volunteers from the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, NY – will use its grant to extend promotion of its work nationwide.
- “Women’s Access to Finances Is Liberation,” a collaborative project of the Women’s Association of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines and Buhata Pinay, Inc., a non-profit organization with the mission of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

UUWF Report to the 2011 General Assembly Of Anniversaries, Synergy and the Work Yet Ahead

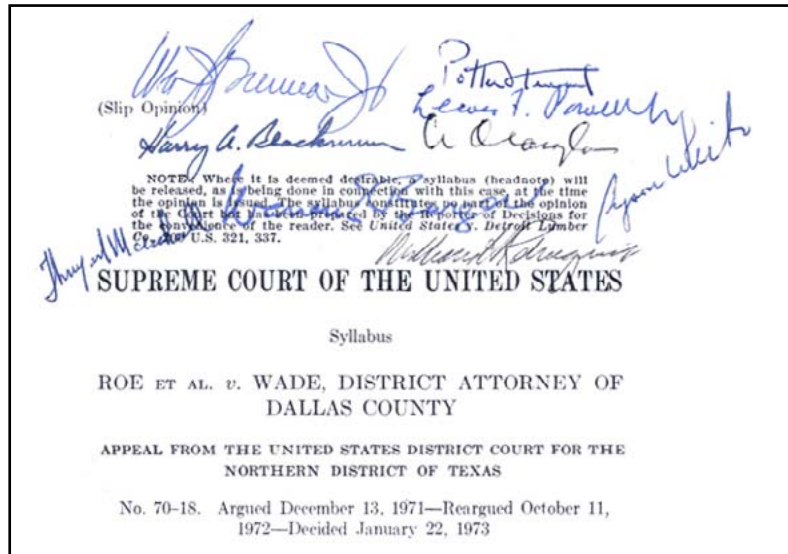
As an associate member organization of the UUA, the UUWF is given time on the General Assembly business agenda to report to the Assembly during a plenary session. The following was delivered by Rev. Marti Keller, UUWF president, at GA this past June.

As we celebrate the UUA’s 50th anniversary during this General Assembly, I can’t help but look forward to 2013, when we of the Unitarian Universalist Women’s Federation will celebrate our own Golden Anniversary.

And I couldn’t help think that it is more than a coincidence that 2013 also marks the 40th anniversary of Roe v Wade.

Yet despite Roe v Wade, I feel the need to remind us all that we are not yet living in a post-feminist utopia. The 1973 landmark Supreme Court decision on abortion is all the more important in the face of constant and continued threats to reproductive rights, among them this year’s proposed federal funding cuts to Planned Parenthood and Title X. I am proud that the UUWF’s Board of Trustees issued a statement in protest of those cuts, as did the Unitarian Universalist Association. I am also proud that, during this GA, we presented our Ministry to Women Award to Rev. Debra Haffner, recognizing her outstanding work in the fields of sexual education, reproductive justice and sexual abuse healing.

I am also proud to let you know that one of the projects funded by our Equity and Justice



More than a coincidence: in addition to being UUWF’s 50th anniversary year, 2013 also marks the 40th anniversary of Roe v Wade, all the more important in the face of constant and continued threats to reproductive rights.

Grants Program this year will help provide women and girls who have recently ended their pregnancies with resources to help them view their abortion decisions as caring and moral.

Besides sharing an anniversary, there is another connection between Roe v Wade and the UU Women’s Federation – a connection that is especially relevant to the UUWF at this point in time. Because, as members of the UUWF board prepared to look forward to plan our anniversary celebrations, we first looked back at the rich tapestry of our past. And we saw – not entirely to our surprise – that most of the threads that make up that tapestry are the stories of women gathered together within our local congregations, women who gather in groups to pursue a wide variety of purposes and goals.

The women of our congregations have been gathering since long before the formation of either the UUA or the UUWF. Universalist

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

UUWF Board of Trustees

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mkeller@uuca.org

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mary.e.mercier@verizon.net

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Kirstie Lewis, Ph.D., Bellevue, WA
kirstielew@msn.com

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UUWF Office
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

617-948-4692 – tel
uuwf@uua.org – email
www.uuwf.org – web

Ellen Spencer
Executive Administrator
espencer@uua.org

Rev. Debra Haffner Receives Ministry to Women Award



The UUWF has given its Ministry to Women Award at General Assembly most years since 1974 to an individual or organization that has ministered to women in an outstanding manner. The first recipient was *Ms. Magazine*.

Rev. Debra Haffner, this year's recipient, was honored for her work in support of women in girls in the fields of sexual education, reproductive justice, and sexual abuse healing. In particular, UUWF recognized her for her leadership role as Co-Founder and Executive Director of The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing.

Following is a message of thanks from Rev. Haffner:

Thank you so much to the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation for choosing to honor

me with the 2011 Ministry to Women Award at the Margaret Fuller Tea at General Assembly. I am deeply moved to receive this award, especially in the company of such amazing women as Bernice Johnson Reagon, Marion Wright Edelman and Dr. Cynthia Tucker.

The UUA has been a beacon on sexual justice issues since the time of merger. I am honored to share the UUWF's mission of advancing justice for women and girls in the United States and around the world. The UUWF has been so important in our history, assuring that the denomination meets the promise of its commitment to women.

I invite each of you to commit yourselves to the Religious Institute's vision that all faith communities will be sexually healthy, just, and prophetic. The Religious Institute has been working closely with the UUA for the past three years, with the generous support of the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock, to improve the sexual health of our denomination. I hope we can count on all UUWF members to work within your own congregations to become sexually healthy and responsible, and to assure that our denomination will continue to speak out for women's health, education, employment, full inclusion, and reproductive justice.

Once again, thank you for honoring me and my ministry.

GA Report, *CONT. FROM PAGE 1*

women gathered together to support their national organization's missionary work in Japan and the British Isles and its schools for African-American children in the American South. They also raised funds to support "weak parishes, ministerial students, disabled ministers, and ministers' widows and orphans." Women in Unitarian congregations engaged in similar activities, and both Universalist and Unitarian women were noted for their activism in social justice causes that, over the years, ranged from the abolition of slavery and the support of universal suffrage to ending world hunger.

Many of these women's groups were and are activists in reproductive justice issues. And

here's the connection with *Roe v Wade*: During that case's early stages in the Texas courts, women from the Alliance of the First Unitarian Church in Dallas provided critical, much needed, support to attorney Sarah Weddington and others involved in the litigation. That support ultimately led to the Alliance becoming a third party to *Roe v Wade* when they signed an amicus curiae brief in 1970.

The UUWF honored those Dallas women, along with Sarah Weddington, with our 2005 Ministry to Women Award. And in fall 2010, inspired by their story and those of so many other UU women who gather, our board made

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

How Do Women in Your Congregation Gather?

From earth-centered programming to dream workshops to MUUMS (Mostly UU Moms support group) – information collected at our booth at this year’s General Assembly amply demonstrates the many different ways UU women are gathering in 21st century congregations.

That and the over 120 women who gathered for a UUWF workshop of the same name – despite a 9 a.m. start time – affirms the UUWF board’s belief that recent years have seen an increased need among the women in our con-

gregations to gather together for a wide range of purposes. So much so that strengthening UUWF’s connection with and support of those women is a top board priority of our board for the next two years.

You can help the board in that work by [visiting our website](#) and telling us about the ways women in your congregation are gathering. We’ll process your responses and evaluate them to see how what we learn may help women in other congregations.

Funding Recipients, *CONT. FROM PAGE 1*

empowering Filipinas. The grant will support further development of a program that provides UU and community-based women’s groups with both low-interest micro-loans to start money-making enterprises and educational programs to familiarize them with their legal rights.

Margaret Fuller Grants Program

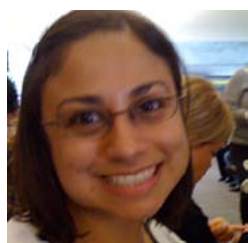
Originally founded in the 1980s as the Feminist Theology Awards, this grants program funds scholarly, prophetic and innovative explorations of Unitarian Universalist religious feminisms. Two \$4,000 grants were awarded to:

- The Women’s Writing Group of the UU Congregation of Atlanta, for “Getting in Touch with the Source,” a conference providing an opportunity for women to write, learn, and share material on the themes of identity, expression, and transformation, as well as a related anthology of women’s writings.
- “Teleconferences with Feminists in Religion,” a project of the Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER). This Washington, DC-based organization will use its grant for to help fund monthly, hour-long teleconferences featuring leaders in the fields of feminist ministry, spirituality and theology.

Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Scholarship Program

“We are so honored to be the designated organization to keep alive the work and memory of the late Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley through this recognition and financial assistance,” Rev. Keller notes of the UUWF’s newest funding program. It gives scholarships for general support to aspirants and candidates for the Unitarian Universalist ministry who identify as women of color, Latina, or Hispanic. Four scholarships of \$1,500 each went to Marisol E. Caballero, Cedar Park, TX; Joan Javier, New Haven, CT; Elizabeth Buffington Nguyen, Somerville, MA; and Jessie Lee Washington, Washington, DC.

For more information about our funding programs, visit www.uuwf.org. The deadline for applications for 2012 funding is March 15, 2012.



From the top: Scholarship winners Marisol E. Caballero, Joan Javier, Elizabeth Buffington Nguyen, and Jessie Lee Washington.

Thank You!

UUWF gratefully acknowledges the help of the following women in presenting our two workshops at this year’s General Assembly.

“How UU Women Gather in 21st Century Congregations”

- Kathy Calhoun, president, Women’s Day Alliance, First Unitarian Church, Dallas, TX
- Barbara Busey, “Ladies of the Last Laugh” (UU women’s book club), UU Church of Charlotte, NC
- Betty McCollum, president, Women’s Alliance of The Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City.
- Kimberly Melton, UU Church of Charlotte, NC, co-founder of “The Luna Festival,” an annual day-long retreat for UU women and girls

“Justice Work for and by Women”

- Marcia Meyers and Jared Gardner, co-directors of the Real Wealth of Portland project, First Unitarian Church, Portland
- Barbara Mannix, Patricia Vivier-Naidl, from the GRACE project of the UU Church of Fort Myers, FL
- Christine Nielsen, UU Church of Annapolis, MD, representing the International Convocation of UU Women
- Rev. Renee Waun, Founding Sponsor of the African Rural Schools Foundation, Uganda

Visit these groups online:

[International Convocation of UU Women](#)

[The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing](#)



The women of our congregations have been gathering since long before the formation of either the UUA or the UUWF. Seen here are yesteryear's Ladies Sewing Society of the First Unitarian Church, Portland, OR and today's Women of Westminster Unitarian Church, East Greenwich, RI.

GA Report,

CONT. FROM PAGE 2

strengthening our connections with and support of women's groups in local congregations a top priority over the next three years. I invite you all to follow that journey of connection and support by visiting our website and Facebook page.

We are still in the early stages of that journey, but we already know that the women's groups in our movement now go by many names, from Women's Alliances and Associations to the Demeters and Womansphere. We are discovering that there are groups formed and forming that are taking on different labels with evolving formats, emphases and partnerships.

Some of these groups focus on what are sometimes thought of as traditional women's activities, such as providing hospitality and refreshments for congregational events or organizing rummage sales and holiday bazaars – and more than one congregation has the proceeds of such sales and bazaars to thank for everything from

new hymnals to what might otherwise have been an overdue mortgage payment.

Other women's groups organize lectures and/or adult religious education courses, or focus on social justice issues. And as we learned while putting together our "How UU Women Gather in 21st Century Congregations" workshop for this GA, not a few women's groups are using the new technologies to communicate through their own websites and various social networking media.

Once again, synergy is at work. The same Dallas Alliance that supported Roe v Wade was featured during the workshop as one of the women's groups that has its own website.

Our plans for work with women's groups call for

UUWF itself to make maximum use of the new technologies to communicate with and serve this important population within our UU community, including more strategic use of our own website and Facebook page, and building additional e-mail discussion groups. We can make a significant contribution to the women in our congregations by creating networks through which they can exchange program ideas and membership strategies that work. We hope also to use web technology, as the UUA board has modeled recently, to hold webinars and/or forums targeting leaders in the women's groups in our congregations, both long established and newer configurations. We'll also continue our collaborative work with other UU women's organizations, as we did at this GA by inviting the International Convocation of UU Women to participate in our "Justice Work by and for Women" workshop.

We will also encourage women's groups to help us familiarize UUs at the grassroots with the UUWF's three funding programs. Our newest is named for the late Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley and awards scholarships to women

preparing for our ministry who identify as women of color, Latina or Hispanic. Since this program's start in 2009 we have awarded scholarships to nine women from across the country.

In addition to asking for help in publicizing our other two funding programs, we will urge women's groups to apply for funding from them. Our Margaret Fuller Grants Program supports accessible projects in UU religious feminisms.

This year's Margaret Fuller grant recipients include a women's writing group from my own congregation in Atlanta, which will help finance a conference, "Getting in Touch with the Source." This gathering will provide an opportunity and supportive environment for women to write, learn and share material on the themes of identity, expression, and transformation.

Our Equity and Justice Grants Program funds social justice work that directly affects the lives of women and girls. In addition to the "After Abortion Talkline" project I referred to earlier, this year's funded projects include start up costs for an online and telephone-based counseling program for liberal religious women in crisis.

We could do none of this work without the generous support of UUWF members and friends from across the county – you know who you are and I extend to you my heartfelt thanks. I invite the rest of you to join the growing circle of UUs who support our mission of advancing justice for women and girls and promoting their spiritual growth.



UUWF's newest funding program gives general scholarships to aspirants or candidates to the UU ministry who identify as women of color, Latina or Hispanic. It is named in honor of the late Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley, who was known for her mentoring of such women.