Director’s Notes/Ann Cudd

This year in Women’s Studies promises a variety of new faculty, new projects, and a stimulating line-up of speakers. Several new faculty with teaching and research interests in women and gender have joined the College faculty, including Anne Choi in American Studies, whose work is on gender and the Korean-American community, Kelly Chong in Sociology, who works on gendered aspects of Christian religious movements in Korea, and Kim Warren in History, whose specialty is the history of gender and race in African American and Native American education, Kansas, and the United States. Although we had to say goodbye to Kathryn Libal, who left KU for the University of Connecticut, we will be hiring for a tenure-track joint appointment with Political Science in Gender and Africa. We look forward to inviting three exciting younger scholars to campus in the early Spring to make campus visits and interview for this position.

Three of our seven permanent core faculty members were on research leave last year for at least one semester. I was working on a book entitled Analyzing Oppression, which is due to be published by Oxford University Press in 2005. My book is an attempt to bring together Anglo-American political philosophy, economic theory, and social cognitive psychology to understand the phenomenon of oppression. A brief report from Lorraine Bayard de Volo is included in this newsletter.

New projects for Women’s Studies include working on plans for an M.A. program for the near future, and designing more opportunities for service learning and internships. Stay tuned for developments along these lines in the near future.

On Oct. 1, Jean Fagan Yellin, distinguished professor emerita, Pace University, presented “Tracking a Slave: The Harriet Jacobs Story.” Next semester the annual February Sisters Forum is planning a return performance of the Vagina Monologues and lectures by Celeste Condit and Judith Halberstam on the general theme of the Myths of Feminism. An article is included by Jimming Manning, one of the members of the February Sisters Association, to provide more information on their future events. Women’s Studies will also bring a speaker to campus in connection with the undergraduate and graduate certificate capstone seminars.

February Sisters On Track for Annual Forum

The February Sisters Association is on track to create yet another successful February Forum. This year the three officers for the Association – Graduate Teaching Assistants Jimmie Manning, Ailecia Ruscin, and Tamela Ice – have started preparing for two lectures, a play festival, and a hip-hop concert.

The invited speakers for the lecture are Celeste Condit (author of Decoding Abortion Rhetoric) and Judith Halberstam (author of “Female Masculinity”). In addition to a larger campus lecture from each speaker, the two guests will also hold in-class appearances and special meetings for graduate students.

The play festival will feature Eve Enseler’s The Vagina Monologues. Preceding the play will be an educational V-Day Fair where various campus groups will offer games and education for the KU and Lawrence community.

Plus, for the first time ever, the February Forum will feature a hip-hop concert with empowering feminist rappers. In addition to the concert, the performers will also likely be speaking on a panel discussing the place of women in hip-hop.

All in all, it should be a fun and exciting February Forum. Anyone seeking more information or who would like to share ideas should write febsisters@yahoo.com. Later in the semester both faculty and student volunteers will be sought to help with the festival. - Jimmie Manning, GTA, Communication Studies & Women’s Studies
Members of the Original February Sisters Visit Women’s Studies Classroom

On Tuesday, September 7th, students in Ailecia Ruscin’s WS 201 class got a special treat when two February Sisters, CJ Brune and Christine Smith, joined students to discuss their role in the women’s liberation movement in Lawrence, KS. To prepare for their visits, students read “Finally We Were Doing Something,” a chapter that focuses on the history of feminist organizing in Lawrence, Kansas from Rusty Monhollon’s book, “This is America?": The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas. CJ and Christine shared with the students their experiences being part of the peace and civil rights movements here in Lawrence and their eventual part in organizing around feminist issues. Like many women of their generation, they spoke of the frustrations they felt as women in these other social movements, and the kind of empowerment they felt as they formed feminist organizations to respond to sexism in both social movements and society at large.

CJ and Christine helped students understand what Lawrence was like for women, specifically for female students, in the late 60’s and early ‘70s. They shared the frustrations that radical feminists felt with esteemed liberal feminist Emily Taylor, who at the time was the Dean of Women. CJ shared a story about the lectures freshmen women were required to attend given by Emily Taylor each fall that reminded women to wear skirts, sit with their legs crossed, and behave like ladies. CJ remembered vividly the conflict she and Dean Emily had over issues of women’s dress and behavior and even still has framed letters sent home by Emily Taylor reprimanding CJ for her actions on campus.

Students particularly enjoyed hearing about the February 1972 action in which they participated in the takeover of the East Asian Studies Building. Among the February Sisters’ demands were: affirmative action programs, a day care center, and comprehensive women’s health care at Watkins. CJ and Christine shared with students intimate detail about the kinds of preparations made for the action at the East Asian Studies Building. Those who took over the building and a network of supporters on the outside were ready to continue the action for a week! They had logistics such as food and security worked out in great detail. Efforts were taken to preserve the anonymity of the women inside the building so that no single student would be unfairly targeted for her participation in the action.

CJ and Christine shared their frustrations working for two years prior to the building takeover on issues like women’s health care and on-campus childcare. The February Sisters action was ignited by a passionate speech by Robin Morgan and discussions that followed well into the night about how to make a reality the demands of women on campus. The occupation of the East Asian Studies Building forced the university to take women’s issues seriously. After hours of negotiations between February Sisters and members of the SenEx committee, the February Sisters finally believed that the university was acting in good-faith to make immediate progress towards their demands.

Students particularly enjoyed having members of the February Sisters in class to share their experiences, they felt it brought life to the reading. One student wrote, “I thought it was very helpful to not only read about the issue, but also hear an actual personal portrayal from women who were very involved with this movement.” Students found their energy tantalizing, one student wrote, “I loved that they still had so much passion for their needs and desires and wants for women. They still live and love what they preach about. Just their presence seemed confident, yet welcoming and I really enjoyed them in class.” Another student found great inspiration in the February Sisters action. She wrote, “Listening to CJ Brune and Christine Smith made me realize how important it truly is to be a women student at the University of Kansas. Their presentation made me want to walk the halls of the University with my chin a little higher and a larger respect for the women of Kansas.”- Ailecia Ruscin, GTA, American Studies & Women’s Studies.

Graduate Certificate Program

Since beginning the Graduate Certificate Program in Fall 2002, we have conferred eleven certificates, including a class of six this past Spring semester. The pipeline of students is steadily filling, as there are fourteen students in the first course for the certificate program, WS 801. Certificate students have come from a wide range of disciplines in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Education, and we hope to attract students from other Schools in the University as well. In our past three faculty searches we have noted more and more applicants who have this credential to offer in addition to the PhD in a traditional discipline. We are beginning to track the success of our students as they leave KU for jobs in academe and elsewhere.
Student Internships and Service Learning

In each of the past two years Women’s Studies has been fortunate to be granted $3000 for support of Service Learning projects from Student Senate as a part of their Educational Opportunity Fund Grant. Last year we were able to fund one student, Shelagh Jessop, to take part in a Social Welfare service learning opportunity in Costa Rica, working with domestic violence programs there. This year we will fund two more students for summer service learning projects.

Women’s Studies is seeking to expand opportunities in service learning and internships by combining efforts with existing programs and adding service learning components to selected courses. We would encourage any Friends who could mentor a service learning or internship student to contact us to discuss a possible link with us.

Gender Seminar Calendar for Fall 2004:


The Gender Seminar is open to all graduate students, faculty, and staff of the University of Kansas and their guests. These sessions are not exclusive and are open for anyone that may be interested in attending. Papers are available for most sessions. Regular participants should select the presenter’s name and follow the links for related materials to download the paper. If you are not a regular participant in the seminar, please contact the Hall Center (864-4798, hallcenter@ku.edu) so that they can arrange to send you a PDF file of the paper via email. If you would like more information, contact Marta Vicente (History/Women’s Studies, 864-2235, mvicente@mail.ukans.edu).

Women’s Studies & Friends Banquet, 2004:

On May 14, Women’s Studies faculty, students and staff joined the Friends of Women’s Studies for our annual recognition ceremony in which award winners, graduating WS Seniors and graduating Graduate Certificate students are recognized.

Awardees for 2003-2004 were as follows: for the Virginia’s Purse Award Rachel Hynson was awarded $500.00, and for The Harley S. Nelson Family Fund Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences Meagan Foster was awarded $1,500.00. Our Equal Opportunity Grant Recipient Service Learning Scholarship went to Shelagh Jessop ($1,500.00), and Vimbayi Kajese was awarded $1,000.00 from Scholarship Aid for Students.

Our Graduating Seniors for 2003-2004 were Kimberly Baker, Diana Calkins, Kandace Creel, Iazia Jones, Jana Mackey, and Sarah Shay.

The Graduating Graduate Certificate Students for 2003-2004 were Roksana Alavi, Carly Hayden Foster, Dawn Gale, Shana Hughes, Tamela Ice, and Chelsea Schlievert.

Our annual banquet is made possible by support from our Friends. We wish to thank those that were able to participate in the event as well as those that sent in contributions, but were unable to attend. Thanks go to Anna Cienciala, Muriel Cohen, Kathleen McCluskey Fawcett, Donna Ginther, Shirley Harkess, Susan Harris, Linda Luckey, Jeannette & Dan Johnson, Terri Knoll Johnson, Lesley Ketzel, Nomi Redding, Jane Sellen, Patrick Suzeau, Edith Taylor, Sarah Trulove, Barbara & Bruce Twarog, and Kim Wilcox for their contributions in support of the banquet.

Visiting Fulbright Scholar Dorcas Akande, a guest at the banquet, is shown opening a gift from the Women’s Studies Program. Dorcas Akande taught Women’s Studies 396 “Studies in: Women in Contemporary African Literature,” during the Spring 2004 semester.
Researching Women and War/ Lorraine Bayard de Volo, Professor of Political Science and Women’s Studies

In the 2003-2004 school year I took the year off from teaching to focus on my new research project on women and war in Colombia, Cuba, Mexico (Chiapas), Argentina, and Nicaragua. This project is funded through grants from the National Science Foundation, the United States Institute of Peace, and the KU Hall Center for the Humanities Research Fellowship.

I spent about two months in Latin America doing fieldwork. I took my second trip to Bogotá, Colombia in August 2003, where I interviewed women pro-peace activists. For over forty years, Colombia has been suffering internal warfare waged by a mix of leftwing guerrillas, rightwing paramilitaries, and drug lords, along with a state military plagued by corruption. Several years ago, various Colombian feminist and women’s organizations came together to form a united women’s front against political violence. In the face of regular death threats, their work has been truly amazing.

I also traveled for a second time to Chiapas to interview women leaders to study the effect of militarization and their collective responses to it. Last but not least, I made two separate trips to Cuba. The first was a research trip funded by the Policy Research Institute, and I spent the time looking through archives and interviewing as well as meeting Cuban academics at a conference on women. The second was a faculty group trip funded through KU’s Office of Study Abroad. Traveling with a faculty group provided great access to people and institutions, thus aiding my research immensely.

When not doing fieldwork or writing, I spent my time overseeing a group of graduate and undergraduate research assistants. Several of these were Women’s Studies students, including Carey Scheerer and Rachel Hynson.

I am about to present my first paper based upon this new project at the Latin American Studies Association conference in October. In addition to several articles, I plan to produce a book detailing my findings.

A Research Trip to West Africa / Omofolabo Ajayi, Professor of Theatre and Film & Women’s Studies

The Hall Center and the Kimbell Faculty Fund in Theatre and Film department, made this mid summer research trip to West Africa possible. The trip lasted a little bit over two weeks, June 28 – July 19, although a weather-related delay in Amsterdam pushed my return to July 21.

Flight Problems to Ghana

Unfortunately, Ghana, the centerpiece of the trip did not happen; thanks to scheduling problems with Ghana Airways. My flight was cancelled three times, and when it became clear that not even my return flight could be guaranteed, I cancelled the whole trip to Ghana. I had arranged to interview some former colleagues and students of Efua Sutherland, a renowned pioneer of modern Ghanaian theatre. A prolific playwright, director, and cultural theorist, Ms Sutherland reworked Ghanaian myths and folktales as metaphors for a country emerging from British colonialism (1957) and promoted women as agents of change.

However, I had also planned to visit Nigeria, a neighboring country to Ghana, to explore possibilities of an exchange program with KU and my Alma Mata, Obafemi Awolowo University (O.A.U), Ile-Ife. I also thought it would be a good idea to find out how the Yoruba Popular Traveling Theatre scene was coping with the onslaught of the extremely lucrative video industry in Nigeria. I had just finished an article on one of the practitioners, the Jimoh Aliu Cultural Theatre, and I wanted to find how his theatre was coping. Well, the Jimoh Aliu Cultural Theatre became my main research project.

As I had feared, the video industry had more or less suffocated the traveling theatre movement; ‘live theatre’ has been replaced by “Nollywood,” the Nigeria video industry named after Hollywood in America. It is cheaper, and more convenient to rent or buy video rather than go to a live performance or even to follow a theatre troupe from town to town as was popular up to the 1980s. Safety is another important factor since nightlife and social life in general have not recovered from the terrible days of military misrule in the country.

Paradoxically, women performers have benefitted greatly from the decline of the traveling theatre phenomenon; they are now freer to pursue their careers, and on their own terms. It used to be that traveling theatre founder/directors, invariably men, would marry their female performers to ensure they stayed with that specific theatre company. Once, back in the 1940s, at the dawn of modern Nigerian theatre, polygamy was a lifeline for theatre owners. In fact the traveling theatre was a family business their children too soon became part of the show. Even if she existed then, no female owner would have attempted marrying her male performers, but then, she probably would not have; male artists were easier to find than females. Indeed, as early as 1956, a woman, Mrs. Adunni founded her own traveling theatre company although she later went into politics, and formed her own political party. Unfortunately, she died from injuries sustained in an accident during one of her campaign trips. Only two women founder/director of a traveling theatre have emerged since Mrs. Adunni and not until the late 1970s. There is currently no woman heading a traveling theatre company in the country.

The newly emerging modern professional theatre of the 1940s was considered disreputable and amoral, particularly from the Christian standpoint. Many parents, including non-Christians, discouraged their children and most definitely refused to allow their daughters to be in theatre. However, once the male theatre directors marry these women, they have the authority as their husbands to put them on stage and allow them to be part of that “sinful” profession. Ah, the joys of patriarchy! Since about mid-1960s, public opinion about women in show business had changed, but the men refused to change, and the women who wanted to be in the profession seemed to have little choice but to be one of the director’s or another prominent male member’s wives. Until Nollywood exploded in the 1990s.

Now with Nollywood, women in theatre have their pick of employers with no strings attached, and there is no shortage of roles for them. It is strictly business between the men and a few women who bank roll Nollywood as fast as it churns out videos. How worthy are these females? That is a different matter entirely. Some women’s organization have spoken out against the stereotypical, cardboard characters of these female roles, but the actresses are quite enamored with their status as ‘stars’ and fail to consider the fact that they help to promote negative images of women through their roles.

Alhaji Jimoh Aliu Theatre International

Needless to say, Alhaji Aliu is highly critical of Nollywood. He dismisses the videos as nothing but “transient themes of flashy contemporary times.” Although he has some of his plays on video, his is an indirect crossover; he prefers making full length movies which he later transfers into video format. He boasts that his theatre troupe continues to focus on historical topics and mythical epics. Nonetheless, he has lost on some critical grounds - a few of his performer/wives have left him to explore their fortunes with Nollywood. Not to be deterred, the Jimoh Aliu Cultural group has gone international both in name and in operating methods. Aliu now set his eyes on breaking into the American entertainment and educational scenes.

Meeting with Dean, Faculty of Arts at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife

I would say the possibilities of an exchange program between KU and OAU looks promising. Officials at O.A.U, were very enthusiastic, and I had a very productive meeting with Professor Akinrinade, Dean, Faculty of Arts. He wrote a letter to our KU International Program to initiate discussions over this. I could not meet with the dean of Social Sciences where Women’s Studies program is located, but Akinrinade promised to let him know of my visit and our discussions. I hope that something concrete will materialize.

Foluke Akande, 2003/2004 Women’s Studies Fulbright Researcher

While at the Obafemi Awolowo University, I linked up with Foluke Akande, our 2003/4 Fulbright researcher, She had returned to Nigeria after her program here ended in June, and was back at O. A. U. where she lectures. She had helped in locating Jimoh Aliu’s new headquarters in Lagos, the economic capital of the country, and in setting up interview appointments with him by the time I got to Nigeria.
This saved me valuable research time because the last address I had for Aliu was in Ilesa, in the country’s hinterlands. Akande was scheduled to give a seminar presentation about her year at KU sometime in August.

**Introducing two new courses, taught by Prof. Omofolabo Ajayi:** “Studies in: The Global Village: Gender, Migration and Cultures” and “Studies in: African Popular Literature”

Coming soon, to the classroom nearest to you are:

1. **WS 396: The Global Village: Gender, Culture and Migration.”** (Spring 2005)  
   (Possibly to be cross-referenced with AMS, LAS & AAAS)
   As much as possible, this course will bring a human face to the 21st century manifestation of globalization by focusing on the issues of culture, gender and migration. How do these three aspects create the “global village” both among the host and donor peoples? When people move from one place to another, what do they leave behind, what do they take with them? What is gained, or lost by the host community? What is freshly created in the new ‘village’ being constituted?
   
   Globalization is not just an abstract happening. It does not happen without people, and it is important to know the people moving and shaking it from various angles, especially from the ordinary people’s viewpoint. Therefore, the course will include real life situation by locating and holding conversations with the ordinary people, the donor and host communities who make globalization happen and sustain it. We will investigate their stories, listen to their tales and examine how they been affected by their experiences.
   
   Women’s stories will command centrality in the course. In many cultures, women are the repositories of their customs and traditions; yet, they are seldom seen as the ‘stars’ in the global village theatre of life. What are their specific experiences? What has changed since the last century? What roles do they really play in the global mix? How has the concept of global village affected their definition of self and gender relationship?
   
   Kansas and its immediate surrounding will also be privileged in our enquiries, the mid-west will be like an expansive classroom, and a practical textbook to our written textbooks.

   (Cross-referenced with AAAS)
   This course is a departure from the cannons of African literature that have become the staple of American university and college classrooms. It offers instead, a different diet of African literature little known outside the continent – popular fictions. Students will be introduced to what an average reader, particularly a young person relaxes with, and shares with friends and colleagues. These popular fictions offer quick, light, and pleasurable readings, as well as serving as pleasant diversions from the stress of daily struggles. Importantly, the writers (including some of the canonical authors) try to see life from, and make sense of the ordinary working person’s experiences.
   
   What fiction is more popular than the story of “boy meets girl’ and girl meets boy, so what happens next?” ‘The readings for this class cut for us a different slice of life in Africa; they take us to the territory where gender relationship/sexuality is at it again – this time ‘in love’ and the romantic thrills it provides.
   
   Note: The two courses will be rotated with Professor Ajayi’s other courses – WS 560 “Race, Gender and Postcolonial Discourses,” (cross-listed with AMS & AAAS) and WS 330 “Women in Contemporary African Literature,” (cross-listed with AAAS).

**A Visit to China /by Women’s Studies Major & Finance Major Vimbayi Kajese:**

Vimbayi Kajese works in the Women’s Studies office as a student assistant and has graciously written us an article about her visit to China last summer, 2004:

*Here are some excerpts and a picture from my travel letters.*

Greetings Womyn’s Studies this summer was quite eventful for me and as always it involved flying off to yet another distant land, this summer’s destination, China. I was fortunate to have been selected as one of this year’s Kansas Asia Scholars, to participate in a 3 week country-wide business tour, the purpose of which was to have a first hand experience of China’s transition to a market economy. Our group traveled from Beijing, to Xian, Chengdu, and finally Shanghai. Saw many of the famous sites and toured various
types of businesses. After the program ended, I opted to stay on for the rest of the summer to work at the Zimbabwean Embassy back in Beijing. I also ended up with another job in a city a few hours away from the embassy as a trade liaison between Chinese and Zimbabwean companies.

Here are some excerpts and a picture from my travel letters

AT FIRST GLANCE

Week 1

“Greetings from the red country. I’m in Beijing and having such a wonderful time having my senses piqued at every moment. China is a place to be stimulated and inspired. Been to the Great wall, the Forbidden City, and lots of temples. It’s beautiful, green and colourful in the country while fast paced and technology-filled here in Beijing. Had our first business meeting, with a museum owner who wants to set himself up in the states…some of us ended up extremely inebriated. So my first cultural reflection on China; this is a country gaining major headway as leader in the political and economic realm- and the business deals used to consolidate these great leaps forward (no pun intended) are done over shots and shots of 40% plus strong stuff. It’s scary yet funny and ironic that many major world influencing contracts are signed in this debilitating state. But all in the name of honouring a culture that sees you unfit as a host if you don’t drink your guest under the table - and you rude as a guest if you don’t drink to a toast and toast back….. and believe me these people LOVE to toast, expect at least 30 “GAMBEI’s” (bottom’s up/cheers) as they call them.”

Week 2

“Right now we're in Xi’an, (northern China)- took a train over night from Beijing. The vendors on the street aren’t as aggressive as the ones in Beijing, their accents are different plus there's more of an Islamic influence here. You can see its colours speckled in the aromatic food and adorned on the headscarves of the womyyn. One of the interesting conversations I had with one of the Chinese girls at the mosque we visited was how different cultures negotiate the concept of what is private and what is public. Like kumusha, (shona term for rural area), the toilets are squatter toilets. But in some areas here, there are no doors or stalls separating these, just rows and rows of sophisticated holes. Imagine if it’s that time of the month, or for some unfortunate group members, you have a runny tummy- then everyone is privy to what information your body is exuding. Nevertheless the artifacts and market place is where I’m in my element and I have since become an astute bargainer.

Another thing about the Chinese is that people here stare and have no problem looking, pointing and talking about you even when you look them back in the face. And I hate being looked at. I purposely dress down for class to be as inconspicuous as possible: baggy clothes hood and all and that irks a lot of people, especially in the summer. Here, I’m a BIiiiiiiGggggG spot-the-dotted-dot and there's no escaping it. The old womyn love to walk up to me and touch my hair - many of them, especially in the villages, have never seen a Black person before, let alone a pimpstress with combination cornrow twists and loose twists…and RED for that matter…geez what a sight! Strangers have stopped me to take pictures with me; one little kid ran up to me tapped me, took my picture when I turned around, then ran away... mind you her parents too afraid to do the deed peeked on from behind a tree. There are days when the attention irritates me, like today- I just don’t want to be gawked at like a specimen and besides you know how I don’t let people back in the in Kansas touch my hair or stare at it like I’m some alien. Folks in Kansas, I think, should be used to and familiar with Black people and our hair by now that it shouldn’t strike amazement or wonder. But here, since we are both studying each other, and I too am a pseudo voyeur I’ll let them touch.

We’re staying at a college with pretty decent accommodation. A pleasant surprise from the 5 star hotels we’ve been spoiled with. We are treated like royalty at these lavish and abundant school or business meals they have for us - its too much food! Its great and its delicious! Nothing like the Chinese food back in the States. I’ve had the pleasure of indulging in jelly fish, duck in all styles ,boneless chicken feet, duck heart etc. Looking forward to the snake, brains, frog, rat , dog, cat etc. Haven’t been sick yet. Prepared my body well before I came and have continued to take my vitamins and sleep at decent hours. This is one place you don’t want to get sick in.”

NEW JOB

Week 6

“Sorry I’ve taken so long to reply but I’ve been up and about and will be up and about tomorrow for a business trip. I have a new job outside the Embassy in another
province (Hebei) as Assistant Manager of the International department of a trading and economics company a few hours from Beijing, in a town called Shiajiazhaung. Today I had my first job interview to hire someone from the company so I’m responsible for assessing peoples’ English proficiency and personalities among other things. My main job here is to deal with the company and province’s trade relations, so I’m currently introducing them to investing in Zimbabwe and linking them up with potential companies for possible joint venture schemes. Tomorrow we’re off to visit 2 other economic hubs to see their growing enterprises as well as mingle and plan with their Execs. I have been treated to a lot of business dinners and lunches, and I’m proud to say I’ve stayed sober! We’ve been meeting with restaurant owners and CEO’s interested in expanding their businesses abroad and since Zimbabwe’s main pitch to China is its tourism, food and hospitality is a good place to start.

I am living with a family, the company CEO, his son and his wife. They don’t speak much English, or should I say ANY English and my Chinese is limited to about uhhhh…3 words. So it’s been an interesting adventure. I have the company interpreter by my side at all times, but when she’s not around …it’s a tough game of charades and ‘bootleg sign language’. Their hospitality sometimes is just too much. They won’t let me do anything for myself. At the Embassy in Beijing I was used to getting around the city, going to new places, shopping and ordering food by myself. I banned the maid from cleaning my room (not that I do it anyways and sometimes she’d sneak and do it), doing my laundry or making my food. I like things done a certain way, it’s just better to do it myself. But here…..heaven forbid I put my own dish away! Carry my own bag, open my own car door or pour my own drink. They insist I be accompanied everywhere, yes even to the loo. For example, taking a jog has become a family and staff affair, everyone goes when I go. Now, I don’t bother arguing any more it’s too much of a hassle and I realise it’s part of their culture but they’re also realising its better to just let me be and that I don’t intend to be a burden - I just want to help out and feel independent. I’m sure my new family finds me very peculiar and hilariously strange-and it’s not hard to make them laugh. The best part is, we are constantly laughing together even though we don’t understand each other’s languages… it’s great! All in all they are extremely pleasant, friendly and kind people who intend well and have welcomed me into their family as the ‘older sister’. I also happen to be all the other kids’ older sister in the neighbourhood, its quite sweet hearing that, knowing that’s the only English word a lot of them know.”

Vimbayi visiting a rural women’s school that instills self-advocating values in women as well as equips them with skills suitable for the professional working environment.

The Women’s Studies Program would also like to acknowledge our other two student assistants: Keeja Andrews and Mariel Metzenthin. We are fortunate to have them working with us this fall semester.

Women’s Studies Endowment Funds

Although our Endowment funds lagged somewhat last year, we were still able to support several interesting projects and scholarships. Professor Nancy Folbre, an economist from the University of Massachusetts – Amherst was the Verne I. Wagner Visiting Scholar in November 2003. In addition to visiting Women’s Studies Advisory Board member Prof. Donna Ginther’s Labor Economics class, Folbre presented a public lecture “The Invisible Heart and the Economics of Care.” We also supported the February Sisters Forum, at which Nilofer Pazira, who directed “Return to Kandahar”, presented a lecture on women’s situation in her home country of Afghanistan in the aftermath of the invasion and in Iraq during the current war. Professor Ellen Lewin, a historian from the University of Iowa, came to campus to lecture on “Family Values: Accounts of Gay Fatherhood in America” and visited both the Women’s Studies 601 and 898 classes, which are the undergraduate and graduate certificate capstone seminars, respectively. With Endowment support, Women’s Studies ended the year with its annual banquet for students, staff, faculty, and Friends.
Want to Join Friends?
The Friends of KU Women’s Studies exists to increase awareness and understanding of the philosophies, values, and activities uniquely applicable to women and girls and to promote the growth of the Women’s Studies Program at the University of Kansas. Questions? Contact Ann Cudd @ 785-864-2301, OR acudd@ku.edu. The Friends website can be viewed at www.ku.edu/~wsku/.

Book of Inspiring Women
Friends of Women’s Studies developed the idea to collect together brief tributes to women whom we have found inspiring. We now have this beautiful book in the Women’s Studies office, and it contains testimonies to the influences of mothers, scholars, teachers, mentors, activists, and friends. If you would like to add someone to this book, we ask for a donation to the Women’s Studies Endowment and a letter with the woman’s name, and if you wish, a description of the influence of this inspiring woman has had on you or others that we may include in your tribute. Please drop by our offices in Bailey Hall to see this book sometime and be inspired.

Women’s Studies Endowment Contributors
The Women’s Studies Program and the Friends of Women’s Studies would like to thank these people for their generous support through their contributions to the Kansas University Endowment Association during the fiscal year 2004.

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Your ongoing support of the Women’s Studies Program at KU is greatly appreciated. If you would like to contribute, please send your tax-deductible contribution to KU Endowment, c/o Kathleen Brady, P.O. Box 928, Lawrence, Kansas 66044-0928. Please write in Women’s Studies mailing code: 7WS in the memo line of your check.