

## *Shahla Haeri, Director*

Professor Shahla Haeri received a Research Fellow & Visiting Associate Professor at the Women's Studies in Religion Program at the Harvard Divinity School for 2005-2006, where she was selected as the Colorado Scholar. She conducted a feasibility research for establishing an Institute of Gender Studies at Kabul University Afghanistan (July 10 – August 14), which was funded by UNDP, UNESCO & University of Kabul.

Professor Haeri received approval from Provost Campbell to join the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies (GCWS) and is currently serving as a board member. The GCWS was founded in 1993, and is a pioneering effort by faculty at eight other degree-granting institutions in the Boston area. Boston University became a member of GCWS in 2006. Shahla Haeri was invited by Professor Deborah Belle to join the board of directors of the recently established University body and mandated by Provost Campbell, Women in Science and Engineering (WISE).

On five different occasions, she lectured on "Religion, Politics, and Women in Iran: Edging toward Democracy?" at the African American Center (BU), Lafayette University (Alburtown) and University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), Middlebury College, Vermont, and Rice University, Texas. On four different occasions, Professor Haeri presented a film screening of her video documentary, *Mrs. President: Women and Political Leadership in Iran*, and participated in discussions at Lafayette University (Alburtown, PA); University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia); College of Holy Cross (MA); and at Nobel Women's Initiative's First International Women's Conference: "Women Redefining Peace in the Middle East & Beyond," Galway, Ireland.

Professor Haeri also completed work on two articles: "Iran's Invisible Candidates," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, Winter 2006, 91-94; and "Resiliency & Posttraumatic Recovery in Cultural and Political Contexts: Pakistani Women's Strategies for Survival," in the *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma*, 14 (1/2): 2007, pp. 287-3-4.

## *Marcia Freedman*

The Women's Studies Program invited Marcia Freedman to conduct an invitation only luncheon with some faculty and graduate students at Boston University. President of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, she was one of the founders and leaders of the feminist movement in Israel in the early '70s. A rare spokesperson for women's issues in the Knesset, Ms. Freedman raised concerns that had never been publicly discussed in Israel, such as domestic violence, breast cancer, rape, incest, and teenage prostitution. She introduced legislation that led to reform of Israel's then highly restrictive abortion law. In 1977 she co-founded the Women's Party. She also was an active member of the Israeli peace movement, and helped to pioneer a network of services for women, including Israel's first shelter for battered women in Haifa.

## *Sima Samar*

The Women's Studies Program hosted Dr. Sima Samar who was invited by The Global Health Initiative at Boston University and the BU School of Public Health. Dr. Sima Samar is a former Minister of Women's Affairs after the fall of the Taliban and the current chair of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission. She visited BU as the 2006 Distinguished Visiting Scholar in Global Health, and met with faculty, students, and staff to explore the complex challenges facing Afghanistan, especially those concerning women and children.



During her visit at BU, Dr. Samar was invited to give various lectures and panel discussions. Dr. Samar delivered a lecture, "The Fragile Future of Afghanistan: Human Rights, Justice, and security," followed by comments by a panel of experts and open discussion with the audience. She also participated in a panel discussion organized by the WSP, entitled, "Dialogue with Sima Samar," which included professors from the Charles River and Medical Campuses.



## Peggy Drexler

The Women's Studies Program organized a lecture for Dr. Peggy Drexler, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Weill Medical College of Cornell University and a research Psychologist who has worked with numerous children. Her book, *Raising Boys Without Men: How Maverick Moms Are Creating the Next Generation of Exceptional Men* is based on extensive research of boys raised in two-parent lesbian, heterosexual and single mothers by choice, and circumstance families.



Dr. Drexler shared the results of her long-term, groundbreaking study comparing boys in female headed household to those raised in traditional mom-and-dad families. The auditorium had standing room only and the audience expressed much interest in her research. She signed copies of her book to all the audience members and the WSP.

## Nadera Kevorkian

In collaboration with BU Law School, the Women's Studies Program organized a luncheon for Dr. Nadera Kevorkian with some members of the faculty. Dr. Nadera Kevorkian is a leading authority on women's issues and civil rights in Israel and the Arab world. Since 1996, she has served as a professor of criminology and social work at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her areas of expertise are domestic and sexual abuse among Palestinian women, the effects of war on women, and women's rights. In 2000, she was awarded the Golda Meir Fellowship, and she won the Arab-Israeli award for Pioneering Scholars in 1998. In addition to her academic activities, Dr. Kevorkian is a board member of the New Israel Fund and B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. Dr. Kevorkian holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Criminology from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

## Ada Baskina

The Women's Studies Program hosted Dr. Baskina, a Professor of Journalism at Moscow State University, author of five books and a journalist for the widely read publications; *Izvestia*, *Argumenty i fakty* and *Ogonjok*. She specializes in cultural studies and her most recent book, *"In Everyday Life"* examines the differences between American and Russian cultures. Dr. Baskina discussed the socio-economic status, and women's equality movement in both Russia and in the US in the past 50 years. Her lecture was received with great enthusiasm from the audience; a discussion also followed.\*

## Rebecca Tinsley

A journalist of long standing, Rebecca Tinsley was invited jointly by the Women's Studies Program, the African Studies Program, and Department of Environmental Health at Boston University School of Public Health. Ms. Tinsley gave a slide presentation on the civil war and violence between the Hutu and the Tootsies in



Rwanda, which she argued to have been exacerbated by the direct involvement of the French Government. She highlighted women's resilience and argued that the solution to Africa's problems lie in the hands of its women. By empowering women and girls through education and micro-loans, African women themselves can make the changes necessary to bring about social, economic and political changes to their countries. Towards that goal, Tinsley is building a girls' boarding school in Rwanda. At the end of the presentation, various students volunteered themselves to help her cause.\*

\*The WSP gratefully acknowledges support from The Humanities Foundation at Boston University.



## "Me and An Owl"

The WSP collaborated with Professor Seungsook Moon, Director of Asian Studies & Associate Professor of Sociology at Vassar College, to extend an invitation to Park and You, directors of *Me and an Owl*. *Me and an Owl* is a new documentary about US military and camp-town women in South Korea. In this provocative documentary, camp-town women have



agreed to allow their faces to be exposed. Since the end of WW II, the US has maintained sprawling network of military bases in Asia. In conjunction with Japan and the Philippines, South Korea has occupied an axial position in the US military's global strategy initially against communist forces and now against terrorist and other unidentified threats. Two thirds of US military overseas bases are still concentrated in Germany, Japan and South Korea. This development has grave and far-reaching implications for the lives of tens of millions of people in various host countries in terms of employment, family, gender relations and sexuality, human rights and environmental security.\*

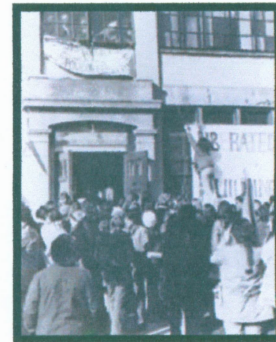
## Contested Spaces, Competing Narratives: Towards Human Rights & Democracy in Pakistan

The Women's Studies Program was one of the sponsors of this program that took place at Harvard University. Diverse perspectives were presented on the struggle for democratic spaces versus increasing militarization, militancy and gender violence in Pakistan. Professor Shahla Haeri gave a presentation on religious militant women in Pakistan.\*

\*The WSP gratefully acknowledges support from The Humanities Foundation at Boston University.

## "Left On Pearl"

The Women's Studies Program and the American & New England Studies Program collaborated together to bring this very special documentary to the BU community. *Women Take Over 888 Memorial Drive, Cambridge*, is a documentary about activists taking over a Harvard University building to create a women's center. This was an exciting event for the Women's Studies Program because Prof. Diane Balser is one of the academic/activists' interviewed in this documentary. This event was highly interactive. Students and faculty discussed and critiqued the 15 minute documentary at the end of the screening.\*



## Violence Transformed

We also co-sponsored a national program called Violence Transformed that was held at the State House in Boston. One of our Ph.D. students, Aparna Sindhoor, performed a dance piece that she had choreographed herself and focused on violence against women.\*

## Faculty Activities

### Diane Balser

Professor Diane Balser continued **this year to teach** Women Society and Culture, Global Feminism and Women & Politics. Students in her Women & Politics seminar had internships with women public policy makers. Professor Balser is the faculty advisor for two women's groups on campus. In the Fall semester she spoke at BU on a panel, "The F-Word, Demystifying Feminism Today," organized by students from VOX, *Voices for Choice*. She also conducts international workshops on topics such as women and leadership, women's empowerment and other women's issues, which took her to France, England, Israel and El Salvador this year.

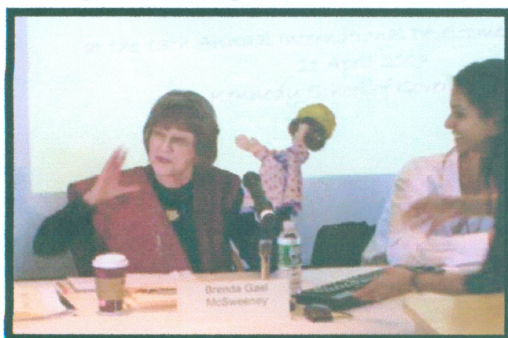


## Barbara Gottfried

Professor Barbara Gottfried taught Women Society & Culture, Women & Film and Race Gender & Mass Media over the past academic year. In summer 2006 she retraced the route of a trip she first took in 1977 from Macedonia to Croatia, studying women in Macedonian society and Macedonian song and dance, and attending the same folklore festivals in Ohrid [Macedonia] and Zabreg [Croatia] she first attended in 1977. In April Professor Gottfried attended the Popular Culture/American Culture Conference in Boston and presented a paper, "Taking Control of Your Look and Life: Post-Feminist Representations in Advertising and Fashion Magazines." She will be teaching "Women And Film" this summer.

## Brenda McSweeney

Professor Brenda McSweeney joined us in September 2003 as our first visiting scholar, and has since been teaching her course *Gender and International Development* every spring semester. Students say they gained a wonderful knowledge of women's issues world-wide in an "eye-opening" course, and that Dr. McSweeney is passionate, knowledgeable, and experienced. In October 2006,



CAS approved *Gender and International Development* as WS 348 to be added to the WSP's regular course curriculum. In May 2007 Dr. McSweeney gave the Commencement Address at Lackawanna College in Pennsylvania and received a Doctor of Humane Letters *honoris causa*. Other presentations of her work on 'mainstreaming' gender in international development and innovation in education include United Nations Development Program in Geneva, the UN Volunteers in Bonn, and the Harvard and Brandeis University communities. The results of her field research included a visit to three zones of the UNESCO

Project for Equal Access of Women and Girls to Education in Burkina Faso, West Africa. The findings, which are based on real-life country-level challenges, also form the basis for a Gender Case Study exercise for her students at her course WS 348 *Gender and International Development*. In the Fall of 2006 Professor McSweeney's students took important steps to launch the first-ever campus coalition against trafficking at BU, and participated in the global Sixteen Days of Action against Gender-based Violence.

## Roberta Micallef

Professor Roberta Micallef joined the Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures as Assistant Professor of Turkish Studies in the fall of 2005. Dr. Micallef's interests include women's studies, and we were very pleased to have her offer one courses for us. In the spring semester 2007, Professor Micallef taught a section of our WS305 topics class entitled: *Identities in Motion: Turkish and British Women Write One Another*. Many prominent texts written by some very perceptive women were "discovered" in the course of teaching this course and students gave it high marks. In the fall of 2006, Professor Micallef participated in a panel on Political Prisoners in the Middle East at the annual Middle East Studies Conference. Based on narratives written by women political prisoners in Turkey, her presentation, entitled *Redefining Honor from Prison*, discussed changes in the perception of male and female honor in Turkey. In spring 2007, Roberta Micallef co-chaired a workshop on travel narratives from the 19th and 20th centuries. Half of the presentations were by women travelers. Her own presentation was on Inside India, by Halide Edib Adivar, a prominent Turkish intellectual.

## Carrie Preston

The English Department and the Women's Studies Program worked together to hire Dr. Carrie Preston as Assistant Professor to teach one course in the Women's Studies Program and three courses in English each year, beginning 2006-2007. In Women's Studies, Dr. Preston offered a section of WS 305, our topics course, on material related to her dissertation. The course, *Performing Women: Drama, Dance, Film, and Feminism*, looks at the history of women as performers and at representations of women on stages from antiquity



to the present. This class is cross-listed with CAS EN 326 A1. Professor Preston spoke at BU on a panel, "The F-Word, Demystifying Feminism Today," organized by students from VOX, *Voices for Choices*. She gave several presentations to graduate classes, including "Feminism and Food," and "Gender and Performance." Carrie Preston won third place in the 2006 War Poetry Contests, and in January 2007, she was invited to perform several of her war poems at the 4<sup>th</sup> Penn Theatre in San Diego as a part of a series of plays about the current conflict in Iraq. She presented two papers at the Modernist Studies Association Annual Conference in October 2006: "Confessional Poetry and the Dramatic Monologue" and "Women's Solo Performance," and was invited to speak at Harvard's Modernism Seminar in May 2007 with a lecture entitled "Posed Performance and the Kinaesthetics of Modernism." At the Modern Language Association Annual Conference in December 2006, Professor Preston presented "Yeats's Dance Plays: Irish Folklore and Japanese Noh," and "Yeats and the Play of Dance," at the Irish Studies Colloquium in April 2007. An NEH grant to study in Ireland has enabled Professor Preston to continue to work in Dublin toward an exploration of post-colonialism, embodiment, and Irish modernist literature.

## Deborah Swedberg

Professor Deborah Swedberg has been a valued part-time teacher in the WSP since 1982, and she continues to teach one course per semester and one course during the summer (she holds an appointment as Managing Editor of *Studies in Romanticism*). For the fall semester, Professor Swedberg taught WS305 (*Pleasure vs. Danger and other Complications of Feminism*), and for the spring semester she taught one section of WS114, the Women's Studies core course in humanities, both of which she found "very informative experience of teaching." Professor Swedberg was invited to lecture and lead a discussion at the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University on the documentary "Inside Deep Throat" on April 11, 2007. In early May, Deborah Swedberg participated in a Favorite Poem Project Reading at the Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline at which she read Adrienne Rich's poem "Transcendental Etude" from her book, *Dream of a*

*Common Language* (1977). She "was the only person who read a poem by a woman at the reading, so the fact that Rich is both a feminist and a lesbian was icing on the cake!" Professor Swedberg offers challenging courses with excellent evaluations. Students say her stimulating and motivating classes make them rethink their roles as women, and also simply make them think. For summer 2007, Ms Swedberg will be teaching WS 114.

## Special Projects

### Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies – GCWS

The WSP received approval from Provost Campbell to join the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies (GCWS) and is currently serving as a board member. The GCWS was founded in 1993, and is a pioneering effort by faculty at eight other degree-granting institutions in the Boston area. Boston University became a member of GCWS in 2006. The GCWS this year gave our graduate students the opportunity to register for unique courses, all of which are team-taught, and to participate in this year's local colloquium entitled, *BEYOND REVOLUTION OR BEHIND IT? The Politics and Practice of Contemporary Feminism Across Academic and Activist Communities* (March 23-24, 2007). Several students from different departments at BU and faculty members attended the conference, and Professor Haeri moderated one of the panels. We hope that with our greater involvement with the GCWS our graduates can increasingly avail themselves of the very unique courses offered through GCWS.

### UNESCO/UNITWIN: Network on Gender, Culture & People-Centered Development

Beginning this year, Boston University's Women's Studies Program will be participating with partners in India in UNESCO's prestigious university education twinning and networking scheme, UNITWIN. The BU/WSP-anchored Network will become the sole UNESCO/UNITWIN active in all of Massachusetts. The initiative is in the spirit of BU's new vision for its role on the world stage,



Advancing educational goals and contributing to the human process. The UNITWIN Program began in 1992 and aims to share information in all major fields within UNESCO. The goal is to promote North-South and South-South cooperation and communities of practice which will enhance institutions, primarily in developing countries. UNITWIN provides a platform for universities and research institutions to work with UNESCO to support national development efforts. In September 2007, Boston University with five renowned partners in India will launch a UNITWIN Cooperation Program with UNESCO in the arena of Gender, Culture and People-Centered Development. The participating partners based in India are: Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab; Visva-Bharati, Shantiniketan, West Bengal; The Bhab Initiative, Shantiniketan, West Bengal; and the Cultural Resource Conservatory Initiative (CRCI)/The Lime Center, New Delhi. The two main objectives of this UNITWIN Network are to: promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation of activities in the field of women and gender studies; and, provide advice and expertise to assist partner countries in gender, culture and development studies. It is of note that UNESCO's draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 that is to go to its governing body, the General Conference, in the Fall of 2007 reflects 'gender equality' as one of just two overarching priorities for the Organization's work.

## Teaching Fellows

### Patricia Stuelke

Patricia Stuelke is a Ph.D. student in AMNESP at BU. She taught one section of WS 114 (*Women, Society, and Culture – Humanities*). Students praised the choice of interesting readings and appreciated class discussion. They describe the teacher as helpful, knowledgeable.

### Molly Geidel

Molly Geidel, is a Ph.D. student in AMNESP at BU. She taught one section of WS 114 (*Women, Society, and Culture – Humanities*). Students complemented the choice of readings and appreciated class discussion. They also appreciated Molly's effort to collaborate with the WSP to bring the directors of "Left on Pearl" to the BU campus.

## Students

### SJD Writing Prize

In Spring of 2007, the Women's Studies Program awarded the fifth annual Sarah Joanne Davis Scholarship Prize. This prize is granted to two students who minor in Women's Studies and amounts to \$250 each. The two recipients of the award are selected on the basis of essays written on a topic pertinent to gender and women's studies. This year the awards went to Heather Foley (CAS - Political Science) won for the Humanities portion. Heather was Professor Barbara Gottfried's Student. Her winning paper is entitled, Deepa Mehta's "Water;" and Rachel Fletcher (COM - Journalism) for the Social Science portion. Her paper was titled "Our Bodies, Our Orgasms?" She was Professor Deborah Swedberg's Student.

## Program Coordinator

### Maryam Shahsahebi

Maryam joined the WSP in the Fall of 2004. She has a Bachelor's of Arts in Consumer Affairs from California State University, Long Beach. She recently obtained her Master of Science from BU's School of Communication in Advertising. She thoroughly enjoys working with the students and faculty at the Women's Studies Program. This was Maryam's final year with us; she will be pursuing a career in finance and communication in the Fall of 2007.

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