

WOMEN'S VU

January 1988

A publication of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, Vanderbilt University

X:5

Black women view King's legacy

Charlotte Frankel

It seems we haven't come a long way, Virginia Slims ads to the contrary. Not according to Black professional women at Vanderbilt, anyway. Twenty years after Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination they feel we are still a racist and sexist society. The dream has yet to be realized.

I received a mini liberal education while interviewing University Black women recently about their perceptions of increased opportunity and mobility.

Vivacious, slim Alma Clayton-Pedersen talks fast and doesn't walk when she can run. Assistant to the Dean of Students, president of the Staff Council, doctoral candidate, she is also mother of an eleven year old daughter. A strong believer in the work ethic, she has always juggled jobs and school, while an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee and pursuing graduate studies at Vanderbilt.

In response to a question about women's status, she says, "Many of the problems women have today have to do with the way they are socialized in this country. Black women have always worked and struggled. They have never had the luxury to stay at home."

"If you see a fairly successful Black woman, you will see that she is not subservient. She exudes self-confidence. Black families sent their daughters to school because they did not want them to become house cleaners and maids."

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Clayton-Pedersen believes that Martin Luther King's dream is really the American dream—what American life is all about. "But Blacks were not able to enjoy it. Hearing King say it in such a powerful and charismatic way made Black people say 'I can dream too. Dreaming is not limited to white Americans. It can be part of my life as well.'"

On the civil rights movement today, she says, "To a large extent people sense that the movement died with King. His assassination dealt the movement a serious blow. We need to get over it and go on. Black America needs strong leaders to take up the banner. Some people have

come to believe that we have arrived but I see around me every day that we haven't. Actually, the chief beneficiaries of the civil rights movement and affirmative action have been white women. Most people don't realize that 65% of welfare recipients are white.

"We need to rethink what affirmative action means. It is not just goal setting and quotas. It is understanding our past and finding equitable—fair and just—solutions," she concludes.

Poised and eloquent, Dr. Sharon Watson Fluker is the Graduate School's first Assistant Dean for Admissions and Minority and Women Student Affairs. As supervisor of Graduate School recruiting and admissions, her position involves sensitizing and educating women, Blacks and other minorities to the importance of graduate education.

Born and raised in Atlanta, Fluker has vivid girlhood memories of Dr. King's funeral where she saw people perched in trees to get a better view of the procession. "That made a powerful statement of the depth of the movement at that particular point in history," she says.

"I think the civil rights movement was a



Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture Series Chairpersons Shannon Hales, Chaplain Bev Asbury, and Kathy Westerberg, (seated) with committee member Nigel Atwell.

period of testing for American society generally. We were tested in terms of our politics, our educational systems and values as a country and we were found wanting as we examined those aspects. I think the civil rights era was clearly an affirmation for every Black citizen of the United States. Later it would be an affirmation for women in their desire to increase their status in American society.

"I think the civil rights movement during the '40's, '50's and '60's had specific targets and goals—to end the racial violence of that time, to end segregation in public accommodations and to open up the educational system. My generation looks back on these from a historical point of view. But we are charged, I think, with making sure in this era of conservative politics that the gains that were made during the '60s are not eroded. The onus remains on us to make sure that education remains free and open and to confront the subtleties of institutional racism and sexism. As women, we need to strive for equal pay for equal work and opportunities for promotion that men have," she says.

A newcomer to the Divinity School this fall, Renita Weems, assistant professor of Hebrew Bible, has another view of the King legacy and the country's response to it.

"There is something in Dr. King's ministry that we don't want to be lost in this country. King was able to confront and address the whole issue of the evil that is in each one of us. . . . I don't think we have come much further since his death in 1968. What we have to do when we commemorate King's birthday is to remember that we have to continually fight the evils within all of us: the evils of racism, of sexism and of classism. Americans have very short memories. We don't like to confront anything unpleasant and we have a remarkable ability to deny our own inconsistencies. We point to Russia's denial of human rights while overlooking our own. Martin Luther King's birthday reminds me of how far we have not come," she says.

A native of Columbia, Mississippi, Shannon Hales is co-chair of the Martin Luther King, Jr. lectures committee. A senior in the College of (continued on page 2)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture Series

January 26, 27, 1988

Theme: Diversity and the Beloved
Community: King's Vision
Twenty Years Later

Lectures

January 26

Langford Auditorium - 7:30 p.m.

Yolanda King

(eldest daughter of Martin Luther King, Jr.)
Attallah Shabazz (daughter of Malcolm X)

January 27

Benton Chapel - 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Henry Cisneros, San Antonio, Texas

Robert Maynard, President and Publisher,
The Oakland Tribune

January 28

Sarratt Cinema - 8:00 p.m.

John O'Neal, *Junebug Jabbo Jones*

Seminars

Nancy Hicks-Maynard, journalist and former reporter
for *New York Times*, Wednesday, January 27 (time
and place tba)

Dr. Levy Watkins, Johns Hopkins University, first
Black graduate of Vanderbilt University Medical
School, Thursday, January 28, 4:30 p.m., Light Hall,
room 108.

In the news

Changing College Mores

Fifty percent of college students responding to a recent survey said that they think sex before marriage is always or sometimes wrong, and 95% believe that sex outside of marriage is always or sometimes wrong. These rather surprising statistics come from "Student Watch '86," a study of characteristics of the student market sponsored by the College Stores Research & Educational Foundation. Some other statistics that demarcate this generation from the preceding one: 84% feel that cocaine use is unwise or harmful and 62% feel that way about marijuana; in politics, half described themselves as moderates and 24% as conservatives, although only 49% of those eligible voted in the last election. The survey was based on a sample of 4,349 randomly selected students. One additional positive find: 50% reported getting more than half of their discretionary income from their own earnings.

Moneypaper, November 1987

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1987 (HR925) has been brought to our attention by a recent letter from WEAL (Women's Equity Action League). The modified federal bill will come up for a vote in the full House in early February. While HR925 as it is amended doesn't cover nearly as many workers as the original bill, it takes a significant step toward providing employees with job-protected leave during family or medical crises. We urge you to let your representative know your wishes on this national family and medical leave policy.

Black women view King's legacy, continued from page 1

Arts and Science, she plans to attend law school next year.

Asked about Black women students on campus, Hales responds, "Black women at Vanderbilt are becoming more vocal. For the past couple of years the leaders of the Black Student Alliance have been females and they have been instrumental in changing conditions for Black students on this campus. The Black sororities are a means for cohesion and serve as support groups. The Black Student Alliance does that as well. As far as interaction in other areas of campus life, we have a long way to go."

University Chaplain Beverly A. Asbury has been deeply involved with the Martin Luther King, Jr. lecture series since its inception five years ago. He feels that Vanderbilt has a moral obligation to present and underwrite this program "given the segregated history of the South, Tennessee, Nashville and Vanderbilt University. This is something that Vanderbilt ought to do as a service to itself and to the public."

An alumna of Vanderbilt University, Charlotte Frankel is a freelance writer.

Profile: Bridget Kelley

Shelley Neill, A & S 1

Behind the turtleneck and the college girl grin, Bridget Kelley is a woman of responsibility. The third-only female *Hustler* editor since World War II, Kelley said the position is "a 50-hour a week commitment." She writes, organizes, and edits her way into the early morning—6 a.m. is not uncommon—while the rest of campus sleeps.

A New Jersey native, Kelley worked her way up from writing "stories about parking lots" to serving as News Editor in 1986 and Editor last year. After this experience and internships with both *The Nashville Banner* and *The Tennessean*, she is convinced that "journalism is the profession for me."

Being a journalist—particularly an editor—is not easy, however. It involves, she said, "tremendous stress" and the commitment of a full-time job. Although her staff does most of the writing, Kelley may nevertheless spend all night editing. "When we're really organized and we have our act together, we can be out of here by three or four in the morning, but more often than not we end up going until six," she said.

But along with the sleepless nights come the benefits of learning how to organize and work with people. In addition, she has become more informed about the university, particularly about its role in promoting the rights of women and minorities.

"There need to be more minority professors, administrators, and students before we can . . . [create] an environment that is representative of the real world that this experience is supposed to prepare us for," she said. "There hasn't been a lot of change yet, but [through discussion] people are becoming more sensitive to minority concerns."

"And the number of tenured women professors in the College of Arts and Science is greatly outnumbered—embarrassingly outnumbered—by the number of male tenured professors," she said. "The same goes for minorities. The most visible minorities on campus are the ones who serve food or rake leaves."

Tenured Faculty as of 12/9/87	
All Schools except Medicine and Nursing	
Men	344
Women	34

"The problem rests in whether or not Vanderbilt has an environment in which women and minorities will feel comfortable," Kelley said, pointing out that the administration, too, is "dominated by a male hierarchy."

This male monopolization of power does not extend, however, to Kelley's staff. She pointed out that half of her section editors are women and she is the third woman editor in over 40 years. An other woman editor, Mary Elson '73, is now Features Editor for *The Chicago Tribune*.



Being Editor, Kelley said, is "challenging, very rewarding, I'm exhausted." But using her experience with *The Hustler* as a pivot, there's no telling where this career woman is headed. ■

It's your health

*Jill A. Oberdas
A & S 2*

What is AIDS? Where does it come from? What causes it? How can it be prevented? All of these questions are, if not on the lips, at least on the minds of many Americans. It seems that as the AIDS virus sweeps through the nation, it is bringing along with it an equally dangerous bug—AIDS Hysteria.

Two approaches dominate expert opinion on the AIDS epidemic. The first is best exemplified by Dr. Helen Singer Kaplan in her book *The Real Truth About Women and Aids*.

Dr. Kaplan's objective is to educate an emerging high-risk group—women. Only 3 percent of all AIDS cases have been women, primarily IV drug users. An increasing number of women are at risk to contract AIDS as a result of intimate sexual relations with bisexual men.

The problem with Dr. Kaplan is her strategy. Although she makes valid medical statements, most of her book is filled with outrageous assertions "warning" women about the hazards of sex in the AIDS era. She uses scare tactics to frighten women into awareness. Such statements as: "If you aren't extremely careful, it can kill you" and "It breaks my heart, but I don't feel I can tell anyone that even kissing is safe" are emotional claims whose bases have not been medically proven. One of the biggest problems with AIDS education is that there are few solid facts, and many theories.

The other major approach to educating the public about AIDS is more reasonable than Dr. Kaplan's. This method is exemplified in a book called *The Truth About AIDS* by Ann Giudici Fettner and William A. Check. In a straightforward and honest manner, the authors attempt to present AIDS as a severe threat (like Dr. Kaplan does) but without the hysterical declarations.

These authors assert that "It (the AIDS virus) can be found in probably every bodily secretion including blood, semen, saliva, sweat and tears. *But it has not been proven* that it is transmitted via all these routes." They go on to say that the concentration of the virus in saliva is usually too small to be transmissible. When (continued on page 3, column 2)



In the library

We're halfway through the academic year. You've finally come by the Women's Center to see the library. The books in our collection were so exciting that you've decided to begin your own small collection of books by and about women. Where do you begin? How do you decide which books to buy?

One good source to consult is the *Women's Review of Books*. This periodical, published monthly by the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, is an excellent selection aid in purchasing recently published monographs. Reviewed books include new works of fiction and poetry, studies in theology, history, political science, health, and more. The *Women's Review of Books* states in its editorial policy that it wishes to represent a wide range of feminist perspectives, both in the books reviewed and in the content of the reviews.

The reviews themselves are generally well-written and scholarly, yet entirely within the scope of a non-scholar as well. Reviewers tend to be authorities in their fields, and have usually made their own significant contributions to the literature of each. Notes on the contributors are included in every issue.

Publication of *Women's Review of Books* began in the summer of 1983 with a "pilot issue." Regular monthly publication began with Vol. I, Number 1 in October, 1983. Included in the September, 1987, edition is a cumulative index of Vols. I-IV (Summer 1983-September 1987). The index is in two parts. The first is an author/title index; the second is a reviewer index.

This allows readers easy access to books and reviews in past issues.

So, if you want to buy women's books, but don't know where to start, come by the Women's Center library and look at an issue of *Women's Review of Books*. You'll probably find something you like. ■



QUICK! Name five classics in women's studies/literature of this century that can be found in the Women's Center library. See page four for some possible suggestions.

"Aids" continued from page 2

there is a substantial level in the saliva, it is usually from bleeding gums or lips—in other words, from blood in the saliva. Dr. Kaplan's comment about kissing, although theoretically possible, is treated as unlikely by Fettner and Check.

Although the Fettner-Check approach is less emotional, I do find faults with it as well. They do not seem to take public education, as a form of prevention, very seriously; Dr. Kaplan takes it too seriously. Their book traces the evolution of the discovery of the disease and summarizes major beliefs about AIDS. But all they seem to say is that no one really knows anything, or at best, very little.

SGA Speakers Committee is sponsoring a symposium on AIDS, Thursday, February 4, 7 p.m. in Underwood Auditorium with the Vanderbilt AIDS Project.

What is frightening for women is that they belong to a group that researchers expect to be hard-hit by the epidemic in the near future. Even more frightening is that researchers believe that the most likely source of AIDS for a heterosexual woman is her husband or long-term male partners. Men who have had sexual encounters with homosexuals or prostitutes may unwittingly carry the virus. The latency period for the AIDS virus is 5-10 years.

Everyone, women and men, should learn as much as possible about AIDS. There is no need for hysteria, but there is a need for knowledge. In Dr. Kaplan's words, "Women have a right to accurate information, otherwise, what they have is a false sense of assurance. And a false sense of assurance can kill them and their future babies." ■

"Color Confidence" will be taught by Connie Gowen of Color My Image on January 26 from 12:15 - 1:15 at the Women's Center. An overall education on the use of color in make-up, clothing and accessories will be taught. Bring your brown bag lunch. Drinks will be provided. Fee \$5.00. Call the Women's Center at 322-4843 for reservations.

Note: We wish to thank Professor Robley C. Williams, Jr. of the Molecular Biology Department for calling to our attention that the name "Dutch Treat Lunch", which we have been using, is demeaning to people of this ethnic origin. In a letter to the Women's Center, Professor Williams suggests that the phrase should go the way of "Chinaman's chance" and "Indian giver."

Therefore, we are actively seeking a new name for our lunchtime program. Since no such event is planned for January, we are asking that all suggestions of an appropriate name be sent to the Women's Center by January 15 so that we can initiate the new name for our February 25th lunch, at which Pat Pierce of the Opportunity Development Center will speak. ■

Women's center programs

Call 322-4843 for further information on the programs listed below.

"Turning Around", a comic 20 minute film dealing with role reversals which takes a jab at sexism in the classroom of medical schools, will be shown Thursday, January 14, at 12:10 p.m. in Light Hall, room 114. Two medical students will lead a discussion following the film. Co-sponsored by American Medical Students Association (AMSA).

International Students Coffee on January 15 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. will be hosted by the Women's Center Advisory Board in McTyeire Hall.

A Noontime Seminar on Thursday, January 21 at 12:30 p.m. will present the findings from the research of Professor Dan Cornfield and graduate students, Bang Jee Chun and Keo Cavalcanti, on gender differences in determinants of union participation. Their recently completed study of Tennessee State employees presents some interesting material on the differing reasons for and constraints on union participation by women and men. Bring your lunch to the Women's Center and participate in the discussion. Hot and cold drinks will be provided.

Issues For Women In The Academic World is the topic for five Vanderbilt women professors when they address undergraduate women on January 21, 5 p.m. at the Women's Center. The professors, who represent a variety of schools, are Karen E. Campbell, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Phyllis Frus, Assistant Professor of English, Alice C. Harris, Associate Professor of Linguistics, Lynn F. Jacobs, Assistant Professor of Fine Arts, and Julia M.G. Miller, Assistant Professor of Geology. Following a presentation by each speaker the audience may participate with a question and answer period.

The next Women's Center New Employees Brown Bag Lunch will be held on Friday, January 22 from noon to 1:30. All recently hired VU employees are invited. Anyone who would like to learn more about the services available at the Women's Center and meet other new employees is invited. Bring your lunch. Drinks will be provided.

Book Group will discuss *A Door into Ocean* by Joan Slonczewski on Monday, January 18 from 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. Margaret Meggs will be the discussion leader. New members are welcome. Light refreshments will be available. ■

Announcements et cetera

Women's Basketball Home Games

Jan. 23 Louisville	7 pm
Jan. 28 Kentucky	7 pm
Jan. 30 Missouri-Kansas City	3 pm
Jan. 31 Florida	2 pm

The January 17 game to be played in Knoxville against the University of Tennessee can be viewed on a delayed telecast from Channel 17 at 5 pm (check local listings to confirm time).

All of the home games are broadcast live by WSIX, 980 on the AM dial. They also plan to broadcast all post-season play by the Women's Basketball Team.

The Women's Swimming and Diving Team will compete against Alabama on January 22 at 4 pm.

Some possible answers to question on page three:

The Dialectic of Sex - Shulamith Firestone; *The Second Sex* - Simone De Beauvoir; *Against Our Will* - Susan Brownmiller; *The Women's Room* - Marilyn French; *The Female Eunuch* - Germaine Greer; *Sexual Politics* - Kate Millet; *The Bell Jar* - Sylvia Plath; *Beyond God the Father* - Mary Daly.

National Women's Studies Association Graduate Scholarships. Two scholarships will be awarded to students doing research or writing a thesis or dissertation. A \$1,500 award will be made to research germane to Women's Studies and a \$500 award in Lesbian Studies. Application must be postmarked no later than March 1, 1988. Further details are posted in the Women's Center or you may write Caryn McFighe Musil, NWSA, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

The **Psychological & Counseling Center** announces the following programs and groups for the Spring Semester:

- Therapy and Support for family or friends of a chemically-dependent person
- Eating Disorders Program
- Weight Management Classes
- Graduate Student Support Group
- Assertiveness Training Communications Skills Workshop

For more information and to register for the above courses call 322-2571.

Sarratt Gallery will exhibit "Mexican and American Folk Art: Narratives of Ethnic Diversity" January 14 - February 10. The cultural heritages of various ethnic groups will be explored in this exhibition. The folk artists selected for the show represent diversity not only in their traditions but in their methods and materials.

Registration for spring semester classes in Sarratt Center Art Studios will be held January 18-25 in Room 121, Sarratt. Classes will be offered in photography, jewelry, pottery, and weaving. Fees vary. Discounts are offered for Vanderbilt community.

Wanted for Decisions: women who are interested in helping prisoners at the Women's Prison in Nashville to learn basic decision-making/life-planning skills. Each volunteer meets with an inmate partner once a week for the eight week program. Flexible hours, most afternoons and evenings. The program, **Decisions**, is a nationally recognized program helping to alter the self-image of women prisoners from "born to lose" to "born to choose." The next training session for volunteers is January 30 and 31st with the eight week program running from February 1 to March 29. Call Candy Markman, 383-6392, days.

Vandy Women's Political Caucus will hold their planning meeting for Spring Semester activities on Thursday, January 21, 12:30 - 1:00 p.m. For location please call Elizabeth Jacobson or Tammy Veazey at 385-3773.

Vanderbilt Lambda Association has recently been organized for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. Interested students, faculty and staff should contact P.O. Box 121743, Nashville, TN 37212. ■

Why I'm not wearing miniskirts, I think

I will wear the new short skirts when:

- Men wear rompers to the office. And no ties, because that would cover up the Osh-Kosh B-Gosh label.
- Salespeople stop calling me Ma'am.
- The average income of a female college graduate is not about the same as that of a male high-school dropout.
- All women's shoes are designed with an invisible crepe sole.
- They invent a home liposuction kit.
- It's safe to go away on vacation - or to the ladies' room for that matter - without wondering whether your company will be the victim of a hostile takeover while you're gone.
- The fashion industry drops its obsessions with "Petites."

Kathleen Fury, Working Woman/November 1987



Edited by Judith T. Helfer

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