

Margaret
Cunningim
Women's Center

October lecture features historian Anne Firor Scott

Nancy A. Walker, director of the Women's Studies Program and associate professor of English

One of the interesting things about the academic life is the way in which scholars periodically and unexpectedly connect with each other. For many years I have known the work of Professor Anne Firor Scott, a pioneer (to use a much overworked word) in the field of women's history. Recently, as I was beginning to write this article, a graduate student with whom I am working on the career of Frances Newman sent me a copy of New-

... the central project of Scott's scholarly career has been to restore to us large parts of American history which reveal just how active and effective women have been in public life...

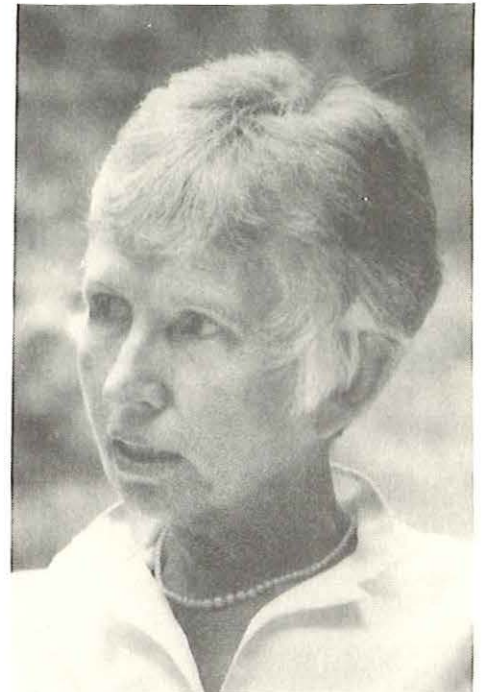
man's 1926 novel *The Hard-Boiled Virgin* (no, it isn't a detective novel), reissued in 1980 by the University of Georgia Press with a foreword by Professor Scott. The fact that this fine foreword to a novel was written by a historian is just one indication of

Professor Scott's wide range of abilities.

Anne Firor Scott will be the Margaret Cuningim lecturer on October 30 of this year. Her talk, titled "Ladies of the Club: Unlikely Revolutionaries," derives from her new book, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History*, which will be published in November by the University of Illinois Press. When I asked Professor Scott how much impact she felt these groups of women had had on American politics and society, she responded that women had been a major force in shaping American life and institutions.

With so much talk about women's oppression and powerlessness in recent decades, this might seem a surprising—even a naive—statement. Yet the central project of Scott's scholarly career has been to restore to us large parts of American history which reveal just how active and effective women have been in public life, as the title of her 1975 book *One Half the People* indicates. Having realized, as she writes, "how partial even the best history must be," Scott set out to study, first, the history of Southern women (*The Southern Lady*, 1970) and subsequently the history of American women more generally.

When I asked Professor Scott how she became interested in women's history before it had developed into the burgeoning field of inquiry that it now is, she referred me to her essay "A Historian's Odyssey," which forms the preface to her book *Making the Invisible Woman Visible*. I recommend this essay to anyone interested in the development of women's



Anne Firor Scott

history, and especially to those interested in the history of women's careers in academia. (*Making the Invisible Woman Visible* is available in the Cuningim Center library.)

Scott's autobiographical essay is a fascinating account of a woman who, in retrospect, seems to have been destined to study the history of women, yet who at the same time entered the profession of college teaching and research more or less by accident—balancing children and a dissertation, taking part-time positions for a while wherever her husband was teaching, before becoming an assistant professor and ultimately the W. K. Boyd Professor of History at Duke University.

Born just nine months after the women's suffrage amendment was ratified, Scott was, as a child, fascinated by stories of her grandmother, who had traveled around the state of Georgia organizing for the League of Women Voters in the early 1920s. Fittingly, Scott herself later worked for the League, serving for a time as the editor of *The National Voter*. As early as 1944, she resolved to "write a history of women, beginning with

(continued page two)

Speaking of women . . .

Positive changes occurring in new Mayfield lodge

Michelle Manzo, A & S '92

"We've been teased and dubbed 'The Happy House,'" muses sophomore Katie King. "But there's so much more to our cause than many people can really appreciate right now."

King is one of the ten founding members of the Developing a Healthy Self Image Living/Learning Lodge. With the efforts of her suitemates, these women hope to increase the importance of a healthy self image.

"First semester we are primarily working on the physical and mental wellness among lodge members. Like most females, we have all gone through extended periods of low self esteem at one time or another. Once we feel that we have reached many of our personal goals, we will then be reaching out to the campus community," King said. "We hope to do this through workshops, the Women's Center, and peer support groups."

The women decided on their theme in the spring of 1991 and developed an itinerary and list of goals to present to Residential and

Judicial Affairs. Objectives of the Self Image Lodge range from expanding personal goals to broader based, campus awareness issues.

"I'm not sure that they [Residential and Judicial Affairs] knew what to

think at first. I think they thought we were joking. When they realized that we were serious about our proposal and the commitments we were willing to make, things began to work out for us," King said. ■



photo by Merni Lessa

Members of the Mayfield Self Image Lodge discuss their personal and campus-wide goals. With Nancy Ransom, Director of the Cuninggim Center as their advisor, these women will address the importance of physical and mental well-being.

Anne Firor Scott (continued from page one)

Eve," and an early fascination with the career of Jane Addams was one of the factors that convinced her that women had made important, though largely unrecorded, contributions to public policy. She completed *The Southern Lady* with a sense of obligation to "the southern women in their eighties who had never doubted that they and their comrades were part of history, but who had long ago ceased expecting anybody to say so."

One episode recorded in "A Historian's Odyssey" is a classic story that is familiar to many female scholars of Professor Scott's generation. While her husband was teaching at Haverford College in the late 1950s, one of the historians at Haverford mentioned to her that he would be on leave the following year and wondered whether she knew of "some young man" who could fill his posi-

tion temporarily. After walking away, Scott experienced what *Ms.* magazine calls a "click," and went back to suggest that she be given the position. She was. (Reading this passage brought back to me uncomfortable memories of typing both my husband's and my dissertations as late as 1971!)

The rest, as they say, is history. By the early 1970s, the rapidly-growing women's movement embraced Professor Scott's scholarship, and the field of women's history quickly established itself in the academy, with her work as model and centerpiece. In addition, she served the cause of women's advancement by serving as chair of the North Carolina Governor's Commission on the Status of Women in 1963-64, and on the President's Advisory Council on the Status of Women from 1964 to 1969.

Professor Scott's list of honors and awards is properly a long one, and includes fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Rockefeller Foundation as well as honorary degrees from Northwestern University, Radcliffe College, and the University of the South.

It is my expectation that at the Margaret Cuninggim Lecture on October 30, the audience will be treated to a lively and affirming talk by a woman who is herself—and quite consciously so—a part of history.

The changes that have taken place in recent decades in women's expectations for themselves owe much to the sense of heritage that women's historians have provided. Anne Firor Scott deserves a great deal of the credit for persisting in her belief that "one half the people" have made all the difference in the world. ■

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Calendar
of
Events

Margaret
Cuninggim
Women's
Center



For further information call the Cuninggim Center at 322-4843.

October 7 (Monday)

Women's Issues: An International Perspective, public lecture by Mary H. Purcell, President, International Federation of University Women (former president of American Association of University Women). 4:30 p.m., David K. Wilson Hall (psychology building), room 126.

October 8 (Tuesday)

Brown Bag Lunch with Mary Purcell. Informal discussion. 12:15 to 1:15 p.m., Sarratt 118.

October 9 (Wednesday)

Cuninggim Center Advisory Board first fall meeting. 4:10 p.m., Carmichael Towers East, room 208.

October 10 (Thursday)

Lunchtime Book Review. Katharyn A. May, associate professor of nursing and chair of the Department of Family and Health Systems Nursing reviews *Fire In The Belly: On Being A Man* by Sam Keen. This current best seller addresses the difficulty that contemporary men have in establishing the balance between strength and nurturance. 12:15 to 1:15 p.m., Sarratt 118.

October 14 (Monday)

Book Group will discuss *Devil In The Shape of a Woman* by Carol Karlsen. Facilitator is Margaret Meggs. 5:15 to 6:15 p.m., Godchaux Living Room.

October 16 (Wednesday)

Noontime Seminar. *Managing Rape: Alternative Explanations of Disparities In Rape Data* led by Gary F. Jensen, professor and chair of the Department of Sociology. Jensen examines conflicting data on rape in the United States and discusses the reasons why some statistical reports show a rise in rape while others show a decline. 12:15 to 1:15 p.m., Sarratt 118.

October 22 (Tuesday)

Slide lecture. *Barefoot and Pregnant: Eroticism of Tossed-off Shoes* by Helen Dickinson Baldwin, art historian. Baldwin discusses the pervasive and euphemistic use of shoes and feet as erotic symbols from the world of Greek and Hebrew antiquity to the images of modern America. 12:15 to 1:15 p.m., Garland 220.

October 30 (Wednesday)

Margaret Cuninggim Lecture. Anne Firor Scott, W.K. Boyd Professor of History Emerita, Duke University, speaks on *Ladies of the Club: Unlikely Revolutionaries*. 8:00 p.m., David K. Wilson Hall (psychology building), room 126. Reception to follow. Co-sponsors Women's Studies, History Department, and University Lectures Committee. (Please note the date. Academic Calendar date is incorrect.)

Please save and post. Individual flyers for these programs will not be sent.

Sarratt Cinema hosts Jaglom's acclaimed 'Eating'

Judith T. Helfer
Editor Women's VU

Food has replaced sex as the thing women are most obsessed with—and afraid of, says Henry Jaglom, director of *Eating: A Very Serious Comedy About Women and Food*.

Jaglom assembled thirty-eight actresses (including Lisa Richards, Gwen Welles, Mary Crosby, and Frances Bergen) in a house in Los Angeles for three weeks. Using a rudimentary script and skeletal plot involving a fortieth birthday celebration, he goaded the women into revealing their most personal feelings about food, men, their bodies, eating, fathers, their thighs and birthday cake. The resulting film is a funny and painful work that offers no happy ending.

"Women—unlike men—are told

... (Jaglom) goaded the women into revealing their most personal feelings about food, men, their bodies, eating, their fathers, and birthday cake.

early on that happiness and success depend on how they look in a bathing suit," Jaglom says. "Five hundred-fifty of the 600 actresses I interviewed during the casting process admitted to food-related hang-ups. Very few were overweight, but it has to do more with mind than body."

The June '91 issue of *Women's VU* published a news quote about this film hoping that it would come to local theaters over the summer. Although the film was selling out in San Francisco, Seattle, Boston, and New York, it never was shown in Nashville theaters. Sarratt Cinema corrects that omission on October 6 and 7 when *Eating* will be shown at

7:30 p.m. and 9:40 p.m.

A panel discussion, sponsored by the Nashville Film Society and Sarratt Cinema, follows the 7:30 p.m. screening on October 6.

Panelists include Katharyn May, associate professor and chair, Family and Health Systems Nursing; Elena Hearn, coordinator of Alcoholic and Drug Services, Student Health Services; Michelle Manzo, senior in the College of Arts and Science; Gerre White, licensed clinical social worker, Parkwest Eating Disorders Program; and David Schlundt, assistant professor of Psychology and assistant professor of Medicine.



Mary Crosby, Frances Bergen, Lisa Richards, Gwen Welles, and Marina Gregory, members of the cast of "Eating." The film will be featured at Sarratt Cinema October 6 - 7.

News quotes

Conley returns to Stanford Medical School

On her terms, Dr. Frances K. Conley has not completely forgiven the Stanford Medical School, but she is coming home. Dr. Conley, a prominent neurosurgeon who quit the Stanford faculty in June complaining of sexism, said last week that the school had changed its ways enough—and promised to make more changes—to persuade her to return.

In announcing her return, officials said that they were reviewing charges of sexism against the acting head of neurosurgery, Dr. Gerald Silverberg, and that a decision about the chairmanship would be influenced by their review.

New York Times,
September 8, 1991

Flight attendants emerge victoriously in suit

Flight attendants have finally won a seventeen-year-old battle with American Airlines over the company's weight requirements. Under the new set of standards, age and height will be considered in determining the permissible weight for the airline's 18,000 flight attendants. The change will save the jobs of 200 women now, and many more in the future.

Women Oughta Know
August 1991

Title X law prohibits abortion information

The recent Supreme Court ruling with *Rust vs. Sullivan* prohibits counselors and physicians who receive federal funds under the Title X law from providing accurate information about abortion. Title X gives some \$200 million a year to 4,500 clinics that provide services to five million low-income women a year. If a woman asks her doctor or clinician about abortion, the professional is required to say "The project does not consider abortion an appropriate method of family planning."

New Directions for Women
July/August 1991

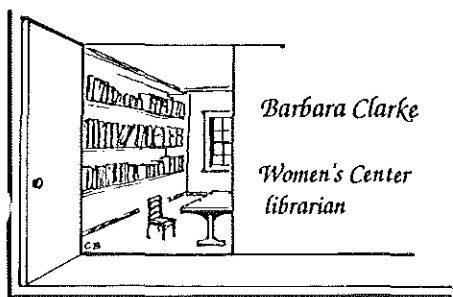
Library periodicals document women's role in world militaries

One of the most useful journals received by the library is *Minerva: Quarterly Report on Women and the Military*, which commenced publication in 1983. It was founded and still is edited by historian Linda Grant De Pauw. Her aim was "to provide an information center for individuals and organizations concerned with some aspect of women and the military."

Minerva includes articles on a wide variety of topics about women in the military—both past and present, and in all areas of the world. Most issues also contain news items, lists of recent publications, and book reviews. Topics covered in recent issues include: women in combat, sexual harassment in the Army, women's participation in the Civil War, Army nurses in Vietnam, Israeli women in the military, and the National Women's Military Museum.

We receive another publication edited by De Pauw: *Minerva's Bulletin Board*, which contains mostly news items relating to women and the military.

Sage: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women has been published twice a year since 1984. Most issues focus on a particular topic, and each usually includes scholarly articles, news announcements, bibliographies, and book reviews. The titles of issues of *Sage* include: "Science and Technology," "Black Women's Studies," "Health," "Leadership," "Artists and Artisans," "Mothers and Daughters," and "Africa and the Diaspora."



Subject Index to Periodicals in the Women's Center Library is a subject index to most of the scholarly periodicals in our collection. We produce this index to make the articles in our journals more accessible to readers.

New Books

Joan Hoff's *Law, Gender, and Injustice: A Legal History of U.S. Women* is a comprehensive work covering the period from the War of Independence to the present. This is an interesting look at legal history from a feminist

perspective. Hoff believes that many of women's legal victories have brought women unforeseen negative consequences, and she suggests that the U.S. Constitution and laws be reinterpreted to create true equality for women. She illustrates why "the long-sought-after 'one-size-fits-all' equality with men has proven both illusory and disillusioning" and hopes for "the successful creation of a feminist jurisprudence that finally puts women *into* the Constitution on female rather than male terms."

Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History edited by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai is an important new book on the problems involved in feminist oral history. As many researchers make extensive use of oral history, this volume should be useful for all those interested in the social sciences. The sixteen contributors, most of whom are American, discuss the techniques they have employed and the problems they have encountered with feminist oral history in their research in a wide variety of countries and cultures.

Women's Studies International: Nairobi and Beyond edited by Aruna Rao includes articles on women's studies, gender issues, and education and development projects in many areas of the world. Included in the publication is a listing, arranged by country, of over two hundred centers for research and teaching about women. This volume was planned at the 1985 Women's Studies International NGO (Non-governmental Organizations) Forum in Nairobi.

Library extends hours on Tuesdays

Beginning October 8 the Cuninggim Center Library will remain open until 10:00 p.m. on Tuesdays for research and as a place to study. The other four weekdays the library will be open as usual from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. ■

High Heels

You tell me
I am not
Cinderella
because my foot
does not fit
into the glass slipper
you hold out to me

But you are wrong.
Cinderella is an illusion
you created
to keep me walking on
eggshells
around you
in glass slippers
that are too fragile
to stand on
like my reality
feels
around you.

Arrogance

Somehow you learned
that one of the exclusive
birthrights
of being male

Is the right
to make the rules
— all the time
— in any given situation.

You've been laboring
under false
assumptions . . .
and you know what they
say. . .
about people who make
assumptions. . .

Reprinted from © book, *Labia Blooming*, by permission of the author, Sue Perz.

A childhood remembered under paternal influence

The Bookmaker's Daughter
by Shirley Abbott

Womenfolks
Growing Up Down South
by Shirley Abbott

Review by Catherine Chambers
(reprinted courtesy of *BookPage*
©1991)

Honest voice in women's autobiography is just beginning to emerge. Recently, the limits a patriarchal culture places on women's lives and the telling of women's stories has been brought to our attention in Carolyn Heilbrun's *Writing a Women's Life*. In Shirley Abbott we find an author who has both confronted and transcended those limits. She has found her voice. It resonates with humor, intelligence, and compassion—but above all with honesty.

Abbott's first book, *Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South* (just released in paperback), is a vivid depiction of her maternal ancestry, Scotch-Irish immigrants settling the wilds of Arkansas. She writes, "They were independent from birth. They knew how to make do in harsh circumstances . . . they gritted their teeth and were selfless. They were as strong and as intelligent as men." In her examination of these mother-daughter roles, Abbott both defines and dispels many of the myths which have contributed to shaping a Southern identity—myths created and perpetuated by both sexes for their own reasons.

Now, in the *Bookmaker's Daughter*, Shirley Abbott shifts her focus from maternal to paternal ties in a more personal memoir of her childhood in the 1940s and 50s. She examines her tumultuous relationship with the most influential force in her life: her father.

The backdrop is Hot Springs, Arkansas, a town famous for its therapeutic waters and used to treat depression. "Hat" Abbott was a bookmaker of the horse-betting variety, but he instilled in his daughter and only child a love of books and a fierce respect for the intellect. "My mother was determined that I should be like other girls while my father was determined to make me different . . .

Fathers are supposed to teach their daughters how to be women, that is, how to love men and serve them and use them . . . But my father refused to do that. A tutor in subversion, he taught me words were sweet and fairy tales superior to life and books more valuable than love itself." From Casanova to the decline of the Roman Empire, Shirley's father rigidly dictated her course of literary study, determined to shape her intellect and her opinions. Abbott chronicles the events of her early years, both rituals and highlights, preserving her child-like sensibilities with an adult perspective. She uses familiar territory to explore larger themes, from romantic love to Southern politics and history. As the child grows so do the discrepancies between what she reads and what she sees and feels, between what she has been taught and what she discovers as her personal truth.

"In the battle that we came to wage against one another at least he equipped me with equal weapons. . . . My father's gift, in the end, was his refusal to feminize me, in the con-



photo by Marni Lessa

Catherine Chambers
Public school teacher and free-lance writer

stricting sense of that word." As Shirley Abbott seized her father's mandate she inevitably passed along his gift. She became her own kind of bookmaker.



What was that Virginia Woolf said about women writers? Something about a room of one's own . . .

Premenstrual syndrome

Lifestyle changes may ease the monthly battles

Michelle Manzo, A & S '92

Ana Alfonso says she doesn't mind temporarily gaining five pounds of water every twenty-eight days.

But it is the high anxiety, irritability, tension, and wide mood swings which kept the sophomore out of classes on several occasions—that she can do without.

"The pain was unmanageable. Getting out of bed was a chore and if I did make it to class, the abdominal cramps made concentrating difficult. Over the counter drugs like Midol didn't help. I finally sought treatment from a physician, who suggested a prescription medication that offered symptomatic help," she said.

Alfonso, like seventy percent of menstruating women, suffers from premenstrual syndrome (PMS), a disorder characterized by a wide variety of symptoms which occurs in the second half of the menstrual cycle. Only five to ten percent, though, are affected as severely as Alfonso.

In decades past, women who complained of PMS were dismissed as having imaginary symptoms. Though attitudes in the medical community are changing, some women still encounter those who treat their symptoms as myth. "I was angry at first with my doctor. He kept telling me that it was 'nothing,'" Alfonso said. "It took repeated visits before he finally believed me."

More research on the seriousness of PMS has made more physicians take the disorder seriously. While no magical cure has been found in reliable research to ease all of the symptoms, some methods of effective treatment include diuretics, high doses of vitamin B-6, and hormonal suppositories. Caution should be exercised as each of these treatments has its own side effects and risks.

Not all successful treatments of PMS, however, must come from a pill. The role that diet plays in PMS and its symptoms has become the focus of several recent medical studies. According to a study from Oregon State University, those who consumed a diet high in sugar and caffeine were more likely to report PMS symptoms. Another study by the Department of Agriculture showed that PMS symp-

toms appear to be eased in some women when their daily calcium levels are increased from 600 to 1300 milligrams. The study points out that an 8-ounce container of plain, low-fat yogurt has 450 milligrams of calcium

you recognize and understand your cycle and make the necessary lifestyle changes such as decreasing caffeine, sodium, and sugar and increasing exercise.

"I keep a chart of my symptoms,"



and a cup of skim milk has 302. There is also significant calcium in a number of vegetables, including 205 milligrams in one medium spear of broccoli and 245 milligrams in a cup of raw spinach.

Awareness also plays a key role in managing PMS. Many women can adjust to their symptoms by merely observing their cycles. Knowing what symptoms to look for and when to look for them can assist women in coping with PMS. A chart may help

says Kathryn Hansen, who works with her physician in treating her severe PMS. "Then I know why I am feeling grumpy and lethargic. I allow time for some extra sleep during that period and increase my level of exercise."

The Cuninggim Center offers the necessary materials and supplemental information for those who are interested in charting their premenstrual symptoms. Please stop by the Center or call 322-4843.

news(continued from page four)

Measuring the glass ceiling for women, minorities in the corporate sector

More than a year ago, the government began trying to find out why white males monopolize the top of the corporate ladder. Now, after studying nine corporations, the Labor Department has concluded that most women and minorities never get past the ladder's first rung or two. "The glass ceiling is much lower than we expected," said Labor Secretary Lynn Martin last week, citing several reasons why: women and minorities tend to be excluded by recruitment practices that rely on word of mouth and networking. They lack access to training and development programs. And most prospects touted by executive-search firms are white males.

Martin vowed to keep checking companies with federal contracts to make sure they live up to affirmative action requirements. But she stopped short of issuing mandates. Instead, she towed the administration's self-help line, pledging that the department would "foster voluntary efforts" within companies.

U.S. News and World Report,
August 19, 1991

Announcements

Campus

Cuninggim Center Writers' Workshop meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. in Kennedy Center, MRL 237. New members are being accepted for the Fall Semester. Attend the meeting on October 9 or call the Cuninggim Center at 322-4843 to indicate interest.

Dissertation Writers meet at the Cuninggim Center on Wednesday, October 2 from 4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.

Students for Women's Concerns is dedicated to addressing the special concerns of women at Vanderbilt as well as highlighting the accomplishments of women around the world. SWC is an opportunity for student involvement in women's issues, education, and celebration.

To participate for the academic year write to Box 7075 Station B or call the Cuninggim Center for more information.

Students for Choice is an undergraduate organization dedicated to promoting reproductive rights for women. Students interested in participating for the academic year should call Tracy Winter, Chair, at 421-6422 or call the Cuninggim Center.

Deadlines

Grant application deadlines from *The Grant Advisor*:

— October 15, Bunting Institute: Bunting Fellowship (for women scholars) 617/495-8212

— November 15, Visiting Professorships for Women, 202/357-7734

For further information call Division of Sponsored Research 322-2631.

Women's Research Awards. The National Association for Women in Education announces two \$750 awards, one for a graduate student and the second for persons at any career/professional level. Deadline to submit entries is November 1. More information is available on the announcement board at the Cuninggim Center.

Conferences

For more information check the announcement board at the Cuninggim Center.

Gender in Academe: Who Cares? is the Second Biennial Conference hosted by University of South Florida, Tampa, October 31 through November 2, 1991. The conference planners seek a lively forum on gender in academe to facilitate the exchange of theory and research.

Community

YWCA Safety and Self-Defense Training. This comprehensive look at prevention awareness and specific techniques for self-defense will focus on risk reduction and a more confident lifestyle. Instructors are Marlene Hall, Vanderbilt Crime Prevention Officer, and Maria Allen, Rape and Sexual Abuse Center Crisis Intervention Director. Three Wednesdays beginning October 9. Fee \$45. Call the YWCA at 269-9922 for further information.

Third Annual Southern Festival of Books October 11, 12, and 13 at Legislative Plaza features a number of Vanderbilt faculty. A panel on "Currents of Feminism" (Saturday, October 12 at 11:00 a.m.) is composed of Nancy Walker, professor of English and director of Women's Studies at Vanderbilt, Patricia Hill Collins, faculty member in African American Studies at the University of Cincinnati, and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, professor of History and Women's Studies at Emory University. For more information call 320-7001.



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Address _____

Student (give school and class) _____ Staff _____

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Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

Vanderbilt University
Franklin Bldg., West Side Row
Box 1513, Station B
Nashville, TN 37235

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