

Margaret  
Cunningham  
Women's Center

## 90s politics

# Women vote their discontent

Martha Bickley, Editor and Publisher,  
*Citizenne*, a fortnightly publication for  
women

1991 began with a bang when *Thelma and Louise* came to movie theaters across the country. The female buddy-buddy adventure film birthed a storm of controversy. While some saw *T&L* as a feminist statement, others cried foul for its "violence" against men. What might have been just another movie excited many women simply because its main characters were female, and angered others for the same reason. *T&L* may not have shed much light on our culture's double standard for women, but certainly the controversy surrounding the movie did.

Within months of each other, William Kennedy Smith and Mike Tyson were indicted on rape charges. Acquaintance rape became a much-discussed topic, and the good girl-bad girl syndrome was proven alive and well. Smith's alleged victim's unsavory past didn't help the prosecution, nor the fact that she had met Smith in a bar in the wee hours of the night; Smith was acquitted. Tyson's victim's case probably was helped significantly by the fact that she was an exemplary student and active in church activities; Tyson was dealt a six-year sentence.

But the biggest bomb of 1991 fell during the nomination hearings of Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court. Anita Hill, a professor at the University of Oklahoma, alleged that Thomas had sexually harassed her during her service with the EEOC in Washington. The nation's eyes turned to the Senate Judiciary Committee—which happened to be all-white and

all-male.

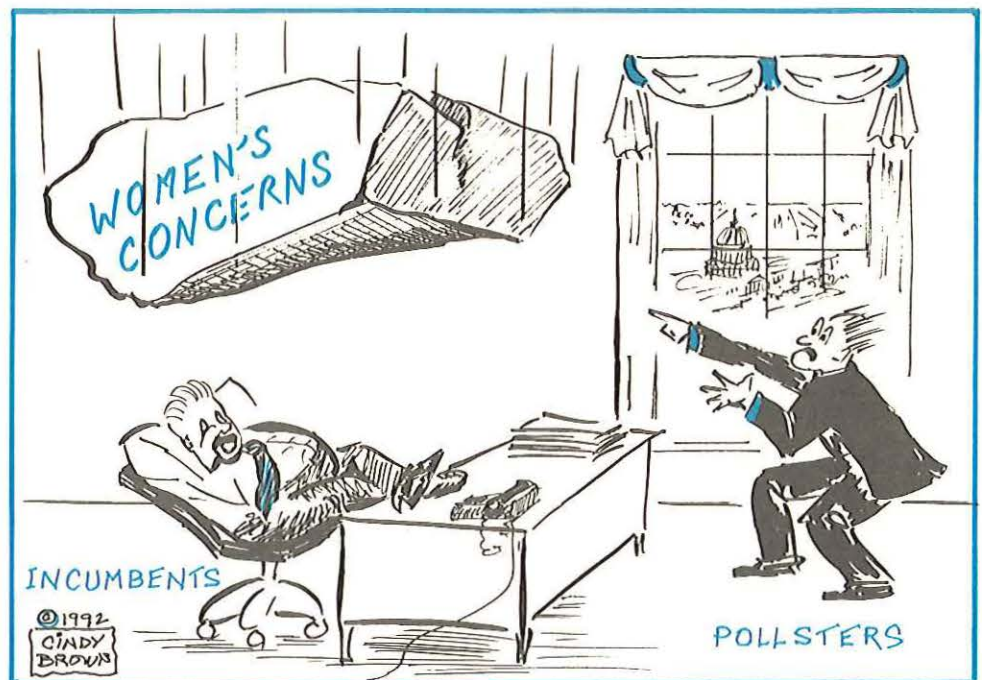
Thomas' nomination was disturbing to plenty of observers even before the allegations came to light—Thomas had claimed to have never discussed *Roe v. Wade* or his opinion on abortion rights. This highly incredible assertion was met with meek acceptance by the Senate Judiciary Committee, although not by women's groups and abortion rights supporters. Is it possible that a Supreme Court nominee would never have discussed a landmark decision? Many didn't think so, but this topic and its reverberations were eclipsed by the leak of Hill's allegations of sexual harassment.

Millions of Americans watched while ninety-eight men and two women stood to cast their votes. By a margin of three votes, Clarence Thomas was confirmed as a Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Thelma and Louise... the Smith and Tyson trials... the confirmation of Clarence Thomas... each of these fueled the anxiety of millions of women by more sharply pointing out women's second-class citizenship; perhaps women are coming out of denial.

Taken in a historical context, one could draw a conclusion that the political activity generated by these events is only to be anticipated, a blip on a twenty-some-odd-year cycle—a waxing and waning of activity. In 1920 women won suffrage; in the 1940s women were called upon to "man" factories to produce war supplies; the 1960s produced "women's lib"; the 1980s, a decade of greed and conservatism, turned the tides back against women and minorities, a sure-fire recipe for political discontent.

(continued page two)



Why should I worry? It's just a piece of fluff.

# Women vote their discontent (from page one)

The 1980s also saw a Supreme Court laden with conservatives, the fulfillment of one of the Reagan-Bush administration's campaign promises. But the abortion debate, the emergence of Operation Rescue, the anticipation of the weakening or overturn of *Roe v. Wade* all have drawn American women's attention to the fact that our basic rights cannot be left to the government we helped elect.

Political fund raisers like EMILY's (Early Money Is Like Yeast—it makes the dough rise) List for Democratic women and Wish (Women In the Senate and House) List for Republican women have funneled money to selected women candidates and played significant roles in their elections. These as well as the Fund for the Feminist Majority and the National Organization for Women saw dramatic increases in membership and contributions following the Thomas hearings.

Women seem to be fed up and are beginning to put their money where their mouths are—aided in part by women's growing economic power. Primary congressional election

victories by Carol Moseley Braun in Illinois and Lynn Yeakel in Pennsylvania may be the foreshadowing of a major upheaval in American politics.

There are two projects active locally which may interest the reader.

WomenElect Tennessee, a NOW-sponsored project, has a three-point plan for electing women to office: find and recruit women to run for office, raise funds, provide financial support, and train workers who will rotate among campaigns. WomenElect Tennessee is based on the WomenElect 2000 project in Louisiana, which qualified fifty-seven women to run for legislative office last year. Women interested in running for office, volunteering or contributing can call the Nashville NOW line at 269-7141.

Women In the Nineties (WIN) is a bipartisan donor network structured much like EMILY's List. Contributors join by writing a \$50 check and in addition agree to send a minimum contribution to two candidates on WIN's list of progressive candidates. Key issues for WIN include reproductive freedom; discrimination; educa-

tion; tax reform; health care; and freedom from sexual abuse and sexual assault. Candidates who wish to apply for WIN approval should write P.O. Box 198881, Nashville, TN 37219-8881. (WIN is sponsoring Patricia Carbine, founding editor of *Ms.*, June 4 at the Cumberland Club. WIN members may attend free; CABLE members for \$10; non-members for \$20.)

What immediate effect will these projects have on state and local politics? We'll have to wait and see. In the meantime, it is refreshing to see the organizational foresight these projects employ and the excitement they are generating. Women candidates who do not succeed this election cycle will gain voter recognition and valuable experience for the next races, and merely by running for office may force incumbents to address issues and dip into campaign war chests, something they may have never had to do before.

1991 may have been a very bad year, but in the long run, the fruit it bears may be sweet indeed. ■



## Women's VU

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## News quotes

### Women shock male political system

They are the "stealth candidates"—a string of women who are primed to do what Lynn Yeakel did last week [April 28] in Pennsylvania—shock the male-dominated political establishment this year.

Across the country, women are waiting in the wings, hoping they can seize on voters' newfound receptivity to them, as did Yeakel, who won the Democratic Senate primary Tuesday in Pennsylvania.

A confluence of political factors bodes well for these candidates. With the Cold War over, people are focusing on domestic issues that were often dismissed by men as the domain of women, such as child care and education. In a year when it is fashionable to be a political outsider, women have long been considered to be on the fringes of the political

process and are generally perceived in voter surveys as more honest than men.

Indeed, after years of struggling to be taken seriously by the people who raise money for campaigns, women's political organizations are reporting that their contributions have doubled this year over the level two years ago.

*The Tennessean*, May 3, 1992

### Small achievement of parity worth noting

The median starting salaries for new holders of doctorates in mathematics who are launching careers in academia rose only slightly last year, according to a recent survey conducted by the American Mathematical Society (AMS) and released late last fall.

(continued page five)

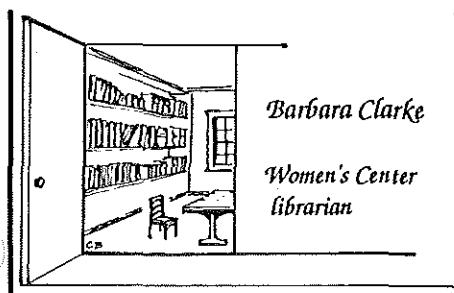
## New library arrivals

# Acker writes of pioneering women in film industry

Ally Acker's *Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema, 1896 to the Present* is a fascinating history of women in the film industry. Many important women pioneers in this field are not known to most film students of today.

Until about 1920 many women played major roles in the cinema. As movie-making became more of a business and less of an art, men were given more and more of the important roles behind the camera and few women were allowed to join their ranks. Only in recent years has this situation changed.

The volume includes sections on women in all aspects of the cinema:



directors, producers, stuntwomen, animators, editors, writers, technicians, minority women in film, and women in foreign movies. Within each section the biographies and accompanying filmographies are arranged in chronological order. Included in the work are over one hundred photographs and a useful bibliography.

*Feminist Fatale: Voices from the "Twentysomething" Generation Explore the Future of the "Women's Movement"* was written by Paula Kamen, a young woman in her early twenties. She first became interested in women's issues when she was a columnist for a student newspaper, and some of her articles led a fellow columnist to call her a "feminist fatale."

Kamen quickly became aware of the strong negative images young people associated with feminists, and she decided to investigate "the special threat of the feminist stigma to people of our age group." Not a great deal of

research has been done on feminism and the young women of today.

Most of this book is devoted to the results of a survey Kamen conducted in an effort to study the views of a large and diverse group of people, most of whom were young. She concludes that "Even those who fiercely denied that they were feminists or never before heard the word voiced strong support for

women's rights in general." [Editor's note: Kamen is scheduled to lecture at Vanderbilt October 21.]

*"Communication," the Autobiography of Rachel Maddux, and Her Novella, "Turnip's Blood"* is edited by Nancy A. Walker, director of the Vanderbilt women's studies program. The foreword is by Susan Ford Wiltshire,

(continued page five)

## Kudos to Manzo - winner of VU Traveling Fellowship

Michelle Manzo, assistant student editor of *Women's VU* this year, submitted a proposal to the Traveling Fellowship Committee to study maternal and child public health care systems in developed and developing countries next year. The committee was impressed and she was awarded a \$9,000 stipend to travel and study in a number of locations including Switzerland, Sweden, Moscow, Israel, Brazil and the Gambia.

This accomplishment was of particular interest to all of us at the Cuninggim Center as Michelle has contributed in many ways to the work of the Center this year. Last spring she responded to an ad in the newsletter for a student worker for layout and design. Her talents and experience were easily recognized and she was hired beginning in May. Later in the fall semester she also was hired into a staff position as a research assistant at the Medical Center in pediatric gastroenterology/nutrition. Due to a bureaucratic snafu, we discovered she could no longer be on the student payroll. Michelle said "no problem." She would just volunteer at the Cuninggim Center. This has been a huge commitment on her part and one that has meant a lot to the quality of our newsletter. You may have enjoyed her writing skills in the March lead article about the feminism she acquired in her four years at Vanderbilt.

All of the staff at the Cuninggim Center are sorry to see Michelle leave Nashville, but will follow her travels around the world next year (she promises to send an article or two back to publish). Thanks, Michelle, for giving so much of yourself to the work of the Cuninggim Center. Good luck in your travels and further study!



photo by David Crenshaw

Chancellor presents Traveling Fellowship to Michelle Manzo

# Speaking of women . . .

## Tapp captains team work, spirit at Kennedy Center

*Dona Tapp is administrator of the Kennedy Center, one of fourteen federally-funded centers for mental retardation research in the U.S. She is interviewed by Elaine Goleski, project manager of the Library Annex.*

EG: When I speak of women at Vanderbilt, you're one of the people who first comes to my mind. I can't imagine coordinating all the activities and grant applications that come through your office. What kind of support do you get as you work here days, nights, and weekends?

DT: I have always been fortunate in receiving acknowledgement for the work I do from the people I work for. I'm not sure, however, that anyone outside the Kennedy Center really understands how much we do. I just wrote a memo about the fact that we've got twelve grant applications due in the next five weeks.

EG: Do you have an opportunity to compare your workload and status with your peers at the other mental retardation centers?

DT: I do, because we administrators meet twice a year to talk about common issues and problems. It's interesting; four are male and ten are female. I believe it is true that all the male administrators are called assistant directors and that all the females are called administrators, which is my title. Our workloads vary from one center to another, but not according to title.

EG: How did you end up in this job? Was it something you planned to do?

DT: I'm one of those faculty wives who started out working part-time for my husband when our youngest of five children was old enough for day care. I started doing library research for him, and then Penny Brooks (who knew I was active in local theater groups) asked me to work on a project in which I mimed instructions to children with and without hearing impairments and compared the differences. I had a number of part-

time projects of this type, and finally ended up as a part-time administrative assistant and assistant editor of a journal.

Then my husband and I divorced, and my world changed completely. I suddenly had full responsibility for five children, the oldest of whom was 13, and limited financial resources. Working full-time was absolutely essential, but even then, there were lots of things my children missed. But they grew up to be terrific adults, and I now have five grandchildren to go along with my own five, and I couldn't be prouder or happier.

EG: Given all you do, how do you cope?

DT: Sometimes I don't. When the stress levels get too high around here, I don't always handle it. But I try to remind my troops that I do always appreciate them. We have a strong team spirit in the Kennedy Center, and I think part of that comes from the fact that I'm part of the team—

that I'll do whatever it takes as we're working toward a deadline. I also think rewards are important for staff, and I'm frustrated at not being able to tie job performance to salary increases.

EG: How would you characterize the climate for women at Vanderbilt?

DT: I think it's gotten better, though I'm not sure how much is Vanderbilt wanting to do the right thing, versus how much is engendered by the presence of the Women's Center. I think the University Series on Valuing Diversity has been excellent. For me, personally, the climate at the Kennedy Center has been very supportive. I feel I've come a long way for someone who doesn't have a degree; I've been in an environment where people recognize abilities rather than just credentials.

EG: What activities would you do if you weren't so immersed in your work?

DT: My job is *never* just forty hours per week, so there are lots of things I want to do, though I may have to retire in order to have the time to do them. I recently discovered that I enjoy painting, so I'd love to take painting lessons. And my grandchildren—I'd love to take them all to the beach with me. Children are the best investment in our country that we can make: being with them is a way to shape their destiny and ours. ■



*Dona Tapp is interviewed by Elaine Goleski*

*photo by Larry Wilson*



## Library arrivals (from page three)

professor of classics at Vanderbilt; Maddux and Wiltshire were friends.

The autobiography is published here for the first time. Maddux completed it in 1941 when she was twenty-eight, and she lived to the age of seventy. Only one copy of the manuscript survived; shortly after it was written the author sent it to friends in Florida. The manuscript was presented to Wiltshire by this elderly couple a year after Maddux's death.

Included with the remarkable autobiography is *Turnip's Blood*, Maddux's first published short story. Her best-known work is probably the novel, *A Walk in the Spring Rain*, which was published in 1966 and made into a movie in 1970.

This is the first volume in the series the University of Tennessee Press plans to publish on Rachel Maddux, and the forthcoming volumes will also be edited by Nancy Walker.

*Gendered Spaces* by Daphne Spain is a new book on the relationship between space and gender. Spain believes that spatial segregation helps to reduce women's access to knowledge, and therefore aids in reinforcing the lower status of women.

Spain uses many examples from modern and non-industrial societies to illustrate her theories. ■

## News quotes (from page two)

The median nine-month salary for men was \$33,000 in 1991, vs. \$32,000 a year earlier. For women, the median salary was \$33,200 in 1991, compared with \$32,500 in 1990. AMS officials speculate that the median salary was higher for female mathematicians than for their male counterparts because of an apparent attempt on the part of employers to raise salaries for women in the field overall, although a precise explanation wasn't offered in the study.

*The Scientist*, May 17, 1992

Page 5, *Women's VU*, June 1992

## Domestic violence Support exists for victims

Beth Colvin Huff, RN, MSN  
Associate in OB-GYN

A woman is beaten every eighteen seconds in this country, according to a recent article published by the National Women's Health Network. That's ten women every three minutes. Violence affects women of all age groups, social and economic classes, and sexual preferences. It might be happening to you or to someone you know.

While there are instances of women who beat men, in most cases it is the woman who is beaten. It is often difficult to understand why a battered woman stays with her abuser. She may feel dependent on her partner financially or she may feel she cannot face the social stigma of leaving her husband, and perhaps her children. She may believe, time after time, her partner's assurances that "it will never happen again."

Violence occurs when one person believes he has the right to physically control his partner, according to the Tennessee Task Force Against Domestic Violence. It is not the result of stress or a bad relationship. These situations are usually handled in other, non-violent ways. Battering is about power and control. No woman deserves to be controlled in this way.

What can be done to help the battered woman? First is identification. For those in the health care field, a question like, "Has anyone ever physically hurt you?" or, "We ask all women with injuries like yours if they've ever been hurt by their partner" can introduce the subject. Even if the woman denies battering, she will know that she has permission to discuss it when she is ready.

If you suspect a friend is being physically abused, show your concern about her injuries and ask if anyone has hurt her. Reassure her of your support. This may include providing a safe place for her (and her children) or simply helping her obtain the community assistance available to her. Remember that leaving her partner is a very difficult, personal decision. Don't blame her if she returns to him multiple times. She may, with your support, be able to finally break away from the batterer.

Referral is the next step. The best resource is the YWCA Shelter and Domestic Violence Program at 297-8833. Immediate assistance is available from the police, various emergency shelters, and local hospitals (if medical attention is necessary). Food, legal assistance, housing, and counseling are all available to help the woman get back on her feet. Counseling is also available for the batterer to learn new ways of communicating without violence.

If you are the one being physically abused, remember: you do not deserve to be beaten. Reach out; get help. Your life is worth it. ■

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That's ten women  
every three minutes*

# Announcements

## Susan Ford Wiltshire essay competition winners are honored

The Women's Studies Program and the Women's Faculty Organization announce the 1992 winners of the Susan Ford Wiltshire essay competition. Winner of the award for the best undergraduate paper was Jane Chun; Emily Walker and Beverly Zink tied for the graduate award.

Chun, a senior in history, wrote on "Women in Nazi Germany." Walker, a graduate student in the history department, wrote a paper entitled "Elizabeth Avery Meriwether: Moral Mother as Radical Reformer," and Zink, a student in the graduate department of religion, considered "Nineteenth Century Models for Ministry: Women Defending Their Right to Preach."

Cuninggim Center Book Group continues to meet on the second Monday during the summer.

June 8, 5:15 to 6:15 p.m., the group will discuss *Quicksand* and *Passing* by Nella Larsen. Facilitator is Jane Dubose.

July 13—*You Just Don't Understand* by Deborah Tannen

August 10—*Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard

New members are welcome.

## Call for papers

*Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture and Society* is soliciting contributions for a special issue on Feminism and the Law to be published in 1994. Articles should have an international focus and can touch on issues such as the role of feminism in changes in law, legal training, and social change.

Send papers in triplicate by September 1, 1992 to 495 Ford Hall, University of Minnesota, 224 Church Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455. For more information, contact Mary Louise Fellows, 338 Law School, University of Minnesota, 229 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455, (612)626-0624.

## Ransom repeats self-image workshop June 18

The workshop on women and self-image conducted by Nancy Ransom will be offered again on Thursday, June 18, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Cuninggim Center. Priority will be given to the twenty women who made up a waiting list for the May workshop. Anyone else who is interested should call soon (322-4843) because the group is limited and most spaces already are taken. There is no charge but reservations are required.

## Black and White: Building a Bridge

*500 years in the land of the Native American*

Following the success of last year's exhibit, *Women On The Inner Journey*, this second exhibit continues to present explorations of art and spirituality at In The Gallery June 14 through July 3. This year's exhibit of painting, sculpture, drawings, and photography is the work of nineteen biracial women artists. Its purpose is to create a seed for healing and transformation of the historical conflicts between the races—black, white, and Native American.

The opening reception on Sunday June 4 from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. features performances by singer/songwriters Vanessa Hill, Mary Beth Anderson, and Jeanne Smith, and poet Gwynelle Dismukes.

In The Gallery is located at 626 Jefferson Street (at 8th Avenue North), Nashville, Tennessee. Sponsored by Lifeworks Foundation, Scarritt Bennett Center, and individuals listed in exhibit catalog.

For more information contact Noris Binet at 297-6654.



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