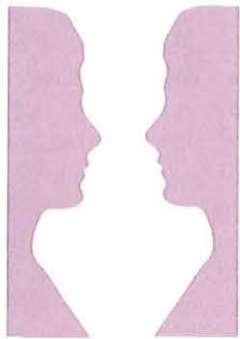


## Becoming a mentor

*Guiding others requires time, tact*

For women struggling to reach the top of the ladder in the business and academic worlds, the problems of those toiling below them can seem irrelevant. But the experiences of women at Vanderbilt and elsewhere demonstrate that reaching out to mentor other women can be a mutually rewarding and illuminating experience.

Women who have been successful mentors note that the process of mentoring can be handled in many different ways, but some key elements are important for anyone interested in becoming a better mentor.



**Making a commitment.** Successful women are always busy. Only those willing to make a conscious commitment to helping others will take the time needed to guide others down the best career path. While many women serve unknowingly as role models for others, it's important that more women take a proactive role to help others break the glass ceiling.

This commitment can include making time for formal sessions of give-and-take with a protégée, or more informal exchanges at lunch or by phone, for example.

**Spotting new talent.** An interested mentor is usually on the watch for ambitious and talented new employees who could benefit from advice and prodding. Pat Pierce, director of Vanderbilt's Opportunity Development Center, has seen two of her assistant directors leave to direct the affirmative action programs at other schools. She says she made a concerted effort with both assistants to prepare them for a director's position. "It is really important when you see a bright, fast-learning, creative individual, that you provide not just some guidance, but start planning ways to advance their career," Pierce says.

**Accepting other styles.** Most successful mentors don't attempt to impose their personal leadership styles on the women they advise. Janet Jernigan, executive director of Senior Citizens, Inc., has had formal mentoring relationships with three women in recent years. Of the three, "one had a style close to my own, and the other two were a little more direct in their leadership style," Jernigan notes. "Everybody's got their own style. There are several different ways to accomplish a goal." Rather than impose her ideas on others, "I just say, 'Have you considered this?' or 'This is why I did what I did.'" All three of the women Jernigan mentored went on to become executive directors at other non-profit agencies.

*continued on page 2*

## Building a bridge

From remarks by Ann Kaiser, professor of special education, in accepting one of two Mentoring Awards given in March by the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center:

*Mentoring is building a bridge — from one generation to the next — across the abyss of professional and personal development.*

*Each bridge is similar at its core — made of trust, shared vision, and hard work, but every bridge looks and functions differently. Building such a bridge takes two people, one standing at either end. Both take risks. Progress is not always easy or smooth; sometimes it is not even recognizable. Both people grow in the process . . . often in ways they did not choose or predict but always in the ways that are precisely right for where they are in their lives.*

*I have always gotten at least as much as I have given in mentoring relationships — the chance to pass on what was given to me, the moments of insight and shared passion, and the incentive to mature as an advisor, a teacher and a mentor. I am deeply grateful for what my students have given me when we have been able to build bridges together.*



Ann Kaiser (right) accepts her Mentoring Award from Nancy Ransom.



*"Maternal leave? No, Sandra dear, partners at Phossil, Rellik, Stoneage, and Anachronism don't get pregnant."*

## Mentoring *continued from page 1*

**Painting the big picture.** One important role a mentor can play is helping younger staff members understand the context of problems they're working on.

Lauren Brisky, associate vice chancellor for finance, was one of two winners of the Mentoring Awards given this year by the Women's Center. She thinks it is "very hard for people to do well when they don't understand the big picture." When working with staff members, she makes a special effort to "explain the context in which a particular problem is embedded." This approach helps to develop skills by encouraging young managers to think broadly when tackling an issue or a personality that is causing problems. "It allows people to grow beyond the defined scope of their traditional duties," she notes.

Brisky, like many successful mentors, cites the style of her own mentors as a key factor in her approach to advising others. "Early in my career, the people I worked for operated that way," taking time to explain the big picture to her. She recalls in particular a vice president at Cornell who spent 30 minutes at the start of each day describing to her the problems he was working on and the context of each. It

was an invaluable learning experience and one that she is now passing on to others.

**Providing opportunities for growth.** As director of ODC, Pierce says she sits down with all her employees and asks, "Are there things we can do here that would make your job more interesting? What are your goals and aspirations?"

This approach extends to entry-level workers. "When I see people with college degrees in clerical positions who are underemployed, I try to give them other opportunities within the office" to expand their duties and use their talents, Pierce says. This not only benefits the office, but usually makes for a happier employee, less likely to depart quickly for a better

opportunity elsewhere.

Pierce encourages her employees to attend classes, conferences and programs that will further their careers. She sends everyone in her center to the supervisory classes offered by Vanderbilt's office of Training and Organization Development, even the entry-level workers supervising only two or three students. "I try to start right at the beginning developing their skills," Pierce says.

**Reaping the rewards.** Most successful mentors see the process of mentoring as a two-way street, with benefits for those on both sides. A well-trained employee can often assume more responsibilities, relieving the load on her supervisor.

"In a more generic form, I think of mentoring as coaching," Brisky notes. "It's an investment. I invest the time with people, and then I watch them take off and accomplish so much."

Jernigan echoes these thoughts and explains that mentoring has always been "fun" for her. "There's the reward of seeing people accomplish their goals and feel good about themselves. Most people have more potential than they realize, and I enjoy helping them fulfill that potential."

With fewer women at the top to lead the way, it is especially important that women managers see the value of advising and assisting young women on the way up. "It is incumbent on women to help other women," Pierce argues. "It is so important when women succeed, that they reach back and pull up others behind them. It just means we are sharing our success with them." ■



**Women's VU** is published monthly September through June at the Margaret Cuningglim Women's Center, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. Campus address: 316 West Side Row. Mailing address: Box 1513, Station B, Nashville, TN 37235. Phone: (615) 322-4843. Fax: (615) 343-0940. E-mail address: [womenctr@ctrvox.Vanderbilt.edu](mailto:womenctr@ctrvox.Vanderbilt.edu).

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# M A Y

## Calendar of Events

Margaret  
Cunningim  
Women's Center



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

### MAY 1-30

"Contemporary Realism," exhibit of oil paintings by Sharon Rusch Shaver remains on display through May. The exhibit is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### MAY 5 / MONDAY

Dissertation Writers, 4 to 6 p.m.

### MAY 6 / TUESDAY

Creative Life Planning Group has two speakers from the Nashville Mental Health Association: Judy Hoppe, Regional Coordinator, and Fran Peebles, Clinical Director. Their topics are "Erasing the Stigma of Mental Illness" and "Women and Depression." New members welcome. Bring your lunch; drinks provided. Noon to 1 p.m.

### MAY 12 / MONDAY

Book Group discusses *Come Go Home with Me* by Sheila K. Adams. Facilitator, Sarah Kazdan. 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. New members welcome.

### MAY 13 / TUESDAY

Creative Life Planning Group meets weekly to focus on ways to improve problem-solving skills and make life changes, noon to 1 p.m. New members welcome. For information call Judy Helfer at 322-6518.

### MAY 20 / TUESDAY

Creative Life Planning Group discusses the book *Motherless Daughters: The Legacy of Loss* by Hope Edelman. Discussion will be facilitated by Chris Germino, noon to 1 p.m. For information call Judy Helfer at 322-6518.

### MAY 23 / FRIDAY

Open House at the Women's Center for Alumni Weekend. 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Art exhibit of oil paintings by Sharon Rusch Shaver is on display.

### MAY 24 / SATURDAY

Open House at the Women's Center for Alumni Weekend. 9 a.m. to noon.

### MAY 27 / TUESDAY

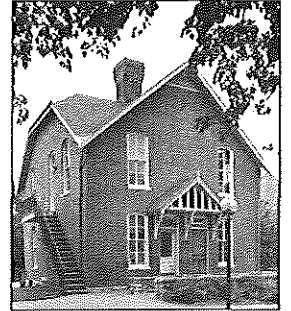
Creative Life Planning Group, noon to 1 p.m.

Freelance Writers Group, a group of women writers who meet monthly to get feedback from other writers and share information. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. For information contact Beth Grantham, facilitator, at 352-9214. New members welcome.

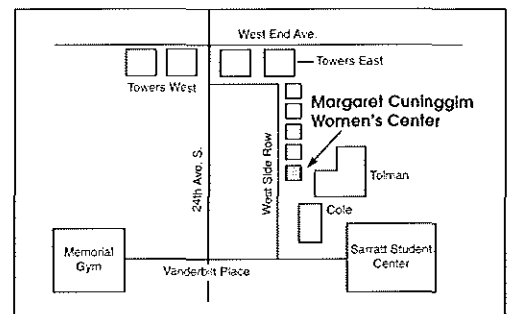
## Visiting Alumni . . .

are welcome at the Women's Center during Reunion Weekend. An exhibit of oil paintings by artist Sharon Rusch Shaver will be on display and open for viewing during the day on Friday and Saturday morning.

Stop by our building on West Side Row for a visit before the Saturday luncheon on Alumni Lawn.



## How to find us . . .



Unless otherwise stated, all programs are held at the Cuningim Center, Franklin Building, 316 West Side Row. For more information, please call 322-4843.

# In the library...

## Tax system places heavy burdens on working mothers

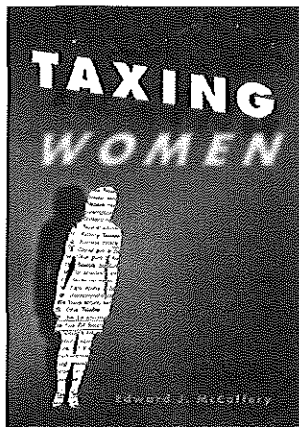
Barbara Clarke,  
Women's Center  
librarian



Edward J. McCaffery's *Taxing Women* (University of Chicago Press, 1997) illustrates how current U.S. tax laws are biased against women, particularly against working mothers. Most of the present laws were formulated from the 1930s to the 1950s, when it was assumed that most adults were members of a family with a working male and a wife who was economically dependent on her husband.

The volume is aimed at the general reader. McCaffery, a professor of law at the University of Southern California and the California Institute of Technology, shows how the current system of taxation affects women of differing socioeconomic groups in different ways. Some upper-income families are better off financially when the wife does not work. Married women enter a tax bracket that is based on their husband's salary, since the man usually has the higher income. Many middle-class mothers discover that their employment outside the home is hardly worthwhile after child-care expenses and taxes are paid. This suits some conservative segments of society.

McCaffery shows how the current system of taxation discourages lower-income women, whether or not they have children, from marrying at all; for these women there is a strong marriage penalty. The tax structure is most advantageous to married men; it penalizes single people as well as married women who work outside the home.

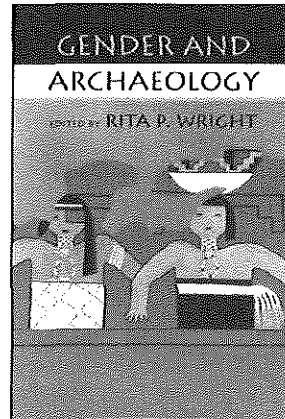


Some married women do not benefit from their contributions to Social Security; these are virtually donations to the system. Social Security is most beneficial to married men and favors single-earner families. It is more heavily skewed against working wives and divorced women than is federal income tax.

The writer suggests how best to rid the tax system of many of the present biases. He feels it would be fairer to tax married men more and

married women less. This would need to be phrased in gender-neutral terms: primary earners should pay more tax and secondary earners should pay less. He recommends a system of separate rather than joint income tax filing and shows why this is preferable to a flat tax, which also penalizes dual-earner families.

*Gender and Archaeology* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996) is a collection of articles illustrating current ideas about feminist studies and gender in archaeology; the editor is Rita P. Wright, an associate professor of anthropology at New York University. Wright argues that there are many "archaeologies of gender," rather than just one. Archaeologists have been slower than other social scientists to study and assess the importance of gender.



Most of the contributors are prominent anthropologists, rather than archaeologists; two are scholars from other fields. The writers seek to integrate gender into most aspects of archaeology: into the vast field of the interpretation of the past and into education and mentoring.

The contributors discuss such diverse topics as women and fertility in prehistoric times, the importance of gendered thinking for students of archaeology, and the intersection of field practice and gender. ■

### VIDEO TAPES



The library has a collection of videotapes that may be checked out for two weeks by faculty, staff and students. A number of the videotapes are accompanied by discussion guides. Among the many tapes available are:

- *The Chilly Climate for Women in Colleges and Universities* (University of Western Ontario, 1991)
- *Out For a Change: Addressing Homophobia in Women's Sports* (Woman Vision, 1994)
- *Dating Violence: The Hidden Secret* (Intermedia, 1993)
- *Still Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women* by Jean Kilbourne (Cambridge Documentary Films, 1987)
- *Girls in the Middle: Working to Succeed in School* (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1996)
- *Campus Rape* with Susan Dey and Corbin Bernsen (Rape Treatment Center, Santa Monica Hospital Medical Center, 1990)
- *Classroom Climate Workshops: Gender Equity* (Purdue University Schools of Engineering, Science and Liberal Arts, 1996)

# “ NEWS QUOTES ”

## *Female athletes read, too*

Magazine racks crowded with sports titles for men traditionally offered few such choices for women. Most publishers thought women didn't care about athletics and there was no market for general interest sports magazines for women. But that is changing.

This month Time Warner will unveil *Sports Illustrated Women/Sport*, with features on star female athletes and advice to wannabes. In September Condé Nast will roll out *Condé Nast Sports for Women*, with a focus on sportswear, travel, and training tips.

"Why these magazines now? Well, a large part of it is we've seen more active women because of Title IX," says *Sports for Women* publisher Deanna Brown, referring to the 1972 gender equality rule that has quadrupled the number of women playing college sports.

—*U.S. News & World Report*, April 14, 1997

## *Woman's killer likely to be her partner*

More women in New York City are killed by their husbands or boyfriends than in robberies, disputes, sexual assaults, drug violence, random attacks or any other crime in cases where the motive for murder is known.

That conclusion, long suspected by family violence and criminal justice experts, has been confirmed by a study of every woman killed in New York City over five years, one of the first studies of its kind in the country. Researchers learned that nearly half of the women were killed by current or former husbands or boyfriends, a higher proportion than expected. Nationally, the figure is 40 percent, compared with 6 percent of men killed by wives or girlfriends.

—*New York Times*, March 31, 1997

## *Child care may affect bond to mother*

The most comprehensive study yet of the effects of child care shows mixed results, revealing neutral or positive effects on some fronts while raising new questions about whether heavy child-care use hurts the mother-child relationship.

The federally sponsored study shows that using child care doesn't hurt the cognitive and language development of children, when compared with kids at home with their mothers. And high-quality day care tends to improve these skills, especially when care givers talk often with children in a rich and responsive way.

However, the study also shows that mothers who put their children in long hours of child care starting in infancy tend to be slightly less sensitive in their interactions with them, and that their children at some stages show less affection for their mothers. Though statistically significant, these effects are very small.

—*Wall Street Journal*, April 4, 1997

## Werthan Award nominations due by June 10

Do you know someone in the University community who has made special contributions toward the advancement of women at Vanderbilt?

If so, this is your opportunity to nominate that person for the Mary Jane Werthan Award, given annually by the Women's Center to recognize an individual for efforts that have benefited women on campus.

The award honors a person with "vision, persistence, and extraordinary skill in interpersonal and institutional relations." Nominations, including a *curriculum vitae* and other supporting material, must be received at the Women's Center by June 10.

To be presented Nov. 6 at the annual Margaret Cuninggim Lecture, the award was created in 1988 and named in honor of its first recipient, Mary Jane Werthan, the first woman to become a life member of the Vanderbilt Board of Trust.

## Summer reading? Try the Women's Center book group

If you like to read and would enjoy a small group discussion of books with other interested women, check out the book group that meets monthly at the Women's Center.

Among the books chosen for the group's summer reading list is the June selection, *Stones from the River*, Ursula Hegi's acclaimed novel about life in a small German town before and during the rise of the Nazis. The central character is a dwarf, Trudi Montag, who longs to be like everyone else. During the course of the story, she comes to realize that being different is a secret shared by everyone, including the Jews hiding in her closet.

The book group meets the second Monday of each month with discussion led by a facilitator. For details, call Judy Helfer at 322-6518.

### Correction

Artist Sharon Rusch Shaver was misidentified in the April issue of *Women's VU*. We regret the error.

# Announcements

## Conferences

The **National Organization for Women** is holding its annual conference in Tennessee this summer. The July 4-6 meeting in Memphis will feature several nationally prominent speakers and a variety of workshops on women's issues. Special caucuses will provide an opportunity to meet others from around the country who share specific interests, such as lesbian rights, eco-feminism, religion and spirituality and feminism for young women. Registration cost is \$85; reduced room rates for conference attendees are available at the Peabody Hotel. For more information, contact NOW's national headquarters in Washington at 202-331-0066 or email [conference@now.org](mailto:conference@now.org).

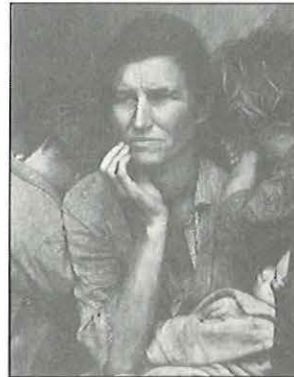
**Economic Equity: Realities, Responsibilities and Rewards** is the subject of a National Working Women's Summit June 5 in Washington, D.C. The summit will be led by Ida Castro, director-designate of the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor. Cities across the country will host satellite broadcasts of the event. Pat Pierce, director of Vanderbilt's Opportunity Development Center, is heading local efforts to establish a satellite site in Nashville.

The seventh annual **Southern Women in Public Service** conference will be June 1-3 in Lexington, KY. The meeting is aimed at women in government positions and others in the private sector interested in improving leadership opportunities for women. Conference sessions will include such topics as fundraising strategies, leadership styles and navigating the "good ole boy" network. Cost is \$194 for government/non-profit representatives; \$254 for others. For more information, contact the Stennis Center for Public Service at 601-325-8409.

The **National Women's Music Festival** is May 29-June 1 on the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington. The musical and cultural festival includes nine concerts, more than 250 workshops on many facets of women's lives, dances, art exhibits and films. All events are held indoors, so there are no rained-out concerts. Registration is available by event (from \$28) or for the entire festival (\$215). For information, call 317-927-9355.

## Exhibits

**Photographs of Dorothea Lange** are on exhibit at the Cheekwood Museum of Art through June 29. The collection includes 85 original prints by Lange, including the well-known Depression-era image, "Migrant Mother," which was taken as part of a Farm Security Administration project. One of the most influential photographers in American history, Lange was also the first woman to receive a Guggenheim fellowship. For information on exhibit hours, call Cheekwood at 353-2140.



Lange's "Migrant Mother"

## Quotable Women

*"It is never too late to be what you might have been."*

—Mary Ann Evans  
19th century novelist who wrote under the pen name George Eliot



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