
ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER

NEWSLETTER

FALL 1993



VOLUME 10 NUMBER 1

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The new academic year has begun and the Shaw Center is filled with revitalized energy and spirit; certainly the fresh paint, new rug, blinds, curtains, and reupholstered and refinished furniture as well as the aroma of freshly brewed coffee welcome and affirm the women's community as never before. Excellent staff and creative, concerned students, faculty, and advisory board members have planned and are carrying out programming that stimulates and engages the School of Theology and the broader community.

We have also embarked on an important research project to determine why clergywomen in the United Methodist church leave local church ministry. If you are a U.M.C. clergywoman and are interested in participating in this project, please contact the Center.

In the following article by Faith Richardson, she identifies herself as the widow of H. Neil Richardson. We know her as secretary of the Shaw Advisory Board and former secretary to Bishop Mathews, secretary of the Council of Bishops and secretary of the General Conference. Dr. Richardson has also played a principle role in the establishment of the Commission on Pan-Methodist Cooperation and was the recent recipient of the Scarritt Bennett Center's Eradication of Racism Award.

WHAT IS A WIDOW TO DO?

by C. Faith Richardson

The thoughts expressed in this article first sprang to my mind in the early stages of grieving and coping with legalities in connection with the death of my husband, H. Neil Richardson, professor emeritus of Boston University School of Theology. I mulled over my thoughts for almost three years before putting them into written form, which I then shared with a few friends, both male and female. Some expressed concern that I might be disrespectful of marriage or slightly avant garde. Now, almost five years after Neil's death and at the request of the Anna Howard Shaw Center, I have reread my words and find that they still reflect my concerns. I also consider them to be in keeping with my Christian understanding of the meaning of life and death. I give permission to print this article and would welcome any reactions from those who read it.

It is strange how things of little consequence to others can loom so large in a person's mind! Now in widowhood I find some of our social customs incongruous. For instance, I have become increasingly annoyed because I am still introduced and receive all mail addressed as "Mrs." Is it really being avant garde or disrespectful not to want to be addressed in this way? Perhaps I'm naive, but I thought the "Mrs." title went out with nylons and garterbelts. Certainly Neil and I both favored the

growing trend of the last thirty years for women not to be addressed using the husband's given name. We were dedicated to maintaining our own individuality as well as a partnership.

Dictionaries indicate that "Mrs." is a conventional title prefixed to a married woman's surname, sometimes with the husband's given name, or a mistress (which I certainly have never been in the tabloid definition).

**WIDOWHOOD HAS BEEN AROUND
SINCE HUMANS BEGAN MATING**

Those who think that one is still married after becoming a widow, probably haven't experienced the IRS, Social Security, pension providers and other legalities after the loss of a spouse. On the other hand, are there occasions when "Mrs." should be used? Of course. For instance, one would use it in a setting where those present knew my husband but do not know me.

Widowhood has been around since humans began mating. In biblical times widowhood was considered both disgraceful and an inferior status; frequently such women were subjected to harsh treatment. This is very evident throughout the Old Testament. Stories in the Gospels reveal Jesus' sensitivity to widows' marginal existence which unfortunately is often still marginal today.

The early Christian church had a special group called "real widows," who were women over sixty who had been married only once, who were in abject poverty, and who were truly alone; both Ignatius and Polycarp refer to them. These widows were involved with rearing children, showing hospitality, "washing the feet of the saints," helping the needy, and participating in intercessory prayer. It is thought that this order of widows later merged with that of church deaconesses.

In addressing widows, why do we think it necessary to use a title of some kind? Why are we uncomfortable with calling persons by their given names? Is it considered impolite? An invasion of privacy in some

strange way? For me the use of the given name shows that someone really knows who I am and this is appreciated.

I favor the decision made by the general agencies of The United Methodist Church several years ago: to eliminate titles in minutes, addresses, and the like. This was intended to dignify the given name of each individual and to break down perceived status barriers. Does this mean that titles are never used? Of course not, for appropriateness needs to be given consideration in any given situation. Even "Mrs." might be appropriate in an introduction at a high official function if another title is not usable.

All males from an early age can be addressed as "Mr." For females, "Queen" is the only indefinite title I can think of that does not necessarily indicate a relationship to a man, but who of us can use that title? I can be addressed as "Dr.," for I have an honorary doctorate, but few widows are this lucky. How should they be addressed? For that matter, how should a female of any age or status be addressed today? Why don't the feminists come up with an appropriate designation?

I suppose I've been somewhat avant garde all seven decades of my life. In fact, I come from a family with a tradition of being individualistic, not necessarily conforming to current trends. I am reminded of the reaction of shock by members of our local church when Neil and I were planning our wedding about fifty-five years ago. At the time we were taking a sociology course in which we learned the symbolic meanings of wedding veils and the giving away. So we

**IN THE RESURRECTION
NO ONE MARRIES**

talked with my parents and decided that I would neither wear a veil, although the virginity symbolism would have been appropriate, nor would my father walk me down the aisle! I still think this was appropriate for a wedding of Christians who were committing themselves to a lifelong

relationship.

This may be why I was so surprised, after Neil's death, to notice that many of my widowed friends were still wearing their wedding bands. In the marriage service the wedding ring is seen as a symbol of faithfulness until parted by death. So the day Neil died his wedding band was taken off and I took the matching ring from my finger; they now reside in a memento box, a reminder of almost fifty years of a marriage bond.

What are widows saying if they continue to wear this "outward and visible sign?" I think of the Gospel narrative (Matthew 22:23 - 33, Mark 12:18 - 27, Luke 20:27 - 40) where Jesus was questioned by some Sadducees about whose wife a certain widow would be in "heaven" since she had married seven times. After stating that in the resurrection no one marries, Jesus said, "Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living." This I believe. Therefore, it seems to me that wearing a wedding band after a marriage union is broken by death or divorce is contrary to Christian theology.

Is it also being avant garde to feel that those who are still in a couple relationship are often insensitive to widows? Lou Squires wrote some months ago about "Coping with Widowhood" in *Prism*, a quarterly journal for retired United Methodist clergy and spouses. She said, "One of the worst jolts for me was to realize that my single status often excluded me from social occasions where I had once been included as part of a couple." I reply, "How true!" This same insensitivity is felt when in a group who are joking about their spouses' refusals to help with household chores. One has a strong desire to shout, "You ought to consider yourself lucky to have a partner to criticize."

I got a few answers from the various resources to which I turned. Feminist writers talk at length about traditions concerning religion, sexism, and the need for changing attitudes, but they seem not to have dealt with some of the "little annoyances" surrounding widowhood. So I ask you, in this day of feminist concerns, what is a widow to do?

ALL WOMEN'S RETREAT

The Anna Howard Shaw Center All Women's Retreat was held September 24 and 25, entitled "Stories That Sustain Us." We shared stories formally and informally throughout the weekend. Our time together culminated in a time of worship centered around a clothesline. We honored all women who have shared their stories and supported one another as they went about their daily work -- at a watering hole, in the kitchen, or at the clothesline. We hung pictures of our stories on the line, shared them, and sang and prayed. Comments from some of those in attendance are as follows:

"It was a beautiful weekend, and in the warmth and the sun we sat out by the lake chatting, relaxing, and reflecting. Our stories, shared with new as well as old friends, and interwoven with worship and song, were met with an abundance of support, enthusiasm, and encouragement. This was a wonderful way to begin the school year."

Julie Marashlian

"My favorite memory of the retreat is sitting in the middle of the floor with the other women. Colored crayons were strewn all over the place as we drew our renditions of stories (Biblical, family tales, and so forth) which sustained us in our lives. While we colored we took turns teaching one another songs. At one point someone began to sing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and as the voices joined in, the music changed, taking into it other melodies in a raucous, giddy, holy celebrative round. The music seemed to dance independently of us; we sang and smiled for a moment, the universe was made only of our contentment and the joy of that song. It was truly a God-filled moment."

Weatherly Burkhead

Energy from women on the retreat initiated our open house, held October 21, to show off our refurbished center, a coffee house October 28, a Marsh Chapel worship service in November, and planning for a spring semester event entitled "Toward Collegiality: Women and Men in Dialogue."

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
Admissions Statistical Report
September 1993

In September the School of Theology welcomed 88 new students during their matriculation ceremony. Of those 88 incoming students, 50 (57 percent) were women, and women outnumbered or equaled the number of men in almost every degree program except for one, the Th.D. program, where women made up 42 percent of the 12 entering students. Twenty-five denominations were represented as well as the 9 countries of Canada, Estonia, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Kenya, Korea, and the United States. Thank you Earl Beane and Kelly Ford in the Admissions Office for supplying these statistics.

AT THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Dr. Sharon Peebles Burch is the new face in systematic theology at BUSTH. She's an ordained American Baptist coming from California where she received her M.Div. from the Pacific School of Religion and her Ph.D. in Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion from the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. She was baptized, married, and ordained by the same church but felt that her calling in ministry was in the classroom. A seminary teaching environment was extremely important to her because she believes a person of faith needs to speak about faith. While preaching at different pulpits, Dr. Burch has been a strong advocate for abortion rights, and has also been active in the food project SHARE. An ongoing project is the creation of a CD-ROM incorporating all available English and German texts of Paul Tillich's three volume Systematic Theology. Her book, The Dynamic Absolute: A Historical Perspective, is forthcoming.

NEWS OF OUR WOMEN FACULTY

During the months from January to June 1993, **Dana L. Robert** served as Visiting Professor, Department of Religious Studies, at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. While there she gave lectures, did research, and taught doctoral seminars there and at the University of South Africa in Pretoria. During her stay, she attended the South African Missiological Congress and was put on the international editorial board of Missionalia (one of only two Americans on the board). She also gave a presentation on "Holiness Thought and American Methodist Women," for the Wesley Society of South Africa in Plumstead, South Africa, on June 15, 1993. Recent work includes: "Mount Holyoke Women and the Dutch Reformed Missionary Movement, 1874 -1904," (August 1993) Missionalia; "Revisioning the Women's Missionary Movement," in Charles Van Engen, Dean Gilliland, Paul Pierson, eds., The Good News of the Kingdom: Mission Theology for the Nineties (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993); and "Evangelist or Homemaker?: The Mission Strategies of Early Nineteenth-Century Missionary Wives in Burma and Hawaii," International Bulletin of Missionary Research (January 1993).

Dianne Reistroffer has been working on her Ph.D. dissertation dealing with the relationship between individual learning styles and career choices among theological students. She is also preparing two supplements for the new Confirmation series, Follow Me, of the United Methodist Church, one on John Wesley's Order of Salvation, and the other on sanctification. She's the energetic youth director at St. John's UMC in Watertown and is also Sub Prior for the Boston University Chapter of the Order of St. Luke.

CENTER BEGINS RESEARCH PROJECT

The Shaw Center has submitted a grant proposal to the Division of the Ordained Ministry (DOM) of the United Methodist Church to investigate the reasons United Methodist clergywomen leave parish ministry and what interventions the Church might take to retain them. This proposal grew out of concerns brought by clergywomen of the Southern New

England Annual Conference who noticed that women who had been in parish ministry were no longer present. The question was raised regarding whether this phenomenon was a trend in the UMC. A study currently in progress (Rolf Memming, personal communications, February 23, 1993, and May 18, 1993) indicates that women leave parish ministry in the conferences in which they were ordained at a higher rate than men do. According to 1992 DOM statistics, nearly one-third of all clergywomen in full connection in the UMC are in appointments outside the local parish (not necessarily in ABLCs, or specialized ministries). Ordained ministry has traditionally been associated with ministry in a local parish. Given the great efforts of women to overcome obstacles to ordination, there is concern about this large percentage of women who choose to leave parish ministry.

The project's goal is to hear directly from clergywomen about their experiences in and out of the local parish and their ideas about how the Church might make it possible for them to continue or return to the parish. We want to give flesh to the numbers that others are gathering.

This summer Beth Collier began a pilot run of this study in the South Carolina Annual Conference (her home conference). The primary goal of that pilot was to refine the instruments to be used in the full study. The women of South Carolina have been very helpful with their comments so that a full study can begin without fumbling around with getting the questionnaire and interview questions in shape. The secondary goal of the pilot was to gather information from South Carolina clergywomen on the study issue. They have been generous, honest, and brave in telling their stories and we are grateful for the trust they have shown in sharing them. The response has been most enthusiastic: Out of 90 letters of invitation sent, 54 women responded positively (60 percent of the total), 41 have returned completed questionnaires (45 percent of the total), and 28 interviews have been completed (31 percent of the total). Other interviews are scheduled or contacts have been made for scheduling.

There are wide disparities in the experiences, perception, and feelings many of these first fifteen women described. However, the intention is not to average those responses to find the "happy medium" that is most descriptive of clergywomen in parish ministry. The joys and the pain both need attention. Women in the UMC are struggling to live out their calls to ministry with integrity. The gifts of their stories need to be received with gratitude.

A preliminary summary of the first fifteen completed interviews was provided to the DOM as a part of the grant proposal. A copy of that summary is available in the Shaw Center for any who would like to read it. We hope to have a full summary report on the South Carolina pilot study by the end of the fall semester. At that time a copy will be placed on file in the Shaw Center.

UMC readers of this newsletter interested in this project, and women with names and addresses of former clergywomen colleagues who have left the ministry are encouraged to contact the Center. These women are the most difficult to identify and their impact is important.

WELCOME

Beth Collier, the 1993/94 Anna Howard Shaw Scholar, is a second year Th.D. student in the School of Theology. Her most recent home before coming to BUSTH has been the suburbs of Atlanta, although she claims South Carolina as her home state. Beth is an elder in the United Methodist Church and has served parishes in S.C. in various capacities. She has worked in mental health chaplaincy and as director of a shelter for homeless families. Beth is focusing her work around issues in feminist theology, especially the intersection of spirituality and sexuality. Her work with the Shaw Center will primarily involve the research project mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter. She is also leading the Advisory Board study group.

Jennifer VanderNoot comes to the School of Theology from Franklin, N.H. and is this year's editor for the Shaw Center newsletter. Since graduating from Emory University in 1989 with a double major in English and Religion, she has been teaching emotionally disturbed boys at a small private school in Tilton, N.H. During this time she was also a district court advocate for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault for Laconia's Stop Family Violence program. She is in her first year of the Master of Theological Studies program and planning to focus on social ethics.

Once Upon a Time

Once upon a a time
in a once upon a place
there began a strain of Music so wholly
beautiful as has never been heard
pure yet complex, simple yet diverse,
singular; yet deeply resonant,...
and it was full.
This Music was full of all that was and
all that promised to be
and the universe danced a dance of birth
which heightened in intensity until
the very sun burst forth
and the stars scattered
into the velvet blackness of the
moon's vibrant shadows.

The Music continued
pulsing a persuading rhythm of life until
Earth gracefully stepped in time
and together
they waltzed the seasons of giddy Springs
and staid Falls.

The greatness of the Music knew a love so
strong that
trees and flowers, antelope and
eagles, starfish and
monkeys, bears and dolphins
and every
kind of living creature leapt forth
in ecstatic response.
Each one had a note to play, a joyous tune

to make.

And the Music swelled with pleasure.
It swelled in strains so great that it drew
from
its very self to bring forth
another who might be able to make
new music of its own desires
and loves.
The other laughed and sang in
intricate harmony with
its partner
to the playful tune of the Music of all that
was and promised to be.

And so the people explored their music in
cadences and descants
and they began to feel power and control,
And the strains of Music urged them to
explore, encouraged them in their power.
But the people grew to think that they didn't
need the Music.

Theirs was enough to draw
the plants to fruitfulness,
the animals to fertility
and the buildings to the sky.

The Music persisted in its tunes and
rhythms,
changing at once to cajole and
chasten
at another to punish and forgive.
But the people wouldn't listen and their
music became
the clashing, slamming, splitting
strains
of greed, lust, dominance and
empty, isolating, stark-white pain.
And they hadn't noticed that their music had
deafened the
trees and flowers, antelopes and
eagles, starfish and monkeys,
bears and dolphins, and every
one that had decorated the Earth
with sweet harmony.
And the Music wept to hear them
dead.

Once upon a time in a once upon a place,...

Kristi Swenson Stefan

"ANNA" VALENTINES

Please consider sending an "Anna valentine" to a woman friend important in your life. For a contribution of \$10 or more, we will send a specially designed valentine for you. Send the donation to the Center with the name and address of honorees before February 1 in order for the valentines to reach its destination before February 14.

THANKS!

Thank you to the staff of Buildings and Grounds, especially Colleen McGinty, as well as Meg Ryan in Procurement and Rosalie Carlson in the Dean's Office for continued help and support in our renovation of the Shaw Center.

ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER ANNUAL GIVING FUND 1993

Patricia P. Adams
 Thomas R. Albin
 Meredith Allen
 Amy L. Alletzhauser
 John & Lois Ambler
 Priscilla A. Barnard
 Laura Jaquith Bartlett
 Rebecca Blodgett
 Mary G. Boatswain
 Mary Lou Greenwood Boice
 Jennifer S. Bragdon
 Elaine & Richard Braley
 Earl Kent Brown
 Charlotte Browne-Mayers
 Evelyn S. Burns
 Alma Lee Carpenter
 Sharon R. Chace
 Soon Ria Chung
 Linda J. Clark
 Doresa Collogan
 Isabelle Cowens
 Carmela M. D'Elia
 Rodney L. Debs
 Laura Z. Delaplain
 Julia A. Doutaz
 Ruth C. Duck
 Dorothy E. Everhart
 Julia A. Foster
 Florence E. Freeman
 Emily B. Geoghegan
 Cynthia Good
 Richard E. Harding
 Gail Haslam
 Mitchell Hay

Sam Hedrick
 Janice Hitzhusen
 Lorraine Holcomb
 Bishop S. Clifton Ives
 Phyllis Izant
 Jill Johnson-Scott
 Lois F. Johnson
 Sarah Kalish
 Deborah L. Kieseve
 Judith J. Kohatsu
 Mary Lawrence
 Barbara Lemmel
 Joan Wright Lindeman
 Joanne Montgomery Link
 Jane Roberta Lippert
 Elizabeth Lurie
 M. Ann Mackenzie
 Willa Mathis-Johnson
 Shelly Ann Matthews
 Sammie Maxwell
 Phyllis H. May
 Gailey T. McIntyre
 Melinda L. McKonly
 Evelyn L. McLean
 Liz McNenny
 Evelyn Johnson Moore
 Rafaela H. Morales
 Mary A. Morefield
 Bishop Susan M. Morrison
 Gene B. Nelson
 Nancy J. Osgood
 Margaret Violet Osondu
 Tina L. Oteka
 Lois Palches

Jeanne A. Parsley Jr.
 Jeffrey D. Penn
 Diane Perry-Matthews
 Leah R. Pogemiller
 Patricia R. Potter
 Juanita D. Powers
 Nancy J. Reed
 Dianne Reistroffer
 C. Faith Richardson
 Marlene Lyn Schmidt
 John J. Shaffer
 Donella G. Siktberg
 Barbara J. Silk
 C. Jean Simpson
 Shirley C. Skeete
 Kristin M. Stefan
 Doreen Treacy
 Robert L. Treese
 Jean Marilyn Trench
 The United Methodist
 Church, Northeastern
 Jurisdiction
 Elizabeth Vernon
 Christine Wagner
 Carmen Ward
 Kathy Lynelle Watson
 Donald A. Wells
 Patricia Z. Wentworth
 Joan-Anne Westfall
 Margaret S. Wiborg

Boston University's policies provide for equal opportunity and affirmative action in employment and admission to all programs of the University.

ANNA HOWARD SHAW CENTER
NEWSLETTER
Volume 10, Number 1

Managing Editor
Margaret Wiborg

Editor
Jennifer VanderNoot

Contributors
Faith Richardson, Beth Collier, Julie Marashlian, Weatherly Burkhead, Kristi Swenson Stefan

Boston University
School of Theology
745 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

BOSTON
UNIVERSITY

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Boston University

UPCOMING EVENTS:

January 25, 1994: Mary Jane Gibson, a United Methodist who is widely recognized for her efforts on behalf of women as a former Massachusetts State Representative and co-founder of the National Women's Legislative Lobby, will give a lecture entitled "Equality, A Slippery Prize" at 4 p.m. in Rm. 325. Sponsored by the Shaw Advisory Board Open to the public.

February 4 - 5, 1994: Women's Spirituality Retreat for clergywomen and laity led by Dr. Linda Clark. Limited space. For more information call the Shaw Center at 353-3075.

February 25, 1994: Carol Pierce and Norm Cellotto lead a workshop entitled "Toward Collegiality: Men and Women in Dialogue."

February 28, 1994: Presentation of Anna Howard Shaw Award to Bishop Susan M. Morrison. Reception and dinner, George Sherman Union. Call the Center for details.

March 17 - 18, 1994: Women and the Word, 1994: "The Good News According to Women: Shaking the Foundations, Reclaiming the Hope." Leaders will be: Dr. Miriam Therese Winter Medical Mission Sister, Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly, and The Rev. Dr. June Christine Goudey.