The academic year is coming to a quick close. Thank you to all the newsletter contributors during the year for making this space a place where we can communicate with one another about all the great things which have been going on and, in some cases, the things which were coming up! We had a very successful set of events for Women’s History Month. To those of you on campus and in the community who came to events, presented events and supported our work through the month of March (and always!), thank you. The department will be moving into Cina Hall over the summer with our space on the first floor. This is a high traffic area on the UMD campus and we are excited about the visibility of our space!! While the new space is still under construction as I write this, we have “visited” it, and it has a lovely communal feel – from the way the offices are organized off a central entry to the fact the offices are across the hall from a newly opened-up Cina hallway with lots of windows and space. As the Interim Head of WGSS this year, I have enjoyed working with the department faculty, staff and students (and the advisory board although I’ve been a member of that for …. a long, long time) on a variety of events, issues, ideas and more. I will continue to serve as Head next year as we transition to Cina and continue our work. Until the fall, be well.
THE WOMAN IN THE RED COAT

You see, this idea rested in my mind
Constructed by volumes of women’s magazines
Paper laden with poison
That to be a successful woman
I had to shrink in size.
Shrink in character.
Just shrink.

Wearing this red coat used to terrify me,
It sat for years in the front hall closet
Of my parent’s home
Begging me
To expand.

I was in love with the idea of dancing around
In a coat three times my size
In a color so bright
You couldn’t
not
look at it.

But I was a girl raised in a society
that taught me
to be small.

Even my friends in grade school
Gave me displeased glances
The very first and last time I wore
My red coat to school.

The thought still haunts me sometimes
A decade later
But I am growing every day
As a woman, a feminist
A scholar, and a leader

Think about it.

Instead of being taught to build each other up
Woman to woman
Or human beings just being human
We are taught to
Tear each other apart
To create more divisions based on differences
Than bridges of opportunity built on similarities

Continued on page 9...

By Anna Spielman—A WGSS major.

I have worn this same exact red wool coat
since I was ten years old.

Well, let me clarify.
I wore this coat on perhaps
half a dozen occasions
between the ages of ten
and twenty.

I think it always broke my mother’s heart a little
The way we picked out the coat together at Macy's
And it was the most expensive article of clothing
I had ever owned.
I told her
Mom, I am going to wear this in New York City someday.

She just smiled and said
'I believe you will.'

But I didn’t even wear this coat in my home town.
IN MEMORIAM: REMEMBERING JOHN ARTHUR

On March 31, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and UMD as a whole lost a kind and caring advocate for social justice when Professor John Arthur died after a brief illness. A professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and founding director of African/African American Studies, John had been a friend, colleague, and supporter of Women’s Studies since he first came to UMD in 1993. He served on the Women’s Studies Advisory Board for many years, as well as on Njoki Kamau’s promotion and tenure committee, and was always interested in and supportive of Women’s Studies. As WGSS faculty member Tineke Ritmeester said of John, “From the beginning he was a friend of the WS department, and became a stalwart defender of its mission, especially because of its intersectional focus.”

I, and many others, remember John as someone who always had a smile and a kind word. Tineke remembers John as “one of the kindest people at UMD, a quiet and unassuming man, who did not like to draw attention to himself.” John walked his talk of equality and the dignity of all. As Tineke said, “I have never seen him do power.”

Sheryl Grana, current WGSS department head, was a close friend and colleague of John’s in Soc/Anth. The words that came to her mind when remembering John wove together in a poetic tribute to John so I include them as is here:

mentor
friend
supportive
peace lover
supporter of positive social change
concerned with race and ethnicity inequities
balanced and calm -- yet feisty
great smile coupled with warmth and gratitude
a global citizen with global concerns
accomplished and humble
loved his students

Njoki Kamau writes: “John was a friend mentor and a voice of conscience. He was a prolific scholar that mentored many faculty across the disciplines. He was kind, and passionate for peace, justice and equality for all. John was committed to globalizing, internationalizing and interculturalizing the curriculum through the many diverse courses that he taught as well as in his national and international research. John was kind, fair and always looked at issues from all sides prior to arriving at a conclusion. John was prudent, judicious, and resilient. John went beyond call of duty to help those in need. John vigorously supported me on my tenure and promotion journey. Yes, we could count on John to show up and held no personal or institutional grudges. John was a wise man and his wisdom, kindness and peacefulness will be his enduring legacy. From an African Indigenous point of view, people do not die. They pass on. They join their ancestors. In that respect, John has attained a higher status in transitioning. John, keep smiling wherever thy spirit rests!”

All of us at UMD benefitted from John’s steadfast efforts to make UMD a place that is welcoming to all. It is a welcome he extended every day. We are all better for John’s work and life. We will miss him.

~Beth Bartlett
Senior Seminar Students 2016

Julian Vela

"This degree, literally, changed my entire college career. I was going nowhere fast in my old degree. When I came to WGSS it was more than just a breath of fresh air. The degree took my passions and put them at the center of my studies and I have thrived ever since. I can confidently say this degree made me a much more critical thinker, and I can go out into the world and do some good."

Ashley Ferguson

"My Women’s Studies major has completely changed the way I see the world. It will affect the way I think for the rest of my life. I will always appreciate the things I have learned, the people I have met and the extended worldview that I have gained.

Amy Thiboldeaux

Women’s Studies has been everything to me. It has changed my way of life and my way of thinking. I have met an amazing group of people that I know will continue to influence my life even after I leave UMD. My heart will always be with Women’s Studies.

Ashley Ferguson

JULIAN VELA

"This degree, literally, changed my entire college career. I was going nowhere fast in my old degree. When I came to WGSS it was more than just a breath of fresh air. The degree took my passions and put them at the center of my studies and I have thrived ever since. I can confidently say this degree made me a much more critical thinker, and I can go out into the world and do some good."
Lee Hansen

Women’s Studies was my second major. It has helped me put my criminology degree into perspective and look at the world through a more complex and nuanced lens. Studying WGSS has helped me become the person and the activist I want to be.

Shawna Suomi

Women’s Studies has given me a new lens through which I see the world. I have gotten the opportunity to meet people and learn things that have truly enriched my life forever. Women’s Studies has made me feel empowered and given me a sense of belonging.

Taylor Zare

Through Women’s Studies, I have had to re-learn a lot, due to being placed on a path of knowledge in a web of intersectionality and feminist discourse. Nearing the end of my feminist journey at UMD, I have gained a strong sense of autonomy, sisterhood, and connection with the earth. Post graduation, I look forward to my internship in London where I will be working alongside a company that is led by three powerful women. From then on, I plan to continue my international travels and hopefully learn a new language or two. Graduating with a Women’s Studies degree doesn't mean my feminist journey it over; it has only just begun.

Tessa Haussler

My WGSS major has meant a radical change in the way I view and interact with the world around me. My professors have provided me with invaluable knowledge that I will forever hold dear to me.

Congratulations Graduates!
Women's History Month 2016 A Great Success!

Winona LaDuke spoke at UMD on March 17th. Afterwards a few faculty, staff and students were lucky enough to join her for a late dinner.

Above: Tessa Haussler, Winona La Duke, Amy Thiboldeaux, and Hannah Schleder

Feminist poet, writer and social activist Margaret Randall gave a poetry reading over the lunch hour and spoke about her latest book Haydee Santamaria: She Led By Transgression at the UMD Griggs Center on March 30th.

Below: Susana Pelayo Woodward, Margaret Randall, Tineke Ritmeester, and Barbara Lee Byers
CONGRATULATIONS!

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Congratulations to WGSS majors Hannah Schleder and Amanda Szczech for being awarded this year’s Jane Maddy Scholarship Book Award. Hannah also was awarded the Ebert-Stembler Scholarship from the College of Liberal Arts and the UMD Carol and Michael S. Berman Scholarship. Congratulations as well to Kylie Salo who was awarded the newly-established WGSS Legacy Scholarship. All are wonderful students who are engaged in learning, the classroom, and many campus activities. We are lucky to have them as a part of WGSS!

Hannah Schleder  Amanda Szczech  Kylie Salo

JODI AND SUSANA

Congratulations to Jodi Carlson Grebinoski, Associate Librarian, Kathryn A. Martin Library and Susana Pelayo Woodward, Director, Office of Diversity & Inclusion for being awarded Outstanding Service Awards. Both Jodi and Susana have made extraordinary contributions to WGSS. Both have served on the Women’s Studies Advisory Board for many years and have been involved in arranging Women’s History Month speakers and activities. Jodi is the Women’s Studies librarian and has helped our students and faculty in our research. Susana has been teaching Women’s Studies classes and been a vital member of the department for many years, and directs the Women’s Resource and Action Center, where she is a valuable mentor for many of our students.

ALUMS

Congratulations to WS alumnae Kris Simonson, who received an award from Head of the Lakes United Way for her work with Mentor Duluth, and Else Swenson, who received the Community Helping Hand Award for her work with sexual assault survivors in Douglas County.

WGSS FACULTY

Each college on the Twin Cities campus and the campuses of Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Rochester may select one individual to serve as the unit’s Community-Engaged Scholar Award Recipient. All collegiate/campus award recipients then become eligible for the University-wide award, which includes a one-time $15,000 prize. This year the UMD scholar award review committee chose Dr. Beth Bartlett, as UMD’s Community Engaged Scholar Award Campus Recipient. Beth is an outstanding community engaged scholar and competed in a pool of very worthy and impressive UMD candidates. Congratulations Beth!

The university-wide President's Community-Engaged Scholar will be announced at an award ceremony April 29th.
Thank you to our community partners: Feminist Activism & Community Organizing!

A vital component of the Feminist Activism and Community Organizing course is students’ work with community organizations. We work to set up mutually beneficial projects and the students learn so much. Their work with community partners is tied into all the topics we cover in class and becomes the basis of much of class discussion. This class would not happen without our partners. Many thanks to Mentor Duluth, YWCA Girl Power!, Public Access Community Television, Mending the Sacred Hoop, Dabinoo’Igan Shelter, Lincoln Park Children and Families Collaborative, PAVSA, the women’s Health Care Clinic in Superior, and Praxis International in St. Paul.

Above: Spring 2016 WGSS Community Brunch. Community Organizations come together with WGSS students and faculty to discuss programs, needs, and potential areas for collaboration.
...continued from page 2
Rather than continuing to create a world
Where a few of us are strong
We must rise up together
Understand our intersectionalities
Cherish them like they are
The very life force of our beating hearts

We are women with unique talents,
Energies, and feminine divinity.
It is time to weave our experiences together
In a diverse and inclusive narrative.

It’s not just grade school.

On my 20th birthday
I wore this brilliant floppy red hat
Red kitten high heels
Lipstick so red that even the shade name was Fierce
And I felt amazing
I was harassed that day
Catcalled
Physically chased by a man
In the streets of my own city
Feeling the brightness of my red ensemble
Fade into fear and disgust
Questioning if I really was a feminist
If a catcall could so easily throw me off
But of course I am feminist
And this poem
Is my reclaiming
Of the color red

Only recently have I had the courage
To feel like my body belongs in a coat
That twirls around my hips and thighs
And hugs my chest in a tight embrace

I haven’t worn this coat in New York City yet.
I don’t need New York City.
This red coat never fit the girl that I was,
Just this dream that I had.
But it embodies the woman I am today.

I am no longer the girl I used to be
So fearful of taking up too much room.
Today, I am a woman,
Unafraid of commanding her space.

Whenever you are feeling small
Voiceless, lesser, or afraid
I dare you
In whatever way it may be
To wear your own red coat

PFUND WINNER

LGBTQ minor, Charlie Johnson is being awarded the prestigious Philanthropic Fund Foundation (PFund) scholarship this spring. "PFund is the premier grant-making agency in the region for LGBTQ+ leadership and policy analysis," explains Assistant Professor George Hoagland, who wrote a letter of recommendation for Charlie. The full story can be found at http://www.d.umn.edu/external-affairs/homepage/16/charlie.html
THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING UMD'S DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN, GENDER & SEXUALITY STUDIES

I/We would like to make a gift to the WGSS department: $__________

Name: _______________________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________________________
City, State, Zip: _______________________________________________
Phone:_________________   E-mail: ______________________________
Graduation year if alumna/alumnus: ______________

__________________________
My/our employer will match this gift. Enclosed is the company's matching gift form.

Payment Options: __Check enclosed (Payable to UMD)
Credit Card: __ Visa   __  American Express  __ MasterCard  __ Discover Card
Account # _________________________ Exp. Date: ____________
Name on Card: ___________________________________________
Signature: _______________________________________________