



Empowering women for 30 years!

Women's

November 2008, Volume 31, Issue 3

The monthly newsletter of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center



The Women's Center Bids Farewell to Our Beloved Director

by Kacy Silverstein, co-director, Project Safe

I met Dr. Linda Manning for the first time seven years ago when I was a first-year student at Vanderbilt University and she was teaching a seminar on Feminist Approaches to Clinical Practice. I walked into a class full of seniors and graduate students and was about to pack up my things and make a quiet and permanent exit when Linda walked into the room. All I can remember from that day is Linda's welcoming smile and her first words to us, "Welcome to Vanderbilt everyone. I'm Linda." Now, this might not seem like much of a memorable introduction, but it changed my life and I know that same introduction has changed the lives of so many women at this university. You see, Linda has this incredibly impressive resume and years of experience in the academy, but she came into class that day without an ounce of pomp or pretension. What most people know about Linda is her infectious laugh, her warm embrace, her overflowing heart, and her love of *Star Trek* (more on that later). What you probably don't know about Linda is the number of lives she has touched as a therapist, teacher, and mentor, and her success as the director of a university counseling center and a university women's center.

Linda Manning came to the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center in 1997 from Austin, Texas. She spent most of her early adult life in Austin, obtaining her Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin and later serving as the Director of Psychological Services at St. Edward's University. For the past thirty years, Linda's work as a therapist and educator has focused on trauma, specifically trauma imposed by acts of violence against women. As the Director of Psychological Services at St. Edwards University, Linda created the University's first training program focusing on therapy with survivors of trauma and culturally sensitive therapy skills. In addition, Linda served on the faculty at St. Edwards, teaching classes on the Psychology of Women and Psychology of Cultural Pluralism.

In 1997 Vanderbilt was in the process of hiring a new Director for the Women's Center when Linda

was encouraged by a friend to apply for the position. Linda came to the Women's Center in November of that year and began her career at Vanderbilt. While I do not believe this small article can do justice to all that Linda has given to this Center and this university during her tenure as Director, I will try to highlight a few accomplishments.

Violence Against Women Task Force

Soon after her arrival to Vanderbilt, Linda called together a group of representatives from various offices to help educate her on Vanderbilt's response to sexual assault. What the group discovered is that Vanderbilt was responding to sexual assault, but there was no coordinated response and there were gaps in education and response services. From this initial meeting the Violence Against Women Task Force was created in 1999 to improve coordination of efforts on campus. That same year, the Department of Justice issued its first call for proposals for the Office of Violence Against Women Campus Grants to combat violence against women on campuses. Linda and Heather Moss from the Vanderbilt Institute of Public Policy Studies co-wrote a grant and Vanderbilt was one of the first twenty-one universities awarded. Project Safe was born from this effort and has existed for eight years as the University's coordinated campus wide response to issues of violence against women.

Women's Faculty Organization

Building community among women has always been something close to Linda's heart. She became Co-Chair with Gay Welch of the Women's Faculty Organization in 1999. This Organization provides connection for women faculty and advocates for their interests on campus.



Dr. Linda Manning
Photo: Vanderbilt University/
Steve Green

Exercise Your Right to Vote! November 4th is Election Day!

Join the Cast of this year's Vagina Monologues!



Audition Dates:
Wednesday, November 12, Thursday, November 13, at 8-10pm; Friday, November 14, 5-8pm

Location: Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center
For more information, please see page 2.

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Visit our website!
vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter

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It's that time of year again... time to audition for *The Vagina Monologues*.*

And we want you (that's right, I said YOU!) to audition for this year's cast.

Audition Dates: Wednesday, November 12, Thursday, November 13, 8-10pm and Friday, November 14, 5-8pm

Location: Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

Who can audition: All Vanderbilt female students, faculty, and staff are invited to audition. You do NOT need any acting experience to audition for the show.

For the audition: You will need to tell a first-time story. This story can be anything... the first time you kissed, your first ice cream cone, your first sexual experience, the first day of school. Just be creative, and tell us your story!

For more information or to set up an audition time, contact Ginger Skaggs at ginger.r.skaggs@vanderbilt.edu.

**The Vagina Monologues is an award-winning play written by Eve Ensler and is made up of a varying number of monologues read by a varying number of women. Eve Ensler wrote the first draft of the monologues in 1996 (there have been several revisions since) following interviews she conducted with 200 women about their views on sex, relationships, and violence against women. The interviews began as casual conversations with her friends, who then brought up anecdotes they had heard from other friends.*

Every monologue in the play somehow relates to the vagina, be it through sex, love, rape, menstruation, mutilation, masturbation, birth, orgasm, the variety of names for the vagina, or simply as a physical aspect of the body. A recurring theme throughout the piece is the vagina as a tool of female empowerment, and the ultimate embodiment of individuality.

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Deadline for newsletter: Submissions are due on the 1st of the month preceding publication.

MCWC bids farewell to Linda

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Parental Leave

Shortly after Chancellor Gee's arrival in 2000, Linda was part of a small sub-committee of the Women's Faculty Organization that approached the Chancellor about concerns regarding parental leave. At that time, there was no consistent policy across the university and each person had to negotiate leave with her or his department chair. The committee provided research and arguments to support a paid semester leave for female and male faculty who were tenured or on the tenure track at the birth of a child or adoption of a child under the age of two. With the support of many women colleagues in the Provost's Office and the Faculty Senate, the proposal was passed.

Athena Award

In recognition of Linda's work on campus and in the community in support of women, Linda was nominated in 2004 for the prestigious Athena Award by Women in Higher Education in Tennessee. Celebrated during Women's History Month in Nashville, the Athena Award is considered a unique award of recognition for the achievements of professional women. This year Linda was appointed by Governor Bredesen to the Board of the Tennessee Economic Council on Women. She is Co-Chair of the Reception Committee for this year's Tennessee Economic Summit.

Star Trek

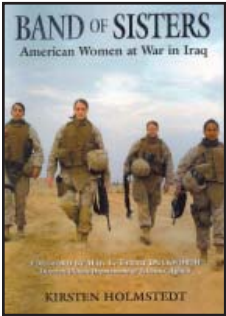
So, I promised I would return to *Star Trek*. Linda always says that the reason she loves *Star Trek* is that it is a show that was far ahead of its time and tackled issues of social justice, including sexism, racism, etc. before any other show on television. The reason I mention this science fiction love is that Linda's reasons for loving *Star Trek* are exactly what she has done in her work at the Women's Center. In simple ways, Linda brings goodness into the world. Through her passion for justice, peace, and equity, Linda came to Vanderbilt and pushed boundaries, created policies, and confronted issues of sexism for the women on this campus. In her role as director, teacher, and mentor, she taught students, staff, and faculty alike how to "live long and prosper" and that the whole purpose of fighting against oppression is to go where no one has gone before.

On November 3rd Linda will begin her work as a clinical psychologist at the Vanderbilt Center for Integrative Health and as assistant professor in the School of Medicine. While Linda is not leaving the university, those of us who work at the Women's Center will feel her loss deeply. It will be strange to walk into this building and not hear her laugh echoing down the hall. It will be strange to not be able to sit in her office when we need a "Linda hug" or seek her guidance. Most of all, we will miss having her with us every day, we will miss her leadership, and we will miss her wisdom.

Linda has taught me many things, but one of the most important is how to live "in the *bardo*." The *bardo* is a term that comes from Tibetan Buddhism and simply means a transition. It is often a period of change and uncertainty, but as Linda has taught, it can also be a time of transformation. Linda, as you move into the next phase of your life and work, we wish you only the best. We thank you for all that you have taught us. We thank you for sharing your heart and passion with us all these years. As you say goodbye to the Women's Center and enter your own *bardo*, we offer back to you a few of your own wise words: "...take care of yourself in this time of transition. Make full use of the *bardo*—slow down, reflect, breathe. But most importantly, enjoy it!"



Band of Sisters: American Women at War in Iraq; Savoring the Salt: The Legacy of Toni Cade Bambara



For years Kirsten Holmstedt lived near Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. After the events of September 11, 2001 she began following military events more closely, becoming very interested in the increasing numbers of women who were going into combat zones. She wondered: “Are there distinct advantages a woman warrior brings to combat? How is the experience different for her, even if she is equally as effective as a man.”

Holmstedt’s *Band of Sisters: American Women at War in Iraq* (Stackpole, 2007) is the first book to examine closely how women are faring in combat. The foreword is by Major L. Tammy Duckworth, who lost both her legs when the helicopter she was co-piloting was shot down in 2004 by Iraqi insurgents. Since April 1993 most positions in the military have been open to females, although they are still excluded from about 20 percent of military jobs. Many women not officially in combat roles nevertheless find themselves on the front lines.

For this book the writer focused on about a dozen women in combat in the current conflict in Iraq, which began in March 2003. She interviewed not only the women themselves, but their family members, friends and co-workers, as well as men and women who fought in current and previous wars. She inspected fighter jets and transport planes and flew in a plane that landed on an aircraft carrier.

The women profiled in this book vary greatly in background, age and rank, and several were mothers. All had joined the military before the start of the conflict in Iraq but were prepared to do whatever they were asked. One woman officially in a support role was a long-haul truck driver who was seriously injured in a roadside ambush. Others included a Cobra helicopter pilot, a nurse, a Hercules C-130 pilot, a turret gunner

defending convoys, an elevator operator on an aircraft carrier, and a veteran of the first Gulf War who was a member of one of the first female public affairs teams.

The women’s stories illustrate the harsh conditions, difficulties, battles and traumatic events encountered by the hardy women and men serving in Iraq. Women have shown that they are skilled in combat and that they perform as well as their male colleagues. Some duties, such as searching Iraqi women, can be done only by females. In some ways life in a war zone is a little more difficult for females but military women have shown that they can adapt to any situation.

Over 100 American military women have been killed in Iraq and about 500 have been wounded. Sending females into combat has been a successful experiment, although the women have not always received the acknowledgement that they deserve. They also are aware that they are being watched closely. A number of those profiled by the writer were decorated or promoted after returning from their tour of duty in Iraq. A brief final chapter describes what the women were doing when this volume went to press. Most have remained in the military or are working in allied fields, such as in veterans’ affairs.

While some Americans still do not feel that women should be sent into combat, the women featured in this volume want others to know that they put themselves into such positions. Holmstedt remarks that “Women aren’t struggling for sameness. They are struggling for equality. There will never be sameness, nor should there be.” Women bring their own qualities and strengths to the military and to combat.



Savoring the Salt: The Legacy of Toni Cade Bambara (Temple University Press, 2008) is a fitting tribute to this notable writer, teacher, filmmaker and activist. The editors, Linda Janet Holmes and Cheryl A. Wall, write

that this volume “examines Bambara’s work—her fiction, nonfiction, and film, as well as her activism and teaching. It honors her resilience and ability to celebrate radical acts as well as her sense of humor and personal grace.” The book’s title is a reference to one of Bambara’s best-known novels, *The Salt Eaters*, which appeared in 1980.

Bambara was born Milona Mirkin Cade in Harlem in 1939, the second of two children in the family. Her parents stressed the importance of education and exposed both children to many of New York’s cultural offerings. Toni’s mother, who was a teacher and later a post office worker, sent her daughter to private schools; her father encouraged her love of movies. Toni’s works of fiction would be set in urban areas.

In 1955 some of Toni’s poems were published in her high school magazine in Queens. It was during her years at college that she became particularly interested in social justice and first became an activist. By 1959, the year of her Queens College graduation, her writing was beginning to win awards. After receiving her Master of Arts in American literature from the City College of New York in 1965, she began to teach college courses and at one stage commuted to her position in New Jersey with fellow educator and writer, Nikki Giovanni. In 1970 Bambara edited the well-known anthology, *The Black Woman*. That same year her only child, Karma, was born. As a young child Toni had shortened her first name and by 1970 she had added the new surname of Bambara, the name of an ethnic group in Mali.

Bambara continued her work as an activist, feminist, writer and teacher and by 1974 she was living in Atlanta, where she taught writing at Spelman College. Following a move to Philadelphia in 1985 she became more involved in filmmaking, which had been a long-time interest. In December 1995 Toni died of cancer at the age of 56. A couple of her works were published posthumously.

In the Library






Barbara Clarke
Women’s Center
Librarian

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November 2008

denotes Project Safe programming 

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 L.I.F.E Project mentoring sessions, 1-3 pm
2	3	4 Election Day! <i>Creative Life Planning Group, 11:30am-1:00pm</i> <i>IMAGE 4pm, Sarratt, 208</i>  <i>Peer Ed, 8pm</i>	5	6 <i>Vanderbilt Feminists, 6pm</i>	7	8 L.I.F.E Project mentoring sessions, 1-3 pm
9	10 <i>Book Group, 5:15pm-6:15pm</i>	11 <i>Creative Life Planning Group, 11:30am-1:00pm</i>  <i>Peer Ed, 8pm</i> <i>MPAS, 8pm</i>	12	13 <i>Vandy Moms 11:30am-12:30pm</i> <i>Vanderbilt Feminists, 6pm</i>	14	15 L.I.F.E Project mentoring sessions, 1-3 pm
International Education Week! See calendar for details.						
16	17	18 <i>Creative Life Planning Group, 11:30am-1:00pm</i>  <i>Peer Ed, 8pm</i>	19	20 <i>Vanderbilt Feminists, 6pm</i>	21	22 L.I.F.E Project mentoring sessions, 1-3 pm
23	24	25 <i>Creative Life Planning Group, 11:30am-1:00pm</i>	26	27	28	29
Thanksgiving Break! Student groups do not meet. Have a great break!						
31						
For details and descriptions of each group, please refer to page 5. Unless specified, most groups meet at the Women's Center.						

Don't Miss This!

FILM VIEWING AND DISCUSSION OF CAMEL (2007)

Director: Nadine Labaki. Rated PG. In Beirut, five women meet regularly in a beauty salon to confide in each other about the joys and pain of love, longing, and responsibility. Can their friendships see them through? In Arabic and French with English subtitles. 95 minutes. The film is presented by: Richard McGregor, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, and Stacy Nunnally, Director, Gender Matters, Margaret Cuningim Women's Center in collaboration with the International Lens Series through the Office of the Dean of Students.

Date: November 18 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Sarratt Cinema at Vanderbilt University

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

[over]SITES OF MEMORY:

Vanderbilt Holocaust Lecture Series

Unless otherwise noted, all Holocaust Lecture Series programs are free and open to the public. For more information about these November events, please see www.vanderbilt.edu/religiouslife/hls/index.html



Project Safe presents *Defending Our Lives*

This Academy Award Winner in the category of Best Short Documentary will be presented in conjunction with the Vanderbilt Law School.

Date/time/location: TBD

For more informatiojn about this film showing, please contact kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu

SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

(Events listed by dates and include events, programs, and series for which the Women's Center is solely responsible or for which we are a major sponsor or collaborator.)

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

International Education Week is an annual, international event initiated by the U.S. Department of State and Department of Education, and coordinated at Vanderbilt by the Office of International Student and Scholar Services and the Vanderbilt International Office. The week promotes programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the U.S. To learn more about International Week throughout the country, please visit: <http://iew.state.gov/>. To get more information on the International Education Week events on campus, please visit: www.vanderbilt.edu/iss.

Date: November 12th–16th, various times

Location: Various locations; Vanderbilt University

For more information, please contact sherif.barsoum@vanderbilt.edu.

VANDERBILT WOMEN VOTE

Twenty million single women did not vote in 2004; however, this year brought out a historic turnout of unmarried women in the primaries making this segment of the population the single largest potential voting block for the 2008 presidential election. We are working to ensure women on campus have the resources to register to vote, become an informed voter, and to exercise their 19th Amendment right to vote on November 4th. We will have "Vanderbilt Women Vote" and "VOTE" buttons available as well as collaborating with the election alliance to provide shuttles to the voting locations.

Date: October through November 4th

Location: Various; For more information, please contact stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu

ELECTION ALLIANCE

Politically inclined students can get involved with the election process by contacting Election Alliance's Lilly Massa-McKinley, lilly.m.mass@vanderbilt.edu in the Office of Active Citizenship and Service. Awesome t-shirts and vote buttons will be at some of these events...hope to see you there!

November 4: Election Day Electricity; Commons Center – Shuttles to the polls all day.

DIWALI BY MASALA-SACE

Diwali is the South Asian festival of lights, a symbolic triumph of light and knowledge over ignorance and darkness. The Diwali program is a well-established performance attracting around 1500 people from the Vanderbilt community and the greater Nashville area to watch as the members of Masala-SACE (South Asian Cultural Exchange) perform various cultural acts ranging from dances to musical performances to drama.

Date: November 15th; Dinner at 5:00pm, Performance at 7pm

Cost: \$8.00 for the performance, \$12.00 for performance and dinner

Location: Langford Auditorium, Vanderbilt University

For more info, please visit: <http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/sace/>

REGULAR GROUPS AND MEETINGS

(Groups listed alphabetically and are all sponsored or co-sponsored by the Women's Center. Unless specified, most groups meet at the Women's Center.)

BOOK GROUP

Meets the second Monday of each month; 5:15 – 6:15 p.m.

What/Who: The book group is open to new members at all times and is for anyone who loves to read.

For November, 10: *Leap of Faith: Memoirs of an Unexpected Life* by Queen Noor, led by Dorothy Iano. For more information, contact Jane Du Bose at jdubose@bellsouth.net or Carmen Gherman at cggherman@yahoo.com.

CREATIVE LIFE PLANNING GROUP

Meets every Tuesday; 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

What/Who: A group for all dedicated to living life intentionally and creatively. Free and open to everyone and is usually attended by women between 40 and 90 years of age.

For more information, call 322-4843.

IMAGE GROUP

Meets the first Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m.

Who/What: IMAGE is an organization dedicated to supporting positive body and self-image issues in the Vanderbilt community. It provides a forum for interested community members to advocate the adoption of healthy body-image concepts and the reduction of eating disorders. Free and open to any students interested in these issues.

Where: Sarratt, Room 208. For more information, contact images@vanderbilt.edu.

L.I.F.E. (Lessons Inspiring Female Empowerment)

Mentoring sessions are Saturdays, 1-3 p.m.

Who/What: L.I.F.E. is group dedicated to mentoring young girls and women on a variety of issues important to them. This group works with a group of teen girls in the Nashville community covering topics such as economic empowerment, girls' and women's health, self-esteem, leadership and more. Free and open to any students interested in these issues.

Where: Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center; Vanderbilt University
For more information, contact ashley.n.walker@vanderbilt.edu or thelifeproject@vanderbilt.edu

MEN PROMOTING A SOLUTION

Meets every other Tuesday, 8:00 p.m.

Who/What: A group of men dedicated to creating awareness about violent crimes against women and eliminating those crimes through social change.

Where: Sarratt 341. For more information, contact tom.rosen@vanderbilt.edu or bryan.adams@vanderbilt.edu

PEER EDUCATORS OF PROJECT SAFE

Meets every Tuesday, 8:00-9:00

Who/What: Peer Educators are students trained to facilitate workshops that promote discussion and encourage understanding of violence against women. For more info, contact justine.e.chess@vanderbilt.edu or katy.adams@vanderbilt.edu

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November Calendar

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SUPPORT GROUP

Meets weekly

What/Who: A support group for women who are survivors of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. This group meets weekly at a confidential location; all information shared is kept confidential. For more information, contact kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu or 322-3774.

VANDERBILT FEMINISTS

Meets every Thursday, 6:00-7:00

Who/What: A student group concerned about women's issues on campus, and promoting equality between genders. Open to all students of any gender. For more information, contact erica.d.santiago@vanderbilt.edu or amy.l.gillard@vanderbilt.edu

VANDY MOMS

Meets the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of each month; 11:30a.m.- 12:30 p.m.

What/Who: Open to all mothers of any age, partnered or single. This is a support network that provides advocacy and programming for moms in the Vanderbilt and larger communities.

Thursday, November 13: *Anne Moore*, a nurse practitioner here at Vanderbilt Medical Center, will discuss birth control options for moms. **Please note special location:** We will meet in S4305C in MCN. For more information, contact misa.culley@vanderbilt.edu or call 343-4367.



Community Events and Volunteer Opportunities

NASHVILLE NOW (NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN) meets the 4th Monday of the month at the First Unitarian Universalist Church located at 1808 Woodmont Blvd., Nashville, 37215. Each meeting features networking and refreshments beginning at 6:30 p.m and meetings run no later than 8:30 p.m. These meetings are open to members, friends and those seeking more information. For additional details, contact cynthianashnow@aol.com or 615-269-7141.

Nashville CABLE meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. For more information, contact nashvillecable.org

In the Library

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The contributions in this book include reminiscences, literary critiques, poems and excerpts from interviews. These are arranged in sections, each of which covers a different aspect of Bambara's life and work; sections focus on her writing, activism, teaching and filmmaking. Each section begins with a selection from Toni's writings or speeches, some of them previously unpublished. Among those paying tribute to Bambara are Nikki Giovanni, Audre Lorde, Ruby Dee, Amiri Baraka, Bettina Aptheker, Paula Giddings and Beverly Guy-Sheftall.



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Vanderbilt University is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action

Women's VU is Going Green!

In an effort to save resources, *Women's VU* is now available for viewing on our website: www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter

Go Green! If you are interested in receiving *Women's VU* by e-mail, please contact jeana.carlock@vanderbilt.edu.

A paper copy of *Women's VU* is also available and sent free, by request, to all members of the Vanderbilt community.

Please send my free paper subscription to the address below.

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For all other mailing list changes, please contact jeana.carlock@vanderbilt.edu

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