



Report from the UU Women's Federation: GA 2009

... advancing justice for women and promoting their spiritual development

Topping our accomplishments over this past year is the first cycle of our new funding program, named for the late [Rev. Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley](#). An inspiring spiritual leader, Marjorie's contributions to our Association included service on the UUWF board and on our first Equity and Justice Grants Panel.

Marjorie was also a valued mentor of women preparing for our UU ministry, especially those who identify as women of color, Latina, or Hispanic. In keeping with the spirit of this aspect of her work, the new program provides financial support to this same population. The board allocated a total of \$6,000 for this year's grants, which was divided equally among four recipients:

Natalie Maxwell Fenimore, Gaithersburg, MD
Dr. Denise E. Hall, Greeley, CO
Kathleen McGregor, Pasadena, CA
Jodi Tharan, El Cerrito, CA

In addition to other funds UUWF has available for these grants, the program is supported by donations made to the UUA in Marjorie's memory. We are grateful to her husband, Rev. Clyde Grubbs who, when consulted by the UUA about an appropriate use for those funds, recommended our new grants program.

Another highlight of our year was UUWF co-sponsorship of the [International Convocation of U*U Women](#), which in February brought over 600 women from 38 states and 17 countries to Houston, TX. Working together in Global Sisters Groups, convocation participants identified the three most important issues facing women worldwide. Work has already begun on a congregational level to develop initiatives focusing on these issues: education; health care, including reproductive rights/justice; and preventing violence against women and children. You can learn how you can get involved in implementing ICU*UW's action plan in a UUWF workshop we have shared out with the convocation planners, beginning at 11:00 am on Sunday in Room 255A of the Salt Palace.

I was pleased to represent the Federation at the convocation, where I also enjoyed meeting in person for the first time the newest UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues, [Orelia Busch](#). Orelia is the fourth woman to take up this UUA staff position, which the Women's Federation established in 2002 with our \$200,000 donation and our assistance in helping the UUA raise a matching sum to complete the internship's endowment.

Orelia comes to us following two years with the Peace Corps in Burkina Faso, West Africa, where she worked to support girls' and women's rights to education and economic independence. She found Unitarian Universalism in high school, and justice-centered spirituality has always fueled her service work. She is based in the UUA's Washington Office, and you can get updates on her activities at the Advocacy and Witness [staff blog](#).

At the ICU*UW and other meetings this past year we have had a new tool to help us tell UUWF's story, thanks to the [Veatch Program](#) of the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY.

Veatch's \$5,000 mini-grant supported development of "UUWF in a Box," a portable publicity kit we debuted at the New England Regional UU Gathering last fall and placed, with the help of local volunteers, at ten district meetings this spring. The mini-grant represents only part of Veatch's generosity and support of our work. For the third year in a row, Veatch also gave us a grant toward general support, in the amount of \$25,000 for 2008-09.

Our two other funding programs are an important part of that work. Are you curious about how our [Equity and Justice Grants](#) help create positive, systemic change in the lives of women and girls? Do you want to learn more about current work in UU religious feminisms, which is supported by our [Margaret Fuller Grants](#)? Come to our workshop "Funding for Women's Work" at 11:00 am on Saturday in Room 255A of the Salt Palace.

The application deadline for 2009 grants from both programs was March 15th, and as I write this in early May our selection panels are hard at work. We expect to post this year's grant recipients on our [website](#) in early June.

Our programming this General Assembly also includes a workshop inspired by a UUWF program at an earlier GA. In 2007 we honored author [Riane Eisler](#) with our [Ministry to Women Award](#). Her acceptance speech on her most recent book, *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics*, inspired UUs in Portland, OR, to begin a caring economic initiative in their own city. The [Real Wealth of Portland](#) workshop begins at 6:45 pm on Friday in Salt Palace Ballroom I – Riane Eisler and members of the First Unitarian Church of Portland will provide information and resources on starting caring economics in your own community.

We would also like to gratefully acknowledge the service of Rev. Liz McMaster, Albuquerque, NM, who rotated off our Equity and Justice Grants Panel after last year's General Assembly, and Cathy Chang, Nashville, TN, who has just completed her service on the same panel. A welcome addition to our Margaret Fuller Grants Panel this year was Liz Fisher, Richmond, CA, and we bid a fond farewell to the panel's chair, Rev. Tracy Sprowls Jenks, Ridgewood, NJ. We also thank the Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Grants Panel for developing the program and making its first selections: Rev. Danielle Di Bona, chair; Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, New York, NY; and Rev. Takahashi Morris, Pleasant Hill, CA.

All my best wishes to you all,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Lu Burciaga".

Linda Lu Burciaga
President