



Report from the UU Women's Federation: GA 2013

... advancing justice for women and girls and promoting their spiritual growth

In 2013 we celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the UUWF's founding and, in preparation for that occasion we looked back at the Federation's work during the past half century and found much to celebrate. I'll begin a sampling of our accomplishments over the past half-century toward the top of the list: our work in support of reproductive rights and justice.

In 1973 the UUWF was a founding member of the organization now known as the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and, given the UUWF's rigorous support of reproductive rights and justice both before and after that, it seems to me an especially appropriate coincidence that 2013 also marks the 40th anniversary of *Roe v Wade*. In January I was privileged to issue, with UUA President Rev. Peter Morales, a joint statement in observance of the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in the United States.

Thus far in 2013 our reproductive justice work has included signing onto several amicus briefs opposing the exclusion of contraception from health insurance, as well as a letter opposing legislation that would ban abortion care after 20 weeks. Late last year we also signed onto a letter supporting the Shaheen Amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act – which finally succeeded in adding coverage of abortion in cases of rape and incest to medical insurance provided to military families.

In 2012 we also supported a protest of the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act, and last April our board also voted to reaffirm our support of the UUA's 1987 and '93 resolutions on reproductive rights. The statement we issued at that time also endorsed the proposed Congregational Study/Action Issue "Reproductive Justice: Expanding Our Social Justice Calling," which was subsequently adopted at last year's General Assembly. You can read more about all of this at www.uuwf.org.

Here are just a few of the other UUWF accomplishments during our first 50 years:

- **Voices of the New Feminism.** A joint project of the UUWF and Beacon Press, this pioneering book featured essays by early feminist activists, including Caroline Bird, Shirley Chisholm, Mary Daly, and Betty Friedan.
- **Ministry to Women Award.** Founded to focus attention on women's issues during the annual UUA General Assembly, UUWF gives this award to individuals or organizations that minister to women in an outstanding manner. Recipients include *Ms. Magazine*, poet May

Sarton, the musical group Sweet Honey and the Rock, and Rev. Debra Haffner, founder of the Religious Institute for Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing.

- **UUWF Clara Barton Intern for Women's Issues.** This internship program in the UUA's Washington Center is supported by an endowment comprising UUWF's \$200,000 donation and assistance to the UUA in raising a matching amount. Founded in 2002, the internship has recently shifted its focus from direct advocacy at the federal level to providing resources and opportunities for congregations and their leaders to advocate for justice issues specific to women, notably reproductive and economic justice.
- **Funding Programs.** The UUWF currently has three:
 - * **Margaret Fuller Grants Program.** Founded in the late 1980s and originally known as the Feminist Theology Awards, this program supports accessible projects in UU religious feminisms.
 - * **Equity and Justice Grants Program.** These grants support UU justice projects that directly affect women and/or girls and address the root causes of gender oppression.
 - * **Marjory Bowens-Wheatley Scholarship Program.** This scholarship program for general support originally benefited aspirants or candidates to the UU ministry who identify as women of color, Latina, or Hispanic. This year the criteria for eligibility were expanded to include candidates in the UUA's religious education or music leadership credentialing programs who similarly self-identify.

As I said, we have much to celebrate.

This is my last report to you as president of the UU Women's Federation, for at the end of June I will end my five years of service on the UUWF board. I am pleased to tell you that the next UUWF president will be Dr. Kirstie Lewis, a member of the East Shore Unitarian Church in Bellevue, WA. Kirstie has served as our Vice President/ Funding Programs since 2010, and before that served – as I once did – as a member and then chair of our Margaret Fuller Grants Panel.



Dr. Kirstie Lewis

I am confident that I am leaving UUWF in a collective set of good hands comprising Kirstie and the UUWF board.

I also look forward to seeing what the UUWF will accomplish during its next 50 years as it continues the work driven by our mission: *advancing justice for women and girls and promoting their spiritual growth.*



Faithfully,

Rev. Marti Keller

Rev. Marti Keller, UUWF President