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## Annual Report to the UUA

Founded in 1963 through consolidation of Unitarian and Universalist women's organizations, the UU Women's Federation has evolved into an education, advocacy, and funding organization with a vital mission: To advance justice for women and girls and promote their spiritual growth. UUWF is one of two associate member organizations of the UUA, along with UUSC.

The UUWF "affirms the inherent value of every woman, defined inclusively as one who identifies as a woman, trans\* woman, or genderqueer woman."

- We affirm the importance of women's voices in our religious movement;
- We pledge action against the religious roots of sexism;
- We pledge to support the diversity of religious feminisms;
- We work to raise consciousness of the linked nature of oppressions;
- We seek justice for all women in the struggle to transform institutions of oppression.

Our board is comprised of passionate volunteers committed to gender justice and intersectionality, and we are currently in a transition/discernment period. As such, we decided to mix things up a bit and take on 5 new members of what we're calling the transitional board. It is our hope that a strong team of even more women from even more backgrounds and identities will aid in ensuring our mission is carried out in the most impactful and vital way through our funding programs and other activities.

### Current Members

- Sue Boone, Treasurer/Clerk
- Isabel Call
- Rev. Terry Cummings
- Rev. Kimberly Quinn Johnson
- Betty McCollum
- Rev. C. Nancy Reid-McKee
- Mandolin Restivo
- Claire Sexton, President and Chief Executive Officer

Our other leadership team members are:

- Rev. Joyce Palmer, Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Scholarship Chair
- Dana Robb, Administrator

As announced at last year's GA, we are welcoming UU Women and Religion as they become a key program of the UUWF, combining forces in our mutual quest toward gender equity.

The New Prophetic Sisterhood (NPS), a project of the UUWF, continues to amplify the voices and ministries of women-identified religious professionals. Last year we expanded the scope of this project to include not only clergy, but all religious professionals. One of the initiatives of NPS is the annual Justice for Women and Girls Sermon Award.

We received many excellent sermons this year and the award recipient for 2019 is Rev. Kimberley Debus. When the Sermon Award panel of judges met, every one of them named Kimberley's sermon "How Not To Be a Boy" among their top choices. The intriguing title, the expertly crafted text, and the wide variety of sources offer a fresh perspective on the conversation about gender justice. The judges noted, "When you hear this sermon, you won't be able to keep quiet!"

The **Margaret Fuller Grants** program supports Unitarian Universalist women in scholarly, prophetic, and innovative exploration of religious feminisms. This year, we are continuing to fund the ongoing project to document UU women's herstory in a special collection at Meadville-Lombard. Before her health turned, Denny Davidoff asked UUWF to contribute to the preparation of the school's HEResies Special Collection archives to be converted to searchable online documents. In addition to contributing many boxes of rough-scanned herstorical documents and several artifacts such as quilts, the UUWF Board committed to funding the bulk of this project. Once the physical and digital collections are complete, it will make researching our herstory and the women who made it a far easier task.

Through the Fuller grants, the UUWF is assisting in the development of the upcoming Skinner House book project "Speaking Our Stories and Telling Our Truths: Black Women Clergy in Unitarian Universalism." The anthology will provide the first published scholarly treatment of Black women clergy in the Unitarian Universalist tradition.

In the **Equity & Justice Grants Program**, funding is given to Unitarian Universalist organizations or UU groups, and to groups or organizations with a significant number of UUs involved in the hands-on work of the project. The program welcomes inquiries addressing a wide range of issues consistent with UU principles and which emphasize the achievement of social justice for women in areas such as: women's health; abortion/reproductive rights; age discrimination; war; human rights; poverty; unemployment; LGBTQ concerns; domestic violence; child abuse; and job discrimination.

Just before General Assembly 2018, the UUWF board pledged to donate considerable funds to the UUA's Promise & Practice campaign to support Black Lives of UU, and completed our pledge in January.

A funded and ongoing initiative is "Shape of Justice," which expands a congregational project of providing menstrual products to food pantries, women's shelters, and other organizations serving low-income women and families. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Susquehanna Valley went from supplying 10 organizations in six counties, to forming a separate organization that currently serves over two-dozen organizations within just 6 months of receiving the grant (in which they originally proposed a timeline of 5 new organizations over 2 years)

## MARJORIE BOWENS-WHEATLEY SCHOLARSHIP

The scholarship provides direct financial support to aspirants or candidates to the Unitarian Universalist ministry, or candidates in the UUA's religious education or music leadership programs, who identify as women of color, Latina, or Hispanic.

This past year's recipients are Sinzchun Sangye Llamu Hawke and Rayla Mattson. Rayla is the Director of Religious education for the Unitarian Society of Hartford, CT. She has worked with children and youth since her own childhood – enjoying giving them a voice and advocating on their behalf. In addition to her work with children, she writes and shares her unique perspective as a single disabled mother of color within Unitarian Universalism.

Sangye Hawke is a student minister at Starr King who resides in Davis, CA. A practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese Chi Kung, and indigenous practices for over twenty years, Sangye's goal is to become a board certified Chaplain with a strong background in parish ministry.

We are so pleased to support Sangye and Rayla on their paths to ministry.

The panels were convened by scholarship committee chair Rev. Joyce Palmer and included Rev. Palmer, Dr. Shiraz Tate, and Lindsay Dunn

### Advocacy/Marti Retirement

As the minister of the UUWF, Rev. Marti Keller brought more than 30 years experience in public witness and advocacy to our gender rights and justice work. She retired in her role as the UUWF minister in December 2018 and continues to preach around the south & do her ministry in a variety of other ways. She was a strong force in the UUWF for over 20 years in various roles and we're so grateful for her time with us.

With her encouragement, we recently released a new statement regarding recent abortion bans, which can be found at [www.uuwf.org/actions](http://www.uuwf.org/actions).

The Clara Barton Sisterhood was begun as a way for local women's groups, congregations, and individuals to honor women aged 80 and over for their contributions to their congregations and communities.

- This year the sisterhood welcomed 14 new members from throughout the country. The descriptions that the nominating organizations provided of the honorees' commitment,

generosity, and service to both their UU congregations and the wider community are powerful and inspirational.

The UUWF has undertaken a complete overhaul of its website to better communicate and provide resources to our members and other visitors, and to better reflect the current “faces” of our community. We are excited to launch the new site later this year.

Redesigned marketing materials to better communicate how the UUWF meets its mission.

Visitors to the UUWF booth at GA will see new marketing and informational materials that better demonstrate how the UUWF meets our mission. We are spreading the word about our grants programs as well as the Clara Barton Sisterhood – all ways that we outreach, support, honor, and amplify the voices of women in the Unitarian Universalist movement and the voices of UU women in our country. We are committed to engaging UUs in the work for gender justice.