

# PERSONAL HISTORY & POLITICAL CHANGE In Memory Of Jane S. Gould '40

A Barnard alumna, Jane S. Gould '40 returned to her alma mater in 1965 as the director of the Barnard Placement and Career Planning Office and helped change women students' perceptions about their work options. Jane's interest in women and work brought her into the women's movement, and she became part of a working group at the College, which in 1971 succeeded in establishing the Women's Center. Jane became the first permanent director of the Center in 1973, following Acting Director Catharine Stimpson. Under her leadership, the Center became a resource for students, faculty, scholars, and the larger community. The first public program held by the Center was entitled "Is There Male Chauvinism at Columbia University?" and Gould described it in her memoir *Juggling* as "a spirited panel discussion." With a dry wit, she concluded, "It turned out to be an evening of high comedy." The Center then began hosting major conferences; the first was held "on a bleak February day in 1973" and brought close to 1,000 women to Barnard's gates to consider issues like the range of human sexual expression, parenting, ageism, the media and self image, power structures and access to information, and many other feminist topics. The success of this conference was followed by the initiation of the signature event of the Center, the annual conference known as "The Scholar and Feminist," now in its 35th year, which continues to draw crowds and further feminist knowledge.

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1 Jane Gould at the Center's 30th anniversary celebration in 2001 2 Scholar and Feminist Conference attendees congregate outside Lehman Hall 3 Women's Center student representative 4 Conference attendees in LeFrak Gymnasium at the Scholar and Feminist IX: Towards a Politics of Sexuality, 1982 5 Participants in a conference workshop 6 Jane Gould, a Barnard student, Leslie Calman, and Janie Kritzman in the Women's Center library in Barnard Hall 7 Workshop participant at the Scholar and Feminist VI: The Future of Difference, 1979 8 Jane Gould at work in the Center



## PERSONAL AS POLITICAL

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Jane Gould changed the women's movement and the movement changed her; she wrote, "Learning to understand the powerlessness women feel as women, sharing experiences and perceptions and connecting with other women—both individually and collectively, both professionally and personally—not only changed the way I worked but also the way I related to other women. Besides the satisfaction of having worked in a field I believe in deeply, I think that I am a happier person today because I interact with other women more openly and honestly than I once did." Even after retirement, Jane Gould continued to make her mark on the women's movement by writing and participating in critical meetings. She participated in the Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice at Seneca Falls in 1983 and in the United Nations NGO Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. She wrote for *Women's Studies Quarterly* and for two anthologies on women in higher education. She also served on the board of the Center for Constitutional Rights from 1984-1992. In 1997, she published her well-received memoir, *Juggling: A Memoir of Work, Family and Feminism*. It provides an important record of the connections between an individual woman's life and the larger movements that make for change in our society.

Jane Gould believed that "the women's movement is a necessary component of our aspirations for an egalitarian, democratic, and more humane society," and she felt privileged to be a part of this work. In turn, we here at the Center are indebted to her commitment and passion in establishing the Center and guiding it to a position of leadership in the field.

**Please join us on Thursday, March 25 as we celebrate Jane Gould's life and work with an event in her honor. See page 14 for more details.**

## MAJORA CARTER

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**BCRW:** Many of us are familiar with the types of environmental justice projects that you undertook in the South Bronx. What types of new projects are you involved in now?

**Carter:** We are very excited about prospects for large-scale wetland restoration in the New Orleans delta area, a new green investment fund meant to spark economic development in American inner cities, and we are still active with our very first clients at Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina. A historically black college that is now part of the North Carolina state university system and is located near the coast of North Carolina, ECSU faces both environmental and economic challenges. They have chosen to respond to these challenges through an innovative approach that links smart growth with energy conservation, erosion control and water management, as well as the dramatic greenhouse gas reductions that will eventually provide economic as well as environmental savings.

**BCRW:** What are some of the projects that incorporate an environmental justice framework that are being initiated in the areas of the Gulf region that were affected by Hurricane Katrina?

**Carter:** Well, the idea of "environmental justice" is that no group of people should suffer from environmental burdens that others can avoid. The recent federal court decision regarding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' "MR. GO" (Mississippi River Gulf Outlet) project found that wetlands were removed to make this shipping channel and their removal led directly to increased pressure on the levees that broke in the Lower 9th Ward. So, this is an example of an environmental justice process starting. What residents do with this ruling is going to be very important with regard to how compensation is used to restore their wetlands and to implement new storm water management techniques that also make for more beautiful communities. Ideally, this process will also create stable jobs at the city's Public Works Department. This is not a complete list of the current work done in the Katrina-affected areas—there are

other important environmental justice efforts underway, but these are the ones I am most familiar with.

**BCRW:** Has the women's movement been inclusive of environmental justice in their struggles? Why should women be concerned about environmental justice?

**Carter:** I think most social justice movements have been very slow to see the connection their work has with environmental issues; however, I am sure there are many individuals who can be described as both women's and environmental justice advocates.

Unfortunately, children are often the most sensitive to environmentally borne diseases, and the care for these children is primarily provided by women, usually their moms. For instance, a child's asthma attack at 3:00 am caused largely by a local concentration of fossil fuel emission sources like power plants, sewerage treatment plants, or diesel trucking will mean that her mother will be late for work the next day, or possibly fired. But the jobs created to repair environmental justice concerns all around us can benefit all people, including women.

**BCRW:** As you have noted in the past, "green is the new black": people in our society in general are concerned about and have adopted recycling and other energy-saving practices fairly widely. A fundamental understanding of the way minorities bear the burden of climate change, however, is less accepted. Similarly, the way capitalism, consumerism and globalization are all tied together to create many of our environmental problems is not understood. How can we raise awareness of these linkages and make this understanding part of the new vogue about recycling?

**Carter:** It's important that this message is received, and that starts with "likeable" messengers. Different ones work for different audiences. A key factor is understanding and respecting where your audience is—and not just where you want them to be—and adapting accordingly.

**Join us on Saturday, February 27 for the Scholar and Feminist Conference on feminism and climate change. See page 12.**