

# VETERAN FEMINISTS OF AMERICA

An irregular publication

10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition

April 2002



Jacqui Ceballos and  
Roxey Bolton in Coral  
Gables, 1989.

## VETERAN FEMINISTS OF AMERICA IS TEN YEARS OLD

What began in Florida in 1989 as an idea for a reunion of NOW pioneers became, in 1992 an organization for *every* feminist active in the early years—from the 1960's to the 1990's. And, as fate would have it (no, this was not planned) on April 6th we were in Florida on our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary to honor Florida's pioneer feminists!

During our ten years, we've accomplished our goals, and then some! We've held one or two reunions a year, honored over 500 pioneer feminists, and have collected more than 1000 bios for our archives and the in-the-works *Directory of Pioneer Feminists*. We've held events with Women's Studies departments at two universities and symbolically passed the torch to younger women.

We've expanded the membership to embrace future veterans of all future feminist campaigns. And why not? As long as there is a need for a feminist movement, there will be an organization to serve and honor them. A civilized world will exist only when there is complete equality of the sexes, and it isn't likely to happen overnight. By documenting the history of the movement, honoring those who serve it, and passing the torch on to younger generations, we are helping to keep the movement moving.

All this could not have happened without each of *you*. Your interest, emotional and financial support have helped to keep VFA alive and vibrant for ten years. It is our celebration. And while there is no official celebration (as yet) we're going to drink a toast to VFA at all this year's events, beginning with the reunion in Florida, where it all started.

The officers of VFA join me in thanking and congratulating all our members. Here's to ten more years, and then some.

Jacqui Ceballos

## SALUTE TO FEMINIST WRITERS

April 26 Barnard College, New York

Another banner event! Muriel Fox and Sheila Tobias have planned two exciting panels and a celebratory dinner in honor of the writers who inspired us on in the early years. The first panel, "Fiction and Poetry" will be chaired by early New York NOW member, Catharine Stimpson, now Dean of Arts & Humanities at NYU, Marilyn French, Mary Gordon, Erica Jong, Judith Rossner and Alix Kates Shulman. Marlene Sanders will chair The Panel on Non Fiction and Poetry. Marlene, a former anchor of NBC and a founder of New York NOW covered the movement and wrote about women in broadcasting in "Waiting for Prime Time." Susan Brownmiller, Phyllis Chesler, Carol Gilligan, Catherine MacKinnon,

Kate Millett, Letty Cottin Pogrebin and Barbara Seaman are on this panel.

### OUR BODIES OURSELVES

In an unusual treat for VFA, the members of the Boston Health Collective who wrote "Our Bodies Ourselves"—Paula Doress-Worters, Judith Norsigian, Jane Pincus and Wendy Sandford will be with us to be honored and take part in the discussion. All these writers, and many others, will be presented with VFA's medal of honor. The co-planners, Muriel and Sheila, have rich movement backgrounds. Muriel, chair of VFA's board, was a founder, PRVP and Chair of NOW, a former president of NOW LDEF and the Women's Forum; Sheila, on VFA's board, now a consultant to universities on math and science, is author of several books, including "Overcoming Math Anxiety" and "Faces of Feminism."



Muriel Fox



Shiela Tobias

## LOUISIANA FEMINISTS

On the Loyola University campus in New Orleans Louisiana's pioneer feminists were honored in March of 2001. Sue Tucker, Curator of Books and Records and Beth Willinger, Director of the Center for Research on Women had invited VFA to join the Center's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. The women came from all points of Louisiana - joining for the first time since the ERA fight of the 1980's for the reception and dinner. Some highlights:

Octogenarian Myrtle Pickering of Shreveport - "I go way back. But I never burned a bra, though I met a lot of people who wanted to burn my bra. I remember the Klu Klux Klan burning a cross on my lawn, ruining my brand new car and painting up my house!

Muriel Arceneaux of Houma- I can't top Myrtle, but I have a bra story, too. I went to the First Governor's Conference and was sent to the legislature to lobby (for the ERA). What a baptism that was! Later, at the conference I was introduced to a well known activist (and anti-feminist) from my home town. She greeted me with, "Are you one of those women who don't wear bras?" Miss Greenberg, I said, I've been wearing a bra since I was eleven, and I plan to until I die! So let's don't get off on bras. We've got important work to do.

Roberta Madden from Baton Rouge was to host a meeting in her home in 1968, which Sylvia Roberts. (attorney and NOW's first Southern Regional Director). Sylvia was tied up in court so Roberta would have to run the meeting. I had no idea how to begin - I went into my bedroom and cried. And ten years later I was running for the State Senate!

Karline Tierney, a new resident of Louisiana, (now of Baltimore): Sylvia told my AAUW group about the state's Head and Master Clause - how women had no control over our money or our houses. By the time she'd finished I said, "Wow, someone has to do something about this." (Karline was ERA coordinator in Louisiana)

Barbara Hanson of Lafayette had battled the IRS. I was being charged for taxes left by my ex-husband, now deceased. With help from the late Ollie Osborne, I won a minor victory. There was no solution because of the Head and Master Clause, but the judge wrote an opinion, saying that "a husband who withholds the income is guilty of theft." The State Legislature overturned the H&M in 1979 due to Ollie's work.

Quincy Hamilton of Baton Rouge, who had worked hard for the ERA - It's been a struggle, and I'm blessed as I've always had my family with me. My mother and father were Civil Rights workers in Mississippi - They used to tell me, "You really want to die because you're black, you're Catholic and because your parents are Civil Rights workers." I'm not dead yet. And I'm 72.

Kim Gandy, (now president of NOW) related how she experienced the "click." My husband and I were filling out employment forms for the phone company. There was a Stock Option plan. On the back of the card it said "If a married woman, husband must sign here." That was it!

VFA officers Sheila Tobias of Tucson, Aleta Styers of New York, and Winnie Wackwitz of Dallas were there to help and enjoy it all - in fact, they thought it was the most moving event we'd had!



Myrtle Pickering



Roberta Madden



Muriel Arceneaux



Karline Tierney



Quincy Hamilton, Clay Latimer, Mary Wisham

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# HONORING FLORIDA'S PIONEER FEMINISTS

On Saturday, April 6, in Boca Raton, Florida, VFA joined South Palm Beach NOW and the Women's Studies Center of Florida Atlantic University in an all-day conference, called **WOMEN SPEAK OUT NOW, *Defining the Past, Confronting the Present and Shaping the Future.*** VFA board member, Judith Kaplan, was the chief planner – and the reason VFA joined so late in the planning only two weeks before our Salute to Feminists Writers.

The day began with upbeat welcomes at 9:30, from Mary Cameron, Director of the Women's Studies Program, SPBN's outgoing president, Sheila Jaffe, and VFA's Jacqui Ceballos. The 200 or so participants were then treated with a moving performance by Elizabeth Perry of her play, "SunFlower" - In a tour de force, she presented several characters along with Elizabeth Cady; Sojourner Truth, Lucretia Mott, Frederick Douglas, Susan B Anthony and Elizabeth's husband and children .

Now inspired, the participants began the discussion sessions , with older feminists joining students in "Circles of Light" taking on everything from Politics to Poverty. The Circles continued in the afternoon. Pioneer feminist Irma Diamond Newmark remarked that it felt good to be able to help the younger women – something we seldom are invited to do.

VFA hosted a reception at 5 – and presented medals of honor to several super feminists; Mandy Stellman, a lawyer much honored in Wisconsin for her defense of women, Charlotte Schwab, former NY activist and author of a forthcoming book on sexual abuse by rabbis, priests and ministers; Sally Drell, who won her stripes as Betty Friedan's secretary during the 1970 Strike for Equality; Virginia Snyder a legendary journalist and detective, who inspired the TV series, "Murder She Wrote" and her husband, Ross Snyder, Elizabeth Shepard, who, in the '70's worked on the Image Committee of Long Island NOW and emceed a feminist radio

show, Dorothy Stetson, a the Women's Studies Center at FAU, VFA's own Judith Kaplan, NYCNOW activist, historian and owner of the Judith and Warren Kaplan History Collection, Linda Miklowitz president of Tallahassee NOW, Irma Newmark, former NYC activist and founder of Bronx NOW, Linda Wells-Roth, founder & president of Bethesda NOW, Jan Hokenson, a founder of FAU Women's Studies, Sandra Norton who as a professor and Dean supported and built women's studies programs for 35 years, Rochelle Shapiro, MD, active in NYC in Women's Health issues, Sandra Weeks, active in abortion and lesbian rights; Heather Frazier, a founder of Women's studies at FAU. One of our own legends, NOW founder Gene Boyer helped present the medals.

And –Ann Gazourian , Warren Kaplan, Davida Luttenberg, Gene Luttenberg Sheila Jaffe, Ana Rodriguez, Harriet Kurlander, Ellie Lowenberg, Joyce Freitag, Etta Endahl, Becky Mahony, Natalie Andre, Ruth Jacobson, Fran Malone, Doris Gold, Carol Huzsar, Linda Wells-Roth, Betty Berry, Eleanor Pam, Florence Falk Dickler –all with incredible feminist credentials!

Homage was paid to some who couldn't be there—Roxy Bolton and Ruth Householder, founders of NOW Harriet Glazner, Nikki Beare, and some who left too soon – Gwen Cherry, Elaine Gordon.

The one glitch – for many, the all-day event was too tiring , and some, like Gonzalee Ford, the new president of SPBN checked out before we could honor them! Next time!

And there will be a next time, as it was such a success that Judy vows to do it again . But we'll plan a year ahead to do it even better . We welcome your ideas.

**VIDEO OF EVENT FOR SALE – THE PRICE \$40.00, WILL COVER COPYING AND MAILING.** Send your check made out to VFA to 220 Doucet Rd, 225-D, Lafayette, LA 70503



Judith Kaplan



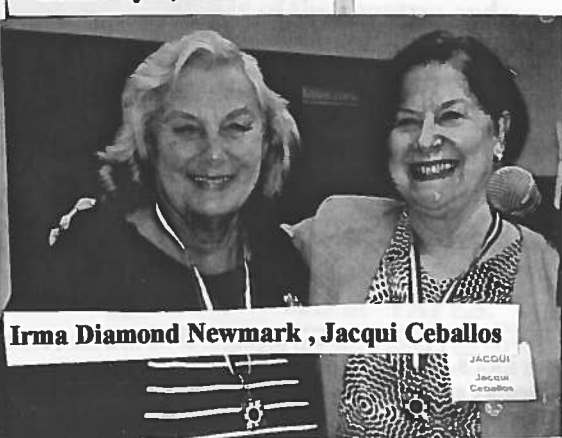
Sally Drell



Charlotte Schwab



Gene Boyer, Doris Gold



Irma Diamond Newmark , Jacqui Ceballos



Shep and Elizabeth Shepard



Davida Luttenberg

Photos – Irene O'Connor Bejarano

...a love is now housed at the Sophia Smith Library so that the next phase, cataloging, inputting and editing, can take place the help of curator, Sherrill Redmon and Smith students.. The project will take longer and needs more work than we'd thought. A m is that pioneer feminists send in mounds of material -which is good, but we need a nicely written, short bios- and that takes of a ing and writing, for which we don't the resources . So please, write your own short bio! If anyone wants to help please get in Barbara through VFA. Email VFA j c v f a @ aol.com

### WHO SAID YOUNG WOMEN AREN'T INTERESTED IN FEMINISM TODAY?

The Boca Raton Sun Sentinel did in a recent first page story about the Florida conference Well, they are wrong! These are but three incidences this year ..Read on....

Feb, 2002 - My great grandniece invited me to speak to her Betty Friedan Club at her private school. These priveleged children, girls and boys, and their three history teachers ( two men, one woman) all pro feminism! Hey, we haven't done so badly! JC

March, 2002 -VFA gets many calls for information about the early movement. A recent caller, Stephanie Gilmore , a grad student at the U of Ohio . asked if she could join VFA. "Are you a veteran of the last 30 years," I asked..."I think I was born when you all began, she answered....and then came back with this...Could I join as a young feminist of America? In fact, may I help form a Young Feminists of America group to be connected with VFA?" Since one of VFA's goals is to "pass the torch" and help to rekindle the spark and spirit of the feminist revolution, this seems ideal. Expect action soon!

April 5, 2002 - Maria Philhower mother of two babies, certified health provider in Delray Beach, ( caring for a VFA members with a broken foot) told us she was incensed that there was no help for childcare and child support from the government. She had taken it upon herself to lobby the House of Representatives at Tallahassee. "Why not join NOW and take this on as head of the Childcare Committee?" we asked. Answer - she did!

### VFA WEB PAGE WINS CRITICAL MASS AWARD

A very nice site, good design, tasteful graphics, great photos, and you have provided your visitors with content that is informative, entertaining, presented well and easy to access. A worthy tribute and a positive contribution to the Web. Thanks for helping make the Web a more interesting, fun and attractive place to visit. I really enjoyed my visit to your site and will return again when time permits.

**Bill Darling - Critical Mass**

Yes, we have a fantastic web site thanks to the dedication and work of our web manager, Jan Cleary Check it out! H T T p // C O M E . T O / V F A <http://vome.to/vfa>

### NEW BOOKS BY MEMBERS

**WOMEN'S INHUMANITY TO WOMEN** - Phyllis Chesler's new book is bound to be controversial - but what's the feminist movement (and life in general) without a little controversy? The author of "Women and Madness" writes about women's treatment of other women in a man's world—mother's to daughter's, sisters to one another, women to women in the professions. What a topic! The book was the cover story of the Washington Post World section recently. It has gotten a lot of good response, and some not so good. Did we say it is controversial? Does anyone remember feminist's inhumanity to feminists in the early days? Say no more. Pick it up and see if you agree with her.

**NO TURNING BACK: THE HISTORY OF FEMINISM AND THE FUTURE OF WOMEN** by Estelle Freedman, Professor of History, Stanford University. Repeatedly declared dead by the media ,the women's movement has never been as vibrant as it is today says award-winning author Freedman. She argues compellingly that feminism has reached a critical momentum from which there is no turning back.

### FORGET THEM NOT

**ELIZABETH SPALDING** - Died October 2001, age 80. Betty was a leader in the marriage and divorce area. She co-chaired the committee for national NOW in the '70's. In her home state (Connecticut) she was into every area of feminism. You can say she died in battle, as she was president of Hartford NOW in 2000. She led her state's delegation to the 1977 National Women's Conference in Houston . To recount all she did for feminism is impossible. As a human being she was one of the kindest, most generous and non-judgmental. A tall, athletic Sagittarian, she was humble but aristocratic, a no nonsense, no frills activist. Eighty is a long life, but her mind was at its peak, and oh, if she could have lived another ten years! VFA honored her in 1994 and with the NOW pioneers in 1997.

**IRENE BLATNIK** - ERA pioneer from Illinois dies at age 82 February 2002. Irene was president of the first ERA coalition ( ERA Central Illinois) in 1972, was co-founder of the national ERA Summit formed with the National Woman's Party. VFA member, Dr Allie Corbin Hixson reports that Irene was a presence at every march, demonstration and meeting. She gave generously of her time, talents and money for ERA passage. Irene was a VFA member, and most of us never knew her - but reports are that she was a major force in her state and in the national ERA movement.



Eleanor Pam & Sandra Norton

Boca Raton - 4/6/02



## CELEBRATING WOMEN'S STUDIES PIONEERS AT BARNARD June 9, 2001

Sheila Tobias gave us our most meaningful event as yet, to quote some members, when we honored the founders, scholars and activists of Women's Studies. Sharon Cucinotta of WENEWS wrote a great article Here we give you EXCERPTS . For the whole article and names of honorees, write VFA--

**NEW YORK (WOMENSENEWS)--**The doyennes of the women's movement in academia and progeny came together on a warm summer weekend to remember the battles of the past and fortify themselves for the work still to be done.

The heady days when "Our Bodies, Ourselves" was first published were recalled, as were the bad old days when discrimination was not thought to apply to women. At the same time, the academics issued challenges for their colleagues to reconsider their roles within educational institutions and not to sacrifice activism and passion to academe and scholarly treatises. The convention of what its members wryly call the Veteran Feminists of America, held at Barnard College campus in June honored educators active during one of the most intense periods of feminist scholarship: 1967 to 1977.

The 130 veterans represented a virtual who's who in scholarly feminism. The celebration included a panel on "Feminist Education: Old Frontiers and New," organized by Sheila Tobias, author of "Overcoming Math Anxiety" and "Faces of Feminism." It featured Bernice Sandler, senior scholar at the Women's Research and Education Institute in Washington, who was instrumental in the development and passage of federal law requiring gender equity in education; Nancy Hoffman of Brown U, who made connections among expanded careers for women, the low social value accorded teaching and a teacher shortage that threatens the future of the country; and sociologist Lenore Weitzman, who has

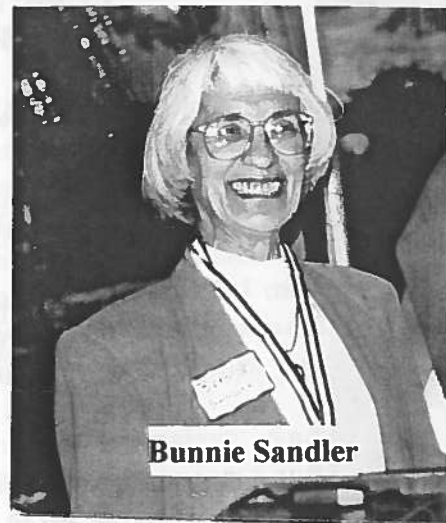
examined the disparate consequences of gender on subjects ranging from divorce to the Holocaust.

Also honored were Florence Howe, founder of the Feminist Press and the Women's Studies Newsletter, now the Women's Studies Quarterly, and Janet Jakobsen, the young director of the Center for Women's Studies at Barnard College, who cited her experience as a token lesbian feminist professor of women's studies to point out some of the pitfalls of progress.

The afternoon panelists and the evening awards ceremony recalled the beginnings of the women's movement with an immediacy that evoked the excitement and frustrations of those early days.

"In 1969 words like sexual harassment and sex discrimination hadn't been invented yet," Sandler recalled. "There were no newsletters about women, no conferences about women and there were no laws prohibiting discrimination against women and girls. There was no equal pay act and no such thing as discrimination based on gender on the books. Today, we have the best set of laws in the world on sexual discrimination, although they are not always enforced." Things began to change--women faculty and students banded together and began to organize, Sandler said.

Jakobsen, director of Barnard's women's studies center, recalled the activist nature of much of the research in the early days, such as "Our Bodies, Ourselves," a book



**Bernice Sandler**

that almost single-handedly changed many women's expectations of their medical professionals and women's own attitudes about their bodies.

Times changed, and the demands for women's and homosexual rights became commonplace and often intertwined on the nation's campuses. Jakobsen found herself teaching at the University of Arizona. Much to her surprise, even though it was a state-supported institution in a region known for its political conservatism, she did not experience discrimination because she was openly a lesbian. Rather, she said she felt as if she had been "embraced by the university" as their "poster girl for domestic partnerships" and "tokenized with my public status as a lesbian."

Another prominent scholar, Nancy Hoffman, professor of education at Brown U, added that when education for elementary and secondary schools is discussed, even the most progressive school reformers focus on the impact of race and poverty--and rarely raise issues related to gender equity.

"Women teachers don't think about what their working conditions mean to young girls in the classroom," she said. That might change now that the Shortage of teachers is gaining more attention, Hoffman added, even as she pleaded with her colleagues to encourage their students who wish to go into teaching. "Feminists need to think of teachers as colleagues in a more profound way," she said.

### **PLACE YOUR VIDEO ORDER NOW!**

**VIDEO TAPES OF THE AWARDS EVENT ARE FINALLY AVAILABLE! *If you paid for your video, please let us know--we're over worked and understaffed, and count on you to understand.... Or place your order now.*** Send \$50 TO VFA FOR THE two tapes (includes mailing)

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## **SALUTE TO FEMINIST WRITERS**

**Friday, April 26, Barnard College 166 and B'way, New York**

**1:30 to 1 – North Tower Suite Brown Bag LUNCH (Bring or buy your own)**

**INFORMAL DISCUSSION LED BY SHEILA TOBIAS**

**1 to 3:30 – Altschuler Auditorium PANEL – “Fiction and Poetry”**

**Catharine Stimpson – Moderator**

**Marilyn French Mary Gordon Erica Jong Judith Rossner Alix Kates Shulman**

**3:30 to 5 - Altschuler Auditorium – NON – FICTION**

**Marlene Sanders – Moderator**

**Susan Brownmiller Phyllis Chesler Carol Gilligan Catherine MacKinnon**

**Kate Millett Letty Cottin Pogrebin Barbara Seaman**

**BETTY FRIEDAN WILL GIVE A PERSONAL RESPONSE AT CONCLUSION OF THE TWO PANELS**

**5 – 6 pm RECEPTION – MCINTOSH HALL 6 TO 9:30 HONORS DINNER**

**Paid up members \$40, others - \$50 (all day, reception & dinner) Send check to VFA c/o Dell Williams  
180 Riverside Boulevard Apt 11-L, New York, NY 10069 For info call Jacqui Ceballos' cell – 337-278-3389**

**April 25<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 PM – An Isadora Evening, Lisa Bonsavage as Isadora Duncan, the woman, Lori  
Belilove the dancer. \$45 NO LATE COMERS CAN ENTER! Dinner at a Japanese restaurant next  
door with the gang – us – all for fun, no \$ goes to VFA \$20 Get in touch with Grace Welch  
IMMEDIATELY --! 631-348-7199 – MAYBE THERE WILL BE TICKETS**

**VETERAN FEMINISTS OF AMERICA**

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