

CMwD Women and Religion Committee  
and UU Women's Connection (successor to CMwD-UUWF)  
proudly present a women's leadership day to celebrate the 200th  
birthday of Margaret Fuller. Our wish is to honor UU women who  
have similarly stepped up in difficult times, as did this feisty and  
fearless UU foremother. We recognize that women who now  
make up over 50 percent of the ministerial leadership and the  
women lay leaders of Unitarian Universalism are surely  
***"Agents of Change."***



[www.womenandreligion.org](http://www.womenandreligion.org)

[www.uuwomensconnection.org](http://www.uuwomensconnection.org)

A joint project of the CMwD Women & Religion Committee  
and the UU Women's Connection with a grant from the Chicago  
Area Unitarian Universalist Council ([www.uuchicago.org](http://www.uuchicago.org)) and  
the generous people of the Third Unitarian Church  
([www.thirdunitarianchurch.org](http://www.thirdunitarianchurch.org)).



***Women's  
Leadership  
Day***

## ***Agents of Change*** **Honoree Stories**



MARCH 20, 2010

THIRD UNITARIAN CHURCH

CHICAGO, IL

**Martha Atherton:** Countryside Church UU, Palatine, IL



Known as “Marty,” Martha has been a UU since she graduated from college. She was president of the “Women’s Guild” in the 50s. Along with her husband, Bob, she has donated seventeen years to the beautiful landscaping at Countryside. One of her pet projects is in support of a homeless mission in Portland, Oregon. The mission provides shelter and long-term residence to help improve lives. Locally her family’s foundation supports and leases space to Trinity Services, an organization that

provides homes and services for the physically and mentally challenged. Of her many projects she is past president of Sister Cities International and American Women for International Understanding, for which she received the Bernice Behrens Award.

**Diane Banta:** North Shore Unitarian Church, Deerfield, IL



Diane is “always there when she is needed.” The Religious Education Director in the early 80’s at North Shore, she loved working with children so much that after fostering the growth of an emerging congregation, Prairie Crossing UU, she served as their RE director. During that same time she also helped NSUC through a difficult time, by service on the Ministerial Relations Committee. Knowledgeable with the Excel spreadsheet program, she assisted with registration and planning of the 2007 Lake Geneva

Fall Retreat for women. A nurse by occupation, she is a caring listener and “gives helpful advice.” She is both leader and friend.

**Julie Bock:** First Unitarian Society, Milwaukee, WI



Julie was one of First Unitarian Society’s leaders of the CMwD Women & Religion 2010 WomanSpirit Retreat. She is a teacher of the OWL curriculum with dialog program with parents and an organizer and Chair of Interweave. She has been very involved in First U Society’s Womanspirit group for several years and does much community volunteer work.

**Jennifer Thomson:** United UU Society of Mukwonago, WI



Jennifer’s greatest gift to her congregation is years of helping guide the congregation through a Visioning, and the Long-Range Planning process that led to the decision to sell their former building and purchase land. Plans are on the way to build an environmentally-friendly, accessible new building. Planning committee work also helped with a new congregational mission, covenant and vision. Jennifer is now pursuing the UU ministry as a seminary student at Meadville-Lombard.

**Gloria Weberg:** Berrien UU Fellowship, St Joseph, MI



A member of BUUF since the mid 80s, Gloria has served as a CUUPs coordinator, board member, RE teacher, chair of Community Outreach/Social Action Committee and so much more. She is ever present “wherever she is needed.” She has starred several times in the local YWCA’s production of *The Vagina Monologues*. In her 80’s, Gloria still teaches aqua-aerobics, and sews beautiful quilts for family and friends. One of her quilting projects was a series of five wall hangings that have transformed the BUUF sanctuary.

**Roberta Wilson:** Third Unitarian Church, Chicago, IL

The Scholarship Committee, TUC’s pride and joy, was formed 35 years ago by Roberta and has given over 200 college scholarships. Roberta continues to be an active committee member. She has been a member of TUC since 1968--the first African-American member. Roberta served on the congregation’s board of trustees and the board of South Austin Day Care Center and Harriet Tubman Food pantry. She is a long time member of TUC’s Women’s Alliance, West Side Community Council and City Wide Legal Assistance Foundation. “Whatever you undertake to do, do your very best” is the motto taught to her by her mother.

**Doris Jones:** Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign, IL

“More or less,” her congregation writes, “if you name it, she has done it.” She has been chair of the board, treasurer, and a cheerful, wise and tireless volunteer on many projects. Recently she led the lengthy project to write a history of the previous 25 years of church history. So well done was this project, which resulted in a book, that the UUA wishes to use it as an example other congregations of how to write a church history. Doris served as a board member and long time member of the CMwD-UUWF. An Allerton Institute fan and regular, Doris recently attended the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Monticello, Illinois.

**Janet Nortrom:** First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee, WI



Janet shines as a female agent of change when spearheading a project that has a relationship to feminist spirituality. She has been involved with the Women & Religion Committee and the Womanspirit program at FUS. She was an important part of promoting *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* and *Rise Up and Call Her Name* both locally and in the district. Most recently she was part of the district program to Train the Trainers for the newly updated *Cakes* curriculum. Janet has inspired many to become involved with the life of the church, and encouraged her nominator to become a UU minister. She is also a long time member of the CMwD-UUWF and the UU Women’s Connection and National UU Women’s Federation board. Janet is a champion of the environment through teaching and volunteering.

**Becky Steffes:** Unitarian Universalist Church West, Brookfield, WI



Becky introduced the “Social Justice Theme” at UUCW. She revitalized the Guest at Your Table Program, shepherded a social action endowment fund of \$55,000 which has provided funding for membership in the Peace Action, Milwaukee Riverkeepers, UUA affiliate Ministry for the Earth; provided grants for YRUU participation in Camp Everytown, money for Nicaragua Brigade, six peace conferences, and funding to many charitable non-profit organizations. Among her many other projects, she volunteers at the Waukesha Hope Center, is a member of Common Ground, and Secretary of the Waukesha County Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

**Nancy Bragg:** UU Church of Bloomington-Normal, IL



Nancy co-facilitated preparation for a settled minister and educated the congregation about Program Church issues. In a time of transition she has been the catalyst for needed change. Her board president reports that she is the “most frequent volunteer for any job.” She also facilitates a monthly book group and is on the Associate Minister’s support team.

**Delinda Chapman:**

Abraham Lincoln UU Congregation, Springfield, IL



Delinda is presently the VP of ALUUC. Because of her strong organizational skills, she has chaired several church fundraisers, including “Trash and Treasure” sales and has just chaired the 2010 Fantasy Auction. She also coordinates congregation committees and is chair of the monthly ALUUC day, supplying meals to the homeless at the Springfield Overflow Shelter. Active in community and world, she is a practicing Zen Buddhist. Delinda is a member of World Affairs Council of Central Illinois and life member of American Association of University Women—she was on the AAUW National Board of Directors as the Great Lakes Regional Director from 2001-02, and also served on the nominating committee. She hosts programming on Access Channel 4 and moderated the UU Women’s Connection’s “What Do Women Want” panel discussion at the Lake Geneva Retreat. She is: a feminist, artist, researcher and writer; lover of people and life.

**Velaine Carnall:** Unitarian Church of Hinsdale, Countryside, IL



Velaine has a long history with Planned Parenthood and Religious Coalition for Reproductive Rights. She is a clinic escort for two area clinics and with her late husband developed the escort-service program. Velaine is a longtime member of the Women’s Alliance and has served as president. She is also a longtime member and strong voice to the CMwD-UUWF and its successor organization the UU Women’s Connection. She serves on the congregation’s Social Action committee, is a long a member of the League of Women Voters, and she is presently involved with Hinsdale’s “Aging Well” program to help keep seniors in their homes.

**Carla Feldhamer:** Unitarian Fellowship of Carbondale, IL

Carla has been the diving force behind the Fellowship's partnership with the Ranchod Hospice and Care for Orphans in Kabwe, Zambia, and Hospice of Southern Illinois. The fellowship has been raising funds through a variety of community events. They have also collected medical and school supplies for those with HIV/AIDS. Through her efforts the partnership received a \$5,000 grant from the UUWF that was used to build a workshop to help women at Ranchod increase production and sales of handmade gifts. She also serves on the UU Global AIDS Coalition and helps other congregations become involved in addressing HIV/AIDS both locally and in Zambia.

**Vicki Fresen:** Green Bay Area UU Fellowship, Green Bay, WI



Vicki has been with the Fellowship since the early 1990s when members could fit around a dining table, and has served as president and on the board for many years. Named by the fellowship president as “the glue,” Vicki held the fledgling fellowship together during various phases of growth. From opening doors on Sunday to representing the fellowship with the district, membership committee or running the annual service auction, she remains a valuable mentor; compassionate, insightful and a determined leader.

**Beverly Feldt:** Unitarian Universalist Church, Park Forest, IL



Beverly invented the “mullible” item for discussion on the board agenda. Her best contribution as president was to renew the trust between the Board and Congregation. She developed, with Rev. Randy Becker, a new paradigm of church governance. Bev led the congregation to deeper connections to each other and a better understanding of lay responsibilities under a part-time ministry. Beverly shares generously of her musical performance abilities, composing songs and drumming. She developed and leads a meditation group and shares her own warmth, talents and generosity.

**Lois Hayward:** Unitarian Fellowship of Carbondale, IL

Lois has been the catalyst for the Fellowship's New Day Prison Ministry. It began with letter writing to one inmate, and then many; she has encouraged others to write. She has sponsored letter-writing contests which resulted in written anthologies. The prison ministry over the years has included visits, collections of toiletries and school supplies. This work has become a springboard for Lois to become involved in prison reform at the state and national level. She has provided compassion and a sense of dignity and connection to many who have been imprisoned.

**Joanne Fought:** Universalist Unitarian Church, Peoria, IL



Joanne recently assisted her congregation in the transition of moving from the church's historic building to its new building and acreage, and the resultant growth. Joanne has served not only her church as an innovative and capable leader, she is two-time board president of CMwD-UUWF. She moved that organization through the transitional time leaving Allerton Conference Center, the 42-year home of the annual Allerton Institute. She helped introduce *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* and *Rise Up and Call Her Name* feminist curriculums in the district and acted as facilitator to many, many women. Joanne was also active with the Women and Religion Committee as planner, committee member and WiseWoman. She has headed planning for both organizations' retreats and conferences. Joanne is a long-time yoga practitioner and teacher.

**Stephanie Downs Hughes:** DuPage UU Church, Naperville, IL



Stephanie has served as the UN Envoy, beginning in the 1990's through the UU UN Office. At the Parliament of World Religions she led in the launching of two on-going initiatives: *Global Negotiation Program* and the *Global Citizenship Pledge*. Another project: *Diversity Dinners* founded in 1996 brought Stephanie the Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award. Through her varied work, she supports public broadcasting, ballot integrity, peace building and feminism. Intent on satisfying the basic needs of all... including the young, weak, illiterate, rebellious and even the terrorist—Stephanie encourages us to make change for the better.