

**THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION
OF WOMEN HISTORIANS**

The Second 25 Years

1994-2019

by
Marguerite (Peggy) Renner

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PUBLISHED BY WAWH 2019

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PREFACE

First, I would like to establish that the information source of this history was *The Networker*, the newsletter that the Western Association of Women Historians has published for the last fifty years. Every one of the past editions is available at the WAWH website. I invite you to explore the exciting information this collection provides. While the Western Association of Women Historians does have an archive located at California State University Sacramento, I did not have access to those materials. I invite our younger members to explore the wealth of material available that was created and collected by members whose story is reported below. Fortunately, the women covered in this history are still alive, and I was able to work with many of them to revise and improve this work.

I would like to thank everyone who helped in developing this history of WAWH's past so that our new members will have a better understanding of the origins of WAWH, who created our organization and what they have done to make WAWH successful as a professional society, and a home for women historians. My thanks go to the past presidents and other officers who reviewed my manuscript and offered critical commentary on their respective material in the section entitled '**The Presidents' Leadership**' which I developed to cover their terms of service. Some of them are also covered in the section entitled **Social Issues and Action**. Each of them helped to provide support for women in the historical profession. Other members and leaders are also highlighted in the sections entitled **WAWH Members' Work in the Classroom as Educators**, **The Graduate Students**, **The Editors of *The Networker***, **The Executive Directors**, **The Internet Experts**, and **The Committee Chairs**.

Several members helped in the development of this history. I offer special thanks to Susan Wladaver-Morgan who not only reviewed the section on her work, and the entire section on the editors of *The*

Networker, but also agreed to review the entire document and offered thoughtful suggestions for revision. On numerous occasions she encouraged me to keep going when I felt overwhelmed by the project. Ronaele Novotny, a friend from graduate school, also provided sharp review of the manuscript and caught those errors that one just does not see in one's own work. The third reader of the manuscript was Robert M. Nelson, my husband, who not only read and made suggestions to sharpen my presentation, but provided dinner, fed the cats, went to the grocery store, took responsibility for numerous other day-to-day necessities, and on a day-to-day basis offered a friendly smile and provided the encouragement that made it possible for me to finish this as I recovered from major surgery.

I also thank Susan Kullman, who helped with revisions to the '**Internet Experts**' section, added material that was not in *The Networker* but was an important part of the internet story. Amy Essington, the first executive director, provided a sharp eye for the '**Organizational Growth and Development as it Changed Over Time**' section. Jennifer Thigpen answered many questions and offered support for my work as part of our celebration of WAWH's 50th anniversary. I also am deeply appreciative of the work that Carrie Streeter has done to prepare this manuscript for printing. And finally I thank Jenny, Jennifer Robyn Terry, and others on the Executive Committee who reviewed the proposed award that is detailed at the end of the manuscript and offered valuable comments to the proposed guidelines. I am excited to see who the winners of this award will be in the coming years.

For information about the first twenty-five years of the work WAWH and the work it has done for women and for the historical profession, see the *Histories of the Western Association of Women Historians, 1969-1994* by Marguerite Renner on the WAWH website at <https://wawh.org>.

THE SECOND 25 YEARS

For the last fifty years the Western Association of Women Historians has provided women historians with opportunity to share their research, exchange invaluable information for women as professional historians and as people, and promote and nurture personal and professional networks. As past president Betsy Perry (president 1989-1991) said in an email I got from her last spring, “I especially remember how much I loved seeing very new women historians come to join us and bring new energy and ideas with them for how we could best support and to encourage them.”¹ Dozens of women have worked to create the environment that Betsy described. What follows is a summary of the work done by so many of our members to achieve the goals of WAWH.

WHO BENEFITS FROM WAWH?

The founders of WAWH who met in 1970 voted to open the doors to all women in the history profession, women who practice as university and college professors, adjunct faculty, independent scholars, and graduate students. In time it added to its membership public historians, editors of professional journals, curators of collections of historic documents, and research scholars working in the private sector. While most members completed their training in history programs, some trained in newer disciplines—women’s studies, African American studies, ethnic studies, LGBTQ studies, or peace and war studies found WAWH a welcome home. These have included scholars of English, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science and other disciplines. Many of the founders were interested in the study of women, but others were specialists in diplomatic, world history, political, economic, or any of a host of other specialties.

¹ Betsy Perry, response to message from Peggy Renner, email, January 2019

Beyond providing women with an environment to share research on the study of women, provide constructive scholarly criticism and encourage publication of their work, WAWH also assumed responsibility for building an organization that could fight the discrimination that women faced and discuss political issues that faced women and/or the larger society. Further, it sought to promote the employment of women in the various loci in which women worked, and to encourage and support teaching. All of this required management skills for an organization to support all of this activity. What follows provides a summary of the work done by the officers and members of WAWH.

WHO HELPED SET THE COURSE FOR WAWH?

The Presidents' Leadership

The presidents of WAWH set the course.

Karen Offen (independent scholar; president, 1991-1993) took as one of her missions the task of broadening our scholarly focus to include comparative analysis of select themes and paying more attention to international developments in women's history. At Stanford in 1992 she directed her fourth NEH summer seminar for college teachers on the topic "The Woman Question in Western Thought, 1750-1950." She invited internationally-known historians from other countries to speak at the annual WAWH luncheon at the AHA-PCB. These are only a few of many ways in which Offen shared her commitment to comparative analysis and an international perspective.

While she worked hard to expand the heavily national scholarly focus of WAWH members, Offen also took action on a critical issue in the teaching of history in the USA. Determined to influence the revisions of the History-Social Sciences Framework for the state of California to

see that it gave more than lip service to women's history in grades K-12, she organized a WAWH committee to advocate for incorporation of new findings from scholarship in women's history into the teaching of history in the public schools. Following in the WAWH efforts of the 1970s and '80s to make the history of women part of the curriculum, the committee dutifully reviewed the textbooks used in California public schools. Further discussion of this is considered below: **Social Issues and Action.**

As an independent scholar, Offen worked to address the needs of so many others who did not have the protection of tenure (or salary) enjoyed by university faculty, but this never inhibited her scholarship. As a sometime member of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars, she reported on the database that was being created to facilitate networking, grant writing, and more. She also made an effort to see that independent scholars were included in programs of our annual conference.

Offen also sought to strengthen the organizational structure of WAWH. This included consolidating a paper trail of the work done to date, that would provide support for future officers of WAWH. She was opposed to reinventing the wheel with each cycle of the presidency. She engaged in making the various award committees self-perpetuating so that each chair had at least one year of experience on the committee. While the president continued to assume responsibility for appointments to the prize committees, she paid careful attention to balancing fields, interests, and geographic representation beyond the borders of California. Offen also produced the President's Handbook, along with Committee Chairs handbooks which identified and recorded the many duties that fell to the president and the other officers, the procedures for undertaking their respective work assignments, the timetable for these various tasks included the work associated with organizing the annual conference, completing reports, responding to correspondence, appointing committee members to the several award committee, and more.

Unfortunately, President's Handbook with all its information disappeared several presidencies later and has never been recovered.

Marguerite (Peggy) Renner (professor emerita Glendale Community College, president, 1993-1995) seeking to establish a better picture of the membership, Renner asked members to complete a questionnaire to all members in 1994 entitled "WAWH: Looking Ahead." The purpose of the survey was to identify the concerns of the members, to consider how to address those concerns, and to build membership. The returns indicated that more than four hundred women from fifteen states were members. It also revealed the interests of members. From the tenured faculty came requests for recognition of their publications and other accomplishments. Adjunct faculty expressed concerns about job security. It also showed that the community of women of color was very small. While graduate students had always been part of WAWH, they voiced concerns about the costs of conferences, and the desire for mentoring, and the limits to their ability to join in organizational activity. Likewise independent scholars, adjunct faculty, and K-12 teachers voiced concerns that provided direction for her administration. Many of the members, who had responsibility in the classroom, spoke of the need to focus on effective teaching. It is hard to say how important that questionnaire was, but the membership the following year did increase to six hundred.

She greatly appreciated the President's handbook that Offen had developed. Above all, it made clear the tasks that fell to the several officers and made the numerous tasks that fell to the president easier to manage. Some of her work involved the management of awards. In the case of the Best Article Prize, she continued the work of naming it to honor Judith Lee Article, the deceased daughter of the donor, Martin Ridge, Director of Historical Studies at the Huntington Library. She proposed a column in *The Networker* that would focus on

political issues, and while this column was not created, the President's Column would serve this function in years to come.

She also oversaw the revitalization of the social action committee in response to the action by the House of Representatives prohibiting women in the military from using their own funds to obtain an abortion in military hospitals at home or abroad, given that many of these women had been victims of sexual assault by men in the military. Funding for women facing domestic violence was also threatened. While members could not write on behalf of WAWH, they were encouraged to write as individuals to the representatives in Congress.

Renner, who lives in Pasadena, offered her home for evening events when the Huntington was not available. During her term of service this included a cocktail party, and in later years it was the site for a buffet dinner, a book reading session, and gatherings on Friday night just to chat. This offered a casual opportunity to meet others in the organization and to build the networks that were a critical part of what has made WAWH so special to its members.

Renner had the delight of organizing the twenty-fifth anniversary of the creation of WAWH. As part of the celebration she wrote the *Histories of WAWH, 1969-1995* that shared the accounts of the founders and reviewed the work of the first twenty-five years of the organization. This is now posted on the WAWH website. A few hard copies still exist, if you would like one. This summary of the second twenty-five years is also hers.

Susan Wladaver-Morgan, (independent scholar, retired associated editor of the *Pacific Historical Review*, president, 1995-1997) tried a new approach to increasing WAWH membership by identifying and recruiting scholars in states other than California, including states several west of the Mississippi along with Canada to the north. As former editor of *The Networker*, which in those days included mailing

newsletters to several hundred members, she was also very aware of the residences of members, and she revised the map that WAWH used on the newsletter to reveal its extensive membership. She also opened discussion of the issues facing adjunct faculty who were becoming increasingly important faculty in the academy. As an independent scholar she worked to reach out to other independent scholars, who like herself, sought other paths than the academy to practice the profession.

Wladaver-Morgan was also focused on the broadening of the scope of history that came with the development of the history of women. The plenary at her first meeting, at the Huntington, focused on the theme of a recently released book that argued for multiple perspectives in viewing the past. Her second meeting, this one at Asilomar, focused on "Difference and Power" to highlight the women's activism and volunteerism and highlighted diversity among women activists in the public sphere and revealed the various ways in which women's activism in the public arena had changed American political culture. In those days Friday evening included dinner and lively entertainment. For her first Friday night event focused on three generations of African American women in a presentation entitled "Whip 'Em With Your Wit." For the second she invited Bonda Lewis for a live performance as Jane Austin.

As president, Wladaver-Morgan also worked to improve the structure and function of WAWH. This included expanding the items included in the quarterly *The Networker*, which she had edited from 1987 to 1993 that will be discussed below. She also updated the membership directory and reviewed the various award committees. She developed timetables for appointment of members so that new people would join in the efforts of picking award winners, and added this to the notebooks for committee chairs. This work made apparent the need to raise funds for the Founders Dissertation Fellowship and to continue the work begun by the K-12 Committee.

The issue that Wladaver-Morgan highlighted as president probably derived from the different experiences she brought to the office. Unlike nearly all of the other WAWH presidents before and after her, she lived and worked outside of California. She did not hold a permanent position as teaching faculty at a college or university, instead scraping together a living by doing freelance editing projects or working as what we now call adjunct or contingent faculty before she assumed the associated editorship at the *Pacific Historical Review*. These experiences led her to focus on independent scholars (serving as president of the Northwest Independent Scholars Association) part-time, non-tenure track faculty, and non-teaching careers for historians and editing the PHR, which allowed her to recruit new work and mentor younger scholars –all topics that loom even larger in the twenty-first century than during her presidency. Wladaver-Morgan also understood the need for social action. For details on her work see **Social Issues and Action** below.

Sarah Stage (professor emerita Arizona State University, president 1997-1999) Starting on an upbeat note, with responsibility for the celebration of WAWH's 30th anniversary, Sarah Stage agreed to schedule the meeting at Asilomar, the favored location in northern California. Renner and Jackie Braitman agreed to help co-ordinate the plans for the meeting. Her keynote speaker was Ruth Rosen whose presentation was titled "Hidden Injuries of Sex: Reflections on the Mothers of the Women's Movement" which she took from her book *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*. She also invited Susan Rose, a dancer and choreographer to performed her "Delivering a Paper" after the President's dinner.

On a more serious note, when Stage became president in 1997, she was confronted with intense political issues. On the one hand, she was in the middle of a sex discrimination case at the University of California, Riverside, where faculty and students had levied charges of discrimination against members of the history department. She had

been a member of that department, but had resigned in frustration by the university's initial failure to respond to the charges. Then she was called upon to testify before a committee that the university had reluctantly created to respond to the charges. Further discussion of this is to be found in the **Social Issues and Action** section below and will also be included in one of the panels at this conference.

If that was not enough, Stage, as president-elect also confronted trouble at Asilomar, one of the first and the most celebrated locations for WAWH annual meetings. Asilomar had just been purchased by a new for-profit company, and this new ownership meant many changes for the employees. We learned the night of the President's dinner that this would be the last night of work for the women and men who served our meal. Fortunately she had the help of Wladaver-Morgan in responding. Further discussion of the WAWH efforts to support the employees is to be found in the **Social Issues and Action** section below.

On a lighter note, Stage began her term of service with fond memories of her first activity in WAWH, in 1979, when she was asked to serve on the Program Committee with Carole Srole in Pacific Palisades. Stage recalled the number of papers submitted by graduate students and this memory shaped her efforts to provide support for the newest members of the professions. In 1979 she recommended students use SPITHRA to be discussed below in the section on graduate students. Almost twenty years later, when she assumed the presidency, her comment to graduate students continued to shape her leadership.

Karen Blair (professor emerita Central Washington University, president 1999-2001) gave new focus to recruiting new members. In her president's column she called upon WAWH to reach out to "high school teachers of history, and others sometimes identified by the controversial term "gypsy" instructors, but also known as adjunct faculty, or freeway flyers, along with new assistant professors to

western colleges and universities, mature scholars who have achieved seniority in the historical professional.”² To assist in this effort, she invited leaders of WAWH, including Judy Raftery, Joanna Cowden, Penny Kanner, Karen Lystra and Betsy Perry to organize a round table which reflected on membership and the drive to reach out to others was the end result of their efforts. While WAWH was no longer an organization of Caucasian women, there was still important work to be done.

To further her goal of outreach to new scholars, Blair authorized and presided over the first meeting outside California. Portland was the location; Lewis and Clarke College the host of the meeting for the 50th. This was considered by some a daring act. Her decision did raise some criticism, but the meeting was considered a roaring success and it not only increased membership, but it encouraged researchers in the western region to join WAWH and share their work. Wladaver-Morgan recalls the time and energy she and Caroline Litzenberger from Portland State University spent as program coordinators along with local arrangements, and presidents expressed their concerns in finding local arrangements coordinators. Ever since, the WAWH has held conferences throughout the region and developed an ever-widening profile. Now no longer do meetings shift from north to south in California, but also include a meeting in a states and Canada. At the same time, these meetings added to the complexities of conference organizing.

Blair was also committed to recognizing members’ accomplishments. Her initial focus was on book publications. Because the Huntington, the location of the conference initially was not available in the evening, Blair organized a book reading at Vroman’s Bookstore in Pasadena. Her ideas of recognizing members work was not lost. Friday evening was established at the time at the annual meeting for the presentations by scholars. And ultimately WAWH was able to

² Karen Blair, “President’s Message,” *The Networker*, Fall 1999, p.1

host evening events at the Huntington. She worked with Director of Research at the Huntington Library, Martin Ridge, who facilitated the use of HEH facilities beyond its conference rooms for evening social events.

In addition, Blair took several steps to tighten the organization. She oversaw the work of the Social Action Committee as it sought to address issues facing part-time instructors. She asked Karen Lystra to supervise the four prize committees and called for the creation of a WAWH website and encouraged WAWH to expand its membership to include more women outside of California. And she began a review of the constitution and by-laws (more on this below see **Organization Growth and Development Overtime**)

Karen Lystra (Professor emerita, California State University, Fullerton, president 2001-2003) sought to improve the organizational structure and function, and to do so she proposed creating the position of executive director. Giving credit to Karen Blair for beginning a goal to preserve historic records of WAWH and to add new dimensions that will give us even more intellectual strength and visibility, she argued, “This decision was crucial to this organization's quality growth and development. From my perspective, this is my most important contribution... and to make it as important as the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians.”³ Her efforts are discussed in details below in the section on “**Organizational Growth and Development Overtime.**”

In keeping with the long established tradition of inviting distinguished speakers for the president's keynote address, Lystra also recruited distinguished scholars, including Grace Larsen, Terri Snyder, Suzanne Lebsock, and Alice Kessler-Harris to focus on the contributions that Linda Kerber had made to the profession. She also sought to create a

³ Karen Lystra, “President's Column,” *The Networker*, Summer 2001, p. 1

conference program that had a balanced mix of senior scholars, younger faculty, independent scholars, and graduate students. The end result was not only the enhancement of the organization's reputation nation-wide but the increasing the participation of historians at all stages of their career.

Lystra also demonstrated the importance of viewing contemporary events through an historical lens. Assuming office shortly before the events of "9/11," Lystra used her column to offer an historian's reaction and response. "WAWH members" she wrote in her column, "can unite in insisting on the importance of history in understanding and analyzing what happened." She then went on to list the bombings in American history—Haymarket-1886, LA Times-1905, Wall Street—1920, Oklahoma City Federal Building 1995. "As historians, we know that to practice our craft effectively we need evidence, imagination, and wisdom," she wrote. As she continued, "The latter is especially difficult without distance and a sense of cause and effect that comes from knowing what followed years, decades, and even centuries after an event."⁴

An archive was also something that Lystra thought WAWH should have. As she argued when her term ended, the organization needs "to hold onto everything that is valuable about our organization and yet continue to add new dimensions that will give us even more intellectual strength and visibility."⁵ Her call for action would transpire in subsequent administrations.

Patricia Cline Cohen (president emerita, University of California Santa Barbara, president, 2003-2005) opened her term of service by reviving questions about inequity in the academy, a topic of historic concern to WAWH. As she reported, the University of California system anticipated the opportunity of 7,000 new positions to be

⁴ Karen Lystra, "President's Column," *The Networker*, Fall, 2001, p.1

⁵ Karen Lystra, "President's Column," *The Networker*, Fall, 2001, p.1

divided among the several institutions, but she questioned whether attention would be given to gender inequity. At that time, men still out-numbered women in history departments among the tenured and tenure track positions. Would attention be given to altering this imbalance? In the end, a sea change in faculty renewal, action that started then and continues in the present actually occurred in the fifteen years since Cline wrote that column, she argues today. The age of professors drove it, irrespective on the economic downturn. “As I look at my own department, we hired 19 brand new people since 2003, in a department of about 43,” she indicated by email when asked about the eventual outcome. As she continued, “UCSB has held the line on adjunct/temp lecturers, using that title mainly for our own grad students with recent PhDs as a way to help added to their experience and their CVs for the market. We have a great Executive Vice Chancellor who really put the brakes on any tendency to hollow out departments and restock with cheap adjuncts bearing the brunt of the teaching load.”⁶ Her concern was in order, and hers along with others may have been influential in the outcome.

Cohen also enjoyed sharing the experiences of the historian in pursuit of the historic record. In the spring of 2004 she shared her own experience in examining a diary that was filled with mathematics, written in 1800 by a young girl. The project began with a television company that wanted to know more about quotations from the ‘Alcoran’ which referred to a Koran. What began as an historic venture proved to be her became a fascinating account of the film industry and the excitement of sleuthing that she did that was complemented by a guest column by Melissa Stevenson in *The Networker* entitled “The Public Historian Tries Theatre for Social Change”.

⁶ Patricia Cline Cohen, “WAWH Conference Roundup,” *The Networker*, Summer 2004, p.5

Under Cohen's administration, the position of executive director was discussed, and Amy Essington, was appointed to this position. Assigned to the new ED was the "responsibility for the membership data base, oversight of the treasury, conference registration, website maintenance, and centralizing organizational information."⁷ Further discussion is considered below in the section entitled **Organizational Growth and Development**.

Cohen also understood the importance of providing support for graduate students. In her President's Column in 2014 she focused on a class she taught entitled "The Academic Profession of History" which taught third and fourth year graduate students how to write a CV, set up a placement file, and other invaluable advice to this community. She was particularly concerned about the number of doctorates awarded every year and how that could exceed the number of job opening and was mismatched with the areas of studies in the job openings. She observed in a report from the American Historical Association, one third of the doctorates awarded each year focused on the twentieth century when there were only 47 jobs in this area. This generated discussion among WAWH members along with the AHA and other professional associations of historians.

Nupur Chaudhuri (professor Southern Texas University, president, 2005-2007) is best known for the work she did fund raising for WAWH's awards. As she stated in her President's Columns, raising money for the several awards was critical. Before, during and after her term of service, Chaudhuri sought to endow several of the WAWH awards. With no hesitation she asked for money and was often successful. And in 2008 she and her husband established the Gita Chaudhuri award that recognizes the best monograph focused on the history of women in rural environments, from any era and any place in the world, published by a WAWH member.

⁷ Nupur Chaudhuri, "Sierra Prize Profiles," *The Networker*, Fall, 2005

Chaudhuri was also committed to developing working relationships with other women's organizations. Before becoming WAWH president, she managed the day-to-day work of the Coordinating Council for Women in History for a number of years. As WAWH president, she worked to strengthen that relationship, including co-sponsoring the drop-in room for graduate students and the evening cocktail at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association. She also worked to develop links with the OAH, the Southern Association for Women Historians, the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, the Association of Black Women Historians, and others. The last was particularly important to WAWH because it represented a concrete effort to bring women of color into our organization.

There were other ways in which Chaudhuri worked to bring diversity to the organization. While many members recognized that she was our only member of color, none had been successful in attracting others. So she invited Deborah Grey White as the plenary speaker at the Asilomar conference in 2006, and encouraged the Black Women Historians to submit panels to the annual conference and to join our organization. She also invited Asuncion Lavrin to be the keynote speaker at the meeting in 2007. She further encouraged her graduate students to participate and nominated one to serve as graduate student representative.

Chaudhuri was particularly concerned with the work the founders of WAWH had done. She interviewed Frances Richardson Keller about her contributions to WAWH and her efforts to "breathe new energy into WAWH in 1980-81."⁸ She also organized panels for the annual conference to honor past leaders, including Francesca Miller, president 1981-1983. Following in the tradition of several predecessors, she organized a panel for colleagues to share ideas on ways to teach about 9/11.

⁸ Carol Gold, "President's Column," *The Networker*, Summer, 2007, p. 1

Following in the tradition of previous presidents, Chaudhuri reported on tragic events in our nation's history. To her fell the task of reporting on the devastation created by hurricanes, Katrina and Rita. Sensitive to issues of wealth and class, her comments in her Presidential Column told of the horrendous effect these storms had on people who had little or no resources to help cope with the devastation. While she did not identify the storms as signs of climate change, she recognized the horror that these had produced and how their intensities exceeded many previous storms.

Carol Gold (professor emerita University of Alaska, Fairbanks, president 2007-2009) contributed to WAWH in many ways, but her determination to keep us apprised of the discrimination women in the profession have faced demands notice. As she stated in her opening presidential column, "We need to make sure that younger generations of women understand the history, know where we have been, understand that issues have not all be settled, that ground gained can be lost and that we need to continue to be vigilant."⁹ Sharing her own personal experience, she offered a powerful summary of her first job out of graduate school. As the first woman in 50 years to be hired on a tenure track position in the History Department, she encountered a department that wanted to maintain the male status quo, at a university where women were paid less than men and few gained tenure much less became full professorships. She ultimately settled her suit against the university for \$35,000 and moved on to the University of Alaska where she not only gained tenure and held a named professorship, but was also considered a leader on many fronts. She will share the details of her experience at the 50th annual conference.

Gold also offered commentary on discrimination and bias facing other women in general. Among these were her discussions of the Supreme

⁹ Carol Gold, "President's Column," *The Networker*, Summer, 2007, p2

Court decision *Gonzalez vs. Rationale* that concerned “one particular form of abortion that should be outlawed”. The case “harkened back to an old stereotype: women are not rational creatures.” Given this, the decision held that the “state needs to step in and make decisions to protect women,”¹⁰ Gold went on to report on Ruth Bader Ginsberg’s comments challenging this thinking. In a subsequent professional column, Gold commented on Hillary Clinton’s campaign for the presidency in 2008, where her cleavage seemed more important to reporters than her campaign message. Or in another challenge she asked whether we really should care whether Clinton bakes cookies? Sarah Palin was also a part of that election cycle. As a resident of Alaska, Gold offered critical commentary on the Palin’s policies and practices as governor of the state. Were the Republicans running a “trophy” vice president who they did not really take seriously? Gold went on to comment on the move to teach “gender history” and whether the history of women still had a place in the curriculum. Her last column focused the financial crisis of 2008. While all of her comments were political in nature, none of them advocated action so none of them could be considered violations of law regarding WAWH status as a 501(c) 3.

Gold contributed to the growth and development of WAWH in still another way. Following in the tradition of earlier presidents, she recognized the value of rewarding excellent scholarship and oversaw the creation of the Graduate Student Paper Award, which is now named for her. Many of us also have fond memories of our 40th anniversary celebration which Gold helped to organize. “I’m getting tenure in the morning,” sung to the tune from *My Fair Lady* along with several other clever tunes written by Susan Wladaver-Morgan. This team of members provided lovely memories of the spirit of WAWH as an organization in which friendship and professional standards are melded together so neatly.

¹⁰ Carole Srole, “President’s Column, *The Networker*, Fall, 2009, p.1

Carole Srole (professor California State University Los Angeles, 2009-2011) While several of Carole Srole's predecessors were interested in membership, as president she added a new dimension by focusing on specialties within and in addition to our discipline. Her outreach was to departments of Chicano, Pan African, and Black Studies, Latin American, Asian and Asian American studies, and Liberal and American Studies. She set up a task force to find ways and means to attract and serve these various groups of historians. Her annual conference programs saw the inclusion of these many perspectives. This move reinforced her point that history was not just about Caucasian, male political, economic, diplomatic leaders as it had been in the 1960s and earlier. Nor was it just about Caucasian women. Her steps were a natural progression from the recognition of gender which WAWH had done in 1969, and further opened the door to issues of LGBT history, the history of climate change, war and peace, and much more.

Like her predecessor, Srole responded to the economic crisis of 2008 and what it has meant for WAWH. As she argued, "...debates about women and work from the recent past have supplied the vocabulary for discussing the current economic crisis." And she continued in her commentary, "Women enjoy an advantage through affirmative action." As others put it, some women are identified as "man hating feminists." And "low wage pink-collar jobs may have protected women while high-paid men were fired."¹¹ Like Gold, Srole saw the limits to progress women have made.

Srole also proposed developing a mentoring program for doctoral students, encouraging them to identify an "outside" advisor. While students have faculty on their respective committees who provide guidance, having someone who is not on the committee can provide invaluable insight and guidance. Finding the right mentor needs to be done thoughtfully. The title of her column, "It's Not a Crapshoot:

¹¹ Carole Srole, "President's Column," *The Networker*, Summer, 2010, p.1

Constructing Mentoring Relationships” provided invaluable advice. “Don’t select someone because you like them, or they live close. Pick someone after careful thought of what can be gained from selecting her or him as a mentor.”¹² She also encouraged WAWH to develop a webpage for graduate students on the WAWH website.

Srole also understood how WAWH had created a strong sense of community by combining scholarship with social events—lunches, dinners, cocktail parties and other events provided to members to socialize. After a AHA meeting in San Diego, which tried to find ways of encouraging collegiality at its annual meeting in San Diego where attendees “shared meals at long tables” and provided “places to hang out and nourish among strangers about scholarly and professional issues” Srole commented—“does this sound like a WAWH conference?”¹³ She ended her comments with language that recall WAWH’s long tradition of professional and personal support, “This is the atmosphere that the major professional organizations would love to replicate, but cannot seem to do.”

As past president for Gayle Gullett, Srole worked with Gullett to lengthened the list of on-line resources available to historians. Among these sources was “Web-sites for U.S. Women’s Historians: Consumerism,” highlights of Duke’s Ad Access plus Ad View, along with the web-addresses.

Gayle Gullett (professor emerita Arizona State University, Tempe, president 2011-2013) Gayle Gullett opted to put teaching on the front page in her first President’s column. Teaching has always been important to WAWH. In 1969 she, like so many others, focused on content to make women an integral aspect of the history of our nation. By 2011 many schools had accepted this, but how to

¹² Carole Srole, “President’s Column,” *The Networker*, Spring 2011, p.1

¹³ Gayle Gullett, “President’s Column,” *The Networker*, Summer 2011, p.1

effectively provide instruction was questioned. Karen Offer had addressed the issue when she organized the committee to respond to the standards posed in the early 21st century. Many members continued to consider the topic in panels at the annual meeting. But when Gullett opened the discussion, she focused not on what we teach—but on how. The electronic world was reshaping the classroom learning experiences of our student, and she decided we needed to discuss it.

Her opening Presidential Column, entitled “The New, Virtual Classroom,” focused on modern technology and the ways in which it was altering our classroom experiences. While use of the internet in the classroom had become common in many two and four years schools this topic had not been part of WAWH discussion. Initially Gullett was not excited by the electronic world. Breathing the same air had been the method of delivery for her entire career. Working with students on-line raised questions: will students learn effectively with this mode of delivery? Her university, as so many others, had decided to use this approach in higher education was ok, and she had to respond effectively.

These discussions in her President’s Columns involved not only the use of technology but also opened discussion of methodologies that worked effectively with 21st century students, using modern technology. In subsequent columns, she discussed “Continued Adventurers in Online Teaching in the State of Arizona,” followed by “The Click or Not to Click: Possible Renovations for he Large College Class,” with continual coverage in “Clicking Slowly: Rethinking Renovation for the Large College Class.” She shared the discussions and debates she had on the topic of using clickers in the classroom and her own appraisal of the effectiveness of this technology. Her final comments entitled “The History Lecture” she argued that the more traditional approach to teaching should not be lost to the profession but had to be modified if students were to learn effectively.

Gullet also shared the web addresses of on-line materials for use in the classroom. In the summer of 2011 she offered information about the “Women and Social Movements in the United States 1680-2000” and “Women and Social Movements, International, 1840-the present” and of the Harvard University Library Open Collection, Working Women, 1800-1930.”¹⁴ Gullet was sensitive to the rapid growth of source materials available on-line and was anxious to see we all had access to these materials. As noted above, she worked closely with Carole Srole to provide WAWH with rich resources for use in the classroom.

Gullet also recognized how important graduate students were to WAWH. While the organization had always appreciated their membership, she also recognized that the annual WAWH conference offered them a venue to share their work while the AHA was still reluctant to offer such opportunities to ABDs. The WAWH meeting in 2012, which had 30 sessions, saw 60 graduate student panelists; 40% of the attendees were graduate student when they represented only 30% of the membership. This raised an important question about ways to provide support for them. While the organization had offered reduced or eliminate registration fees for grad students, the expense of getting to the meeting along with hotel costs and meals made it very difficult for many to attend. While she was not the first or the last to raise issues facing our grad students, her focus called upon all of us of the need to act.

Jessica Weiss (professor California State University, East Bay, 2013-2015) also recognized the importance of the work done in our classrooms, and early in her term of office provided a column entitled *Faculty Learning Communities*. Among the topics she discussed were “Community Engagement and Social Responsibility,” along with “Teaching with Technology,” “Peer Observation Training for

¹⁴ Jessica Weiss, “Faculty Learning Communities,” *The Networker*, Summer, 2013, p.1

Formative Evaluation” and “The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.”¹⁵ As the modes of teaching and tenure criteria were being altered, Weiss sought to open discussion of effective ways of responding to these changes. She was also sensitive to tensions women faced. In a column entitled “Navigating Work-Life Balance in Higher Education,” she recognized the different phases of academic careers.¹⁶ Her column entitled “Restore, Research, and Revision” focused on the three months scholars when scholars refresh teaching and pursue their research and on ways of making summers more satisfying. You need to “plan activities that regenerate and revive you.”¹⁷ Her columns acknowledged the realities of contemporary professional life for our membership and proposed modes of coping and thriving. While women were no longer categorically denied positions in the academy if they were married and/or pregnant, members in the academy offered little recognition of or support for the double burdens women faced if they were also spouses and/or mothers. She elaborated on the hardships women still faced along with the absence of good answers, and she reported that the upcoming conference had several panels focused on these issues. Perhaps the wisest advice she had to offer us was to learn to say NO when the requests/expectations are unacceptable. For some of us, reading her columns was a frightening reminder of conditions in the academy 25+ years earlier.

Under Weiss’s term of service, WAWH created the office of Digital Communications Chair. While the organization had used on-line technology for a while, the need to create an actively engaged social media presence and the position that would attend to the many dimensions of this work represented an important step forward. Sunu

¹⁵ Jessica Weiss, “Navigating Work-Life Balance in Higher Education,” *The Networker*, Spring 2014

¹⁶ Jessica Weiss, “Restore, Research, and Revision,” *The Networker*, Spring 2015, p.1

¹⁷ Rebecca Jo Plant, “President’s Column,” *The Networker*, Summer, 2015, p.1

Kodumurtha stepped into the role. Susan Kullmann revised the website and helped set up the Executive Director with mailchimp.

She also confronted a declining membership. Some of this was a product of more accurate record keeping where members who did not renew were dropped from the membership list. But WAWH also saw that some younger scholars did not see the value of the professional society in the ways in which senior members did. WAWH was not the only professional organization to encounter this decline. Its response was to consider how to become more meaningful to younger scholars. The graduate student awards offered a path, but the organization's ability to ignore the lines drawn in the academy—between graduate students and faculty, between tenure track and tenured faculty, between tenured and adjunct faculty proved advantageous. The Board, encouraged by program committee chairs Danielle Swiontek and Jennifer Robin Terry, introduced the first poster session in 2015 and its accompanying poster prize at the Sacramento conference. The response to these decisions proved effective as the increase in participation revealed.

Rebecca Jo Plant (associate professor University of California San Diego, president 2015-2017) Rebecca Jo Plant began her term as president reminding us that history, and our role as historians is not “a luxury.” Events unfolding in the nation, she wrote in her opening column “appear to be underscoring what historians know to be true—that there is no evading history... Whether it comes to lowering the Confederate flag and confronting enduring racial inequality in the United States, legalizing gay marriage, restoring relations with Cuba ending sanctions against Iran, or any number of other critical issues, what historians have to say matters deeply.”¹⁸ In recognition of these issues she organized the Presidential Roundtable entitled “Black Women’s Political Activism: Lessons from the Past” that was co-

¹⁸ Rebecca Jo Plant, “The President’s Column,” *The Networker*, Winter 2017, p. 1

sponsored with the Black Women's Historians Pacific Branch. Their session highlighted women who have not been names in the Civil Rights struggles, but were the backbone of those efforts. Included among the speakers were Antwanieha Alameen, Anastasia Curwood, Dayo Gore, and our incoming president, Ula Taylor.

Her term as president began just as the primary season for the 2016 elections was taking off and she was taken aback by the negativism of the campaign. Comments made about Hillary Clinton who was running for President on the Democratic ticket threatened the progress that women thought they had made since 1969. Throughout her term as president, Plant reminded members of critical roles as historians. Whether it was to help students understand the significance of having a woman run for President, or to critically view the issues of sexual harassment as it has become part of the public discourse, as historians, she argued, we needed to speak out. "How can we translate the outpouring of anger and idealism into sustained and well-coordinated activism," she asked in her final column as president. "How should we think our roles as scholars and teachers within the new political context?"¹⁹

Plant's comments encouraged WAWH members who had retired to ask questions at the annual meeting in 2015 about what would happen to their positions at their respective colleges and universities. Would the field they had covered be maintained or replaced with another new specialty? This was the same concern Pat Cohen had expressed a decade earlier. In some cases it was the field of women's history that was no longer deemed important. In other cases it was the discipline of history that was being short-changed in favor of other, more "modern" areas of study. Historians understand that change over time is not linear. Progress made can be lost, and the era we live in reveals signs of regression. As this manuscript was being written questions were raised on Facebook as to whether history and

¹⁹ Jennifer Thigpen, response to email from Peggy Renner, email, 2019

the social sciences should be considered a part of the core curriculum. This in turn poses new demands on WAWH.

Plant also reported on progress the organization had made, particularly on the digital front. Material from the 2015 conference was posted, clicks to the WAWH Facebook site increased, the WAWH webpage was updated and more. WAWH opened a twitter and Link-in accounts. Troubled by the decline in membership she initiated a drive and was able to report on increases during her term of service.

Jennifer Thigpen (associate professor Washington State University, 2017-2019) In keeping with the tradition of many predecessors, Jennifer Thigpen addressed a hot topic on the public agenda. In her case it was the ill-treatment of immigrants as children who were being separated from the parents at the southern borders of the country. She offered efforts in her own town's "Keep Families Together" to protest the governmental actions to reject immigrants' efforts to find asylum in the United States. In her summer in 2018 column, she spoke of "the important role historians must play in modern life." While WAWH, as a 501(c)3, cannot engage in political activity, Thigpen understood that WAWH has responsibility to speak out, and wrote of "the important role (that) historians must play in modern life" to respond to "recent events by centering that responsibility, spotlighting the activists among us and providing tools for continued political engagement." To further promote this responsibility to speak out on issues of discrimination she invited Anita Casavantes Bradford as her keynote speaker to focus on "the connections between scholarship and activism, personal and political."²⁰

Thigpen also worked to broaden our membership. One effort was to reach out to include women of color, and her strongest act was to ask

²⁰ Karen Offen, "Special Edition K-12, Education in 1992, *The Networker*

Ula Taylor to serve as her president elect. Taylor had been active in WAWH for a number of years and her selection for leadership was the logical next step. Thigpen also organized a panel entitled “The History of Sexuality in the U.S.: Conversations on the State of the Field” which included Leisa Meyer from William and Mary, Mireille Miller-Young from University of California, Santa Barbara, Shanon Fitzpatrick from McGill, and Sowande Muskateen from Washington University to address gender in a more complex version than the founders had considered when they called for adding women to study of the past.

Thigpen has also had the responsibility of organizing our celebration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of WAWH. Having been responsible for the celebration of the 25th anniversary, I can say this is a HUGE job. For her presidential plenary, she has invited Martha Jones, Professor of History at Johns Hopkins University, whose presentation is titled “What if Black Women Have Always Been the Vanguard of Woman’s Suffrage?” Her Program Committee has also developed an exciting program. Working with the Executive Director, Thigpen selected Portland as the location for our meeting, in delightful memory of earlier meetings held there. She has overseen “Fund for the Future” which Peggy Renner and Susan Wladaver Morgan proposed and managed. She also brought Susan Kullman back to rework the WAWH website to provide exciting information about the conference and to update the WAWH webpage. And these are only highlights of her work to make this celebration of the 50th meaningful for all of us.

SOCIAL ISSUES AND ACTION

What were some of their issues and goals?

Presidents along with other members of WAWH have tackled a host of social issues facing women. As mentioned above, in 1992 WAWH

meeting Karen Offen was committed to influencing the revisions of the History-Social Sciences Framework for the state of California so that provided more than lip service to women's history in grades K-12. So she had organized a WAWH committee to advocate for incorporation of new findings from scholarship in women's history. The committee reviewed the textbooks uses in California public schools. At the 1992 WAWH meeting at the Huntington Library, Offen organized a plenary session on the K-12 initiatives, featuring Ed Berenson (then at UCLA) along with several other leading California history educators who were deeply involved in the K-12 reform efforts. Dutifully they examined the textbooks used in teaching history in the public schools. In 1994 the committee took their findings to Sacramento where members testified before the state Curriculum Commission. While the commission did not agree to revise the state standards, it did recognize the value of the WAWH committee's work by incorporating some of its recommendations into subsequent documents. This WAWH effort followed in the wake of a controversial (but failed) national effort to set strict standards for the history to be taught in public schools. The WAWH committee understood, as did many historians at the time, that such efforts had important political implications and needed to be addressed with great care.²¹ While the pressure to set national standards may have declined the emphasis on testing remains with us—for better or worse.

In 1994 WAWH took a strong stand in support of the decision of the American Historical Association to move its meeting from Cincinnati. The AHA found the hotels it had reserved for the conference were not going to provide protection against discrimination for the LGBTQ community. Past president, Betsy Perry, (1989-1991) called upon WAWH to take a strong stand in support of the resolution, "The AHA will not hold its 1995 annual meeting in Cincinnati and will cover any resulting liabilities through a package of voluntary contributions and

²¹ Marguerite Renner, "President's Column," *The Networker*, Spring 1994, p. 2

dues and other fees.” As the AHA stated, “It is the policy of the AHA not to hold its annual meetings in locations where its members would be subject to discrimination on the basis of age, gender, marital status, national origin, physical disability, race, or sexual orientation under state or city laws.²² Both resolutions were passed without opposition.

In 1995 the Social Action Committee reported on topics on the agenda of the House of Representatives. One concerned the refusal to cover the costs of medical services for women in the military who sought abortion at home or abroad. In addition, funding to the tune of one hundred and sixty million dollars was to be denied to women facing domestic violence, including funds for women’s shelters, education to prevent rape, a hotline for women seeking protection from domestic violence, and more. While WAWH could not take action on these issues, members certainly could and did. Letters went out to congressional representatives, including both the House and the Senate, and one member even visited her representative’s office in Washington, D.C. to offer her thoughts.

In 1997, Susan Wladaver-Morgan was confronted with labor issues at the conference at Asilomar. Workers at Asilomar had been trying to organize a union but faced strong resistance from the owners. WAWH members discovered this at the President’s dinner, on the last evening of the meeting. Troubled by this, Wladaver-Morgan sent members out to interview the staff to see if they could determine what the problems were. Reports back led to action by Wladaver-Morgan’s successor, Sarah Stage, to reinvigorate the Social Action Committee to further pursue the case and she was fortunate to have Joanne Goodwin and Rebecca Mead to help. They learned that this conflict which dated back several years, and had led to the workers to take the issue to the National Labor Relations Board. In response

²² Sarah Stage, “Update on Asilomar Labor Dispute,” *The Networker*, Winter/Spring 1998, p. 4

Goodwin and Mead wrote guidelines for op-ed pieces for local and national magazines. The next step was to urge members to write letters to the Asilomar administration focusing on the devastating effects their action had on the workers, to support of the workers desire to unionize, and to apply pressure to allow a vote. In addition, Jo Goodwin agreed to develop a session at the next conference that would focus on labor issues at Asilomar. What followed was the revitalization of the “social action” committee to track on issues facing women historians and society in general without crossing the line into political activity which were not permitted under the tax status of WAWH.²³

Another heated issue that WAWH responded to was gender discrimination. In 1997 Susan Wladaver Morgan sounded the alarm regarding the allegations the University of California Riverside faced for alleged Title IX discrimination. Following years of complaints, female faculty had charged five male faculty members had harassed them. Wladaver Morgan’s successor, Sarah Stage, knew this story first hand. As a former faculty at UCR, Stage left the university and relocated to Arizona State University. In her opening President’s Column, she provided a firsthand report on the events at UCR. I “was relieved to be leaving a department that had become toxic, sapping my energies and demoralizing my spirit.” She was not alone. In the face of accusations and the departure of several faculty members, the executive vice chancellor had finally ordered an investigation at the university based on years of complaints from women faculty, including Stage, along with a number of students. In the end it was determined to that there was “no pattern of sexual discrimination” but five faculty members did “face investigation for their personal actions and were required to take unpaid leaves of absence.” This case was ugly. Although the plaintiffs left the university because of its failure to address the complaints, they did sue.²⁴

²³ Sarah Stage, “President’s Column,” *The Networker*, 1998, p. 1

²⁴ Pamela Stewart, “Conversation Corner,” *The Networker*, Fall, 2012, p. 9

To bring the issue to the attention of WAWH members Stage invited Christine Littleton, Professor of Law and Women's Studies at UCLA, to be the plenary speaker at the WAWH conference. Her lecture was entitled "The Historical Development of Sexual Harassment Law". Stage not only identified and reported on issues facing women in the classroom, but she also understood the importance of engaging the public. This was not the first case of gender discrimination, as one of the panels at the conference this year reveals, but it served to revive discussion and action from the Social Action Committee of WAWH.

Another issue facing women and men alike was the decline in the employment of tenure track employees along with a shift to the employment of adjunct faculty. What would this mean for faculty who had none of the security provided by tenure and what it might mean for higher education. In 1992, Mary Ann Irwin, chair of the Social Action Committee, proposed creation of a part-timer instructors' task force—which identified itself as the "Gypsy Scholar Committee." This group supported the Part-Timers' Bill of Rights which had been taken to the California state assembly as AB420 which called for equal pay for equal work, rehire rights, and retirement and health benefits. Members were called upon to contact their representatives, as individuals. This issue was particularly important because a number of universities were making this shift. While only parts of it were eventually passed, it was an important step for the state and for WAWH to support. She asked members to write letters to their representatives in Sacramento to pressure them to support this call, and a panel was organized for the annual meeting in 1998 to discuss various methods of enhancing the public discourse on these changes. WAWH remained vigilant in advocating for adjunct faculty at universities. In 2008 Carol Gold raised these issues of the rights of adjunct faculty, this time to deal with rights to leave policies for pregnancy, adoption, or health reasons.

WAWH also addressed concerns raised by the OAH and AHA as tensions between full-time, tenured and adjunct faculty at universities. At the center of this conflict was a proposal that graduate programs should be “downsized” and these programs needed to be tailored to meet the demand for labor given the new areas of specialization in the profession. Of course, anticipating demand in the future was complicated, if not impossible. At the same time more and more universities were hiring an increasing number of adjunct faculty members. Newly minted doctorates wondered what they were supposed to do. As Pamela Stewart wrote in the Conversation Corner in 2012, “Now what do I do? How do we create stable careers for scholars who don’t have tenure-eligible option?” These issues affected all members, and in the years to come graduate students and university faculty tackled these topics in conversations at the annual meeting and went back to see how they could influence decisions on their respective campuses.²⁵

Downsizing graduate programs and the shift to an adjunct labor force were not the only concerns of WAWH addressed. Some feared that women had seen their day. In 2003 Patricia Cline Cohen reported on the goal of the University of California to hire 7,000 faculty members. Would this action lead to a fair share of positions for women, or would there be a decline in the commitment to hiring women? Women were hired in the University of California system, but would this path be cut in other states and in the future? Although many were careful not to express this opinion publicly, many feared the opposition which was still functioning in some schools. Others would raise this question in the early twenty-first century. Were the positions filled by women retiring in the 2010s be filled by women in the 2020?

To add to the complexity of the issue was the recognition of the underrepresentation of women of color. Rebecca Plant approached

²⁵ Francesca Miller, “President’s Message,” *The Networker*, August, 1986, p.1

this issue several times, in 2015/16. Others argued that Caucasian women were well-represented; women of color were not. To this issue LGBTQ under-representation was added. While there were more women in the academy than had been true thirty years earlier, as one generation of scholars retired, would they be replaced by women when there were other categories of scholars who were under-represented. These actions reveal the responsibility members of the organization assumed in their students and the general public to understand how contemporary issues connect with the past.

The responsibility of helping the public to understand the importance of history in the observation and analysis of day to day events in contemporary society is another responsibility assumed by members of the WAWH community. In 2001 Karen Lystra used her president's column to call for historians to engage students in an effort to understand the importance of history in analyzing the events. Joanne Goodwin and Rebecca Meade worked hard in the 1990s to engage WAWH members in ways of reaching beyond their respective classrooms. Letter writing to local press and writing editorials engaged faculty in using their skills as historians to comment on contemporary concerns. As discussed above, Rebecca Plant, Jessica Weiss, and Jennifer Thigpen also joined in this discussion of the role of historians in a world in which facts and truth are questioned daily.

Our roles as historians were also part of the discussion of national issues. For example, Nupur Chaudhuri wrote about the horrors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and what this meant for the thousands whose lives were powerfully disrupted. While she did not use the language of "climate change" clearly she spoke to the fearful effects of changing weather patterns and the importance of considering the effects these devastating storms have had on the poor in America. Carol Gold dedicated space in her president's column to discussion of the Supreme Court decision *Gonzalez v Rationale* regarding abortion and what this action meant for women's reproductive freedom. And there were many more comments by presidents, other officers, and

members in a continuous effort to engage members in the responsibilities of historians to engage society in discussions of contemporary events in light of the past.

WHO ELSE HELPED SET THIS COURSE FOR WAWH?

The Work of WAWH in the Classroom as Educators

WAWH was created in 1969 by women who wanted the study of women to become part of the history curriculum offered in the colleges and universities. As Francesca Miller (President, 1985-1987) said, “WAWH fills a variety of purposes—as a network, a forum for women’s scholarship...support for the work of our members in their many enterprises, which range from teaching to film production, to publishing, to research projects.”²⁶ Efforts to add women and to improve the methods of teaching came in many forms over the years. To this list we can add Blair, Lystra, Cohen...in fact all of the WAWH presidents.

Some members shared new and innovative ways of helping students learn. The questionnaire Renner sent out in 1993 identified several techniques members used to promote effective learning. In 1994 Renner organized a workshop on co-operative teaching which attracted a large crowd and produced an intense discussion of the various methods the panelists offered for use in small, medium and large classes. A panel offered in 2001 entitled “Community College Round-up: Teaching and Curriculum” offered a new round of teaching methods that members found effective in twenty-first classrooms. While most of the comment focused on undergraduate education, in 2004 Pat Cohen described a course entitled “The Academic Profession of History” in which she taught third and fourth year graduate students how to write curriculum vitae, set up placement

²⁶ Mary Melcher, “A National Movement to Link Women’s History with Historic Sites,” *The Networker* p. 6

files, which offered lots of good advice and necessary preparation for the hiring experience and beyond. In 2010 Carole Srole focused on mentoring. Referring to the task of mentoring, Srole stated in her President's Column, *It's Not a Crapshoot: Constructing Mentoring Relationships*.

Several of *The Networker* editors used the column entitled "For Your Information" to provide information on issues of teaching and its politics in the classroom, and techniques for teaching and dealing with problems encountered when teaching. Some members focused on teaching modules for secondary schools and college/university to address topics such as the study of women, women in the global economy, and welfare reform. Another focused on collaborative learning. Another explored ways of responding to difficulties teaching in the classrooms of the 1990s. The content of lessons in college classrooms, particularly the host of political issues became important in the early 1990s. Historians faced efforts to "downsize" the graduate programs. California faced passage of Proposition 187 which was based on the argument that "illegal immigrants "are" robbing us honest, tax paying citizens of their just dues." (Sound familiar?)

Others shared lists of films, articles, books, and other source material for use in the classroom in one edition of *The Networker* after another. With the turn of the century came suggestions of materials on the internet. In 2010 Mary Melcher shared material on trails that were being developed across the U.S. which revealed women's work in public space as part of her efforts to bring the study of public history into the fold. This included statewide trails in New York, Florida, Indiana, Connecticut, Arizona, and Maryland. As she also reported, there were trails in several cities including Boston and Portland. For additional information she shared the website, where further information could be found. The web address was <http://ncwhaoah.org/index.php/blog/show/NCWHS-Releases-New->

Report-Concerning-Women-Heritage-Trails.html.²⁷ Additional information on the internet for classroom teaching made its way onto the pages of *The Networker*, including a review of the www.washingtonwomenshistory.org. There were dozens more, and hopefully dozens more will be added.

Gayle Gullett combined the “what we teach” with “how we teach” in several of her President’s Columns. Her column in 2011 began with “Spreading the News: Publicizing Useful Women’s History Websites.” Beginning with a summary of her use of technology in the classroom discussed above, she went on to recommend that *The Networker* add a column which would include websites and databases on women’s history. Her next column included the fantastic work that Kitty Sklar and Tom Dublin had done in creating “Women and Social Movements in the U.S. 1600-200” and “Women and Social Movements International, 1840 to the Present” along with several other rich sources of material on-line. She then went on to discussions in her subsequent President’s Columns of the use of the internet, computers, clickers and other technology to engage twenty-first century learners in the study of the past.²⁸

The discussion of teaching began in 1969 with the call to include women in the historical study continues. As she wrote, following the election of 2016, “we find ourselves reckoning with a political reality that appears more frightening by the day. Instead of the United States’ first woman president, the Electoral College system has given us Donald Trump – a man who entered the political arena propaganda (that was) a racist lie, and whose contempt for women was patently obvious even before we heard the tape of him boasting of committing sexual assault.” And she continued in 2017, “How can we translate the outpouring of anger and idealism into sustained and well-

²⁷ Gayle Gullette, “President’s Column,” *The Networker*, Spring 2011, p.1

²⁸ Gayle Gullette, “President’s Column,” *The Networker*, Summer, 2012, p.1

coordinated activism?”²⁹ The next year, Jennifer Thigpen followed with impassioned commentary on “Keeping Families Together,” in response to presidential policy of denying asylum opportunities to hundreds of migrants from nations to our south. The issues of what we teach and how we aid students in the learning process has been central to our work.

WHO ELSE HELPED SET THIS COURSE FOR WAWH?

Organizational Growth and Development as it Changed Over Time and the Women who Made It Happen

In 1969 little thought was given to formal positions of leadership by the founders of WAWH. They gathered to meet each other and share their research. As *The Histories of the Western Association of Women Historian, 1969-1994* revealed this changed over the course of time. In the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, the constitution and by-laws were amended and leadership positions established, and WAWH was established as a tax exempt professional organization. By the 1990’s WAWH had a full slate of officers, including president, president-elect, three past presidents, secretary, treasurer, *The Networker* editor, chairs of the prize and awards committees, the chair of the K-21 Standing Committee, and liaisons to the other organizations. Over those years, the organization had matured. There were officers to cover all bases, but, as noted above, Karen Offen argued in 1993 that WAWH needed “more solid structural footing” and set about improving organization and structure.³⁰

In the early 1990s leaders of WAWH also turned to the internet to facilitate some of their work. The first move came with the development of platform for scholars looking for others doing common research in the effort to create full panels for the annual

²⁹ Karen Offen, “President’s Column,” *The Networker*, Summer, 1993, p.1

³⁰ Emily Rader, “Graduate Student News,” *The Networker*, Summer, 1994, p. 3

meeting. Emily Rader, Graduate Student Representative at the time created a link to the internet which she initially named the WEB. This allowed members to search online for others whose work might work to create a complete panel. Shortly thereafter Rader had to change the name to SPITHRA because the creators of the international electronic network had upstaged her with the world-wide web—the ubiquitous www.

In 1999 WAWH opened a discussion about creating a website. Several graduate students who identified themselves the Claremont Collective proposed using the internet to distribute *The Networker* instead of the old fashion method of printing, labeling, stamping and snail mailing. While some members were excited by this proposal, this step was a little too big for many members, and so it was agreed to give members the choice—to stay with paper copy or receive *The Networker* electronically. Leaders of WAWH made further changes as their use of the internet increased. In the spring of 2008 the website was redesigned and has been updated several times since then. In 2012 the leadership engaged in an extensive discussion of Facebook. This generated discussion of work load and of the content of the website and in 2014 the organization agreed to create the position of Digital Communications Director to take of Facebook and made other changes to the organizations website.

Following the suggestion that Blair when she was president and others in the organization agreed, WAWH needed to develop its archive by locating materials and housing them in the file established at California State University Sacramento, Amy Essington set out to find materials. As considered above, she offered her first part in 2003 which was printed in *The Networker* as the “Hunt for the WAWH Archive”. Part I was published in *The Networker* in 2003, Parts II, III in the spring and summer of 2004, and Part IV in spring 2005. These materials which can be found in *The Networker* which is posted on line along with specific pages posted on the WAWH website have been useful in developing *The Second Twenty-Five Years*.

Over the course of thirty years, the responsibilities of the various officers had changed, but not all of them were officially recorded. The leadership had expanded and the work of the president, president-elect, secretary, treasurer, editor, graduate student representatives, local arrangements chair, program committee chair, and the social action coordinator had all changed in some way. In addition the rules and regulations for the various awards and prizes, which included the Barbara Penny Kanner Award, the Founders Dissertation Fellowship, the Judith Lee Ridge Prize and the Sierra Book Prize, needed to be reviewed. This meant reviewing and revising the constitution and by-laws. This work began under Lystra's term and was completed in Cline's term of service.

In 2001, shortly after Lystra assumed office, Essington and Lystra asked Renner to meet and review the list of tasks involved in organizing a conference. Renner had created this list but it had gotten lost in the shuffle from one president to another. This list involved who to see, what to do, and when these tasks had to be accomplished and Essington understood just how important it was to think about organizing. She also recognized just how much work it was to be president and that there was room for change.

Included among the revisions was a proposal for the creation of a new office, the executive director. This proposal generated intense discussion and debate. Several past presidents argued that the work to be assigned to the ED was the job of the president. Others worried about the cost. This new position was proposed to be a paid position. How could the organization justify asking all of the other officers to work as volunteers when the ED was to be paid? The discussion was intense, but in 2004 the membership approved this recommendation, with provision that the decision be re-visited in two years. So a temporary position was created and in 2006 members voted to make the position a permanent, five-year job. With the new position a host

of changes followed, but these will be discussed below in the section titled Executive Director.

Past presidents also understood the value of preserving WAWH records. Peg Strobel, Karen Blair and others in WAWH called upon leaders to preserve the records of the organization. In one of her presidential columns in 2003, Lystra said she was defining a new era for the organization. Amy Essington, working with Patricia Cline Cohen, took up the task to find materials that would be named "Hunt for the WAWH Archive, Part I" which was published in *The Networker* in the fall of 2003. Part II and III were completed in 2004, and Part IV in 2005. All of these records were then deposited in the archive at Sacramento State University which Joan Moon had established for WAWH.

Subsequent presidents called for additional changes to the constitution and by-laws. These included the call for written reports from the several committees, and publication of the minutes of the Business meeting in *The Networker*. Changes proposed in 2006 were approved, but further questions arose regarding the language in the Awards and Prizes guidelines. This meant a need for further revisions and revisions and still more revisions, as the minutes of the business meetings for 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2014 reveal. The last revision was particularly interesting. It called for all submissions for prizes be submitted in the English language.

Several presidents faced the issue of raising dues. In 1993 dues were \$15.00 for full time faculty, \$10.00 for part-time and retired faculty, and \$5.00 for graduate Students. By 1999 dues had been increased to \$20.00 for full time faculty, \$15.00 for part-timers, for independent scholars and graduate students it was \$8.00 and Life membership was \$400.00. By 2008 leaders decided it was time to ask for still another dues increase. No longer was WAWH meeting at the Huntington where space was provided to us gratis. While the costs of meetings held in college or university space were generally less

expensive than hotels, the expenses of running WAWH were increasing. The proposal to raise dues came in 2009 when members voted at the business meeting to base membership dues on self-reported income. Full-timers membership fee was raised to \$25.00, Part-timers and retirees to \$20.00, graduate students and independent scholars to \$10.00, and lifetime membership to \$500.00.

There were also several campaigns to raise money for the several awards. While the initial contributions that created the awards were generous, it was insufficient to cover costs over time. Often the focus was on a single award—funds for the Sierra Book award, the Graduate Student Fellowship and donors were acknowledged in *The Networker*. In the early twenty first century presidents considered a Capital Campaign that was intended to endow the awards, but Nupur Chaudhuri deserves credit for the biggest and most successful effort to provide security for these awards. Not only did she convince people to give, but she worked with the executive director to place these funds in accounts that paid more than the measly bank interest rates.

A final change in duties for the leadership came in 2014 when it was proposed and agreed upon to create a Nominating Committee. The task assigned to the committee was to recommend the officers for the organization, but it did leave the selection of the president-elect to the president. Historically this task belonged to the president and it was felt to be an important job for this officer to control. In the end, the committee was told they would be notified when they were needed to make recommendations for committees and officers.

WHO ELSE HELPED SET THIS COURSE FOR WAWH?

The Graduate Students

Since the 1970s graduate students have been members of WAWH, but over the course of time the ways in which they contributed to WAWH changed. Initially most offered papers, applied for prizes and

the dissertation fellowship and/or volunteered at the conference, but WAWH also provided graduate students in the organization with opportunities to develop leadership skills in preparation for roles as historians and quickly several sought to expand their participation. One such effort came when several organized a specific panel focused on students who were working on dissertations. As several reported, they learned research and writing skills from each other and how to constructively criticize each other's work.

Others were asked to serve as graduate student representative to the executive board. Some graduate student reps served as teams, some as individuals. Some served for one year, but by the late 1990s most were appointed for two year terms, with one serving as the senior with a new representative, who became the senior rep her second year as a new candidate was appointed. We learn of some of their activity from the reports that they provided to the membership in *The Networker*. One task many assumed was report on grants, fellowships and awards available to graduate students. Another was to recruit members. Some recruited from their own campuses, but when the internet became available, several develop clever ways of reaching out.

Graduate students also have leadership roles in WAWH. In 1993 Emily Rader (grad rep 1991-1993) developed WEB, later renamed SPITHRA, which was an on-line opportunity for graduate scholars to find others in an effort to create full panels for the conference that was discussed above. In her Grad News column she provided instructions that took a grad student to the site to find graduate students doing similar work. "Go to the USC Gopher site. To get there you will need to go through a series of menus: at the first menu choose #1, at the second menu choose #1, at the third menu choose #4, at the fourth menu choose #2 and finally you have made it to

SPITHRA". Fortunately the path to the WAWH on-line source is now much easier.³¹

Regina Lark, (graduate student rep 1993-1995) thought it would be ideal if graduate students met on their respective campuses over the course of the year to support each other in their graduate studies, and to provide a network as WAWH members. And this is what they did for the next few years. Lark also revived the Social Action Committee that had fallen dormant over the years.

Lara Bickel's comments in the Grad Student column in 2000 should make WAWH so proud. "The WAWH provides a safe place for graduate students to practice being professional," she wrote. And she continued, "WAWH institutionally advocates the participation and input of graduate students." From its earliest years, WAWH has sought to provide an environment in which the next generation of historians could learn how to be an effective and compassionate member of the history community.³² Julia Kehew also reported on the benefits of WAWH to her professional career. As she stated in her introductory report, "I was delighted by the warmth, openness, and impressive array of scholarship displayed by conference attendees, and was thrilled to have an opportunity to serve such a wonderful group of women scholars."³³ While not all of the contributions of graduate students are offered here, their contributions are significant to the organization and their names and terms of service are listed below.

³¹ Lara Bickel, "Graduate Student Representative Column," *The Networker*, Summer, 2000, p.4

³² Julie Kehew, "New Graduate Student Reps' Report," *The Networker*, Summer, 2005, p. 7

³³ Andrea Talbot and Cynthia Scott, "Graduate Student Reps: Report," *The Networker*, Spring 2011, p. 7

In 2011 the Andrea Thabet and Cynthia Scott developed a list of “Guidelines for Graduate Student Representatives” which was “a blueprint outlining the responsibilities of and expectations for graduate student representative” and took these to the Executive Committee for approval.³⁴ In their summer report they presented proposed guidelines for the “Appointment of Graduate Student Representatives” which proposed meeting time and location for grad students at the annual conference which was to be posted on the web-site so that everyone could see it.³⁵ The following year the grad reps suggested that the email list of graduate students be revived to allow for them to communicate most effectively, and called for a grad student Facebook page.

Others used their column in *The Networker* to offer commentary on issues facing graduate students. In 1997 a column warned of a proposed tax increase that would be paid by graduate students making less than \$15,000 per year and suggested that grad students look to the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students for ways to challenge this proposed increase. In 1998 readers enjoyed the thank you letter that came from the winner of the Graduate Student Fellowship. In 1999 another shared her experiences as a graduate student teaching for the first time and on that she evaluations received. With no preparation for the classroom, she felt unprepared and argued the evaluations neglected to consider the lack of training for teaching. Others used the column to criticize the commentators on graduate student panels at the meeting for relying on audience comments instead of providing constructive criticism. In 2001 Kim Warren, sharing her thoughts and those of Cecelia Tsu and Rachel Jean-Baptiste commented on the exciting but challenging transition through the several stages of a graduate career

³⁴ Andrea Talbot and Cynthia Scott, “Graduate Student Reps: Report,” *The Networker*, Summer, 2011, p. 7

³⁵ Kim Warren, “Grad Student Rep Column, Beginning the Transition from Student to Scholar,” *The Networker*, Fall 2011, p.3

in her column titled “Beginning the Transition from Student to Scholar.”³⁶ The following year comments came from an undergraduate and a graduate student on how enriching the conference in 2003 had been for both of them.

In 2004 The Graduate Student Collective assumed responsibility of setting rules governing the graduate student email list. In addition, the graduate students worked to develop panels for the annual meeting. Often this was one focused on dissertation work and work-life issues. In 2015 comments came from a senior member of WAWH who remembered giving her first paper at a WAWH conference and how enriching that experience had been for her.

Still others provided support services for grad students, using *The Networker*. Creating a WAWH webpage, they created a Graduate Student Resources page that they would monitor and revise. Karissa Haugeburg (2007-2009) reported on efforts to update the webpage and she and Andrea Thabet (2009-2011) reported on additional efforts. Increasing graduate student membership was a high priority for them, as it had been for others, but they argued that a web-page would be the most effective tool. Unfortunately, not all of the work of the graduate student reps has been chronicled here. WAWH is indebted to the time, energy, and new perspective they have brought to the organization and in their honor, they are listed below.

WHO ELSE HELPED SET THE COURSE FOR WAWH?

The Editors of the *Networker*

The Networker has proved to be the invaluable source of information for this history of WAWH, and it is the editors who have created this tool. The editors for this history of the organization include Susan

³⁶ Lindsay Blake Nelson, “Business Meeting Minutes of the May 2014 Conference,” *The Networker*, Winter, 2014

Wladaver-Morgan (1989-1993), Susan Puz (Kullmann) and Barbara Stites (coeditors 1994), Jacqueline Braitman (1995-1998), The Claremont Graduate Collective (1998), Sara Patterson (1999-2005) Trudy Flores (2006), Annie Russell (2008-2008), and Brittany Terry (2009-2014). Beginning in 2014 Samantha Francois became the co-editor with Sunu Kodumthara (2014-2015), who later co-edited with Niki Nibbe (2016-2017).

In the 1990s, the editors not only organized and formatted *The Networker*, but also printed, labeled and mailed it to members, as it had been in the first 25 years. Needless to say, this consumed lots of time and energy and explains why the editors wanted to make sure the membership list was kept current. Then in 2001 the executive committee decided to publish *The Networker* on line for any who wanted it electronically, but individuals were allowed to say no. That meant the editor was still distributing some copies of *The Networker* using snail mail. Then as indicated above, publication gradually moved to the internet so that now everyone receives *The Networker* electronically.

Every edition of *The Networker* began with the President's Column but sometimes was titled The President's Message. Many of the topics that the presidents addressed were discussed above. In addition, most of *The Networkers* included "Member News," columns filled with information about books and/or articles that members had published, trips they had taken, conferences they attended and reported on, job appointments, election to office in other organizations, and much more. Dozens and dozens of members proudly reported on their accomplishments. To elaborate on the content of these columns would double the size of this manuscript. Be it sufficient to say the information included in this column, where the work of the membership is reported, deserves further study. And WAWH has lots of which it can be proud.

Each edition also included “Announcements” which in the days before the internet provided information about conferences other than WAWH, whether they met in the United States or elsewhere. This section also included information about meetings, job announcements, organizational developments in WAWH, and special groups meetings such as the “Writers’ Support Group.” Occasionally it covered issues facing the profession.

Back then this information was most useful to members because it was not easily available anywhere else. The incredible access to information that the internet offered may have made that information a little less crucial for members today. Job announcements, for example, were no longer included. But the annual “Call for Papers” for WAWH, announcements for and reports from conferences around the world remain invaluable. In addition, many editions of *The Networker* welcomed new members and listed their names. Donors’ names, membership renewals along with the thank you message provide a social historian with interesting data.

Sometimes the president reported on plans for the next meeting, but sometimes others assumed responsibility for this task. Still others provided thoughtful commentary on the success of the previous WAWH meeting. A few editions provide the entire program, while others offer the schedule and summary of the panels. Sometimes a participant offered thanks reporting that presentations had been especially fruitful because the commentator and/or the audience gave the presenter new insights or ideas. Each editor in her own creative way made decisions on how to handle this kind of information. *The Networker* is available at the WAWH website, for interested scholars.

The Networker also provided announcements of the awards and prizes that are given out annually to members by WAWH and by other organizations. Members got the description, application requirements and the due date. Sometimes the winners of the awards were reported. These awards include the Carol Gold Graduate

Student Conference Paper Prize, the Mary Elizabeth “Betsy” Perry Graduate Student Conference Poster Prize, the Founders’ Dissertation Fellowship, the Judith Lee Ridge Prize for the best article in the field of history, the Barbara “Penny” Kanner Award for the publication which illustrates the use of a specific set of primary sources, the Gita Chaudhuri Prize for the best monograph about the history of women in rural environments, and the Frances Richardson Keller Prize for the best monograph in the field of history. At this 50th anniversary conference a new award to be granted for teaching and curricular innovation to a member of WAWH will be announced. This award will go to the scholar and WAWH member who has sought to engage students in seeing the connections between the history and a major event or events happening in contemporary society.

WAWH has long had a commitment to developing and maintaining relationships with other organizations and *The Networker* has been an important means for keeping members informed of their work. The strongest links were with CCWHP-CGWH which became CCWH in 1993. With CCWH, WAWH annually co-sponsored the drop-in room and the cocktail party at the AHA annual conference. In addition, several presidents moved on to serve as Co-Presidents or Executive Director of CCWH. They included Penny Kanner, Frances Richardson Keller, Betsy Perry, Nupur Chaudhuri, Peggy Renner, and Susan Wladaver-Morgan. Other important organizations included the AHA, the OAH, and the PCB-AHA. These connections provided WAWH with exciting opportunities to network with other organizations and other historians. In the days before the internet, this information was vital to scholars seeking to reach beyond their own work environment.

Nearly every issue provided calls for papers, announcements of meetings, and reports for WAWH and several other organizations enhancing WAWH efforts to network. Also included were columns or paragraphs of *Grad News* discussed above as well as lists of new members, donations to the organization and various awards, member news which provides a gold mine of material on the professional work

of members, reports from standing committees, grants, fellowships and awards. This kind of information provides a wealth of material not just on the professional work of WAWH members, but also on how the roles of women in the profession more generally developed in a period of sometimes rapid, sometimes glacially slow change.

In addition to the wealth of material presented in every issue of *The Networker*, some materials appeared less regularly or only once. Some shared information about creative historical work in the public domain. They also included occasional letters to the editor and a few columns from independent scholars. Some offered new materials for teaching—books, films, VHS, CDs, and eventually websites, as well as book reviews. Occasionally the graduate students used *The Networker* to recruit new members or to call for volunteers at the annual meeting. As discussed above, a special edition was produced in 1993 focused on the work by the K-12 Committee on history education in the public schools. Another special edition featured developments in public history and its efforts to make women part of the story.

Reports were another category of information included. Occasionally these reports came from other organizations on topics related to WAWH. These included reports from the AHA, OAH, and CCWH. Other covered the WAWH Business meetings, the Report of the Executive Director which will be considered in greater detail below. Occasionally the minutes of the Business meeting were reported. Discussions of the proposal to establish the executive director position were offered and the call to create a material archive for WAWH was announced. In the case of the archive, material collected was printed in *The Networker*.

Still other kinds of information appeared in *The Networker*, such as “Good News/Bad News” which only appeared once. Members shared contributions they had made to their respective communities. Also included were fund raising for efforts for WAWH awards and prizes,

often to fund one specific award or another, some modest scale, others not. There were calls for volunteers, and beyond these practical matters, *The Networker* published obituaries of Joanna Cowden, Frances Richardson Keller and Agnes Peterson that introduced new generations of members to the work and experiences of the founding members of WAWH.

WHO ELSE HELPED SET THIS COURSE FOR WAWH?

The Executive Directors

As noted above, the executive director position was proposed in the early 2000s, but when first created it was only temporary while the organization decided whether it needed to have this new position. The position as defined then covered several of the tasks that had once fallen to the president, including finding locations as potential sites for meetings, developing necessary contracts with meetings sites and hotels in those locations, keeping the president apprised of the work of the prize committees, the treasurer and other officers, organizing sessions at the meetings of the AHA, OAH, PCH-AHA and other organizations, organizing volunteers for the WAWH conference and others, and numerous miscellaneous other duties. It is also appropriate to say that it is a position that has been shaped and reshaped by the women who have been executive directors and the presidents with whom they worked.

The first to be selected as executive secretary, now identified as executive director, was Amy Essington (Lecturer, California State University Fullerton and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Executive Director 2008-2014). Amy Essington came to WAWH in 1999, at the early stage of her graduate program at Claremont Graduate University. Her first steps into leadership were to accept the position of treasurer. Working with Karen Blair she watched and learned the intricacies of the presidency and understood

how important it was to think about the need for historians to keep it records.

Essington reported on her work in each of the issues of *The Networker*, providing extensive insight into the work of the ED and other officers. Her reports included a summary of the conference that had just happened, or information about the up-coming one, information on the president's keynote speakers and panels at the conference that had attracted considerable attention. She also decided that future conferences had to be scheduled in advance, just as the AHA and OAH did, so that members would know and could plan accordingly. Initially conference registration was done by snail mail, but she quickly moved it on-line, and regularly shared information about registration. When the meeting schedules changed from Friday-Sunday to Thursday-Saturday, she warned members in advance so they could make appropriate arrangements. When it was decided that participants in the conference had to register early, she notified them, along with information about registration, ordering meals, and any other details related to conference attendance. She reported on the winners of awards, thanked the committee members for their work in selecting them, and welcomed new members. She updated and added new material to the WAWH webpage. She reported on the membership numbers and encouraged members to invite colleagues to join or to give gift memberships to graduate students.

She reported on work she did to develop links to other organizations, including the OAH, AHA, PCB-AHA, CCWH and the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, events that WAWH co-sponsored with them, and reported on the events that were co-sponsored. She also reported on WAWH speakers at the PCH-AHA luncheon and sessions organized for the AHA and/or the OAH meetings.

On a regular basis she identified and thanked the women who had served on the award or prize committees. When new people were

appointed to or retired from committees, she reported it. She also identified those who had volunteered in any number of ways to other organizations. That, she felt, was another way in which she could distinguish and further promote the work of WAWH and its members.

Adding membership was another important goal. In 2008 she called for increasing the membership from 500 to 600. Regularly she reminded members of the importance of membership renewal and encouraged members to invite colleagues and to provide guest membership to students. The need to provide updated information for the directory was also critical. To this information she added a request that graduate students identify themselves as a MA or PhD student or as PhD candidate so that the organization could appropriately serve their needs. Changes in the dues were dutifully reported in Essington's reports. She also kept the organization apprised of the funding needs of the several awards and prizes. Sometimes she acted alone in the call for funds. Other times she had a committee to assist her. She also found ways of managing the prize and award funds so that they earned more than the bank interest. She also reported on the losses the organization experienced in response to the stock market crash of 2008, and her report offered painful insight into the work that lay ahead restoring funds.

Amy Essington was only the first of the three executive directors who have helped WAWH develop organizationally. Following her, Cheryl Krasnick Warsh (Professor, Vancouver Island University, Executive Director, 2014-2018) assumed the position. Located in Vancouver, her selection revealed the way in which the membership had developed. No longer was WAWH an organization of mostly Californians. Its membership included women from many of the states west of the Mississippi and Canada.

Warsh assumed the Executive Directorship after the conference in 2014 and made a quick study of all the things WAWH. She proved to

have an eagle eye for conference contracts and to be an excellent negotiator and this made for a tremendous difference in the organization's coffers at each of the conferences during her tenure as ED. In addition to a most effective response to the list of tasks assigned to the ED she added thanks to Essington, past presidents and the retirees who had helped her make the transition to the job. She fulfilled the promise of outgoing ED Amy Essington's prediction at the 2014 Business Meeting at Cal Poly Pomona: "I believe that she has new, fresh ideas and energy to see the organization grow and expand, including in Canada." Cheryl had a hard act to follow. Amy served WAWH for ten years and had moved the organization forward many steps, but she graciously and very professionally helped Cheryl learn the ropes, even as she wove her own. During her tenure WAWH renewed the three years membership which had seemingly been forgotten. To her felt the task of adjusting to Eventbrite which was supposed to be oh-so-simple to use, but left some members without meals at the Denver conference.³⁷

At the end of Warsh's term of service, Sarah Gold McBride assumed office. McBride, like Warsh, followed the path Essington has cut for WAWH. She began her term of service awaiting the birth of her child. Needless to say this added to the work on her agenda. In her first report at the Business Meeting in 2018, she said "she did what Cheryl did: processed mail; advised treasurer; worked on membership; collected donations; managed Eventbrite; processed registration; wrote a column for *The Networker*; advised local chairs; coordinated conference and awards. As of the end of last year: 486 members; 224 members now. 188 people registered for the conference."³⁸ As the material above suggests, this is an enormous amount of work, but she has managed not only to attend to the regular work of the

³⁷ "2018 Business Meeting WAWH 50th Annual Conference," *The Networker*, Summer 2015, p. 2

³⁸ Jennifer Thigpen, response to a request from Peggy Renner regarding Sarah Gold McBride, email, 2019

organization, but to the preparation of the celebration of the 50th anniversary.

When asked for her comments on Sarah's work as the executive director, Jennifer Thigpen, the president sent her reply by email, "Sarah has been a wonderful addition to WAWH. A real problem solver, Sarah's is solution oriented and has worked to put in place structures and procedures that are usable well into the future." For example, she helped to overhaul our registration and membership systems, making them much more user friendly. She also transitioned the prize applications to a digital format, which streamlined the process for applicants as well as committee chairs and members. A spreadsheet whiz, Sarah has also created new organizational tools for the 2019 conference which will see us well into the future.³⁹

WHO ELSE HELPED SET THIS COURSE FOR WAWH?

The Internet Experts

Very early in the twenty-first century WAWH recognized the need to use the internet to more effectively carry on the business of WAWH. Initially leaders used it for email communications and then to provide an option for copy of *The Networker* online, WAWH's three-time per year newsletter.

WAWH Treasurer Amy Essington developed and managed the first WAWH website that appeared online in early 2001. The site had general information about WAWH and *The Networker*, WAWH's national and regional ties, and WAWH membership. It also included organizational information, the calendar, conference information, executive board, prizes and awards and an online form for members to submit new for *The Networker* and full contact information for the

³⁹ Susan Kullmann, "Update on 'The Internet Experts'" response to an email from Peggy Renner email 2019

Executive Committee and other women's history organizations. The contents expanded over the years. Amy also modernized WAWH conference registration and membership on Eventbrite's online service.

Susan Kullmann, whose history doctoral degree included the development of digital skills, stepped forward in 2007 to update the website to a more modern style that struck a balance between reaching out to scholars comfortable with web technology and members adapting to technology who were turned off by flashy, complicated websites. A modern online service was setup for email communications. Adobe Contribute software simplified in-house editing for Amy Essington, the WAWH's Executive Director. In 2008 Amy also created a WAWH Facebook group.

When Warsh became WAWH's executive director in 2014, she asked Kullmann to redesign the WAWH website as a WordPress site that could be edited easily by Sunu Kodumthara, WAWH's new Digital Communications Director. Pamela Stewart became WAWH's new Eventbrite Coordinator. Kullmann moved WAWH email to Google for Nonprofits to provide consistent email records as Executive Board members changed. Later she updated membership and donation online transactions to newer services. In 2015 Kodumthara set up WAWH's Twitter account. In 2018 Kullmann and Andrea Milne became WAWH's Digital Communications Co- Coordinators. And WAWH's conference registration moved to a newer online service in 2018.

Except for the Internet Archives Wayback Machine's captures of some of WAWH's websites form 2001-2014, the data are not extant to capture the early websites with the one online today, but we can say today's site serves the organization well today. It includes extensive information about WAWH (present and past), membership, annual conferences, awards and prizes, online resources, news, donation opportunities and contact information. Rather than try to

detail all that information, Kullman suggests you please visit the website at <https://wawh.org>. Also see an early capture of Essington's first WAWH website: March 4, 2001 is to be found at <http://web.archive.org/web/2001032143555/http://www.waeh.org>. Susan Kullmann's 2007 web update is to be found at <http://web.org/web/20070702080328/http://www.wawh.org/> ⁴⁰

WHO ELSE HELPED SET THIS COURSE FOR WAWH?

Committee Chairs

WAWH provides awards and prizes annually, and virtually all work to select the winners is done by volunteers. As indicated above, several presidents who appoint the committee members worked to standardize committee rules and procedures and to insure that these met professional standards. *The Networker* and the WAWH webpage on awards offer information about procedures, requirements for eligibility, and the deadlines for application. The chairs of these committees are reported in *The Networkers* on the WAWH Executive Board page at the end of *The Networker*. While the minutes of their meetings may be available in the archive (and I don't know if they are), their work was done confidentially and cannot be reported here. The decisions they make are protected as private. Still it is important to recognize their work. Unfortunately the members of committee are not available for all these years, so we cannot recognize them, but the names of chairs, many of whom started on the committee as members, are available and are listed below. Special thanks are offered to the committee members, many of whom became chairs and to the unnamed members who have dedicated time and energy in finding the deserving winners.

⁴⁰ Susan Kullmann, "Update on 'The Internet Experts'" response to an email from Peggy Renner email 2019

AWARD AND PRIZE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Frances Richardson Keller/ Sierra Book Award

For the best monograph in the field of history

1993	Peggy Pascoe
1994	Francesca Miller
1995	Sherry Smith
1996	Sherry Smith
1997	Angel Kwolek-Folland
1998	Angel Kwolek-Folland
1999	Alexandra Nickliss
2000	Nupur Chaudhuri
2001	Nupur Chaudhuri
2002	Nupur Chaudhuri
2003	Judith Raftery
2004	Judith Raftery
2005	Jessica Weiss
2006	Jessica Weiss
2007	Jessica Weiss
2008	Eileen Boris
2009	Eileen Boris
2010	Hend Gilli-Elewny
2011	Elizabeth Watkins
2012	Amy Harris
2013	Sue Peabody
2014	Tannis Thorne
2015	Edith Sheffer
2016	Carolyn Herbst Lewis
2017	Lisa Cody
2018	Paula Michaels
2019	Paula Michaels

Judith Lee Ridge Article Prize

For the best article published in the field of history

1993	Ellen Hubert
1994	Ellen Hubert
1995	Ruth Alexander
1996	Ruth Alexander
1997	Florence Baker
1998	Florence Baker
1999	Florence Baker
2000	Janis Appier
2001	Janis Appier
2002	Janis Appier
2003	Janis Appier
2004	Ellen DuBois
2005	Ellen DuBois
2006	Sarah Stage
2007	Sarah Stage
2008	Barbara Molony
2009	Carolyn Lewis
2010	Carolyn Lewis
2011	Marie Francois
2012	Terri Snyder
2013	Joanne Goodwin
2014	Rebecca Kluchin
2015	Leandra Zarnow
2016	Lori Flores
2017	Hend Gilli-Elewy
2018	Miroslava Chavez-Garcia
2019	Grace Pena Delgado

Founders Dissertation Fellowship

For the student whose dissertation proposal was deemed the strongest

1993	Margaret Rose
1994	Bogna Lorence-Kot (check spelling)
1995	Nupur Chaudhuri
1996	Nupur Chaudhuri
1997	Lois Huneycutt
1998	Nancy Page Fernandez
1999	Nancy Page Fernandez
2000	Alexandra Nicholas
2001	Alexandra Nicholas
2002	Alexandra Nicholas
2003	Alexandra Nicholas
2004	Alexandra Nicholas
2005	Alexandra Nicholas
2006	Alexandra Nicholas
2007	Alexandra Nicholas
2008	Kimberly Jensen
2009	Kimberly Jensen
2010	Lois Huneycutt
2011	Sharon Wall
2012	Lydia Otero
2013	Lindsay Wilson
2014	Carla Brittel
2015	Marie Nelson
2016	Lauren Kienrtz
2017	Susan Wladaver Morgan
2018	Kate Jarvis
2019	Kate Jarvis

Barbara Penny Kanner Award

For the publication which best illustrates the use of a specific set of primary sources

1994	Frances Richardson Keller
1995	Karen Blair
1996	Karen Blair
1997	Candace Falk
1998	Candace Falk
1999	Candace Falk
2000	Nancy Slote
2001	Nancy Slote
2002	Nancy Slote
2003	Maria Elena Raymond
2004	Marie Elena Raymond
2005	Regina Lark
2006	Marie Elena Raymond check spelling of Marie
2007	Marie Elena Raymond
2008	Maria Elena Raymond
2009	Suzanne Baxendale
2010	Lynn Sacco
2011	Ron Loftus
2012	Jane Slaughter
2013	Sharon Wood
2014	Liza Sousa
2015	Nwando Achelbe
2016	Kathleen Jones
2017	Kathleen Jones
2018	Nupur Chaudhuri
2019	Nupur Chaudhuri

Gita Chaudhuri Prize

For the best monograph about the history of women in rural environments

- 2009 Kathleen Sheldon
- 2010 Margaret Jacobs
- 2011 Susan Wladaver Morgan
- 2012 Laura Woodworth-Ney
- 2013 Hinda Gilli-Elewy
- 2014 Kathryn Anderson
- 2015 Laura Munoz
- 2016 Katherine Jellison
- 2017 Grey Osterud
- 2018 Ana Elizabeth Rosas
- 2019 Ana Elizabeth Rosas

GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE PAPER PRIZE

RENAMED THE CAROL GOLD CONFERENCE PAPER PRIZE IN 2015

For the best paper presented at the conference

- 2009 Jill Field
- 2010 Paivi Hockkala
- 2011 Laura Woodworth Ney
- 2012 Sanjam Akluwalia
- 2013 Kathie Sheldon
- 2014 Jennifer Thigpen
- 2015 Donica Belisle
- 2016 Carrie Adkins
- 2017 Emily Hess
- 2018 Annalise Heinz
- 2019 Carole Srole

PROGRAM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

For the annual conference sponsored by WAWH

- 1993 Sarah Stage
Alex Wexler
- 1994 Jane Bernard-Powers
Alexandra Nichliss
Kathie Sheldon
- 1995 Tamara Hunt
- 1996 Tamara Hunt
- 1997 Nupur Chaudhuri
- 1998 Nupur Chaudhuri
- 1999 Nupur Chaudhuri
Lois Hunneycott
- 2000 vacant
- 2001 Carolyn Litzenberger
- 2002 Carole Srole
- 2003 Barbara Loomis
- 2004 Shirley Yee
- 2005 Gayle Gullett
- 2006 Regina Lark, Ula Taylor
- 2007 Pamela Radcleff
- 2008 Karen Blair
- 2009 Barbara Molony
- 2010 Nancy Page Fernandez
Kahleen Kennedy
- 2011 April Bullock
Corliss K. Slack
- 2012 Patricia Schechter
- 2013 Stephanie Camp
- 2014 Stephanie Camp
- 2015 Jennifer Roby Terry
Danielle Swiontek
- 2016 Sharon Block

	Terri Snyder
	Erica Ball
2017	Erica Ball
	Sharon Block
	Terri Snyder
2018	Sharon Block
	Terri Snyder
	Marne Campbell
	Anita Casavantes Bradford
2019	Sharon Block
	Terri Snyder
	Marne Campbell
	Anita Casavantes

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

2017	Barbara Molony
	Nupur Chaudhuri
	Peggy Renner
2018	Barbara Molony
	Nupur Chaudhuri
	Peggy Renner
2019	Barbara Molony
	Nupur Chaudhuri
	Peggy Renner

GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

1993	Regina Lark
1994	Emily Rader
1995	Erika Bsumek
	Katie Pearce-Sasson
1996-1997	Katie Pearce-Sasson
1998	Phoebe Kropp
	Melissa Dyea
1999	Phoebe Kropp

	Melissa Dyea
2000	Melissa Dyea
	Lara Bickell
2001	Melissa Dyea
	Lara Bickell
2002-03	Kim Warren
	Caryll Dzedziak
2003-2005	Caryll Dziwdziak
2003-2004	Annie Russell
2003-2005	Annie Russell
2005-2007	Sandra Dawson
2005-2007	Sandra Dawson
2005-2006	Julie Kehew
2005-2007	Julie Kehew
2007-2009	Karen Huebner
2007-2009	Karen Huebner
2008-2009	Lilia Raquel Rosas
2007-2009	Lilia Raquel Rosas
2009-2010	Karissa Haugeberg
2009-2011	Karissa Haugeberg
2010-2011	Andrea Thabet
2009-2011	Andrea Thabet
2011	Cynthia Scott
2011-2013	Jennifer Robyn Terry
2012-2013	M. Nichole Sater
2011-2013	M. Nichole Sater
2013-2014	Jennifer Robyn Terry
2014	Andrea Milne
2014-2015	Andrea Milne
2014-2015	Kate Flach
2016	Laura Moore
2017-2018	Lara Ping
2017	Susan Schmidt
2018-2019	Lara Ping
2018-2019	Susan Schmidt

CONFERENCE LOCATIONS 1993-2019

- 1993 Stanford Sierra Camp, Lake Tahoe, California
- 1994 Huntington Library, San Marino, California
- 1995 Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, California
- 1996 Huntington Library, San Marino, California
- 1997 Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, California
- 1998 Huntington Library, San Marino, California
- 1999 Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, California
- 2000 Huntington Library, San Marino, California
- 2001 Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon
- 2002 Huntington Library, San Marino, California
- 2003 Clark Kerr Conference Center, University of California, Berkeley, California
- 2004 University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California
- 2005 Black Canyon Conference Center, Phoenix Arizona
- 2006 Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, California
- 2007 Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, San Diego, California
- 2008 University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
- 2009 Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California
- 2010 University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington
- 2011 Huntington Library, San Marino, California
- 2012 Doubletree Hotel by Hilton at the Berkeley Marina, Berkeley, California
- 2013 Portland State University, Portland, Oregon
- 2014 California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Pomona, California
- 2015 Hilton Sacramento Arden West, Sacramento, California
- 2016 Sheraton Downtown Denver, Denver, Colorado
- 2017 Town and Country Resort & Convention Center, San Diego, California
- 2018 Hyatt Place, University of California, Davis, Davis, California
- 2019 Hilton Portland Downtown, Portland, Oregon

THOUGHTS ABOUT WAWH AND THE NEXT 25 YEARS

Over the last twenty-five years WAWH has served its members in many ways, and in so doing it has served our profession well. Now we must consider what we want WAWH to do over the next twenty-five and fifty years. Clearly we need to continue to provide support for women in our profession, but the steps we take can only be determined as we respond to the challenges we face. Today the study of the past faces threats from many sides as colleges and universities restructure and revise the disciplines they support and as voices from the public question the value of history. We know history is vital in a democratic society. Each generation needs to know what has come before, what mistakes our ancestors have made and the reforms they initiated and how much energy it has taken to protect the status quo or make changes for the future. As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of suffrage for women, we understand how much energy it took and how transformative that change has been. We need to ask what is now on our agenda and how can we promote change.

I deeply believe that the work we do in our classrooms is a critical starting point for opening this discussion. As I quoted Francesca Miller at the beginning of this manuscript, "WAWH fills a variety of functions...support for the work of our members in their many enterprises, which range from teaching to film production, to publishing, to research project." In recognition of the work WAWH members to provide valuable learning experiences for contemporary students, I have created the WAWH Teaching Award. The intention of the award is to recognize and reward the efforts of a member who seek to engage students in understanding contemporary issues in light of the lessons we learn from past, to help students develop the knowledge and skills of history, to better understand contemporary issues and to help students connect the issues with the past. I believe

our work in the classroom influences as many minds as our publications do. To date WAWH has not rewarded this work.

This award will be granted to an individual who has developed a new course or significantly revised an existing course so as to engage students in connecting a contemporary issue of significance to its history. Our focus on women is the first and best example of this teaching. In the 1960 and 1970s members of WAWH asked how the past was shaped and developed by the hands and hearts and minds of women. The topic of women's place in history remains important to members, at the same time new topics have stirred our minds and led us to question what we want to cover about the past. For example, the environment and climate change are vitally important today and have a history that we need to help students explore. Questions of who has or has not had political power and how it has been used have important links to the present that our students need to know. Issues facing immigrants have been a hot topic this year, and this has a history that we want to help our students to explore historically. The dramatic rise in wealth and the widening gap between wealth and poverty has generated valuable discussion for our democracy. War and peace, LBGQTQ, the challenges by Native Americans to the status quo, life in the south, in the mountains, the rust belt, or in rural society are all topics which play out daily in the lives of our students, and we as historians work to help them link these issues to the past. Let us reward our members' efforts for helping students to view these issues in historical perspective.