



# University of Oklahoma Women's and Gender Studies Program

## Activists-in-Residence: The Selmon Family

The Center for Social Justice is delighted to introduce this year's Activists-in-Residence, the Selmon Family. The Selmon family has a long and decorated history with the University of Oklahoma and the Norman community. Parents Dewey and Kathryn were both OU graduates from the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication. Dewey was part of the '74 and '75 National Champion Sooner football teams and Kathryn was a founding member of Norman's Food and Shelter for Friends. They have seven children: Shannon, Megan, Lauren, Zac, Adam, Christiana and Gabrielle. Shannon is an OU graduate and former Sooner basketball player. Zac works in the OU Athletics Department and teaches at OU.

second event, "Engaging With Failed States: Challenges and Debates in U.S. Foreign Policy," in October allowed Megan Selmon to speak about her work in the State Department and her experiences in Iraq.

During the Activists-in-Residence event on Nov. 17, Lauren screened her award-winning documentary *Rainbow Town*. After screening, Lauren and photographer Amy Elrod spoke about their experiences in Liberia and answered students' questions.

Our next spring event is "How and Why to Start and Run a Non-profit Organization," set for noon, Feb. 18, in The Associates Room of the Oklahoma Memorial Union. Our final Activists-in-Residence event of the year will be in April, when we will show a collection of art and photography from Liberia. In our upcoming events, we will be working with the Selmon family to highlight activism both locally and abroad, engaging students in dialogue about how to find areas for activism in their own lives.

For more information on either the Selmon family or the Center for Social Justice, contact the center at [center.for.social.justice@ou.edu](mailto:center.for.social.justice@ou.edu).



Rainbow Town film

The first event "Stories from Trips to Liberia," in September, was a great success, with more than 120 students and members of the community in attendance. The Selmon family spoke about their experiences in Liberia with the Rainbow Town Orphanage, their nonprofit, SHINE Foundation, why what they do is important, and what it meant for students at OU. Our



Center for Social Justice 2012-2013 Activists-in-Residence, The Selmon Family

# WIGS



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*The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.*



# The Welcoming Project Undergraduate Scholarship

The Welcoming Project is pleased to announce its first scholarship, a \$500 scholarship that will go to a student in the fall 2013 semester who demonstrates leadership and contributes to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer activism. The Welcoming Project began in 2011 to encourage local businesses, health care/service providers, organizations, and churches in Norman to display welcoming signs for the purpose of making LGBTQ individuals and allies feel welcomed as patrons. The deadline to submit applications is March 1 and the winner will be announced at the April Welcoming Project anniversary celebration in Norman, Oklahoma.

For more information, contact The Welcoming Project at [contact@thewelcomingproject.org](mailto:contact@thewelcomingproject.org) or email Meredith Worthen at [mgfworthen@ou.edu](mailto:mgfworthen@ou.edu).



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

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## Spotlight on Faculty: Dr Lisa Funnell

Lisa Funnell recently joined the faculty and the WGS Program. A Canadian citizen, she holds degrees from Brock University and McMasters Universities in Ontario. This fall Funnell completed her first semester at OU, where she taught Social Justice and Social Change and Female Heroism in Hollywood, both upper-division Women's and Gender Studies courses.. Funnell was drawn here upon hearing about the Women's and Gender Studies Program. "The WGS Program at OU is the only one in the state, and I thought that this is where I should be," she said.

Funnell first came to study film from religious studies, where she realized she enjoyed studying religious works as cultural texts. After making the leap from studying contemporary religion to contemporary film, she became fascinated with discourses of

masculinity in action films, completing a thesis on Arnold Schwarzenegger's films and their portrayal of men and masculinity.

She was inspired to develop a course on Female Heroism in Hollywood through the work of Michelle Yeoh in Chinese action films and through the James Bond franchise film *Tomorrow Never Dies*. "I really wanted to understand these images of strength," Funnell explains.

She enjoys the interaction with students in her classes at OU, taking inspiration from the intersection of theory and practice she sees in student involvement in social justice work. Funnell will be teaching "The James Bond Phenomenon" in spring 2013, analyzing the James Bond film franchise and the ideas and messages it sends across generations and cultures. "It

is the most popular and long lasting film franchise in history. We're hitting the 50th anniversary, and we're 23 films in," she said. "This is when people want to talk about gender and feminism in James Bond."



*Dr. Lisa Funnell*

## A Message From the Director



*Jill Irvine, Director, WGS*

This fall has been full of changes and new faces at WGS. First, we welcome Tanya Miller to the position of managerial associate. Tanya is doing a great job with the many aspects of this position, and I have heard from numerous students who say they are grateful for her thorough advising. I know I am glad to have her help in running the program. We also welcome two new faculty members to the program. Lisa Funnell, who joined us as a WGS faculty member in the fall, teaches a variety of great courses, including Hollywood Female Action Heroes and the James Bond Phenomenon. She has inspired her students in Social Justice and Social Change to get involved this semester, including students who have created a new student organization, Serving Equality in Contemporary Society. Finally, I would like to welcome

WGS affiliate faculty member, Lupe Davidson, to her new position as co-director of the Center for Social Justice. She and program coordinator Mallory Gladstein are working hard to foster innovative teaching, research and engagement on social justice issues.

WGS is incredibly lucky to have such dedicated and supportive alumni and members of the community. This fall, we received two great gifts that will allow us to serve the students more effectively. First, WGS alumna Robin Maril established a law scholarship to provide assistance to a graduating senior who plans to attend law school and advocate for gender quality and social justice in her/his career. Second, we received a very generous gift from Oklahoma City resident Robert Lemon and his daughter Robyn Lemon Sellers that will provide funding for staff for the Center for Social Justice. Finally, we continue to benefit from Cindy Merrick's generous support for the Empowerment of Spirit Award. A big thanks to our generous financial supporters from WGS.

I have totally enjoyed the Activist-in-Residence events this fall, which have featured the Selmon Family and their social justice work in Norman and Liberia. I look forward to the "Take Root: Red State Perspectives on Reproductive Conference" in February. Many thanks to Jen Cox, Sandra Criswell, Mallory Gladstein, Shai Fenwick and Lupe Davidson for their countless hours of work on planning this conference. I think it will be even more amazing than last year, so put it on your calendars for Feb. 15 and 16. I look forward to seeing you there!

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## Get to Know an Alum: Robin Maril

Robin Maril graduated from OU in 2006 summa cum laude with a degree in Women's Studies. After finishing her degree at OU, Robin received her law degree from the prestigious Temple University's Beasley School of Law, where she was named a Rubin Public Interest Law Fellow. Upon completion of law school, Robin worked for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, D.C., helping to draft the 2010 HUD implementing rule for the Violence against Women Act conforming amendments. Robin now works as legislative

counsel for Administrative Advocacy at the Human Rights Campaign. Her work focuses on policies and campaigns that impact the LGBT community.

In Robin's leisure time, she enjoys yoga, cooking with her partner, and exploring the many interesting sites of Washington, D.C. We are so proud of Robin's accomplishment!

Through Robin's generosity, the Women's and Gender Studies Program is seeking applications for the Maril Law Scholarship. This scholarship is open to Women's and Gender Studies and Social



*WGS Alumna Robin Maril*

Justice students who plan on attending law school in the fall 2013 semester. For more information, please go to [wgs@ou.edu](mailto:wgs@ou.edu).



## Center for Social Justice Gains Lupe Davidson as New Co-Director



*Lupe Davidson.*

This fall marks Maria del Guadalupe Davidson's sixth year at OU and her first semester as the Center for Social Justice's new co-director. Davidson holds master's degrees in communication and English as well as a doctorate in rhetoric from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Penn. During her travels, Davidson has lived in many areas of the United States and particularly enjoys university towns. "There is nothing like living in a college town, and Norman is one of the best ones around," Davidson says. "I love the schools, the access to cultural events and sports, and it is a nice place to raise a family."

As the co-director of the center, Davidson's work includes organizational efforts for the

"Take Root Conference: Red State Perspectives on Reproductive Justice," as well as the Activist-in-Residence and other center programs. She encourages students to attend Take Root, stressing that "it is a great place to learn about grassroots activism and to network."

Davidson and her family live the university experience—they are the faculty-in-residence for Couch Residence Hall, which she calls the best job ever. She is also the faculty adviser for the OU Co-Ed Field Hockey Team and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity Inc.. This semester, Davidson yearns for free time above all things. "Spare time...oh to have some! I like to hang-out with my awesome kids and husband, read, shop for shoes, and ride my bike," Davidson says.

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## Lorena Garcia Comes to OU, Inspires Students

I had the pleasure of meeting Lorena Garcia while she was here to give a talk about reproductive justice as part of our larger participation in **Take Root**, a reproductive justice conference held in Oklahoma for the past two years. We talked about organizing difficulties, the challenges of living in red states, and how much we loved pho. Lorena was a joy to be around and was impressed by the activity of students on our campus.

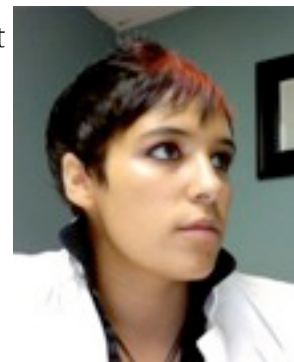
Lorena is the executive director for the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights. She has a background in organizing for social justice in the areas of education, LGBTQ and workers' rights, as well as curriculum and youth leadership development. Her energy and enthusiasm in talking to young people about reproductive justice and how a myriad of issues could affect their reproductive lives was obvious; she had people engaged and thoughtful during her entire presentation at OU.

Lorena spoke about the barriers many people in Colorado and Oklahoma face in seeking medical care. Immigration, violence, poverty and a host of other issues impact the populations

COLOR seeks to help. She also talked about the effectiveness in working with politicians who might be hostile to a cause and how valuable relationship-building can be in making lasting change in red states.

I am so excited to hear from Lorena (among other fantastic writers, thinkers, and activists) again at the **Take Root Conference: Red State Perspectives on Reproductive Justice** on Feb. 15 and 16. If you missed Lorena this time, don't pass up the opportunity to hear from her and other advocates at this upcoming, powerful event.

-- Jen Cox, Graduate Student



*Lorena Garcia, executive director of Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights*

## Program News and Awards

*Jill Irvine and Malaka Elyazgi**Cindy Merrick, Gabrielle Baez and family**Cindy Merrick, Donna Lucero and family**Cindy Merrick, Kristen Carlson and family*

Women's and Gender Studies awarded seven scholarships, recognized eight graduating seniors, seven graduate certificate holders and 13 minors in WGS and Social Justice this year. Cindy Merrick graciously joined us to present this year's EOS Empowerment of Spirit awards. Merrick, with Ally Richardson, established the award in 2009 to assist single mothers pursuing their education at OU. This year's recipients were Gabrielle Baez, Donna Lucero and Kristin Carlson. The Betty Baum and Norman

Hirschfield Award, permanently endowed in 1999 by E.J. Hirschfield and Alan Hirschfield in memory of their parents, was presented by Lesley Rankin-Hill to Valarie Lambert, Chrystal Fuller and Amy Posey. The Social Justice award for student, faculty and staff, established in 2009, recognizes outstanding contributors to social justice in the OU community. This year's recipients were staff fleet managerial associate Sam Fellows, joined by Sociology faculty member Susan Sharp and Educational Studies student Jennifer M. Cox. WGS

students also received travel awards to two national conventions. Civil Liberties and Public Policy Conference Award winners were Jordan Ward and Jennifer Cox, with Elicia Medaris-Reynolds and Noel Isom earning the Young Feminist Leadership Conference Award. WGS Director Jill Irvine also honored Barb Houser for her remarkable contributions to the OU Women's and Gender Studies program, and Malaka Elyazgi on behalf of the Women's and Gender Studies Board of Advisors.

*Valarie Lambert, Amy Posey and Leslie Rankin-Hill**Noel Isom, Milo Rhodes, Hester Baer and Molly Oakley-Rattler**Jill Irvine and Barb Houser**Jennifer Cox and Susan Laird**Kristin Holzer, Amanda Fehlbaum, Darrell Cox, Kendra Davis and Penny Pasquay*

### Congratulations, WGS Majors, Minors, SJ Minors and Graduate Certificate Recipients!

#### **Bachelor of Arts in Women's and Gender Studies, May 2012:**

Kelsi Colvin, Quinn Cooper, Noel Isom, Cassie Moss, Molly Oakley-Rattler, Rachael Ogletree, Whitney Patterson and Milo Rhodes

#### **Minor in Women's and Gender Studies, May 2012:**

Cassandra Borjon, Lindsay Culp, Madeleine Fontenot, Macy Hoover, Kaysee Johnson, Melissa McCutchen, Elicia Reynolds-Medaris and Autumn Wiles

#### **Graduate Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies:**

Amanda Burnham, Derrel Cox, Kendra Davis, Katie Eaves, Amanda Fehlbaum, Kristin Holzer and Ami Stearms

#### **Minor in Social Justice:**

Mary Dewers, Tammie Mallow-Dresch, Cassie Moss, Molly Oakley-Rattler, Megan Sweaney

## Clyde Snow Social Justice Award

The first Clyde Snow Social Justice Award ceremony was held May 18, 2012, at OU. The award ceremony hosted members of Snow's family, faculty, and members of the forensic anthropology community. Snow was the inaugural recipient of the award that bears his name. Oklahoma artist Harvey Pratt designed the award that features the hat Dr Snow wears.

Snow has changed the lives of thousands through the use of his skills as a forensic anthropologist to explore and provide answers for the families of those murdered by violent regimes. Snow and his teams have worked on anonymous grave sites in 44 countries around the world. Their

work helps to restore humanity to these "disappeared" individuals. The Clyde Snow Social Justice Award was created to honor individuals and organizations whose work contributes to the re-humanizing of victims of human rights abuses.



Harvey Pratt, Jill Irvine, Clemencia Rodriguez, Clyde Snow, Lesley Rankin-Hill, Mimi Doretti, Antonia Doretti, Eric Stover



Clyde Snow, recipient of the Clyde Snow Social Justice Award

## Faculty News and Publications

Julia Ehrhardt presented the following conference papers: "Let's Make Lardo! Teaching Food Studies in Tuscany" at the Association for the Study of Food and Society conference in New York City; "Better to Be an American? Teaching Edith Wharton's Short Stories in Italy" at the International Edith Wharton Conference in Florence, Italy," and "Dieting, Middlebrow-Style: Nina Wilcox Putnam's Weight-Loss Writings in The Saturday Evening Post" at the Society for the Study of American Women Writers Conference in Denver. She was the invited commenter on the panel: "At the Heart of the American Empire" at the 2012 American Studies Association Annual Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She also won a grant from the Sooner Parents for a project designed to introduce cooking components into her Honors College course, "Perspectives on Food, Society, and Culture."

Kirsten Havig and Rachael Robinson-Keilig from the Department of Human Relations and Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work received the Faculty Enrichment Grant funded by the College of Arts and Sciences Support of Teaching and Research Committee.

Jill Irvine co-edited a themed journal issue, "Gender and Political Transformation in Societies at War," in the *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13 (4) 2012. She also published "From International Courts to Grassroots Organizing: Obstacles to Transitional Justice in the Balkans," (with Patrice McMahon) in *Civil Society and Transitional Justice in the Balkans*, Olivera Simic, ed. (Springer, 2012). She also published two government reports for the National Council of Eurasian and East European Research: "Bounded Altruism: INGO Opportunities and Constraints during Humanitarian Crises and US Intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo" (with Andrew Halterman) (August 2012) <http://www.nceer.org>, and "Women's Organizing and Electoral Breakthroughs in Croatian and Serbia," (August 2012) <http://www.nceer.org>

Clemencia Rodríguez delivered a key note address titled "Five Challenges in the Field of Alternative/Radical/Citizens' Media Research" to an audience of about 900 European communication academics. The plenary opened the IV Conference of the European Communication Research and Education Conference (ECREA) held in Istanbul, Turkey, October 24 - 27. Rodríguez, and a team of Colombian academics received a grant from the US Institute of Peace project titled "Historical Memory Reconstruction from the Regions: Contribution toward Peace-Building in Colombia."

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