Although the name, Sheryl WuDunn is not known to many people, the book that she co-authored with her husband, Nicholas Kristof, titled Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide, remains on the New York Times bestseller list two years after its initial publication. The book has won rave reviews from readers and analysts alike. As literary non-fiction, the prose is clear and compelling. But what sets this book apart is that it has a clear agenda, which is to spur those of us who enjoy privilege to commit to concrete, do-able steps to improve the lives of women worldwide.

While I have read many books and articles that outline the impediments to education, economic survival and reproductive health that many women face, this one leads the reader to identify solutions that work to improve on unfair conditions.

The writers are also very clear about why they highlight stories of individual women to illustrate the global issues that they address. They note that people are much more likely to give to an individual than they are to a group. WuDunn and Kristof give voice and body to the statistics of poverty.

While Kristof writes an Op-Ed column for The New York Times, WuDunn is an investment advisor, with a focus on philanthropy. Together, they won a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage of China. They have also won a George Polk Award and an Overseas Press Club Award. WuDunn, the first Asian-American to win a Pulitzer, has been an executive at The New York Times and worked in finance at Goldman Sachs and Bankers Trust. She graduated from Cornell University, and has master’s degrees from Harvard Business School and Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School.

WuDunn will talk about her work on the book on March 7 at 7 p.m. in the O’Shaughnessy Educational Center. The event is free and open to the public. The center will also be conducting discussions of the book prior to the lecture, February 29 at noon; March 5 at 3 p.m. and March 6 at 11:45 a.m. The discussion on March 6 will be led by students in Foundations of Women’s Studies. All of these discussions will be held in the Women’s Center. The first 50 people who sign up for the discussions will receive a free copy of the book. Please contact Pat Alexander if you want to join us.
I discovered aspects of professional work that I did not expect to enjoy as much as I have.

For a while I thought that this would lead me into further administrative service, but the whole time I have been director, I have continued my research agenda on the prophets of the Exile. What has surprised me, and may be the less obvious way that being director has changed me, is how much my work here has affected my research agenda. Although I have always been interested in global women’s rights, I, like many of us, had a long list of books and talks that I “should” have read but never seemed to have found the time. My work at the center has given me the opportunity to do that reading and to find whole new areas of women’s experience about which I had only minimal knowledge. The stories of women on the edge of poverty and the images of women with no choice about how their bodies are used and abused have become a new lens through which I now read the biblical texts.

I realize that engagement with these women’s experiences needs to remain a vital part of my work. It is impossible for me to read a verse like Amos 8:6 that describes the economic elite as those who “buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals” without thinking about the girls that Sheryl WuDunn and Nicholas Kristof interviewed who had been sold into sexual slavery by families who faced starvation. I now read the description of the harem in the book of Esther or the partnership of Ruth and Naomi through the lens of Fatima Mernissi’s description of harems in Dreams of Trespass. The fact that the Elijah cycle begins with him feeding a widow and her son who face starvation, a story that always seemed like an odd introduction to the prophet, now makes perfect sense to me, realizing that the effects of drought like the one that Israel faced is first felt most acutely by women and children. These connections have helped me to develop my research agenda in ways that I find not only exciting, but also urgent.

Next year, I look forward to a sabbatical during which I will work on a feminist commentary on the book of Ezekiel. The commentary will be part of a new series that requires biblical scholars to engage the diversity of women’s experience, a diversity
that expands beyond racial/ethnic diversity into areas such as class, sexual orientation, able-bodied-ness, ageism, etc. Six years ago I would have found such a project daunting. Now I am ready to write!

I also want to point out that this is the last semester that Pat Alexander will be the “face” of the Center. Pat is going to retire at the end of June. It is hard to imagine the Women’s Center without her. She has been the one who has taken my “big” ideas and turned them into reality. Her competence is unparalleled, and her knowledge of the university extensive. But I think what our whole St. Thomas community realizes is that her hospitality has made an indelible mark on the Center. She will be missed, but we wish her nothing but the best in her retirement. I have no doubt we will see her on campus, probably with an even bigger smile on her face! Please mark your calendar now to join us at her retirement party on May 17 and join your well wishes to mine.

Before Pat and I say adieu, however, we still have a whole spring semester of programming left! I am looking forward to meeting Sheryl WuDunn. I am curious about how she and her husband collaborated on their book, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. It is well-written and compelling; I hope our book clubs are overflowing this year! Their focus on individual stories draws the reader in. But it was their discussion about why they focus on individuals that has made me think critically about why I support the causes that I do. In light of the subject of *Half the Sky*, our book club and our Feminist Fridays will focus on global women’s experience.

We also look forward to co-sponsoring (with the Jay Phillips Center and the Department of Theology) a talk by a leading Jewish medieval religious historian, Dr. Miri Rubin, on her critically acclaimed book on the development of the image of Mary during the Middle Ages. A group of Theology faculty has been reading the book together, and can attest to the sheer wealth of information that Dr. Rubin assembles.

Finally, we will continue hosting discussions of topics that interest female faculty this spring. This series is co-sponsored with Faculty Development, and has proved to be a fun and important venue for faculty who have sometimes felt isolated to meet each other and learn from each other about how to succeed here at St. Thomas. While the topics are geared for female faculty, male faculty are welcome to join us.

The second most common question that people ask me is whether I will miss being director. The answer is mixed. Yes, I will miss the people that I have worked with. I will miss talking to Pat nearly every day. I will miss being in the mix on important issues facing the university, and I will really miss having a budget that I can use to create programs that address these issues. But what I look forward to, besides returning to a more robust research agenda, will be being able to attend Women’s Center events without having to worry about whether they will go well or if the speaker is fine or if the food has arrived, etc. I leave it in very capable hands. I have no doubt that Dr. An will take the center in her own direction, and I look forward to learning more about women’s experience in the programs that she will design. I have absolutely no plans to say good-bye to the Women’s Center. Instead, like Pat, I will now simply be able to enjoy the Center and its programs!

"Next year, I look forward to a sabbatical during which I will work on a feminist commentary on the book of Ezekiel."
The Center to Welcome New Director July 1

The Advisory Board invites you all to join us in welcoming Dr. An when she assumes directorship of the Center July 1, and to supporting her as she offers new and exciting leadership.

Dr. Young-ok An brings wonderful qualities to the position of director of the LDCW. In describing her experience as a Korean woman new to graduate school in the United States, she recalls her sense of the warmth, openness and safety of the women’s center at University of Southern California, and expresses the desire to strengthen the tradition of the Luann Dummer Center for Women providing a space where those same characteristics will be felt by all members of the UST community.

“For the younger generation of women that make up our student body, I will aim at addressing ways to connect their academic pursuits, career goals, social awareness, and personal growth,” she wrote in her application letter, continuing, “For our staff and faculty, I will foster an environment in which they will find themselves intellectually stimulated, and socially connected and spiritually nurtured.”

Since coming to UST in 1997, Dr. An has presented her feminist scholarship at the Women’s Center, as well as organizing an external speaker at the center. She has taught a variety of English department courses related to women writers and feminist theory, including “Woman Becoming Author,” “Literary Mothers and Daughters” and “Gender and Fame.” She also team-taught the ACTC Women’s Studies senior seminar with the then-director of the Women’s Studies program at Augsburg, Dr. Jacqui de Vries. Her scholarship has included work on the writings of Mary Shelley, Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon.

Dr. An is well known for her effective mentoring—both formal and informal—of women students and faculty colleagues.

Not only does Dr. An express a clear commitment the center’s mission, but she is particularly interested in “cultivating fairness, open-mindedness, and personal growth.” “While understanding both the culture and history of our school and working with the administration,” she adds, “I will strive to foster civil discourse and academic freedom. Since I consider issues concerning women and gender vital to the health of the academic and larger community, I will work vigilantly to keep Luann Dummer’s vision, pioneering spirit, and legacy alive and well.”
After working at UST for 12 ½ years, I plan to retire on June 30, 2012. My employment at UST has involved a unique full-time position in which I work half-time as the Administrative Assistant in both the Luann Dummer Center for Women and the Center for Faculty Development. Originally these two centers were located in the same building which made logistics easier to handle. But the Faculty Development Center has been in three locations since my employment. I divide my Faculty Development time into a morning and an afternoon shift and the Women’s Center in one shift starting at 9 a.m. and ending at 1 p.m. The exercise benefits are plentiful.

I have especially enjoyed hosting and expanding the Yarn Tamers yarn craft group through the Women’s Center.

These two positions have enabled me to virtually come into contact with almost all faculty, staff and many students. Building these networks and establishing these relationships has been the best part of both of my jobs and what I will miss most about leaving UST. I have especially enjoyed hosting and expanding the Yarn Tamers yarn craft group through the Women’s Center. I plan to continue my association with this group as a member from the neighborhood that UST serves. I have had the opportunity to work with three directors of the Women’s Center and four directors of the Faculty Development Center and each of these experiences has been a pleasure. I have said many times that I have the best jobs and supervisors on campus. Another bonus was the opportunity to meet and work with guest speakers and presenters at events sponsored by the Women’s Center and Faculty Development.

Building these networks and establishing these relationships has been the best part of both of my jobs and what I will miss most about leaving UST.

As much as I enjoy my work at UST, I don’t enjoy the long winters in MN and hope to become a snow-bird and spend time in the winter months in more temperate climates. I would like to become a volunteer with the National Park Service and try to find openings in the winter months in warm weather states. I also plan to travel and to register for more Road Scholar trips. Road Scholar is the new name for Elder-hostel which may be more familiar to you. I will be going to Scotland and exploring the Highlands in September with Road Scholar and then adding on a three day tour in London on the return trip.

I would like to become a volunteer with the National Park Service and try to find openings in the winter months in warm weather states.

Corrine Carvalho and Ann Johnson, my two current supervisors, are planning a retirement party for me here at UST on Thursday, May 17 from 2-4 p.m. in O’Shaughnessy Library, Room 108. An announcement will be in the Bulletin and I hope to see many of you there to help me celebrate this transition.
The Luann Dummer Book Club continues its focus on global women’s experience this spring semester. The book club meets on the last Wednesday of the month at noon in the Women’s Center. Bring your lunch and enjoy the discussion. You do not have to have finished (or even begun) the book to join the discussion. The group will also discuss next year’s list at the April (brainstorming) and May (deciding) meetings so send suggestions of any book written by a woman.

- February 29: Sheryl WuDunn and Nicolas Kristof, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*
  New York Times columnist Kristof and his wife, WuDunn, a former Times reporter, make a brilliantly argued case for investing in the health and autonomy of women worldwide. More girls have been killed in the last fifty years, precisely because they were girls, than men were killed in all the wars of the twentieth century, they write, detailing the rampant gendercide in the developing world, particularly in India and Pakistan. Far from merely making moral appeals, the authors posit that it is impossible for countries to climb out of poverty if only a fraction of women (9% in Pakistan, for example) participate in the labor force. China’s meteoric rise was due to women’s economic empowerment: 80% of the factory workers in the Guangdong province are female; six of the 10 richest self-made women in the world are Chinese. The authors reveal local women to be the most effective change agents.

  This fiercely satirical, semifantastical novel features an Asian-American television news executive, Emi, and a Latino newspaper reporter, Gabriel, who are so focused on chasing stories they almost don’t notice that the world is falling apart all around them. Karen Tei Yamashita’s staccato prose works well to evoke the frenetic breeziness and monumental self-absorption that are central to their lives.

  After a childless first marriage Nnu Ego, the daughter of a Nigerian chief, is sent from her village to Lagos to marry Nnaife Owulum who works as a laundry man for an English couple. Nnaife is a weak man and the adjustment to urban living is a painful one for Nnu Ego. Her life becomes an unceasing struggle to maintain her family. Through periods of extreme hardship and deprivation, amid more intense by Nnaife’s absence during WWII, Nnu Ego is sustained by
the bright future she anticipates for her children when they will be able to support her. However, the traditions she has fought to uphold and the family ties she has always honored are but an anachronism for her children: Nnu Ego is forced to live out her days alone. The *Joys of Motherhood* is more than just a story of Nnu Ego and her family, however. We see Nigeria as it tries to catch up with the twentieth century; a Nigeria rocked by colonialism, WWII, and the general encroachment of the modern western world on a traditional African one.

**May 30: Louise Erdrich, The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse**

Erdrich seems to be inhabiting her characters, so intense and viscerally rendered are her portrayals. Her prose shimmers: a piano being carried across the plains is “an ebony locust.” This novel will be remembered for a cornucopia of set pieces, all bizarre and stunning: wounded and taken hostage by a bank robber and pinned to the running board of his Overland automobile, Agnes, “her leg a flare of blood,” briefly touches hands with her astonished lover as the car crosses his path; old man Nanapush, impaled on fish hooks that pin him to a boat that’s hitched to the antlers of a wounded moose, careers through the woods in delirious exhaustion.

Writing with subtle compassion and magical imagination, Erdrich has done justice to the complexities of existence in general and Native American life in particular.

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**UAWE Hosts Spring Reception in April**

The Coordinating Council of the University Advocates for Women and Equity invites the entire St. Thomas community to its spring reception and awards ceremony on April 19 at 3:30 p.m. in McNeeley 100 on the St. Paul campus. This year, the Sister Pat Kowalski Women’s Leadership Award will be presented to a woman who is a non-exempt staff member, as well as to a student, both of whom have demonstrated through their actions their convictions in working for the needs of women. In addition, the UAWE will recognize various members of the community for their help to others on campus (the Good Sister Award), their willingness to challenge problems related to gender (the Pauline Lambert Advocacy Award), and their scholarly or creative work focused on women (the Sapientia Award).

In addition, the UAWE sponsors various programs to serve women on campus. Watch for programs on women’s leadership skills as well as meditation and stress reduction. The UAWE also provides scholarships for students to attend the MN League of Women’s Voters’ Leadership Series.

Finally, the UAWE is addressing concerns about inappropriate behavior in the workplace or “bullying.” Although the word “bullying” may bring up images of schoolyard taunts, bullying can occur also in the workplace and includes angry outbursts, insults, or withholding information from a colleague. Look for more information on dealing with this concern.

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**Discussion Opportunities For Female Faculty**

This year, the Luann Dummer Center for Women has been partnering with Faculty Development to host a series of discussions for female faculty on a variety of topics. In the fall, faculty talked about “Is Service a Trap for Female Faculty?” and “Work-Life Balance.”

This semester, we will host three discussions:

- Feb. 9, 3 p.m.: Dr. Marie Lopez del Puerto will lead a discussion on the isolation many female faculty experience in small departments or where they are a significant minority
- March 15, noon: Asst. Dean Kris Bunton will facilitate a discussion on Third Year Reviews, which will look both at how to prepare one, but also at how to provide a constructive review
- April 19, noon: Dr. Brenda Powell will focus on what female faculty should know about the Faculty Handbook

Participants should sign up for each discussion in advance so that we can order the right amount of food. We will usually provide a short reading ahead of time to prepare for the discussion. Each discussion is self-contained, so there is no need to attend the whole series. Faculty can simply register for the topics and times that work best for their schedule. While these topics are designed for female faculty, male faculty can also attend.

You can register for any or all of these by emailing Pat Alexander (pmalexander). Please indicate if you have any dietary restrictions.
Miri Rubin, professor of Medieval and Early Modern History at Queen Mary University of London, will be the speaking in the O’Shaughnessey Education Center Auditorium on Monday, March 26, at 7 p.m. Rubin’s topic will be “Mary: From Jewish Maiden to Global Mother.”

Prof. Miri Rubin discovered History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where she studied for the B.A. in History and completed an M.A. in Medieval History in 1980 with a dissertation on The Oriental Politics of Charles of Anjou. The desire to research the social and religious history of Europe led her to Cambridge, where under the supervision of Christopher Brooke she completed a PhD, with the topic “Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge” in 1984. After a number post-doctoral fellowships and appointment, she was promoted to a Readership in Medieval History in 1998, and in 2000 was appointed to a Chair in Early Modern History at the Department of History at Queen Mary, University of London.

Dr. Rubin enjoys intellectual collaboration and travelling the world in search of history and its makers. She is also involved in communicating an understating of history to non-academic publics, in writing and through appearance on TV and radio.


Most recently she published *Mother of God: a History of the Virgin Mary* (London: Alan Lane, and New Haven (CN): Yale University Press, 2009), on which her talk is based. In the book, Rubin investigates the ideas, practices, and images that have developed around the figure of Mary from the earliest decades of Christianity to around the year 1600. Drawing on an extraordinarily wide range of sources—including music, poetry, theology, art, scripture, and miracle tales—she reveals how Mary became so embedded in our culture that it is impossible to conceive of Western history without her.
Over the past couple of years a group of faculty, staff, and students, with the support of the Luann Dummer Center for Women, the President’s Office/Diversity, and the Office of Mission, has been working on ways to improve the climate on campus for people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and allies (LGBTQA). A subcommittee of this group focuses on coordinating a variety of activities to further support our awareness and understanding of LGBTQA issues, history, and life experiences. This fall the subcommittee invited Nick Sideras, a senior majoring in Political Science and Philosophy, to share his Young Scholars work highlighting some of the philosophical and legal history related to LGBTQA issues.

Nick Sideras’ Young Scholars project, “From the Closet to Acceptance: The Evolution of the Philosophical and Legal Perspectives Regarding Sexual Orientation from Bowers to Lawrence and Beyond” is a journey into the philosophical foundations that have shaped legal frameworks throughout history. From the Bible to Plato to the Supreme Court, this training offered us an expansive and deep look at the intersection of legal history and present day challenges LGBTQA persons face. In particular, Nick walked us through a handful of legal cases from 1986 to 2003 which highlight paradigm shifts, evidentiary perspectives, and new views on precedence. Nick left us with some important things to reflect on as we continue our work as Allies:

- **Visibility, power, and justice:** The impact of power and visibility cannot be overstated. Whether it is the power that comes with class/status (Plato) or power in taking action (filing a legal suit), this is historically what is recognized in the pursuit of justice. Claiming opportunities for visibility provides power in the pursuit of justice. As allies this visibility may come in many forms and it will take intention and strategy to bring it to life.

- **Change can be difficult and it takes time:** Legal history is complex. It is not every day that we consider how Plato influences current social norms, policy, and law. To bring such awareness forward is to remember the influence of time on any given system or ideology. We don’t often talk about the influence and role of tradition in social norms, policy, and law – which leads not only to the concept of precedence, but the deep roots of individuals, families, and communities and how beliefs, values, and morals are a part of the fabric of our being. Furthermore, for many people these deep roots are seen as a sacred connection that should not be challenged. As we consider the personal connections that people have to norms, policy, and law, we must also consider human nature. No matter how much change we have experienced, it does not often come easily for us.

- **Reflecting to inspire hope:** While society and law may not be where we, as allies, want it to be, progress has been made. When we reflect on history we see that change has been made. There has been progress in both the law and society for many LGBTQA communities around the world. Remembering that change has taken place, however slowly and perhaps painfully, can serve as a hopeful reminder that more change will come.

As allies, we are committed to our continued learning and work in service to that change. As Gandhi once said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Nick for his outstanding work and for taking time to share it with us.

If you’d like to learn more about our work or schedule an Ally training for your group or organization, feel free to contact Dr. Corrine Carvalho (clcarvalho@stthomas.edu).
We welcome you to any or all of our programs and co-sponsored events. See the LDCW website for information on additional events and activities. (All events are held at the Luann Dummer Center for Women, OEC 103, unless otherwise noted.)

Feb. 9 ▶ Female Faculty Discussion, Dr. Marie Lopez del Puerto on isolation, 3 p.m.

Feb. 24 ▶ Feminist Friday: Panel of international students: Dating, Marriage and Romantic Relationships: Views and Roles of Women in Relationships, co-sponsored with International Student Services, Noon

Feb. 29 ▶ LDCW Book Club: Half the Sky, Noon

Mar. 5 ▶ Discussion of Half the Sky, 3 p.m.

Mar. 6 ▶ Discussion of Half the Sky, led by students from Foundations of Women’s Studies, 11:45 am

Mar. 7 ▶ Women’s History Month Lecture, Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide, Sheryl WuDunn, 7 p.m. OEC Auditorium

Mar. 15 ▶ Female Faculty discussion, Asst. Dean Kris Bunton on Third Year Reviews, Noon – 1 p.m.

Mar. 26 ▶ Dr. Miri Rubin: Mary: from Jewish Mother to Global Mother 7 p.m., OEC Auditorium, co-sponsored with the Department of Theology, the Jay Phillips Center for Jewish-Christian Dialogue and the University of Minnesota, Center for Medieval Studies

Mar. 28 ▶ LDCW Book Club, Tropic of Orange, Noon

April 13 ▶ Feminist Friday: Dr. Young-Ok An, “Literary Friendship between Felicia Hemans and Letitia Landon.” Noon

April 19 ▶ Female Faculty Discussion, Dr. Brenda Powell, “What women should know about the Faculty Handbook,” Noon

April 19 ▶ UAWE Spring Reception, 3:30 p.m. McNeely 100

April 25 ▶ LDCW Book Club: Joys of Motherhood, Noon

May 4 ▶ Grant Recipients Reception, 3 p.m.

May 17 ▶ Pat’s Retirement Party, 2-4 p.m., Library 108

May 30 ▶ LDCW Book Club: The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse, Noon

June 19 ▶ Corri’s Goodbye Party, 2-3:30 p.m.
Mark your calendars! Women’s Studies Breakfast Talks are back. Our three dates for this spring are February 14, March 13 and April 17 from 8:15 – 9:15 a.m. in the Luann Dummer Center for Women (103 OEC). All faculty, staff, and students are welcome to attend. Thanks to the LDWC for their generous support of this series.

- **Tuesday, February 14 (8:15 – 9:15 a.m.):** Dr. Mark Stansbury O’Donnell, Art History *The Pursuit of Women in Greek Art, and the Pursuit of Complex Meaning.*
- **Tuesday, March 13 (8:15 – 9:15 a.m.):** Dr. Young-ok An, English *Redefining Heroism: Exploring British Romantic Women Writers.*
- **Tuesday, April 17 (8:15 – 9:15 a.m.):** Dr. Roxanne Prichard, Psychology *Predictors of Poor Sleep in College Students: Gender, Stress, and Consequences.*

**“The Business of Being Born”**

UST graduate and local midwife Brielle Stoyke will give an Alumni Reflections talk on Tuesday, February 21 at 7 p.m. in OEC auditorium, followed by a screening of the film “The Business of Being Born” (http://vimeo.com/432665). Light refreshments will be provided. This event is co-sponsored by the Pre-Health Committee and the Women’s Studies Program. Thanks to Dr. Roxanne Prichard (Psychology and Women’s Studies) for organizing this event.

**Yarn Tamers**

Yarn Tamers is an opportunity for faculty, staff, students and outside community members to spend a relaxing hour working on yarn projects, meeting new friends and colleagues and socializing. Newcomers are encouraged to stop by and join in the fun.

Each year the group works on a service project with materials funded by a small grant from the Women’s Center. This past fall one of our members, Susan Anderson-Benson, knitted 24 hat and scarf sets that were donated to Sarah’s an Oasis for Women and to the Alexandra House. We also donated 8 afghans. Members of the group knitted or crocheted squares and they were sewn together into afghans by member, Dede Hering.

Yarn Tamers meets on Mondays from noon-1 p.m. in Room 103, OEC in the Luann Dummer Center for Women. During the summer months, the group meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays and weather permitting sits outside on the quad.

Anyone can come to Yarn Tamers, even if they don’t want to work on a yarn craft project. Some just stop by for the social time. There is no formal registration; interested people can just show up to a meeting. Contact: pmalexander@stthomas.edu.
Luann Dummer Center for Women

Hours: Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. - 9 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Contact:
Telephone: (651) 962-6119
From this number you can access hours and leave a message.

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