Wisdom is calling to her children:  
Come to the banquet I have spread:  
   Come and drink my wine;  
   Come and eat my bread;  
Come to the feast I have prepared.

Rev. Michael Joncas
WISDOM FOUND

THE FIRST 10 YEARS OF THE LUANN DUMMER CENTER FOR WOMEN 1993-2003

Susan Hanson Clayton

Presented in conjunction with an exhibition of art and history, Nov. 7-Dec. 19, 2003

O’Shaughnessy Educational Center Lobby Gallery University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minn.
Acknowledgments

It has been my very great pleasure to tell the story of the Luann Dummer Center for Women, a facility that has afforded me wonderful professional opportunities as well as support for my personal growth. On behalf of the many University of St. Thomas women who have enjoyed the same, I am grateful to Luann Dummer and to 10 years of women and men who took on the work of the LDCW. In tracing the progress of the LDCW, I worked from original documents in the women's center as well as clippings and memorabilia collected by Pauline Lambert, who started this project. Thanks, Pauline! For this text I am in debt to Joseph B. Connors' book, Journey toward Fulfillment: a History of the College of St. Thomas, and University and College Women's Centers: A Journey toward Equity edited by Sharon L. Davie. Many thanks are due archivist Ann Kenne, at the O'Shaughnessy-Frey Library Center, Pat Alexander of the LDCW, and designer Sara Klomp of University Relations. Thanks also to JoAnn Andregg, Ann Johnson, Anne Klejment, Corrine Patton, Patty Petersen and Nancy Zingale, who provided information and clarifications. I had wonderful help with the research, yet any inaccuracies are mine. Lastly, I wish to extend gratitude to LDCW directors Meg Wilkes Karraker, Brenda Powell and especially, Debra Petersen, who has the gift of empowering many women in many ways.

Susan Clayton

All illustrations are from the archives of the Luann Dummer Center for Women. Works from the LDCW art collection were photographed by Mark Jensen and Roger Rich.

“Wisdom is Calling to Her Children” is used with the permission of its composer, Michael Joncas.
Message from the Director

Reading Wisdom Found by Susan Clayton brings back many professional and personal memories for me. I sought female role models and mentors as a new faculty member at UST, and in the short time that I knew Luann Dummer, she was both. I joined the Women’s History Month Committee because I was attracted to her humor and style; she wore black athletic shoes (instead of the typical low pumps) and she drove a fancy sports car (which was the envy of many). My first time away from our newborn daughter, Taylor, was attending Luann’s funeral. Colleagues Mary Swanson and Carol LaHurd and I cried and laughed when the feminist anthem “I Am Woman” by Helen Reddy was played as the recessional. Today I have the great honor and pleasure of serving as director of the center created and sustained by Luann’s generous gift. This is my fourteenth year at UST and our second daughter, Camille, looks forward to being old enough to join her sister at our “Take our Daughters to Work Day” activities.

Luann’s friends created a wonderful space for students, staff and faculty to gather in and we continue to benefit from the programs that were created by Meg Wilkes Karraker, Brenda Powell and others, that reach far beyond the physical space of OEC 103.

As we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the center, we pause in our busy lives and hurried days to remember and to thank Luann, and to tell the stories of many women at UST. We are most grateful to Susan Clayton for telling these stories in this wonderful book and exhibition.

Debra L. Petersen
Nov. 7, 2003
Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach

Visitors to the women’s center on the St. Paul campus of the University of St. Thomas often hear first about Dr. Luann Dummer (1942-1992), a longtime faculty member who made possible a place for women at UST. Luann, who came to St. Thomas in 1971, was the first female chairperson of the Department of English, serving from 1976 to 1988. She was elected Professor of the Year in 1989, only the second woman to hold that honor, the first being her friend, Dr. Nancy Zingale, in 1988. Luann’s expertise was in medieval literature; Chaucer’s “I will gladly learn and gladly teach” was somewhat of a motto for her. In 1991, Luann served as the first director of the fledgling women’s studies program at UST and she headed a committee to study the feasibility of a campus women’s center. That same year, at the height of this productivity, she was given a terminal diagnosis of cancer. Her response to this prognosis was characterized by overwhelming generosity,
laced with whimsy, indicative of an understanding for her fellows in the academic life.

Luann’s will held important surprises. She stipulated a party, at her favorite St. Paul restaurant, for 40 friends and colleagues. She provided funds for course releases for Department of English faculty. Most electrifying, she directed $1 million for the establishment of a center to serve as a resource and meeting space for women on campus. It was said at her memorial service, that during her illness, Luann put away her interest in linguistics and medieval studies yet she continued her concern about the “woman-issue.”

The dinner party took place, English professors continue to have the opportunity for time off, and today, in 2003, we celebrate 10 years of success for the Luann Dummer Center for Women. As Luann had hoped, the center offers space, support and service to the St. Thomas
community. “Even now,” said a former student at her memorial service, (and it remains true today), “Luann herself continues to teach – about generosity ... about the fragility of life ... and about the impact one teacher can have on the life of a student.” In the last 10 years, droves of St. Thomas students, staff, faculty, and community members have been served by the Luann Dummer Center for Women.

**Always Present (if not present all ways)**

History shows that, from its inception, women were always a presence during the growth and development of the St. Thomas community. Land along the Mississippi River in St. Paul had been gifted to Archbishop John Ireland, for the purpose of a school. Founded in 1885 as St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, the institution did not train young priests exclusively. Like many American Catholic schools of the period, St. Thomas was called upon to educate future Catholic doctors, lawyers, and businessmen. A woman would influence the destiny of the school when, in 1890, railroad magnate James J. Hill promised $500,000 to build a separate seminary campus. This gift was given in gratitude to one of the first trustees of the school, Monsignor Louis Caillet, acknowledging years of spiritual guidance provided to Hill’s wife Mary Mehegan Hill. Since 1894, future priests have been educated at The St. Paul Seminary. The College of St. Thomas was incorporated in January of that year.

Feminist history and literature are replete with examples of the harm of a lack of education for women and about the questionable results of “second sphere” training in home arts. In the late nineteenth century, higher education for American women was the exception
rather than the expectation, however, for a variety of reasons, a national system of co-education had begun to take hold in the mid 1800s. As American territory expanded, a growing need for teachers at bargain prices opened the profession to educated women. At the ensuing land grant universities, it became cheaper to admit women than to build schools for each gender, but female students were still a second-class minority. There was a feeling that, because of the presence of women, co-educational state universities were inferior to the all-male Eastern bastions of education.

Nationally, religious schools of the day commonly separated the sexes. Archbishop Ireland, the force behind the creation of St. Thomas, was a man who believed that “we should live in our age, know it, be in touch with it.” Although co-education was a contemporary innovation, Ireland wished to attract students who possessed a “robust, manly piety.” St. Thomas was constructed for the education and improvement of men, but the presence of women was essential to its success.

Culinary services, housekeeping and medical care were supplied to the students by the Sisters of St. Joseph until World War II. In 1905 a new infirmary was completed and staffed by the Sisters, who also resided there. Many sisters served long careers in support of the school including Beatrice Gleason, Sabina Letourneau, Alfreda Drobinski, and Julia Moroney, longtime director of housekeeping at Ireland Hall. Another important woman was Mrs. Tyllia, who ran a confectionary at Grand and Cretin Avenues around the turn of the century.

Also in 1905, the Sisters of St. Joseph opened the College of St. Catherine on a site just south of St. Thomas. Thus began a longtime relationship between the two schools. St. Catherine’s women exerted their influence on St. Thomas men, first socially and, eventually, academically. St. Catherine’s was tapped for actresses in the 1920s when Joseph Connors called “the ancient and deplorable practice of having men play women’s roles” was abandoned. By mid-century, St. Catherine’s was the major source of dates, cheerleaders and homecoming queens for St. Thomas. In 1957, many Tommies and Katies became classmates when a program of cooperative learning between the two schools was enacted.

As at most American Catholic colleges, women’s roles were initially limited by the constraints of social convention and the strictures of doctrine. As women slowly made gains within society, it became acceptable, and then commonplace, for a few professions to be open to them. At St. Thomas, some of the first women hired were librarians. Among those who professionalized the school’s collection were Mary Griffen, who implemented the Dewey Decimal system, and Mary Helen Meagher, who applied Library of Congress classifications. Gertrude Costello served as a planner of the O’Shaughnessy Library in the 1950s. Administrative assistants also supported the work of the college. For example, Mary Loftus, longtime aide to Dean William O’Donnell, became an important resource for faculty and students because of her management skills and expertise.

In addition to women employed by the school, female family members and volunteers increasingly made an impact at St. Thomas. Women came to campus in the most traditional capacity with the construction of Tom Town, a temporary post-World War II campus housing solution for married students and faculty. A women’s auxiliary had
been formed in 1941, holding social and charitable functions until it disbanded with the construction of the women's center in 1993. Women's work was recognized with honorary degrees for the first time in 1966, when presentations were made to Butler Foundation vice-president Aimee Mott Butler and former St. Catherine's president Sr. Mary Edward Healy. A philanthropist, Mrs. Ignatius O'Shaughnessy, joined her husband in the support of many significant building projects at St. Thomas.

Beginning with Mary Keefe, hired to teach biology in 1947, women began to be included on the St. Thomas faculty, slowly paving the way for more female academics at the school. Dr. Ann Hoversen, an English professor since 1948, headed the 1969 committee that explored the possibilities of co-education at St. Thomas. By that time, many factors had converged to create a more hospitable climate to women on campus. Language from the 1962 Vatican II Ecumenical Council led many Catholics to consider that women, as well as men, had roles in laity service to the church. The women's movement of the 1960s had incited re-evaluation of women's roles in many areas of American society. Title IX legislation in 1972 decreed that women and girls be given opportunities equal to those of men and boys in education and school athletics. As it was across the nation, the 1970s was an important decade for advances for women at St. Thomas. Women were included as trustees of the college for the first time, beginning with Elizabeth Ann Hidding and Helen McNulty in 1972. Dr. Pauline Lambert became the first woman to serve as a senior level administrator, when she was appointed to the president's office in 1976. By the mid 1970s, there were only about a dozen females on faculty. This number would increase as St. Thomas began to express, through its hiring practices, a commitment to inclusion of and opportunities for women. In 1977, women were officially admitted as St. Thomas students.

**A Civilizing Effect**

During the late nineteenth century and for most of the twentieth, women interested in pursuing higher education in a co-educational Twin Cities setting could enroll at the University of Minnesota and, beginning in 1893, at Macalester College, not far from St. Thomas on Summit Avenue. Catholic women, of course, could attend St. Catherine's, yet, over time, inroads were made into the education of women at St. Thomas. An early attempt at co-education took place in the 1920s when women were admitted for a brief time to the School of Commerce. Women had been included in the graduate program in education since its inception in 1950, chiefly to accommodate the Sisters of St. Joseph. Women could also enroll in the graduate program in business administration when it was formed in 1974.

In 1957, an exchange program between St. Thomas and St. Catherine's had begun, intended to employ an economy of consolidation in upper division courses. By 1969, approximately two thousand Tommies and Katies were taking advantage of this exchange. Meanwhile, a drop in Minnesota birthrates foretold a drop in freshman enrollment by the late 1980s. Administrators began to look at co-education as a source of increased revenues for St. Thomas. The possibility of enrolling women had been
studied for years, formally with an ad hoc committee in 1969, and definitively with an outside study in 1975. Many students felt that St. Thomas was already co-ed because of the presence of St. Catherine’s women, while anecdotes from faculty indicated that women in the classroom stimulated discussion. On the other hand, there was strong sentiment for the traditional all-male school. A priest’s remark that “girls are not as dependable as boys in persevering in college work” was surely a perception formed by women’s opportunities rather than their ability, but many shared this view. There was also a concern for co-education’s impact on the enrollment at St. Catherine’s. In the end, the changing times sealed the rationale for a move to co-education. It was ultimately determined, in October of 1976, that women would bolster enrollment and, therefore, coffers. The announcement read, in part:

*Whether we think of equal rights or the feminist movement or simply of Christian life sharing one conclusion is evident, namely, that young men and women, as part of their educational development, particularly during the final years as they pass from adolescence into adulthood, must be given opportunities for an integrated lifestyle.*

When the local papers reported the reaction to the move, the “civilizing effect” of women was repeatedly cited. Dr. Dummer was quoted as saying that in her experience women would change classes for the better and exert a civilizing impact. “With all those girls here,” said freshman Mark Willrock, “it will probably raise the grade point averages.” St. Catherine’s president Sr. Alberta Huber viewed the decision with “alarm and apprehension.” St. Catherine’s would remain dedicated, as declared in its mission, to engaging “students from diverse backgrounds in a learning environment uniquely suited to women.” It would become the largest Catholic college for women in the country.

Learning from the experiences of other American institutions, St. Thomas administrators knew that the success of the co-ed program was dependent on proper facilities. One million dollars was spent updating Murray Hall, the William Mitchell building (now McNeely Hall) and O’Shaughnessy Gym. Shelly Ann Moorman was appointed assistant dean to oversee female students, while forty administrators and faculty members attended co-ed awareness training. The sessions revealed that there was much to learn in order to make for a successful transition. “Nobody came out very well,” said Donald Leyden, then vice-president for administration.

With the arrival of 221 women — comprising 10 percent of the undergraduate population — during the 1977-78 academic year, St. Thomas became the largest private school in Minnesota. Whether or not these women also “civilized” the school is debatable, but it is true that they became active players in the academic vitality of the institution.

**Wisdom Has Found Herself a Home**

The Luann Dummer Center for Women was dedicated on April 28, 1993, 15 years after women were officially admitted to the College of St. Thomas. In the meantime, the college had become a university. Women had continued to achieve important firsts: the Mr. Tommy Award, made to the year’s outstanding senior, became the Tommy Award when it was awarded to Rachel Wobschall in 1981. The 1980 women’s cross-country team became the first of any team in the history of St. Thomas to win a national championship. In 1993,
women comprised 49 percent of the overall student population and, outpacing the men, 51 percent of the undergraduate enrollment. It was the mission of the women’s center to celebrate and reinforce these achievements and to provide opportunities to bring women and men together in understanding.

There was a healthy precedent for campus-based women’s centers in the region. The Minnesota Women’s Center was established at the University of Minnesota in 1960, well before such organizations became more common in the wake of second wave feminism. Nationally, centers were characterized by a diversity of impetus and services specific to each institution. The University of Minnesota’s center, for instance, was created to serve older and re-entry students, affectionately called “rusty ladies.” In general, early women’s centers offered a variety of means to self-knowledge as well as to institutional change.

Familiar with Luann Dummer’s feminist beliefs, friends and colleagues were charged with shaping the mission of the LDCW. They, too, were women experienced with the St. Thomas climate, possessing an understanding of women’s needs on campus. Designated as temporary director, Pauline Lambert guided the work. Susan Alexander, Joan Piorkowski, Brenda Powell, Gale Yee, Denise Wilbur and Nancy Zingale all had a hand in the planning. This group enjoyed a collaboration with Catherine Lupori, director of the Abigail Quigley McCarthy Center for Women at St. Catherine’s, who also served as the keynote
speaker at the LDCW dedication. It was established that:

The mission of the Center is to foster the intellectual, spiritual, and personal development of women at the university. The Center's educational programs, activities and resources are available to students, faculty, and staff of the university and are intended to promote a more open and diverse environment. Although the Center is dedicated especially to women, it is committed to the service of the entire campus community within the context of its mission.

The University Committee on Women had been formed in 1990 to unite campus members active in addressing women's issues. A relationship with this group was established from the inception of the LDCW. The women's center was also to work closely with the Department of Women's Studies.

Women's centers are frequently zoned far from the center of the campuses they serve. The LDCW was fortunate that, with the receipt of Luann Dummer's endowment, work began on transforming the windowless, standard-issue classroom space of 103 O'Shaughnessy Educational Center into a light-filled, welcoming place in the heart of campus. Tom Dale, of Building Services, supervised construction of the project. Ankeny, Kell, Richter and Walsh Architects of St. Paul designed the 900 square foot area to include meeting and workspace, keeping in mind the display of Dr. Dummer's art collection, also bequeathed to the center. Mary Swanson assisted with the installation of art and the choice of furnishings. To complement the art collection, a portrait of Luann was commissioned by her executor, Merritt Nequette.

"Wisdom Is Calling to Her Children," written by liturgical composer Michael Joncas, was featured at the dedication of the center:

Wisdom is calling to her children; 
Come to the banquet I have spread; 
Come and drink my wine; 
Come and eat my bread; 
Come to the feast I have prepared.

Women were increasingly joining in the banquet at St. Thomas. The women's center was a formalization of this. Soon after the dedication, the LDCW acquired a print as part of its growing art collection. "Wisdom Has Found Herself a Home" was created by Ansquar Holmberg, of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The print and its title evoke success and reference women's history at St. Thomas.
Well Begun

The treatment of women in the world is symbolic of the treatment of all people in the world. When women are being oppressed, so too are others in the world.

Meg Wilkes Karraker

Meg Wilkes Karraker, faculty member in the Sociology Department, was chosen as the first director of the LDCW. She served from 1993-1996. The director reported to the Office of the President, first to Pauline Lambert, and then, after Lambert’s retirement in 1998, to Nancy Zingale. An advisory board, comprised of students, faculty and staff, was created to oversee policy. Original board members were Dr. Denise Wilbur, Dr. Gale Yee, Dr. Jeanne Buckeye, Dr. Jill Manske, Dr. Nancy Zingale, Jeannine Harfi, Earline McCauley, Angela Stanco, Diane Benz, Monique Maier Keffer and Alison Vogel. During these first years, the center was kept open as many hours as possible by a group of enthusiastic volunteers.

In the course of Dr. Karraker’s term, many of the enduring routines of the center were established. As planned, the center was busy as a meeting place, primarily used at first by faculty, who perhaps best understood their good fortune in having the resource. Programming during these first years included explorations of wage equity, financial planning, sexual harassment, aging parents, breast cancer, the connection between mass marketing and eating disorders, women in science, the legacy of Susan B. Anthony, faith journeys, the Jewishness of Mary, and the reflections of alumna. The results of a 1992 interest survey among potential users determined an initial desire for programs in spirituality, higher education and balancing work with family. Discussion groups were formed to address these topics. April’s Take Your Daughters to Work Day at the LDCW quickly became a popular event for the children of St. Thomas staff, faculty and administrators.

The Luann Dummer Lecture Series, an important yearly event scheduled to coincide with Women’s History Month, was inaugurated in March 1994. Writer Carolyn Heilbrun, whose academic and popular writings Luann enjoyed, gave the first talk, titled “Writing of Women’s Lives: Adventures in Detective Novels and Biographies.” Days of programs were set for Heilbrun’s visit, which set a precedent for speakers to participate more intimately with small groups outside of the lecture format. In the years that followed, the LDCW sponsored women from theology, government, and the arts, including a founder of the musical group Sweet Honey in the Rock and representatives from the Guerrilla Girls, activists for gender equity in the art world.

An important role of the LDCW is to foster achievement and learning through a series of grants. The first awards were made for undergraduate research in women’s studies and for professional development activities of faculty and staff appropriate to the mission of the LDCW. In addition,
the LDCW began regular sponsorship of the attendance of select undergraduates at the annual Leaders of Today and Tomorrow (LOTT) conference in St. Paul. A bit of mystery surrounds the LDCW in recent years, as an anonymous donor has funded the LOTT sponsorship with an annual donation on the occasion of Luann Dummer’s birthday.

The center was designed to function as a resource for women’s art and literature. Early gifts given in Dr. Dummer’s honor include “Mother/Sister,” a well-loved sculptural vessel by St. Paul artist Judith Altobell. Books were also given to form the LDCW lending library, chosen to enhance but not duplicate the holdings of O’Shaughnessy Library. A special feature of the collection is works by St. Thomas women and those authored by the Women’s History Month lecturers.

Unruly Place

*My vision for the Luann Dummer Center for Women is that it will serve as a place that reminds us all to take women seriously.*

_Brenda Powell_

The next director of the LDCW was Brenda Powell, of the English Department. Dr. Powell, who served from 1996 to 1999, saw the women’s center space as a place for discussion. During her term, the LDCW was host to debates on interns at Planned Parenthood, the history of reproductive freedom in America, sexual identity and the interpretation of women’s roles in terms of Catholicism. In these years, policies were enacted to deal with controversial speakers and presentations on campus. Dr. Powell brought these guidelines to a conference of the National Association for Women in Catholic Higher Education (NAWCHE) for discussion with other women at American Catholic colleges. Out of this discourse came Powell’s identification of the LDCW as an “unruly place” for exploration of unconventional paradigms. In a 2000 discussion of the campus climate for women, Powell assessed the situation by identifying a reluctance
to discuss women’s issues at all and a resistance to women contradicting their *charisma*, or God-given role.

Practical matters at the center were facilitated with the addition of a part-time assistant, Tracy Hyland. Pat Alexander assumed this post in 1999. While the center continued to serve primarily faculty and staff, an increase in student participation was sought through various mailings and canvassing of residence halls. A Women’s Club for undergraduates was formed and was most active in raising awareness of specific issues such as equality in the classroom, body image and abortion. A tradition of employing committed, vital work-study assistants was started. These students sometimes exemplified the varied St. Thomas population. “One pickets Alliant Energy, one just became a cheerleader for the Minnesota Vikings,” noted Powell.

As the LDCW’s work-study positions have developed, student employees have been encouraged to develop and share their many talents, such as photographing artists for exhibition displays. Recognition of student work was enhanced with the addition of a grant to support graduate student research. An award for curriculum development with a focus on women was formulated at the same time, with preference given to courses likely to become permanent.

Feminist Fridays, a lunchtime discussion and dessert series initiated by Meg Karraker, was cited in a 1996 survey of LDCW users as the most popular programming at the center. During Dr. Powell’s term, topics included looks at family studies, childcare, the next generation of feminists, art history, and women in pop culture. Co-sponsorships were forged with the Center for Catholic Studies, the Communication Studies Department, the Center for Jewish-Christian Learning, the Center for Career Counseling, the Center for Faculty Development and Women-Spirit, an ecumenical Twin Cities group. In 1997, the center helped celebrate the 20th anniversary of co-education at UST with a reception celebrating the achievements of women throughout St. Thomas history.

**Celebrating Women**

I think people don’t purposely exclude women. Many times they just don’t think about them.

*Debra L. Petersen*

In 1999, Debra Petersen, of the Communication Studies Department, became the next director of the LDCW. Programming during this time addressed feminist-friendly graduate schools, women entrepreneurs in India, Native American culture, and photography. The center had earned enough notoriety to attract visitors from the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio, interested in creating their own center for women. Additional funds from the Dummer estate were acquired, enhancing the possibilities of LDCW events and activities. As new opportunities for collaboration have arisen on campus the LDCW has
formed new partnerships. For example, a St. Thomas chapter of the Society of Women Engineers became active; the LDCW now helps to fund their activities and to afford programming opportunities to the students involved.

Art from the LDCW collection became a springboard for exploration of a diversity of women’s experiences. With cutbacks in the university’s curatorial budget, the LDCW stepped in to fund exhibitions on campus, appropriating the space adjacent to OEC auditorium as the Lobby Gallery and affording opportunities to art history students through a graduate curatorial assistantship. The first LDCW student curator was Susan Clayton. Exhibitions featuring Native American art, painting, sculpture and pottery, book art, textiles, glass and photography were mounted for the benefit of the campus population and the greater community as well. An exciting part of these installations was the accompanying programming that offered opportunities for discussion with the artists. The titles of these exhibitions are evocative of the ideas that the artists wished to explore: “Revealing the Invisible”, “The Myth That is True”, and, importantly, “Celebrating Women.”

New acquisitions to the art collection were added by donation and by purchase. When Karraker remarked that she hoped the center would be “busy enough for the rugs to wear out,” she did not predict that a woman would make the new ones, yet weaver Kelly Marshall was commissioned to create textiles to enhance the meeting space of the LDCW. Marshall then participated in a Feminist Friday program, explaining her journey as an artist and businesswoman. Funds for the purchase of additional new works by regional artists were applied for and granted from the Auxiliary Services Fund.

From the beginning, the LDCW Director acted as the go-to person for commentary and opinion on women’s issues on campus. Drs. Karraker, Powell and Petersen have regularly given statements to the Again and CampusScope and have served on committees such as the Affirmative Action Committee, Climate Study Task Force, Diversity Steering Committee, and the School of Law Faculty Search. Women involved with the center have also been leaders in efforts to create a

Below, left: Professor Held Erdrich, of the UST Department of English, who inspired the title of the exhibit *The Myth That is True*, with sister and author, Louise Erdrich and her daughter, 2001

Below: Weaver Kelly Marshall leads a Feminist Friday discussion, 2001
campus daycare and update parental leave policies. Ten years after the dedication of the center, LDCW programming continues to impact women’s experiences at St. Thomas, from the insights afforded at Feminist Fridays to policy making for the university.

**The First 10 Years**

As we celebrate the first decade of the LDCW, we look back on a continuum of progress. Today, a half-time administrative assistant and two to three work-study students per semester make it possible to keep the center open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, fall and spring semesters and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. during the rest of the year. Programming continues to respond to the requests and opportunities that arise on campus. Additionally, the space continues to be used for meetings by a diversity of campus groups.

In her article *Women’s Centers as Agents of Change*, longtime Barnard College administrator Jane S. Gould explains:

> Women’s centers were created to raise and examine new questions about women’s lives, roles, and expectations; to help women develop a feminist consciousness; to combat feelings of isolation; and to establish a sense of community among women.

Looking at the transformative role of women’s centers on American campuses, founding director of the University of Virginia Women’s Center Sharon Davie writes:

> Pulling the wool of our seamless knowledge over our eyes as a way of avoiding new insights is perhaps particularly prevalent in an academic setting - after all, we are supposed to know - whatever, everything, especially who we are. (Women’s centers) create forms that disrupt, even momentarily, standard cultural modes of perception . . . centers can help universities move from a state of unvoiced, unresolved conflict into a state of voiced, constructive, fertile dialogue.

At the University of St. Thomas, it is this dual dynamic of personal and institutional understanding that characterizes the work.
of the LDCW. Individual users cite the “shock of recognition” brought about by the activities and programs. At the same time, tensions between the school and the women’s center, inherent on most American campuses, arise from time to time. The LDCW has responded to such challenges as opportunities through which issues can be carefully considered and presented to the greater university community. In terms of service, it is its role as an agent for discourse that most aptly describes the work of the LDCW.

The experiment of co-education attracted more than the traditional college student. Re-entry students, senior citizens, faculty, staff and the greater community were all affected by the inclusion of women at St. Thomas. The women’s center gives them a place for exploration, support and confirmation. The importance of extending personal invitations and individual recognition has been tried and affirmed.

Coalition building has been vital as well. From the beginning, the LDCW worked in partnership with the University Committee on Women and Women’s Studies Program. Other relationships were forged over the course of the center’s first decade with Art History, Theology and several other UST departments and offices. Looking at gender through all these different lenses has led to insights on its differences and strengths. The Luann Dummer Center for Women continues to fulfill the mission first conceived by its benefactor and carried out by the women and men of the University of St. Thomas.
Ain't That Good News, Kimber. Collection of the Luann Dummer Center for Women

The Luann Dummer Center for Women

... to foster the intellectual, spiritual, and personal development of women at the university ...
Directors
Pauline Lambert, 1993 (temporary)
Meg Wilkes Karraker, 1993-1996
Brenda Powell, 1996-1999
Debra Petersen, 1999-present

Advisory Board Members
Susan Alexander
Martha Ballard
Diane Benz
Jeanne G. Buckeye
Anastasia Carlone
Michelle Croteau
Jeannine M. Harff
Amy Hayden
Ann Johnson
Monique Maier Keffer
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Earline McCauley
Mark Stansbury O’Donnell
Corrine Patton
Joyce Roen
Angela Stanco
Jane Stendahl
Michelle Tweten
Alison K. Vogel
Denise Wilbur
Ronda Willhardt
Gale A. Yee
Nancy Zingale

Work-Study Students
Susan Blue
Danette Rae Buskovick
Anastasia Carlone
Jenna Diem
Kristin Engling
Carmen Friske
Erika Geske
Karen Kapingst
Jennifer Kowski
Keri Kohut
Barbara Langer
Katie McNamara
Tiffany Meeks
Sadie Norby
Elizabeth Royal
Alyssa Samek
Mishka Vertin

Assistants
Tracy Hyland, Pat Alexander

Department of Art History
Graduate Student Curators
Susan Clayton
Debra Blair
Audrey Johnson
Luann Dummer Women’s History Month Speakers
Carolyn G. Heilbrun, Ph.D.
(Amanda Cross)
Writing of Women’s Lives: Adventures in Detective Novels and Biographies
1994

Mary Frances Berry, Ph.D., J.D.
Long Memories: Gender, Race and Social Policy
1995

Lydia Villa-Komaroff, Ph.D.
A Life in Science: When Turtles Want to Fly
1996

Rosemary Radford Ruether, Ph.D.
Femaleness and the Image of God: Questions for Theology and Ministry
1997

Bernice Johnson Reagon, Ph.D.
The Sacred Repertoire of Sweet Honey in the Rock
1998

Rebecca M. Blank, Ph.D.
Welfare Reform and Women’s Well-Being:
What Have We Learned About Effectively Fighting Poverty?
1999

Susan Chira
A Mother’s Place: Choosing Work and Family without Guilt or Blame
2000 (cancelled due to illness)

Bonnie J. Dow, Ph.D.
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