

## R. W. W. ACTIVITY REPORT FOR 1998-2000

Sunera Thobani

My second term as the Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Chair has been an extremely rewarding one. As a woman of colour activist and scholar, this unique position which combines academic work with community outreach has enabled me to maintain my commitment to my activist work in the women's movement with my academic and research interests.

### **Teaching :**

I have taught the following courses during the academic years 1999-2000:

- Violence Against Women, Fall, 1998.
- Race, Class and Gender Relations, Fall 1998.
- Bordering Women, Spring 1999.
- Violence Against Women, Fall 1999.
- Bordering Women, Spring 2000.

I have volunteered for the following additional responsibilities:

- \* Served as a member on the Committee supervising Peter White's M.A. in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.
- \* Supervised a number of independent studies.

### **Speeches, Conference Presentations and Other Engagements:**

- Oct. 10/98. Workshop, Cranbrook Multicultural Women's Resource Society, Cranbrook.
- Oct. 23-25/98. Keynote Address, Making History, Making Race Conference, University of Victoria.
- Nov. 2-3/98. Keynote Speaker, "Globalization and Canadian Women's Citizenship," The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington.
- Nov. 7-16/98. Third International Women's Conference on APEC and People's Summit, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

- January 22, 1999. Keynote Address, Women Take On Globalization, Vancouver Status of Women, Roundhouse Community Centre, Vancouver.
- January 26, 1999. Lecture presented to Graduate Student Seminar of the Sociology and Anthropology Department, SFU.
- January 31 - February 2, 1999. Participated in the National Consultation on the Cairo + 5 United Nations Meeting, organized by the Canadian government. Chaired the session on Migration and Population, Ottawa.
- February 12-14, 1999. Participated in National Women's Consultation on the Canadian Government's Biotechnology Strategy, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
- February 17, 1999. Keynote Speaker, Multiple Identities, Difficult Choices Conference, Burnaby Multicultural Society and Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Chair, Burnaby.
- February 18, 1999. Met with representatives of End Legislated Poverty to identify strategies for integrating an anti-racist perspective in their anti-poverty campaigns.
- February 25, 1999. Presented lecture at the Centre for Feminist Legal Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.
- March 1, 1999. Organized International Women's Day Celebration for the Ruth Wynn Woodward Community Liaison Committee.
- March 3, 1999. Participated at founding meeting of Coalition of Women For Justice in Immigration Policy, Vancouver Status of Women, Vancouver.
- March 7-10, 1999. Spoke at various community forums and at the University of Regina for International Women's Day events, Regina, Saskatchewan.
- March 11, 1999. Participated in International Women's Day Conference organized by the Philippine Women's Centre, Vancouver.
- March 17, 1999. Meeting with Raman Mann, Indian film maker visiting the Department of Criminology, SFU.
- March 20, 1999. Keynote address at the Biopiracy Action Day, Basmati Action Group, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Vancouver.
- April 10, 1999. Keynote address at Conference on Developing International Solidarity in the Canadian Women's Movement, Action Committee on Women's Rights in Iran, Vancouver.

- May 7-10, 1999. Keynote Address at the conference, Changing Together, Edmonton Immigrant Women's Organization Edmonton, Alberta.
- June 1, 1999. Meeting with End Legislated Poverty, Vancouver.
- September 24-26, 1999. Participated in Conference on Violence Against Women, Vancouver Rape Relief.
- October 20, 1999. Panel Presentation at the Public Education Forum on Refugees, Direct Action Against Refugee Exploitation and the Vancouver Association of Chinese-Canadians, Heritage Hall, Vancouver.
- October 23, 1999. Panel Presentation on Feminist Perspectives on Social Justice, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Women's Studies Department, University of Victoria, Victoria.
- October 23-24, 1999. Keynote Address at World Trade Organization Teach-In, Labour Studies Program, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington.
- November 4, 1999. Keynote Address at Public Forum on The Politics of Canadian Immigration, Coalition for the Rights of Immigration and Refugees, Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Vancouver.
- November 6, 1999. Presentation on Plenary Session, Transforming Women's Future, LEAF National Forum, Vancouver.
- April 29-30, 2000. Bowen Island Retreat. Keynote Address, "Challenges to Women's Studies in a New Millenium.
- May, 2000. Participated in workshops and presented a lecture, "South Asian Women in the Diaspora Challenges for a New Millenium," Nrityagram, Hesaraghata, India.
- Originally scheduled to be held during November 19-23, 1999, in Katmandu, Nepal, the Conference of Coalition of Groups Working on International Trafficking in Women was postponed as a result of the nuclear tests conducted by India. While consultations with working groups have been organized, the larger conference remains to be re-convened.

Additionally, I have been involved in the following activities:

- Chaired the monthly meetings of the Ruth Wynn Woodward Community Liaison Committee, as well as follow up work for Committee's activities.

- Served on the Board of Directors of the FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children, Harbour Centre, SFU.
- Worked with the FREDA Centre to develop a grant proposal for a research project on violence against marginalized girls and young women, submitted to SSHRC. The project, "The Intersectionality of Race and Gender in Social Cohesion: An examination of the Factors Influencing Identity Formation, Experiences of Violence, and Integration of Marginalized Girls in Canadian Society," received a seed grant for further development, and has subsequently received three year funding.
- Co-organized a conference on Race and Gender Issues with the Burnaby Multicultural Society. The Conference was held on February 17, 1999 in order to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racism. Mary Woo Simms, the B.C. Commissioner on Human Rights, was the opening speaker for the conference. Over 150 participants attended the conference, most of them from immigrant service agencies, multicultural organizations, women's groups and anti-racist organizations in the lower mainland.
- November 30, 1999. I worked with the international organization, Diverse Women For Diversity, to organize the *Women's Gathering* (of Non-Governmental Organizations) during the World Trade Organization Summit in Seattle, Washington. The event featured speakers from Latin America and Asia who addressed the threats of biopiracy to human survival, stressed the role of women in preserving biodiversity, and made links between struggles for food security and women's rights. A number of women's groups presented performance pieces on the themes of the conference, including the Basmati Action Group and a troupe of Odissi dancers from the Evergreen State College. Participants were served a vegetarian meal of organic food grown by local farmers. The event was attended by over seventy delegates.
- March, 2000. I worked with the Burnaby Multicultural Society to organize the Conference, *Canada in Denial*, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racism. The conference participants (approximately one hundred) represented immigrant service agencies, as well as feminist and anti-racist organizations in the lower mainland. Speakers addressed the topics of Aboriginal women's struggles for self-determination, the prevalence of racist violence in British Columbia, and of the struggles of people of colour for racial equality in Canada. The conference provided a valuable forum for service providers and activists to work together in developing strategies to counter the growing tide of intolerance and racism in British Columbia.