Included in this publication are the stories of 43 Idaho women who have been nominated as women making history. As part of Boise State University Women's History Month celebration, we find it not only important to understand the contributions of women that came before us, but also to hear the stories of the women who are making history now - ordinary women, leading extraordinary lives. Join in the celebration of their lives and how they have changed the lives of others. Then participate in activities throughout the city to celebrate and understand the contributions of women in our history.

Special Thanks to The Idaho Statesman for distributing this Boise State produced section.
Boise State University Women's Center

There were many women who made a difference but didn't make it into traditional history books. Celebrate Women's history year round. Join Women's Studies and learn the whole story, including "her-story." Earn a minor in Women's Studies.

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Boise State Women's Center

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Proud Supporter of the Boise State Women's Center
BECKY HAYS, Boise, Idaho

By Wendy Mercer: Wendy is a freshman honors student, who someday hopes to be a strong, positive influence on people, just as Becky is.

Becky Hays is an extraordinary woman. Hidden behind the quiet, modest exterior lies a soul of steel. She needed every ounce of that strength to fight breast cancer. Victorious, she now uses it to help others in their fight in life.

A couple of years ago, Becky Hays was a "normal" mom, working at the Idaho Department of Labor and enjoying activities like a pistol-shooting league, helping her stepson's Boy Scout troop, and being a part of the Western White Water Association. Then, one day she went in for a routine mammogram. What the radiologist found would change her outlook on life forever.

There were no lumps; instead, there were three tumors surrounding a calcification. She experienced a wide range of emotions: astonishment to disbelief to acceptance and finally, determination to conquer the illness. In the weeks following, Becky had to make difficult decisions. She had to decide which investigative procedure to use, and when it was positive, whether to have a mastectomy or merely a lumpectomy performed. She chose a bilateral mastectomy; she would not "hacked apart piece by piece." Her choice was fortunate; the surgeon found yet more tumors around the original three, and the cancer did not spread after surgery.

Her family was supportive of her during this difficult time. In addition to the stress of surgery, Becky had to face the stubbornness of her insurance company. It would not give its approval to her mastectomy before the surgery took place, even though the procedure was commonplace and often needed for victims of breast cancer. She literally called the company from the hospital right before it happened, arguing with the different representatives from the company. Finally the doctor told her that the company would pay, and immediately she was whisked away into the operating room.

In the midst of her struggles to fight cancer, she became involved with a breast cancer support group meeting at the Meridian St. Luke's hospital. Here she felt accepted; these women were going through the exact same thing she was experiencing. She continues to go to group now even though her breast cancer has disappeared; she wants to support others in their fight. Every Monday at 6:30 pm they meet to discuss their struggles and the pain surrounding the illness, in hopes to support each other.

After her cancer went into remission Becky did not stop at merely helping those already afflicted. She became an ardent supporter of Race for the Cure, a women's race for the support of breast cancer research. Captain of the team "Hikin' for Healthy Hooters" (not associated with the restaurant chain Hooters), she has motivated over 500 people to participate in the Race. She helps with the office work of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation (which sponsors the race) and gives many hours of her time to raising breast cancer awareness throughout the country.

As Wendy Matlock, executive director of the foundation notes, Becky has "inspired a team spirit and given special meaning to the national race theme: 'celebrating the strength of one and the power of many to change the world.'"

For those who go through the trauma of breast cancer, Becky is a shining light of hope. She urges those fighting cancer to "not look at it as a fight against death, but a chance to realize the importance of life every day. Life is precious; it might end soon, but that is no reason to waste it by worrying. Her own struggle has inspired her to leave her comfort zone and reach out to others. By assisting with Race for the Cure, she supports those still fighting breast cancer and helps future generations of women in their struggle against the age-old killer. Becky truly is a remarkable woman."

LEACADIA POWELL, Boise, Idaho

By Tim Dinh: As the coordinator of Boise State's Cultural Center, Tim provides educational opportunities for students and the community to experience the rich cultures that make up Boise.

Poised. Confident. Beautiful. Definitely the epitome of a successful woman and by anyone's standard, Leacadia's achievements in her professional and personal life are worthy of recognition. She earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from Howard University in Washington, DC. After a short stint in modeling and designing, she was introduced to the corporate world after a career counselor noticed she had "people skills" and suggested that she go into sales. She sent her to three sales interviews, and right away she was offered all three jobs. From there on, it was one adventure after another as one company after another vied for her employment. She has worked for many major companies such as Honeywell, Kodak, Xerox, Compaq, and now Hewlett-Packard.

Even though her success in the corporate world is to be admired and maybe envied by some, Leacadia does not see her success as an indication of her optimal achievement. She admits that there is another side to her that is very much an opposite of her corporate image. She sometimes feels very torn, for there is "an artist screaming to get out!" She wishes that she had more time to devote to her artistic side. Leacadia channels her creativity into her arts and crafts. Her artistic ability ranges from making candles to jewelry to wedding gowns. Her dream is to one day open a boutique where her creative works can be displayed and enjoyed by the public. For now organizations for which she volunteers benefit from her creative talents. She has volunteered for the Cherry Blossom Festival and the President's Inaugural Ball in Washington, D.C.

Her creative reputation preceded her in Boise; after living here for only two months, she was asked to chair a committee in charge of creating exhibits for the Idaho Black History Museum. On a shoestring budget without the benefit of allocated budgets, two exceptional exhibits were created: "Blacks in the Military" and "The Harlem Renaissance." With creativity and sometimes reaching "into their own pockets," the committee created these exhibits with less than $1,000 and $500 respectively. They borrowed relics from the community and utilized resources frugally to create exhibits that reflected the ambience and nostalgia of the era. "We couldn't have pulled it off without the help from the community," notes Leacadia.

It is almost unfair that one woman could be so accomplished and could have achieved so much with such ease, but Leacadia takes many of her experiences and accomplishments in stride. She acknowledges that it feels good to be recognized for her performance and that she feels proud that she is a financially independent female. However, she sees her achievements as a result of her following her heart. With a very clear vision of her goals, she describes herself as being creative, people oriented, and success driven.

How have these successes come so naturally? She believes that it comes from going with the "flow." She uses her natural talents and the rest falls into place. She looks forward to what life will bring her next. Whatever it is, she will take it in stride and make the best out of it. She will use her natural skills and talents to make her mark on this world. This is a great lesson we can all learn. The answer is all there within us. We need to recognize our innate potentials, embrace what nature has given us and success will follow more naturally. Even though it is easy to surmise that she will continue to make her mark in the corporate world, what Leacadia looks forward to most is to make her mark on the world through her creativity...through the beautiful things she creates.

PHYLLIS SMITH, Caldwell, Idaho

By Kim Marie Niemiec: Kim is a senior at Boise State University, studying creative nonfiction writing. She has served the women's center in a variety of ways: as a mentor for returning women students and newsletter producer.

On April 7, 2001, Phyllis Smith's life was forever changed. Her seventeen-year-old son and his best friend were killed in a one-car rollover crash. In the aftermath of the investigation of the accident, it became apparent that neither her son nor his best friend was wearing a seatbelt. According to Phyllis, Idaho spent $300,000 to educate the public about the importance of wearing a seatbelt. However, Phyllis had always warned her children about the dangers of riding in a car without a seatbelt, and she knew firsthand that education isn't enough. In response to her tragic loss, Phyllis began the painstaking research to determine how motor vehicle related deaths could be prevented. She learned that wearing a seatbelt is the most effective way to prevent death in a motor vehicle crash and that the state of Idaho has one of the weakest seatbelt laws in the country. She also found that seatbelt use in Idaho is among the lowest in the
nation with less than sixty percent of Idahoans wearing their seatbelts. Phyllis decided that it was time for the law to change.

Intelligent, articulate and to the point, Phyllis is a woman with a mission, her purpose clear, her strength ineradicable. She is the creator of "SAFE," an organization that stands for Seatbelt Awareness for Everyone. With the help and support of about thirty students from Middleton High School who were friends with her son, Phyllis has initiated a powerful grassroots movement to change the current seatbelt laws in the state of Idaho. Most of her young supporters are members of The Middleton Muscle Club, who often drag race at Firebird Raceway.

Together with Phyllis, they bought a 1969 Camaro, "the kind of car that kids just ogle over," which happened to be her son’s favorite car, and painted in his best friend’s favorite color, bright orange. The car was made into a memorial with the words, "In Loving Memory" with both boys names painted on the back. Phyllis and her group of young supporters began participating in parades in Idaho, using the car to raise awareness that if you don’t wear a seatbelt, "this can happen to you." The kids walk beside the car handing out information and statistics to the public.

Another aspect of Phyllis’s campaign to raise seatbelt awareness has been to travel around the state with some of the kids, speaking to driver’s training programs about the necessity of wearing a seatbelt. "Now we’re using peer pressure, kids telling kids," says Phyllis. Phyllis and her daughter have done public service announcements on the radio and a video was made at the crash site with Phyllis and her young supporters. They are also being booked on a regular basis for school-wide presentations. They have spent their weekend evenings downtown, holding up signs for cruisers, warning them of the dangers of not wearing a seatbelt. To cover the costs of their efforts, they sell t-shirts and hold raffles. "These kids have taken off work and have sacrificed a lot of personal time in their efforts to support seatbelt awareness," says Phyllis.

Her tireless efforts also include visits with state Senators Robert Geddes and John Goede, in her push for the passage of primary seatbelt legislation. This means that a person can be stopped for not wearing a seatbelt just as they can for having a broken taillight.

Phyllis’s determination and ineradicable strength are nothing new. She was a marine, was a single mom for quite some time and suffers from a physical disability. However, she overcame her disability by getting an education. As a non-traditional student at Boise State, she is three classes away from being graduated. She also has a history of advocacy for causes she believes in. "I’ve always been an advocate," she says and at one time channeled her energy working with veterans at the Department of Veteran’s Affairs. However, she left her job after her son’s death. "People are dying everyday," says Phyllis.

The leading cause of death in the state of Idaho for people between the ages of ten and twenty-four is vehicular injury due to not wearing a seatbelt. There is no pain worse than losing your baby, who you love more than anything on the face of this earth. No matter how much work it takes, no matter how many hours we spend or how many years I spend doing this, if I can save one life like my son’s, it was all worth it." •

KARA JANNEY, Boise State student

By Kim Marie Niemiec

In a recent essay for the Lehrer News Hour, Ann Taylor Fleming considered the changing images of women in film, waxing nostalgic for women like Sophia Loren and Ingrid Bergman who were "sumptuous, complicated, and can’t-take-your-eyes-off-of-provocative." In comparison, she looks at the current women who dominate our movie screens, perky, giggling, high-strung: "There just doesn’t seem to be much density here, any complexity, any real wounds." If only Ms. Fleming could meet Kara Janney, vice-president of Boise State’s student body. With the intelligence of Katherine Hepburn and the strong sense of justice that Johnny Cash exemplifies in his song, "The Man In Black," Kara is a woman who defies category. In her soft-spoken West Virginia life, her unabashed honesty is refreshingly disarming. She is the kind of woman that you want on your side when the world goes to hell in a hand-basket. On a cool autumn afternoon, Kara and I meet at the Iron Gate, the kind of place that one might say has "character." Glasses clink, pool balls smack and conversations collide under thin clouds of cigarette smoke. With Ingrid Bergman good looks and a flair for style, she might seem out of place here, and yet she is relaxed and comfortable, chatting

MARGIE VAN VOOREN, Boise State, Dean of Student Services

By Kim Marie Niemiec

Margie Van Vooren works hard to help students find connection and assistance in a large university. Her position is a "generalist position" she says. "Fifty percent of my time is working with students, faculty, and administrators as an ombudsman." She currently chairs the university appeals committee, working with students who need help because they didn’t drop a class in time or add in time as well as those who have been academically dismissed. She also supervised the development of the Women’s Center for about ten years and currently supervises the Children’s Center. Many times students are referred to Margie when they don’t know where else to go.

"A lot of times when students have problems, it’s not just in one area, it’s a variety of places," says Margie. She is quick to point out that while it has taken her time to get to where she is now, she has been fortunate to work for someone who has allowed her to do a lot of different things. This gives her a unique perspective that enables her to help students. As the university becomes larger, there are more specialists than generalists. As a generalist, Margie works with the whole picture and the whole person, helping in all aspects of student issues, whether it is problems with financial aid; academic problems or personal problems.

Margie’s position is not without challenges. Students today at Boise State University are often students who work, who are struggling financially, and many don’t live on campus and tend to be isolated. I’m trying to help them connect to the University, to have a quality college experience that encompasses all the growth and development that comes outside the classroom as well as inside.

However, challenges are nothing new to Margie. When she was six years old, she contracted polio. She spent almost a year in a rehabilitation center and upon returning home, attended a school for children with disabilities for two years. Physical therapy was a part of her daily routine. Overcoming polio was one of the greatest achievements of her life and Margie believes that “the reason she can walk today is because of the sacrifice and dedication of her parents.”

At the age of twelve, she worked for a horse trainer named Toby. This experience had a tremendous impact on her life. “He was a gruff old horse trainer and I was half afraid of him. I started riding a horse that was probably too much for me at the time, but I was more afraid of him than I was of the horse.” Toby taught her the value of challenging herself. Margie’s parents were somewhat protective of her, doing their best to make sure that Margie found success in her early endeavors, due to her struggles with polio. Toby taught her that by overcoming a difficult horse, she could do anything, which was a major turning point in her life. Margie learned at a young age, that the true meaning of success comes with achieving something that is difficult.

Animals have since played an important role in her life. At age fifty, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. The day after she got the news, she and her husband took their horses out for a ride. “When I ride into the mountains on my horse, with my dogs trailing at my side, I feel a strong sense of reconnection. It’s all a very sensual experience to me; the smell of the animal, the feel of the leather, the feel of the movement of the horse beneath me, the sound of the hoofbeats as they go across the rocks. After the ride with my husband I said, ‘O.K., I can do this.’”

Margie survived breast cancer, but her chemotherapy treatments have caused permanent damage to her heart. However, her spirit remains unscathed. As she reflects on her personal challenges, Margie says, “This has just reminded me again of how close to that line we all walk. Once things get back into balance, you don’t think about it everyday but you do understand what it is that people deal with. I do think that having gone through the challenges that I have has given me a genuine interest in assisting college students who are overcoming difficulties.” This understanding has proven to be a valuable asset in her work at the university. “Students don’t just pick up that catalogue and take all those classes in the program the way it says,” says Margie. “Like John Lennon said: ‘Life is what happens to people when their busy making other plans.’” She also believes that one of her greatest tools is a sense of humor and “the ability to laugh at the day, to laugh at oneself and not to take this world too personally.”

On a personal level, Margie’s greatest achievement has been raising two sons, which she readily shares half of the credit with her husband. “They are cooler than shit,” she says with a wide grin and a twinkle in her eye. “They care about the environment, human rights, and they both expect to be with women who are their own person.” On a professional level, Margie’s hard work has not gone unrecognized by her colleagues. She recently chaired a regional conference for NASPA (The National Association of Student Personnel Administration), creating a more relaxed, accepting and warm atmosphere, setting a model that conferences have continued to follow. She also received the TWIN award, (Tribute to Women in Industry) from the Boise Women’s and Children’s Alliance. Boise State has been awarded with a tremendous gift in Margie Van Vooren, generalist at large, who is a great example of what it means to be a human being and how to make the most of it. •
with Lou, the bartender, who has been working there for years. Kara was born in West Virginia, her father a jack-of-all trades, her mother, a social worker. Her family moved like 'gypsies,' her father in search of work due to the economic slowdown of the early nineties. Her family spent time living in Florida and Ohio and eventually moved to Boise five years ago. While moving around so often could be perceived as difficult, Kara saw it as an opportunity: "I got to see places and this gave me new perspectives. It gave me strength." And while her parents struggled to make ends meet for their four children, Kara learned to be self-reliant, baby-sitting to buy what she wanted.

Some of the strongest influences in her life have been members of her family. Kara comes from a lineage of matriarchs, her mother the clear-cut boss of the house during Kara's formative years. Kara also speaks affectionately of her grandmother: "She was loved by everybody." However, Kara is quick to point out, "you would never want to cross her path."

I laugh when she tells me this. "Do you know that student body president, Nate Peterson, says the same thing about you?" I ask. Kara laughs.

Kara has demonstrated fearlessness in a situation that unfortunately, women experience far too often. One day, while walking near campus, some young men were yelling some extremely offensive remarks at Kara from the window of a house. Instead of running, Kara walked up to their door, knocked on it, and demanded to speak to the perpetrator of such an act. The man who opened the door was speechless. While the other men continued to yell expletives from their window, Kara continued on her way, not one of them had the guts to come to the door to face her. Kara walked away with her dignity intact.

This is not the first time that Kara has faced circumstances that have challenged her sense of dignity. Due to one economic setback after another, her family found themselves temporarily homeless. While Kara admits that the situation "was not fun" it has affected her in a profoundly positive way. Knowing what it's like to live in economic despair, Kara is responsible for developing an account for students with non-traditional needs. According to Nate Peterson, "This is the first account of this nature to ever be created by ASBU."

This account helps students with unexpected emergencies like when there is "a death in the family and they need money to fly home, or their transmission falls out of their car, or woman has been beaten by her boyfriend and needs to get out of her situation." All information is kept confidential and funds are available upon application to all students in need.

As Kara considers her future, she speaks of the possibility of law school or graduate school. She speaks of a strong desire to return to West Virginia and work with Labor Unions, to "learn the nuts and bolts about them, to find out what they do, where they are going." She speaks of a desire to live in a world where "kids don't have to feel awkward wearing clothes that don't fit, and then there's the issue of medical care."

And as I hear these words, I know that someday, without a doubt, I will be watching The Lehrer News Hour and will hear about a young woman named Kara Janney, a woman of honesty and integrity, who takes pride in her appreciation of people that are often perceived as difficult. I will hear about a strong individual who believes in justice and who has the courage to tell it like it is, a woman of density and complexity, with a keen sensitivity to the wounds of the world. And as Johnny Cash sings, "making her move to make a few things right." ✡

ALEXIS HIGDON and KATH'REN BAY
Boise, Idaho
By Kim Marie Niemiec

It all began with two women with a vision: "an old fashioned, comfortable, state-of-the-art, feline practice."

Kath' ren and Alexis did their homework long before their practice was realized. They were both living in Seattle when they decided to start their own practice. They studied the demographics of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho and determined that Boise was the perfect place for "The Cat Doctor." Within our city, anyone with good business sense knows the importance of location, location, location. Kath'ren and Alexis once again did their homework and found the ideal location, where they found property for sale.

Then came a series of hurdles that seemed insurmountable. They only needed the front part of the three-acre site. However, their realtor told them that the elderly woman who owned it would never break it up. Did this stop them? Absolutely not. Kath' ren and Alexis took matters into their own hands and drove right into the woman's driveway, knocked on her door and shared their vision with her. Within an hour, she agreed to break up the property for them. They, in turn, promised to enhance her lifelong home and make it an asset to the neighborhood.

The next day brought another challenge; Boise's planning and zoning division told them that "this side of Ustick is residential and the neighborhood plans are carved in stone. It's as rare to change this as a blue moon." However, after considerable research, Alexis was able to convince the review committee that what they wanted to do would have less impact on the area than an allowable apartment complex - and looking at the calendar, that day just happened to fall on a blue moon.

Then came another major obstacle; planning and zoning called again and said that if the property had been split after 1960 it could not be split again. After searching through archive after archive, Kath' ren finally found the deed that proved that it had been split before 1960.

In the meantime, Kath' ren and Alexis had to obtain financing. "We naively thought this would be a simple matter," says Kath' ren. The first eight banks turned them down. But like a cat with nine lives, their situation turned around when they met the ninth banker (who just happened to be a woman), who understood their vision and arranged the loan.

"Here we were, we didn't even have paper clips, nothing to start a hospital with," recounts Kath' ren. With all their budgeted money gone to construction surprises, they rotated credit cards to pay off balances and got leases for equipment. After ten months from the time they had set their eyes on the place, they opened "The Cat Doctor" with ten dollars in the bank.

They soon found themselves in demand. By living in the employee lounge for two years and putting every dime back into the business, they have since paid off every start-up loan and lease. Their staff has grown to ten full-time and five part-time employees, including three more veterinarians.

The aesthetics of the premises, from the 50-year-old hardwood floors, to the cat library that enables clients to check out books to learn more about their cat, reflects the warmth and care that Kath' ren and Alexis have put into their practice.

Being firm believers in giving back to the community, they insist on paying their employees a living wage and offer full benefits to all employees. Once a month, Alexis and her staff volunteer to spay and neuter cats from some of the local non-profit organizations that foster and find homes for street cats. The property itself is so delightfully pleasing to the eye, that it greatly enhances the beauty of the neighborhood. Reflecting on their success, Kath' ren says, "Don't you just love it, two old women without a pot to piss in five years ago? Yes, we do love it. Kath' ren and Alexis are an inspiration to anyone with a vision, who dares to follow it." ✡

PENNIE S. COOPER, Idaho
By Katie Mills

Pennie went to college at the University of Iowa to become a nurse, because no one ever told her she could be a doctor. However, she soon discovered that nursing was not a profession she wanted to pursue, so Pennie went back to school to get her bachelor's degree in sociology. Pennie enjoyed her sociology and social work classes, but didn't know what she wanted to do after college was over. Fate took over when one of her classmates offered her a job at the Iowa security medical facility, working with those considered "criminally insane." She was the first female social worker in the prison's history, and worked out of an office that was a former cell. Some of the inmates had been in the facility for over sixty years and had been subjected to such medical practices as lobotomies. The ones that could function well, however, were extremely protective of Pennie and the other female staff, and the women would often play softball with them during the lunch hour. During her time at the prison, Pennie saw the facility change from being part of the main prison to becoming a separate facility. She was also responsible for developing policies for the new program. It was Pennie's first job out of college, and over the short...
time she was there, Pennie felt she learned more about herself then she did about any of the inmates.

Pennie left Iowa after two years, and moved to Texas to pursue a job as a social worker, then moved back to Iowa to do graduate work in law enforcement. However, she cut her academic life short to return home to care for her father, who was very ill. Pennie did not choose to go back to work directly, but instead stayed at home for a while. After a year I got tired of being a housewife," she said with a smile. Back in the work force she started on a path that would eventually take her to Idaho.

In 1977 Pennie became the chief of the bureau of medical services for the Iowa department of human services. Her boss moved to Idaho in 1979 and noted the problems with the systems that were in place. He offered her a job in Idaho, and she became the chief of the bureau of benefit payments, where she managed funds for both Medicaid and welfare. “My husband is a real planner. I take what comes along,” Pennie said. After working in the private sector as a consultant, Pennie eventually took a job as the executive director for the Idaho state council for the deaf and hard of hearing. “When I took the job I didn’t realize I would be working by myself for six and a half years,” she said with a laugh. Pennie had continually taken voluntary pay cuts and has refused raises in order to see the program succeed. She was the only person in the office until 1999 when she had a part time assistant.

Through her work in the agency, a system has been put in place to test all newborn children for hearing problems. Because of Pennie’s hard work, “99% of all Idaho children are now being screened at birth and those children who are identified with hearing loss can now receive the services needed to assure that they develop language at a normal pace.”

Pennie Cooper has done quite a bit in her life, and has accomplished much. She is part of the Rotary Club in Boise, and helped found the City Club of Boise, an organization that brings in speakers with the purpose of encouraging civic debate. She never forgets about those who may need her. She is always willing to put her professional life on pause to help those close to her when they are in need. Pennie’s life may not have turned out the way she thought it would when she was in high school, but those turns of events have proved to benefit Idaho citizens, especially the children, who have better deserved full time assistant.

ZEDA JAMES, Boise, Idaho

By Amber Armstrong: Amber is an English major with a writing emphasis and is looking forward to graduation in May 2002. When she is not reading or studying, she enjoys spending time with her husband, Josh, her family, and her friends.

Almost ten years ago, Stephanie Tucker, the original coordinator of Soul Food Extravaganza, asked Zeda James to cook a dish for the very first festival – baked mac & cheese and fried chicken. Soul Food Extravaganza, an event that raises awareness about the contributions of African Americans in the community, began as a small gathering and has grown into a major event that draws more the 5,000 people. In a city with so few African Americans, Zeda believes such events build community and emphasize the belief that "differences should be appreciated."

Zeda, currently one of six coordinators for the festival, is responsible for publicity, securing a park for the event, booking entertainers, merchandise vendors, and food vendors. This year marks its 10th anniversary, and Zeda is hopeful that her work will draw at least 10,000 participants.

Soul food is made from the soul and the heart. According to Zeda, every nationality has some sort of soul food; in the U.S., soul food’s history mirrors the history of slaves, when people had very little to eat and made do with what they had and never wasted anything. Zeda has been cooking soul food since she was ten years old. These meals, that require a lot of time to prepare, can include large amounts of food such as catfish, cornbread, biscuits, black-eyed peas, mustard greens, collard greens, turnips, fried chicken, and sweet potato pie.

While Zeda’s work touches the lives of many people, like so many community leaders, she doesn’t always see the tangible fruits of her labor. However, during one celebration, she recounts a particularly moving experience. She was near a ticket booth for the event when a woman stopped her; she had something for Zeda. This woman, who Zeda had never seen before and still does not know, gave her a bag that contained a Santa Clause doll, then told her how much she appreciated her work. She felt touched and surprised that a total stranger would honor her this way.

However, not all of Zeda’s experiences have been so touching. About 30 years ago, on a trip to North Carolina to visit family, she was told that her children could not use the restroom at a gas station because there were no “colored restrooms.” She was even followed and watched closely in stores. She stayed a week and has never returned, save a short visit; she could not tolerate the racism that was displayed towards her and her family.

Zeda grew up in a racially diverse neighborhood where differences of race were not pointed out. However, during the 1960’s, when riots broke out in New York due to visible inequities in employment, housing and opportunities, Zeda was introduced to racism in our country. As a teenager, she didn’t quite understand why people were burning their own homes; through inquiries with her family she realized their homes were in poor condition and could not compare to the quality of homes and actions of mainstream society. She remembers the mother of one of her friend’s getting shot randomly while she was at home looking out a window. These events impacted Zeda’s life forever. She wanted to learn more about black history and why things happened the way they did. Zeda possesses a deep honor and respect of those women that came before her. She stresses that today’s African American women get their strength through the women who grew up in slavery. Without their sacrifices, hardships, and perseverance Zeda believes that she would not be where she is today.

When Zeda first came to Boise in the 1970’s, with so few African Americans living here, she initially felt isolated. However over time, she became confident that she had made the right decision. She still has had to work twice as hard to teach her children their culture since they grew up in a predominantly white area. But these experiences have helped her learn how to welcome new African Americans at Hewlett Packard, where she is an administrative assistant. She promptly introduces herself, gives them her phone number, and offers answers about Boise if they have any questions. Her empathy and actions help dissolve the feelings of isolation that others may feel.

Zeda is proud to be an African American woman. She is proud to have reached the status she has and likes to think that there are slaves in heaven looking down on her with pride. Zeda is involved in many more diversity works, which includes work on Martin Luther King, Jr. Human Rights Week, the Gay and Lesbian Network and the People of Color Network at Hewlett-Packard. Through her work, she tries to make the people of Boise aware of different issues that face many different kinds of people. Zeda is truly a woman who honors history and by doing so creates history of her own.

BUDDY ARMSTRONG, Moscow, Idaho

By Jeanne Harvey, Director, UI Women’s Center; Jeanne loves Latin and Caribbean dance, lived in Jamaica, and finds any excuse to travel. Jeanne also teaches women’s studies, and is adjunct faculty in the department of sociology.

Moving, moving. Dr. Juandalynn Taylor is on the move. And, she is fast. Since arriving at the University of Idaho, she has quickly become involved in campus, community, and statewide activities. She visited Idaho for the first time in November 2000, during the first snowstorm of that year. And, for a Texan, that was brutal. Yet, she returned in January of 2001 as a visiting professor in the communications department.

Her portfolio of activities soon broadened to include assisting the Office of Diversity & Human Rights. Then, in September, Juandalynn took the position of Interim Director for the Office of Multicultural Affairs. In addition to her administrative role on campus, she also teaches a class called, “Race, Class and the Media” at the UI. In her short time in Idaho she has made an impression on many of us for her get-things-done attitude. Prior to joining the UI faculty, Juandalynn taught at Xavier University of New Orleans, Louisiana, the University of Texas at Arlington and Huston-Tillotson College. The chance to work on diversity issues drew Juandalynn to the University of Idaho. Since arriving in Idaho, she has participated in many aspects of the University’s diversity programs, including a Scripps-Howard Multicultural Journalism Workshop held last summer. The participants of this workshop were high school students of color who have an interest in print and broadcast journalism.

As an African American woman, she feels she can lead the way for African Americans and other minorities. This fall, she brought Oscar de la Torre to campus. Mr. de la Torre is a teacher and community activist working with gang youth in Los Angeles. He gave the keynote address at a reception for diversity scholarship winners, the first time for this event. The reception was an idea Juandalynn turned into a reality.

Last summer she assisted the Office of Diversity and Human Rights as they began development of diversity plans within divisions across campus. As a leader within the College of Letters and Science’s diversity task force, she, along with others, coordinated a survey of faculty about diversity issues then developed a report and diversity action plan for the college. This effort became a model for other colleges on campus.

Sonya Rosario, her nominator and Executive Director of the Women of Color Alliance (WOCA), first met Juandalynn at a Caesar Chavez celebration where they
quickly learned of their mutual interest in women's issues, especially women of color in Idaho. Juandalynn eagerly joined Idaho's WOCA and was soon involved with women's issues at a state level as a member of their advisory board. Sonya describes Juandalynn as a "teacher and human rights activist [who] stands out... a thinker out of the box, never to take the easy way of learning... an incredible asset to the University of Idaho as well as to the WOCA."

Juandalynn earned her Ph.D. at the University of Texas, Austin. Her dissertation examined media coverage of Cuban and Haitian immigration and public policy issues. She has studied popular culture in Brazil in addition to other research interests, which include Black Generation X identity construction and intercultural communication in college classrooms. Her broad interests have taken her to different regions of the Americas. She traveled to Cuba and the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean. And to pursue her interest in popular culture in Brazil, she traveled to Salvador, Brazil. Although we don't want to add to her busy schedule, some of us are hoping that Juandalynn will teach one of her hobbies: Brazilian dance, or samba. She has practiced ballet since she was young and was a member of her university's dance troupe. To keep active and fit, she teaches aerobics in addition to other Latin dances.

Juandalynn Taylor is an inspiration to many of us for her ability to make things happen. Sonya describes Juandalynn as "dedicated, an excellent listener and observer, human rights activist, a leader, a thinker." I would add visionary to that list. Juandalynn has the vision to imagine what is possible, and then she knows how to work to achieve that vision making her mark in history. She will certainly succeed in moving others along with her.

JUSTICE CATHY SILAK, Boise, Idaho

By Melissa Worwour: Originally from Ohio, she serves as the coordinator of the Boise State women's center. She earned her bachelor's in English from Miami University and her master's in higher education from the University of Georgia.

Cathy Silak is a woman who cherishes history and reflects on her own with a quiet and matter-of-fact demeanor. She grew up in Queens, New York and attended New York University where she earned her bachelor's degree in French literature and sociology. While at Harvard where she earned a master's in city planning, she took her first law class when a professor noticed her talents and encouraged her to take a class. Cathy found that law was "a language [she] could speak." It offered an established structure or a framework within which to operate and solve problems, an aspect of law that she loves. From there, she received her law degree from the University of California at Berkeley School of Law, and a master of law degree from the University of Virginia.

Cathy Silak is currently practicing law and serves as a partner at Hawley Troxell Ennis and Hawley, Idaho's oldest and largest law firm. Justice Silak served on the Idaho Court of Appeals from 1990 to 1993 and on the Idaho Supreme Court from 1993 to December 2000. Prior to being appointed by former Governor Cecil Andrus as the first woman member of the Idaho Court of Appeals in 1990, Justice Silak was associate general counsel at Morrison Knudsen Corporation (now Washington Group International). She was recently appointed for a two-year term to the American Judicature Society's board of directors — a nonpartisan organization with national membership of judges, lawyers and non-legally trained citizens interested in the administration of justice. Justice Silak has been admitted to the bar in Idaho (1983), in California (1977), and in the District of Columbia (1979).

Two of her most historic roles came into being after former Governor Cecil Andrus became familiar with her outstanding work and reputation for the law, and "because of her vast background and experience" he appointed her to the Court of Appeals and then to the Supreme Court. Justice Silak "is an intelligent woman, and one of the finest trial lawyers we'll ever know," declares Governor Andrus. "She served the state in an excellent capacity regardless of political consequences, proving to the world that a woman can serve as a Supreme Court justice in a manner that put most male lawyers to shame. With a broad understanding and sensitivity of people, she is always willing to serve the people and the broader good, beyond serving a single client."

While her resume is formidable, Justice Silak is a warm, approachable person that is involved in her community beyond her contributions to our system of law. She places the utmost value on her husband, Nicholas G. Miller and her three children, Hartley, Martha and Michael. Just mentioning her name to people who know her solicits an energetic response that shows they are proud to call her a friend, colleague or acquaintance. The glowing faces and charged voices echo a consistent message of respect and honor. As Jim Everett, director of the Boise Family YMCA, notes, "Cathy is the one of the classiest people I know."

Justice Silak is a founding member of the Idaho Coalition for Adult Literacy and currently serves as an advisory board member of the Learning Lab. She is on the board of the Boise Family YMCA, and is a current member and immediate past chair of the Idaho YMCA Youth Government Statewide Committee. A recipient of a 1998 Service to Youth Award from the Boise Family YMCA, she is also an advisory board member of United Way Success by Six.

Everett is particularly excited about the contributions that Justice Silak made with the Youth Government program that allows more than 1,500 young people in the state to conduct mock hearings and learn more about our system of government. "Through her unique style of leadership, Cathy was able to build on the successes of her predecessors," Everett notes. "She was able to build consensus and bring people together to strengthen the program."

Everett goes on to note, "Cathy serves as an exceptional role model to everyone, but especially to young women. She balances the roles of being a tremendous state leader with her abilities to be a great mom and her value of family and community. "Justice Silak has been described by many as someone who is poised and calm, finding a way to address life's tasks in a fluid way; she "has an amazing ability to go in and out of things," Everett notes, "while making each person she's in contact with feel special."

MARILYN WATTS, Idaho Falls, Idaho

By Janis McCurry: Janis, a native Boisem, has worked for Boise State University for 14 years as a management assistant in the Auxiliary Services Department. Janis writes fiction and has completed two contemporary romance novels and is working on her third, a historical romance.

Someone forgot to tell Marilyn Watts that in the 1950's a woman couldn't do just anything she wanted. According to her daughter, Beth, Marilyn "defined all the conventional roles of her time, without being antagonistic or condescending. She was adventurous. She was independent. She was definitely headstrong, but she was caring." Defying cultural convention, she always pursued her passions.

After graduating from nursing school, Marilyn and two friends found jobs in Sitka, Alaska working in a government-run tuberculosis (TB) hospital. At that time, TB was rampant in the little fishing village, and indeed, all over Alaska. Marilyn was assigned to the children's orthopedic ward where children with bone TB came from all over the territory. It was also in Alaska where she met her husband of 45 years, Steve.

Marilyn Watts established the first hospice care facility in southeastern Idaho in her adopted hometown, Idaho Falls in 1980. The administrator of the long-term care institution at which she worked approached her about starting that kind of care. She was new to the world of hospice care, had never run a hospital, was a single mom, and a very slow one; doctors are trained to make people live, and if a patient died, it was considered a failure. Hospice is about helping people to die with dignity and helping their families to accept it and cope with this process of death. The medical community initially found this concept difficult to support. Marilyn plunged in and convinced the doctors one-by-one of the importance of caring for people in every phase of life. When people would ask her why she wanted to do this, she said, "Death is not always the worst thing to happen to somebody."

Her first experience in forming her philosophy on hospice care came when she was just starting out as a nurse in Minnesota. One Christmas Eve, she saw an R.N. caring for a man dying of Hodgkin's disease; they were talking and chatting about the Minnesota-St. Paul area. Marilyn thought, "He's dying; how can she talk to him like that?" It taught her that dying people are still living, a lesson that has stayed with her through the years.

Several years later, Marilyn was asked to care for a man in her neighborhood dying of cancer. She was so impressed with how this teenage son took care of him that she was more comfortable he was at home. His wife gave him his pain medication when he needed it, not when the clock said it...
was time. This was very different from how Marilyn, a hospital nurse, was used to doing things. Nobody took his blood pressure or took his temperature, because it didn't make a difference. The last time Marilyn saw him, she was saying goodbye to his family. When she walked in the room, he looked up, "Hey, Beautiful, where did you come from?" Everybody laughed, the tension in the room broken. This illustrated the importance of humor, when appropriate, in hospice; humor eased the stress for the whole family.

Marilyn is like most quiet heroes. She couldn't readily think of that "Ah Ha" moment when she realized she was doing something that counted. When pressed, she remembered that early in the development of hospice when it was financially struggling, members of a hospital auxiliary who believed in her abilities and vision presented her with a check for $5,000. This was a good sum of money in the early 1980's and it enabled the program to continue until Medicare certification was in place. It was the first time that she recognized that someone believed in her and what she was doing. Adversity has not been a stranger in her own life, either. Marilyn is a breast cancer survivor of 25 years. A woman with a great sense of humor, she dealt with that like everything else, with a supportive husband and sister...and optimism. Her children and their perspectives on her illness also helped her to defeat her cancer.

Marilyn has continued to accept and relish challenges. At 50 years of age, she climbed Mt. Borah. Now that she is retired, she has more time to volunteer in areas other than the medical field. She mentors the current administrators of the hospice, and serves on the board of directors and is available any time to help and coach them. They call her "the grand lady of hospice." A typical week consists of hospice board work, serving as a docent at the art gallery, planning menus or cooking at the soup kitchen, tutoring reading in a 4th grade class at elementary school, and reading favorite books (Marilyn's in a book club, too).

Marilyn's daughter, Beth, nominated her as a "woman making history" and she is well aware of Marilyn's accomplishments. Beth grew up feeling that the world was hers for the taking because her mother was so confident and self-assured. It was the greatest gift a mother could give to her daughter.

When widowed, she moved back to Boise and, as she puts it, the opportunity to "selfishly pursue my goal of coming out" was presented. With a slight smile, Dallas also attributed her greatest strength, stubbornness, with enabling her to step up as a leader in the gay community.

After coming out, she was hurt and incredulous at how she was treated by those whom she had counted as friends. It led her to wonder: if people she knew acted this way, how would strangers react? She believed people needed to be educated. Religious political extremists were painting a picture consisting of lies, myths, and stereotypes to fuel their hate campaign against gay citizens. Dallas said, "I knew my life put the truth to the lies, myths and stereotypes. I needed to speak up and educate."

That commitment to truth and education has led to twelve years of leadership in Boise's gay community: Dallas served on the board of the Idaho Women's Network, which was one of the first "non-gay" organizations to provide outreach to lesbians and speak out in support of the "No on One" campaign; was "recruited" to be on the first board of the Ada County Human Rights Task Force; and was a member of the board of the Community Center, a gay organization. Through these boards, she networked with progressive thinking people who also nurtured and sustained her through the difficult times that led to, perhaps, the single most historic victory for gay rights that has been fought in Idaho - the "No on One" campaign.

In 1993, an initiative called Proposition 1 was drafted. Far from being just anti-gay legislation, this proposition was anti-fairness, anti-human rights, and pro-censorship. The campaign sought to criminalize and vilify the gay community. The solution was, again, education about the scope of the proposition. Dallas worked with the dedicated core of activists to meet people and speak. She kept a network of about two dozen non-gay human rights activists informed with articles and information about the gay issues involved. With another friend, she created a series of information packets that were sent to the state legislators.

During this time, some of the activists were threatened with violence. They knew they were taking risks and could get hurt, but they also knew that they were making history - the right kind. It's very difficult to deal with irrational fear and hatred. She feels strongly that there are a lot people who do care, arc positive, and are not hateful. Her guiding thought when writing letters to the editor or giving talks in the community is to take the opportunity to reach out and speak to the "great middle who have open minds and hearts." When they know gay people and can put a face to them, they aren't afraid.

Proposition One was defeated. Looking back, Dallas now believes it was bigger than they imagined. As she says, "If Proposition One had been passed, there might not be an Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial Center, or we might have seen the Aryan Nation become stronger." Plus, "we have seen the demise of the three anti-gay organizations: the Idaho Citizen's Alliance, the Idaho Christian Coalition, and the Idaho Family Forum."

Dallas added that, while culturally Idaho has improved in the area of human rights, in the area of gay rights, nothing legally has changed. Gays still have no legal protection from hate crimes; no legal protections from discrimination in employment, housing and numerous other areas; and the antiquated sodomy law is still on the books. There is much education to be done but the future looks very bright.

Her activism extends beyond gay rights and embraces all human rights; Dallas is also active in the Idaho Black History Museum. She enjoys meeting new people, traveling, and sharing life and new experiences. As Dallas reflects on how each of us can impact history in a positive way, she stresses, "You don't have to lead the parade, just take the time to do something you are passionate about."

SUE BILLINGTON WADE, Boise, Idaho

By Janelle Frigo: Janelle is a recent graduate of Boise State University with a bachelor's degree in English. She is an aspiring nonfiction writer and is thankful for the strong support of friends and family. Janelle believes that doing what you want in life and listening to your heart leads to a life of good fortune.

When you ask Sue Billington Wade to explain her nonprofit organization, "Walkin' the Talk," she is immediately filled with a powerful energy. Her face lights up and her words reveal her passion about what she does. Sue's company teaches children and parents how to communicate, how to understand emotional intelligence, which creates responsible adults in our society. "Walkin' the Talk" conducts workshops in schools and businesses across the country and in parts of Canada.

However, "Walkin' the Talk" has grown from simple yet urgent beginnings. Sue always knew she was going to be a teacher and served in public schools and in colleges. For years, she read journal after journal from students who were filled with pain and anger. For example, she once had a student who committed suicide, leaving a note to his family saying all he wanted was to have someone to listen to him. Another time, a forty five year old man, tears in his eyes, asked, "How can I tell my daughter how I am feeling." She was dismayed at all of the needless situations she was seeing and hearing. She began to realize the strong need building within her to reach out and help children and parents. Sue followed her calling with a passion — a calling to listen to children.

In 1995, Jack Canfield, motivational speaker and co-author of the Chicken Soup for the Soul series, spoke at Boise State. Sue was in the audience when he asked, "What is your goal?" The audience was quiet as Canfield looked around at everyone, almost daring someone to speak. Sue squirmed in her seat and saw herself raising her hand. Canfield looked at her and repeated his question. She stood up and said, "I will have a self-esteem company for teenagers by May '96."

Sue's story continues. After her presentation, Sue was invited to speak at numerous universities. "Walkin' the Talk" has traveled to schools in all 50 states, as well as to conventions in Italy and Japan.

In one of her newsletters, Sue writes, "If we want to develop healthy self-esteem in our children, it's time we let them be honest with us about some of our parenting styles. We must be open to hear the truth by both the negative and the positive behaviors we tend to recycle from our own beliefs and upbringing. The parenting days of do..."
as I say and not as I do' are over. Our actions deliver a message much louder than our words, and that's the one our children are hearing and copying."

Sue teaches the art of "emotional intelligence" in her workshops. This includes, self-awareness, impulse control, motivation, empathy and social skills. Everyone gets a copy of "Know Thyself - Socrates," a national copyrighted workbook. Sue has the students draw their own "roadmap of life" and explains how one wrong turn can lead to a destructive dead end. When the students realize and learn their own life choices and mistakes, Sue says, "you can hear a pin drop in the room." It's that amazing. She tells them the facts of life without holding anything back. She "speaks the unspoken."

When young people speak their own pain, they create their own intervention. Your reaction to life, either negative or positive, affects others and can create a rippling effect. The more children and parents learn to talk about their feelings and frustrations early on, the more positive the rippling effect will be. Sue says, "It's important to shift old ideas and beliefs in order to create new habits" for everyone. "Prevention intervention" is the key.

Sue has applied her "emotional intelligence" strategy at home and sees the benefits with her son Jim. She "cares enough to ask the hard questions" and knows when to just step back and wait for him to come to her if he needs something.

Last year, Jim told his mom that he wanted to go away to a kayaking school in Vermont. Sue allowed him to go because she "heard" how important it was for him. With pride in her eyes, she recalls how Jim, a caring young man, an excellent student and a committed athlete, won second place last year at the Junior Olympics in slalom kayaking.

She is grateful for Jack Canfield, "for helping [her] pull [her] vision together." With the unwavering support of her family and friends, the volunteer board of "Walking the Talk," and most of the parents themselves, the dream continues to grow. Clearly history in the making, Sue loves touching so many lives: "the more children we reach, the more they will reach out to others until it is a universal phenomenon."

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**STEPHANIE NEIGHBORS, Boise State staff**

By Janelle Higg

"Today I know that such memories are the key not to the past, but to the future. I know that the experiences of our lives, when we let God use them, become the mysterious and perfect preparation for the work He will give us to do." — Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*

Like Corrie ten Boom, Stephanie Neighbors has opened her heart to serving others. If she sees you walking by her desk, she will smile. If she sees that you are lost, she will stop you and send you in the right direction. If she sees that you are having a bad day, she will greet you and let you know she cares. If she sees you suffering, she will do whatever it takes to make you happy.

If you've ever walked by the Student Activities desk in the Boise State Student Union, then you have most likely seen Stephanie. She is known as the "school mom" and does not mind the position. As administrative assistant, she not only keeps the department of Student Activities running smoothly, similar to Corrie ten Boom in her father's clock shop, but at the same time, she takes the time to greet most everyone walking by, letting them know she cares. According to her nominator, Johann Vargas, "The attention she gives each individual is amazing. She never misses anything."

Working the last seven years in Student Activities, Stephanie has come to know a great assortment of people. She has received numerous letters over the years from students she has impacted, thanking her for the time she has given them.

She finds great satisfaction in just being able to be there for people. Her one undying belief is that if "God loves everybody then I don't have an option but to do the same." Stephanie has brought desperate souls to her own home. She has seen the need of others and has sacrificed her own comfort and security in order to put a roof over someone else's head: "The balance of having to protect myself and my family taught me to be strong. Determining the boundaries when reaching out is hard when someone's hurting." But for Stephanie, sometimes you just do the best you can when someone needs you. Stephanie has learned that she "can't be a savior" and "you have to be responsible for the way in which you give." If she sees someone going through something that she has experienced, like the weariness of going through a divorce, trying to balance being a single mom and only being able to see your kids on certain days, or just trying to support yourself, then she won't wait for the person to ask for help; she knows how hard it is to have to ask. She'll take that person home, or she'll clean that person's house, whatever she's able to do to help.

Stephanie has had her fair share of difficult times. Circumstances in life changed her direction. All she had ever wanted was to be married and have children. Seven years ago, Stephanie was happily married with two boys, when she suddenly found herself divorced and sharing the custody of her children. At the time of the divorce, her oldest son was only fourteen, and the other was seven. She comments, "I experienced the empty nest syndrome way earlier than I was supposed to." One of the hardest transitions she faced emotionally was that she didn't always know where her children were at all hours of the day. For years before, Stephanie had run a daycare out of her home so that she wouldn't have to send her kids to one. Her boys are everything to her and the divorce was hard on them as well. But Stephanie endured, and like ten Boom, she has survived to reach out and help others. Corrie ten Boom writes, "Out of the depths of my own spiritual experiences, I want to be able to share how God works," and that is exactly what Stephanie tries to do in life. From an early age, Stephanie was "instilled with a passion for God," which she believes has affected her outlook on life. She came to work on campus during her divorce and believes that this is where God intended for her to be. She values being able to help others. Stephanie's experience of being alone in the face of adversity connects her to others. Deep down, Stephanie wants people to know they are valued and loved. She "[wants] to give what [she would want] to receive." Stephanie opens more than just her heart to people. She touches lives and makes history in subtle and very powerful ways. By creating a space where everyone feels welcome, knowing they have a special place, Stephanie eases feelings of isolation that can sometimes cripple a student's ability to succeed. Never give up.

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**MONICA HOPKINS, Boise State student**

By Janelle Higg

In a crowded study session at Southwest Texas State University, Monica Hopkins experienced her first social anxiety attack. Imagine yourself in a crowded room. A question is asked about a famous law case, Marbury vs. Madison, and you know the answer. Do you speak up, or let the person next to you have all the glory? For Monica, that was exactly what Stephanie tries to do. in Corrie ten Boom, she found great satisfaction in just being able to be there for people. She "cares. If she sees you suffering, she will do whatever it takes to make you happy. She reached out to others until it is a universal phenomenon."

Circumstances in life changed her direction. All she had ever wanted was to be married and have children. Seven years ago, Stephanie was happily married with two boys, when she suddenly found herself divorced and sharing the custody of her children. At the time of the divorce, her oldest son was only fourteen, and the other was seven. She comments, "I experienced the empty nest syndrome way earlier than I was supposed to." One of the hardest transitions she faced emotionally was that she didn't always know where her children were at all hours of the day. For years before, Stephanie had run a daycare out of her home so that she wouldn't have to send her kids to one. Her boys are everything to her and the divorce was hard on them as well. But Stephanie endured, and like ten Boom, she has survived to reach out and help others. Corrie ten Boom writes, "Out of the depths of my own spiritual experiences, I want to be able to share how God works," and that is exactly what Stephanie tries to do in life. From an early age, Stephanie was "instilled with a passion for God," which she believes has affected her outlook on life. She came to work on campus during her divorce and believes that this is where God intended for her to be. She values being able to help others. Stephanie's experience of being alone in the face of adversity connects her to others. Deep down, Stephanie wants people to know they are valued and loved. She "[wants] to give what [she would want] to receive." Stephanie opens more than just her heart to people. She touches lives and makes history in subtle and very powerful ways. By creating a space where everyone feels welcome, knowing they have a special place, Stephanie eases feelings of isolation that can sometimes cripple a student's ability to succeed. Never give up.
in Ketchum for a short time and falling in love with Idaho, she finally found her niche at Planned Parenthood. Her next-door neighbor convinced her to volunteer, and her heart has been there ever since. One of the things Monica does at Planned Parenthood is to help parents and kids talk about difficult life issues, like sex. She counsels parents to help them “unfold” into active individuals with healthy relationships.

Monica applies what she has learned from all of her experiences into her conversations and her speeches. She has made a name for herself in the simple way she listens to people and draws people in “to think and to question” their own beliefs and the way our society is today. Monica is very involved in many grassroots events and initiatives to help give others a chance to be heard. Besides being deeply involved with Planned Parenthood, Monica also works with the Idaho Women’s Network and is on their board. She has also spoken at several different conferences, including an Idaho Women’s Network workshop, a queer issues conference: “It’s a tribute to our community to know we can pull together and be active.” No matter the event or the occasion, Monica is honest and compassionate.

Even in the classrooms at Boise State University, where Monica is a senior in social science, she is energetic and thought provoking. “I don’t have a very good poker face,” she notes. “You can always tell what I am thinking.” Fidgeting in her chair, taking deep breaths, raising her hand to get the instructor’s attention, putting her hand back down and then up again, her eyes wide with urgency, her classmates can always tell when she has something to say. She has a hard time not saying something. Monica is filled with so much passion and energy towards social justice and making sure that everyone gets an opportunity to be heard; it is hard not to be affected by someone like Monica.

BARBARA NEWELL, Boise, Idaho

By Janelle Higg

Barbara Newell was recently asked at a baby shower to give some advice to the new mother. Barbara chuckled and said, “Enjoy every minute. He’ll be a senior in high school and graduating from college before you know it. It goes so fast.” She believes that history is being made all the time with parenthood. “It can have either a bad or a good ending,” she notes, “and a lot of bumps along the way, but being a good parent is the most successful thing anyone can do in life.”

Barbara has raised two girls on her own who both grown to become very successful women, both deeply involved in the community and in life. Barbara reminds us that children are like “a blank piece of paper; you can help them to become so much, just help them, guide them every so gently.”

Barbara grew up the youngest of eleven children where she learned to value family at an early age. Barbara believes the reason she has come so far academically (receiving her bachelor’s and master’s degrees) is because she grew up playing pinoccle of all things. Spending time with family, figuring out strategies in card games, trusting your partner, and knowing when to catch a bluff are valuable life lessons.

After Barbara graduated from high school, little was expected of her. She didn’t expect much of herself then, either. She married, had a child, and was perfectly happy as a secretary.” When Barbara’s children were still young, she got a divorce and went back to school. As the “sole bread winner for [her] kids,” Barbara needed a position that paid more than her secretary position. She currently works for Albertson’s labor relations department where she advises management and deals with negotiations: if that doesn’t put pinoccle skills to good use, then I don’t know what does.

Just as her family had been there for her when she was growing up, Barbara has been there for her family as well. Barbara has attended every one of her daughters’ events, everything from “games, meets, dances, theatre, music, or any other soft activities... I was there baked cookies for fundraisers, and taught them to excel.”

More than anything, though, Barbara has taught her girls to be a part of their community. When Angela and Katie were younger, they volunteered at the local YWCA, their first volunteer experience, where they worked to rebuild its Women’s Center. Both girls still volunteer as adults. Angela played a key role in creating the coalition, Healthy Community Healthy Youth. “The goal of the coalition is to do things with youth, for youth” so that they can be strong in the face of negative situations. Barbara has volunteered for the coalition many times and says, “It’s important to take time to listen to people. Kids especially love to talk to you.” Barbara has also served in soup kitchens around town, volunteered in retirement homes, and participated in “paint the town” and the kite festival. Giving back to the community is important for Barbara, Angela and Katie. Whether together or apart, they each do what they can to help others. And both of her daughters will be attending graduate school to pursue their master’s degrees.

Barbara, an active volunteer assisting others, has also faced her own personal challenges. A survivor of a rare form of cancer called neurofibrosarcoma, a disease that is usually only found in children, she told the doctors, “Well, I guess I’m just a big kid.” The cancer was removed and she endured three months of chemotherapy and eight weeks of radiation treatment. Barbara believes, “You have to take charge of your own destiny” and that is exactly what she has done. Everyday during her sickness she walked up five miles, just “to keep her sanity.” Barbara says, no matter what, “You have to just do what you do... you have to be healthy.” Even though she was not feeling well every day, Barbara knew she had to survive as her family depended on her. She now has a scar, but it is a constant reminder to her how lucky she is just to be alive and to still be there for her girls.

Barbara continues to stay healthy by walking. No matter the distance, Barbara finds satisfaction in being outdoors. She has run in numerous local races, and even ran a marathon in Ketchum. Today Barbara continues to stay active by walking and hiking, adding more time to her life, more time to be with Angela and Katie.

Barbara believes that taking an active part in the lives of children is definitely a way to make history. Raising her daughters has come to be much more than just teach them about history. Barbara knows she has made a difference in their lives. Barbara jokingly declares, “It was the three of us against the world.” She clearly has made an impact in the lives of her own children. She is “a quintessential woman, and a woman worthy of history!” exclaimed her nominator.

KAY MACK, Boise, Idaho

By Ellie Allen: Ellie lives in Boise, Idaho, is home schooled, and is in the 9th grade. She enjoys riding and showing her horse, playing with and showing her dogs, reading, writing, and doing artwork. Ellie completed this story as part of a Girl Scout assignment.

Kay Mack is an extraordinary woman. She does not think twice about helping troubled children and teens; she actively looks for opportunities to work with them. Since her employment at the department of Boise Parks and Recreation in 1980, Kay has brought about many major changes and improvements in the programs for both children and teens. Kay believes that everyone in the community is important, and that children and teens do not always get their fair share of benefits.

“I’ve always been a champion of young people,” she says. “I feel their rights need to be protected. We, as adults, need to be out there encouraging them, finding ways that they can thrive and be creative.”

Autumn Haynes, Kay’s nominator, believes that Kay is “outstanding” because she works with troubled youth every day of her life and “manages not to be bitter.” In relation to helping them Autumn notes that Kay “could tell you stories that you would think only happen in big cities... It is people who struggle with a problem and just need a friendly ear... I am glad there are people like Kay around young people who are growing up in today’s world.”

Kay’s parents were very supportive of her early in life, offering her opportunities to participate in many activities. While she was in high school, she began tutoring other students, deciding early on that she loved working with people. She discovered through experience that she was a good listener, and people felt like they could tell her anything. Kay continues to give back to the community through her work with the current generation.

“Kids in particular are comfortable with me,” she notes. “I think in part, it is because I am not a really big person; I’m not perceived as being a threat. I think they know that I’m willing to listen, and I don’t make any judgments before they open their mouth,” a large part of Kay’s success. Indeed, she possesses a boundless energy that you can feel when you are near her. It is this energy that helps her get things done.

Since 1980, Kay has been working actively for Boise Parks and Recreation. Hired originally as a gymnastics coach and dance instructor, Kay soon became aware and was astonished by the lack of programs, especially those for children over the age of 15. When asked about the difficulties of her job, Kay commented, “My biggest challenge to overcome has been one of attitudes. Convincing people that ‘teens are people too’ is difficult. It seems to me that once a child turns twelve or thirteen, they become invisible until they are old enough to vote. Determined to do something about these problems, she decided to make some changes around Parks and Rec. She helped write grants and get them passed, organized day camps, and developed programs to suit all ages, not just young children.

Kay enjoys working with children more than any other aspect of her job: “Anytime you can turn someone’s life around, let them see that they are special, have something to contribute... keep them off the street, out of jail, keep them from having a baby when they don’t need to be having a baby, from doing drugs... you are impacting the life of another person. That is what I love most about my job – helping people.”

She has made lasting impressions on youth in particular, but also seems to be a powerful role model to older students. Autumn Haynes, a BSU staff member and graduate student, remembers when she first met Kay and got involved with helping Boise youth. “I never considered
myself a teacher or someone who could relate with children. But Kay put my concerns at ease and assured me that my only task was to see that the kids had fun. Since then Kay has helped me establish a touring acting troupe for youth and a summer musical program with Boise Little Theatre.” Kay has been a steady force and influence in Autumn's own development and growth.

Kay Mack is a phenomenal woman who cares deeply about the lives of others. By helping troubled teens and children turn their lives around, she is changing history through her positive influence on the future. Her warmth, sincerity, and positive attitude have changed the lives of countless people over the years. Although Kay Mack may not be big in stature, she is huge in heart.  

RUTH HARRIS, Boise, Idaho
By Delilah Troia: Delilah resides in Boise, Idaho where she is a Boise State student.

"In music, you can often express something that you can't express in words," Ruth Harris tells me. Since her retirement, which came shortly after the death of her husband in 1998, Ruth has found solace in her music. Fifteen years ago she began playing recorder and in the past five years, her involvement with music has deepened.

"Playing music was a big thing for me in [dealing with] grief," she says in relation to her husband's death. "I found it spoke to me, and I am very thankful for that."

Ruth is an active woman. Besides involvement with music, she watches birds, takes walks, socializes, swims, exercises and goes to church. She travels often to see her daughter and grandchildren in Anchorage, Alaska. Her first grandchild was born two months after the death of her husband. With such a huge change in one's life like losing a loved one, it is sometimes very difficult to adjust as well as Ruth has. Ruth is optimistic, and as a medical social worker, experience in her career has lent itself to her inspiring resilience.

Ruth's beginnings were in Pennsylvania, on a small farm. During World War II her family moved to Detroit, Michigan. There she attended Wayne State University for six years and obtained a master's degree in social work. Her father was mentally ill and in the hospital. The social worker that came to interview the family impressed her so much that she decided to major in social work. Ruth began her career in 1950, and she worked at a variety of hospitals in the Detroit area including Henry Ford Hospital. In 1959, wanting to learn more about national health care, she journeyed to Britain. She worked for two years in Europe. Ruth returned to the U.S. and went to work for Idaho child health services as a statewide social worker.

Instrumental in the development of medical social work in Idaho, Ruth notes that medical social work encompasses everything that is attached to being a patient and how an illness affects a person. This includes helping people to adjust psychologically to their lives, relationships, families, jobs or anything that the illness affects.

After thirteen years of working consistently, Ruth took time off to have her daughter: "I realized, everyone isn't sick. When I went back to work, it made a tremendous difference to think life may not always be dominated by sickness. It left me optimistic about life, people, our resilience, and the ability to do what we have to do. It helped me with work and with my own life."

Ruth's resume continued to grow during her career in Idaho. She went to work at St. Alphonsus hospital in 1977. From 1982-1996 she went to Mountain State Tumor Institute and Senior Life. In 1994, she was appointed as the first director of social services at St. Luke's Hospital. She organized the Treasure Valley Medical Social Workers Association and served as its chair. In 2000 she became a 43-year charter member of the National Association of Social Workers. By her retirement, Ruth had contributed to making standards higher for social workers.

Reflecting on her career she says, "When I was younger, I thought the patient was different from me. Over the years, I grew to believe we are much more alike than we are different, and that helps the patients have a part of me and a part of my life. My compassion and understanding grew. I think I was a better social worker when I finished than when I started because of it."

Ruth has seen more death than most of us, and it is reassuring to see her beautiful attitude about life. She says, "My greatest achievement is my daughter; sure work was extremely important, but you have a family and a hope for that young life that things will be better in the next generation."

The message – everything we do is important.

Some of us learn that decisions we make today are not always for us; they are often for the generation that follows. Life is a beautiful, bittersweet journey. Ruth tells me, "You keep learning all your life and don't quit [learning], hopefully. If you get to age 75 and you're still learning something new, do it. I could say I am too old, but I don't. I do it anyway."  

KELLEY JOHNSON, Eagle, Idaho
By Delilah Troia: Delilah resides in Boise, Idaho where she is a Boise State student.

Kind eyes. You know the sort of eyes, when you look into them, and it's as though you are looking at the soul that lives within a person. Kelley Johnson's eyes told a story all their own. They radiated pure kindness. This is the story of a woman who appreciates life a bit more than the rest of us. She has seen sadness and fear and has walked through it. An inspiration to many, this humble and quiet woman has managed to reach out through her involvement in the community, while overcoming her own set of challenges that many of us could not comprehend. Her peers describe Kelley as an "unsung hero"; she works quietly behind the scenes dedicating much of her free time to breast cancer awareness in Idaho.

Kelley was born and raised in Boise, Idaho. She later went to Moscow to attend the University of Idaho, where she majored in finance. At the age of twenty-one, a junior in college, she found out she had a malignant brain tumor. She was just twenty-one years old with her whole life ahead of her, suddenly forced to deal with a life-threatening disease. Eventually, with treatment she defeated the cancer that left her partially paralyzed on the left side of her body. Kelley finished school and went on to work for an engineering firm.

At twenty-eight, Kelley married her high school sweetheart, Pete. Four years later they had their son, Michael. In 1998, through self-examination, she found a lump in her breast. Not just once did Kelley develop cancer, but here she was again, for the second time. It didn't run in her family; she didn't fit into any group that was especially susceptible. It just happened. Early detection was important and within a year of treatment the breast cancer was gone.

Although the cancer is no longer in Kelley's body, it still remains with her. She will be forever changed by those times in her life. The amazing thing about Kelley is that she doesn't complain about the cards she was dealt. She is genuinely appreciative of what and who she has in her life. It isn't hard to sympathize with Kelley, but that is the last thing in the world she would want.

These days much of Kelley's time is spent in service to others. She resides in Eagle, Idaho. She is a very active member of her church where she was elected to the council and formerly was president. Kelley spends many of her days at her son's school, where she has done an assortment of needed jobs for the past five years. From October through June she is involved with the Race for the Cure, a fundraiser for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. She began helping at the race's conception in Boise in 1998. In her first year with the race, she doubled as chair of both volunteer recruitment and merchandise sales. Since then she has used her talents in an assortment of other needed positions.

All of the work she does is completely voluntary. Kelley says that it was a lot of support in her own life that got her through her most troubling times. She tears up when she talks about her "great husband, supportive parents, and good friends" that have been there for her. She credits them along with her "strength in faith" that saw her through those times. Her most cherished memories and what she considers her greatest achievements revolve around the closeness of her family.

Kelley is a person who seeks recognition for what she does; she will do the work whether anyone notices. She truly is a quiet hero.

"I'd rather be out of the limelight and just doing things," Kelley says. And behind the scenes is where you will find her, constantly working and organizing so that events like Race for the Cure come together. She is, along with peers, the backbone that makes it possible to raise money for breast cancer research.

Chris Loucks, friend and fellow volunteer notes, "Kelley exemplifies volunteerism. She is not the kind of person who seeks recognition for what she does; she will do the work whether anyone notices. She truly is a quiet hero."

Women Making the Story
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, March 2</td>
<td>In Her Style: Children's Art Workshop, 1pm (primary), 2pm (intermediate), Ada Community Library. Create art in the style of famous women; explore the work of Georgia O’Keeffe. Free.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, March 9</td>
<td>In Her Style: Children's Art Workshop, 1pm (primary), 2pm (intermediate), Ada Community Library. Create art; explore work of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. Free.</td>
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<td>Monday, March 4</td>
<td>The Art and Authorship of Beatrix Potter, 7pm, Ada Community Library. Introduction and background on Beatrix Potter and her work. Free.</td>
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<td>Jane: An Abortion Service, 7pm, Special Events Center Boise State. Film and lecture about Chicago based women's health collective that performed 12,000 safe illegal abortions between 1969 and 1973. Free for students; $3 general.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, March 6</td>
<td>Target's Toddler Wednesdays: Creations in Clay, drop in 10am-noon, Boise Art Museum. Explore sculpture of Viola Frey and shape your own figures in clay. Free with general admission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women in War, 6pm, Barnwell Room, Student Union Boise State. Discussion of women's involvement on battlefield and in government, community, and home in world's war zones. Free.</td>
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<td>Abigail Duniway and Idaho's Role in Women's Suffrage, 7-8:30pm, Boise Public Library. Dr. Debra Shein will highlight Duniway's career. Author reception at the Log Cabin Literary Center afterward. Free.</td>
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<td>Family Storytime: Lady Tales - Tall and Otherwise, 7pm, Ada Community Library. Free.</td>
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<td>Friday, March 8</td>
<td>Afghan Women Before and After the Taliban, Noon, Grove Hotel. Yasmin Hamidi-Aguilar from Agency for New Americans will discuss role women play in Afghan society. Presented by City Club. Forum is free; lunch is $12 members, $17 non-members. Lunch reservations required. 371-2221.</td>
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<td>Hispanic Women Writers: A Panel Discussion, 7:30pm, Log Cabin Literary Center. $3 Log Cabin members, $6 general.</td>
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<td>Balance 5: Dance concert at Fulton Street Theater, 8pm. $5 students, $10 general. 331-3184.</td>
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**MARCH 2002 WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

**CALENDAR**

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<tr>
<td>Friday, March 15</td>
<td>Mahalia: A Gospel Musical, Morrison Center, 8pm, by Boise State Women's Center. Rousing new musical tells the true story of Mahalia Jackson, gospel singer and civil rights activist. $8 students; $14 fac/staff; $19 general. Tickets thru Select-a-Seat, 426-1494.</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, March 19</strong></td>
<td>The Women's Holocaust: The European Witch Hunts, 6pm, Farnsworth Room, Student Union. Why were approximately 100,000 women arrested on charges of witchcraft, tortured, and killed in Europe between the years 1400-1750? Free. Logghe Gals Present: Unsung Heroines, 7:30pm, Log Cabin Literary Center. Features stories, poems and songs about non-famous women, whose stories aren't usually heard: pioneer days to WWII. Members $3, non-members $6.</td>
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<td>Friday, March 22</td>
<td>Dramatic Reading with the Idaho Theater for Youth, 7pm, Ada Community Library. Students present theatrical reading of The Diary of Anne Frank and Zlata's Diary. Free.</td>
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<td>Saturday, March 23</td>
<td>Helen Thayer: The First Woman to Solo any of the World's Poles, 2pm, Discovery Center of Idaho. Helen Thayer, at 50 in 1988, began her journey across North Pole and has since trekked the Yukon, Amazon, and Sahara. 343-9895.</td>
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<td>Thursday, March 28</td>
<td>Mary Hallock Foote's Idaho by Judy Austin of Idaho Historical Society, 7-8:30pm, Boise Public Library. Native of New York and trained artist (1884-1984), she wrote prose and created many illustrations with scenes of Idaho life. Free.</td>
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| Saturday, March 30| Make It, Play It, Be It: Hands-on Art for Kids & Accompanying Adults, 2pm, Boise Public Library. Join women artists as they lead a hands-on session to create. Free. Family Art Saturday: Creations in Clay, drop in noon-3pm, Boise Art Museum. Explore sculpture of Viola Frey and shape your own figures in clay. Free with general admission. For Complete Schedule Descriptions: www.news.boisestate.edu

Presented by Boise State & The Cultural Network
"I have an irrepressible desire to live till I can be assured that the world is a little better for my having lived in it." — Abraham Lincoln

It isn't out of character for a professor of political science to challenge her students to investigate their "rights and responsibilities," as citizens in this country. Dr. Stephanie Witt, her name reflecting an integral part of her character, reminds us to look a little more closely at the "responsibility" side of that statement and venture beyond merely focusing on individual rights.

Stephanie Witt began her career at Boise State University in 1989 as a political science professor, after receiving her doctorate from Washington State University in Pullman, Washington. She has chaired the political science department for six years, and has served as interim Associate Dean for the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs, and was recently promoted to Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. A learned scholar, she has published numerous articles, book chapters and books addressing a breadth of topics.

Along with her vast list of publications, Stephanie has been recognized for her contributions as a teacher and faculty member. A 1998 Outstanding Professor of the Year award recipient, Stephanie was nominated "because of her dedication to the highest standards of undergraduate education and her commitment to innovation in public service," noted one of her nominators J.D. Williams, State Controller.

A student that worked with her when she was as an internship coordinator noted, "She exudes the professionalism and truly caring nature that made my experience...first rate." Stephanie is known for her ability to focus on individual students, working hard to connect a student to meaningful learning experiences.

Her nominators state, "Dr. Witt is a mentor that is always available to lend an ear or helping hand to her students, staff and peers alike." As the past advisor of the Xi Chi Chapter of the National Political Science Honor Society, Dr. Witt anonymously paid the membership dues of a student (single mother of three) that was eligible for membership, but couldn't afford to pay the dues. The student, unaware of her benefactor, was both thankful and tearful at the generosity.

"Dr. Witt is selfless in her volunteering and support of the American Red Cross," her nominators continue. Stephanie's beginnings in the Red Cross do not fully reflect her intentional and mindful approach in her position, however. "I was walking through a mall one day in 1996 and saw a display for the Red Cross," she notes. She was looking for a way to get involved and to give back to her community.

"Dr. Witt is a trained disaster services volunteer for the American Red Cross. She is a member of the Disaster Services Human Resource System that responds to disasters across the nation; she has served in two 'national' disasters as a mass care volunteer. Stephanie has served in a variety of roles, performing a variety of tasks: she has driven truckloads..."
of food in Idaho during floods; she lends moral support and provides Red Cross supplies to victims of house fires; and she has spent countless hours answering phones at the Red Cross in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11th.

Truly selfless, Stephanie side-stepped the question about how she was "making history," by turning the conversation to the influential people in her life that impacted her own history. Raised in a blue-collar family, where no extended family members had ever attended college, Stephanie's future was impacted when a co-worker of her father's shared some information about college loan programs available through their employer, Boise Cascade. The information came to her father quite by chance, but planted a seed that allowed Stephanie to pursue a college education.

"We all owe something to someone," says Stephanie. "What you can give back [to the community] is not a zero sum. We get a lot more back when we give." Stephanie takes her responsibility to the community seriously in her work as a political scientist, a volunteer, and as an instructor. She urges students to take an active role in their education, "to try to make it as worthwhile and meaningful as possible." While faculty members are important figures in the equation of education, students cannot forget their responsibility to engage in the learning process. And her students relish the opportunity to engage in class due to her innovative and creative methods of teaching. One of her former students noted, "The hours students spend in her classes [seem more] like minutes."

Stephanie possesses admirable personal qualities, which include "her caring nature, calm intelligence, and her sense of humor." In fact, she is renowned for her marked wit, an irony she carries with her name.

Dr. Stephanie Witt has made history at Boise State in many tangible ways, like being one of the only female professors in the political science department for quite some time. However, as one of her former students described, "I cannot begin to do her justice in explaining her achievements... She is like a bit of magic; it must be experienced in order for one to truly understand her greatness." 

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EVELYN FERRARI, Boise State student

By Corianne Jensen: Corianne, from Hillsboro, Oregon, is a senior at Boise State. She has completed her bachelor's degree in communications and is currently completing her minor in Spanish education.

Here comes a woman with basic medicine bottles full of aspirin to relieve pain and a bag full of medical supplies in hand. She leaves the comforts of life in Boise to administer medical aid to needy people in the jungle of Nicaragua. The people she gives medical attention to, either have no money or are far from reach. This woman is a Boise State pre-med student and her name is Evelyn Ferrari.

Evelyn notes in her journal, "You are literally out in the middle of nowhere. No running water, no phone, no power. The people are living in grass huts with snakes; eight people are living in one room hut... yet as long as they have the people they love in their life, they are happy."

She has traveled to Nicaragua many times and returned with incredible stories of sacrifice. Evelyn continues to administer medical aid to the people when she can and has spent over $10,000 on medical supplies and transportation. She paid for her most recent trip by obtaining a title loan on her car.

Evelyn was inspired to study medicine after being told she would not walk again when she survived a serious accident some 15 years ago. However, Evelyn didn't lose hope and found a doctor that performed a miraculous surgery, so she could walk again.

Determined to go on a medical mission, Evelyn found the Good Samaritan Mission and soon left to administer medical aid to the Nicaraguan people. When she arrived and began giving medical attention to the people there, she fell in love with them.

Evelyn has returned several times since. She says, "Everybody seems to ask me why I'm going." Yet she says, "If I don't go and help these people, who will?" The support of her husband Vic is what drives her to continue to administer medical aid to these people: her inspiration.

On her first visit to Nicaragua she lived in an orphanage where children were dying because they did not have epileptic medicine and parasites were killing them. When she returned to Boise she was a changed person: "I still see the children's faces and it just breaks my heart." After her first trip, Evelyn decided to return, because the faces on those little children were calling her back.

On another visit Evelyn explains she went to administer medical attention to a little girl and had to hike up a volcano to get there. When she arrived she gave the little girl medicine, stayed with her through the night, bathed her in cool water, and alleviated her fever. Yet as Evelyn left the girl's home, she fell down the side of the volcano and broke her leg. She began to realize the lack of medical attention and scarcity of it, because there was no doctor nearby to help alleviate her pain.

Evelyn realizes how fragile life can be. She has helped deliver and watch a baby come into the world, but her experience with death is not far from life. She had received word from Nicaragua that a certain woman had ovarian cancer and the people wanted Evelyn to bring medicine to alleviate pain. Evelyn collected all the possible medication she could find in Boise and took it there. Yet the day before she arrived the woman passed away. Evelyn has experienced life from beginning to end.

"I have never felt so much compassion and love in my life," Evelyn says. Even though she doesn't speak Spanish, the look in their eyes communicates their gratitude. "This is what I am here to do in life," she says. "To help other people."

In Evelyn's future she plans on becoming a doctor, specializing in surgery and traveling to third world countries. She says, "One day I would like to have a practice in Boise and once a month, for a week or so, travel to countries like Nicaragua..." Her dream is to build a hospital on the island of Ometepe in Nicaragua.

Evelyn gives us all good advice when she says, "We need to appreciate and focus on what we do have, not on what we don't have. And be grateful for the simple things of life." Evelyn is making history by inspiring us to think more of others as we work hard to improve the health and livelihood of Nicaraguan. As Evelyn notes, "One person really can make a huge difference in the world around them, no matter where they live."

Evelyn hopes to return to Nicaragua this spring and is always looking for donations of clothing and medicine. If you can donate or help in anyway contact Evelyn Ferrari at 938-1978.

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BONNIE VESTAL, Boise, Idaho

By Amber Armarong

Being a woman and a medical student during the late 1960’s may have made Bonnie Vestal feel a little out of her element, but she did not ignore the healing archetype she possessed. She was one of ten women in a class of 120 and continued to enjoy being feminine. She trained in oncology because she enjoyed the intensity and the challenges of this medical frontier. She felt most comfortable working with children and witnessed significant medical advances during the course of her education.

Having two children of her own, she gives credit for being a good mother to what she has learned from other people, especially the people whom she has seen diagnosed with cancer. Impacted by the weight of such serious news, she has seen them 'wake up' to life and carefully reevaluate their choices about how they live their lives. This helped her realize that little things didn't matter: making sure her children's rooms were cleaned was less important than showing them love for their family. She asked Bonnie how she 'goes home' after spending time with a dying patient or how she transitions from one part of her life to another. She matter-of-factly answered, "I live totally present in the moment...I don't want to take the sadness home to my children, so I can be open to my children's joys. Therefore, I don't let my mind go where my body is not." Bonnie believes that the most important thing in life is love; we need to be in good relationships with all of life.

In 1996, a door was opened for Bonnie when she was asked to become involved in an integrative health clinic where practitioners work "toward improved integration of body, mind, heart, and spirit...awakening inner wisdom to the use of new tools and responses to common, often chronic problems." Bonnie dropped her medical practice of 17 years to pursue a new career that would enable her to focus on "living with intuition." This helped her teach people to look at things with a new perspective. While performing her oncology duties, she witnessed the fear and pain her patients experienced and the way they "passed on gracefully." She applies this knowledge to the adults she now counsels. This 'dying perspective' taught her how to live life in a good way. She now teaches people to be authentic, be present, be in the moment, and allow what they have been through or are currently going through.

When Bonnie left her traditional medical practice, many people told her she was brave, but Bonnie felt free. She enjoys what she currently does because it is mutually beneficial for the patient and for herself. She is inspired by what she learns from her patients in pediatric oncology, which helps her "to have a good day everyday." With each day, Bonnie collects more wisdom and offers it to others.

Bonnie is also very in tune to the environment, where she lets nature teach her a lot about how to conduct human life. There was a time when Bonnie lived in Baltimore, Maryland for two years. Unlike the doctors who come to her for her skills, she tried her best to create a home by nurturing different parts of herself; she took walks, worked in the...
garden, and breathed in the fresh air, while soaking in the sunshine and looking at the blue sky. She believes that survival depends on how well you nurture yourself, so she has learned to look to nature for guidance. Her belief that people should pay attention to life’s little obstacles has helped her “learn the lesson that those are the places in our lives where real growth occurs.”

Dr. Bonnie Vestal has accomplished many great things for herself and for others. She currently works at the Integrative Health Building with other healthcare providers who help people with the problems they face as a whole person. Bonnie believes that it is very important to treat the “body, mind, heart, and spirit,” not just the affliction the patient has. Bonnie is also involved in teaching the community with her many presentations about illness, healing, and life. Bonnie’s involvement in the historical advancements of medicine and the life she has chosen to live for herself, have benefited others in great ways.

ANITA PEDRAZA, Nampa, Idaho

By Delilah Trioa

Early in the morning, before the sun had even risen, the family station wagon pulled into the farmer’s field, the heat still lingering from the day before like hot smoke lingering at the ceiling of a smoke-filled bar. Anita grabbed her sack and hurried into the field; the older children got started with their parents while the little ones slept in the car. The pungent smell of onions surrounded her as she began to pick up handfuls of onions left on the ground behind her parents in the row ahead of her. She had learned to work fast. As the sun peeked over the horizon to remind them that the heat was growing, the little ones slowly awoke. This is what Anita and her family did every summer until she was fourteen years old. Anita was born and raised speaking English in the Nampa school district. It was this beginning that helped her as a driver for child safety, suicide prevention, and a strong advocate for women’s health.

As Ginger Floerchinger-Franks—-but well, first things first. Running in St. George, Utah, she was determined toward a personal best when she spotted a kitten. Forlorn, frightened and obviously lost or abandoned, the kitten needed help. Ginger stopped, rescued the small feline and carried it to the next water stop. An action typical of this energetic, caring woman, her friends say. “I guess I just believe that every life is as important to its owner as my life is to me,” she said, recalling the incident. It’s a credo well suited to her work as Injury Prevention Manager at the Department of Health and Welfare.

“Ginger has been a driver for child safety, suicide prevention, sexual assault prevention and poison control in Idaho, just to name a few of her initiatives.”

When she is asked about those initiatives, it quickly becomes apparent that Ginger prefers the “we” to the “I” personal pronoun. A team player quick to acknowledge the efforts of her co-workers as well as ordinary citizens, she speaks with an infectious blend of honesty, directness and conviction about the injury prevention issues in which she’s involved. She believes that knowing the facts is the basis for people changing their behavior. Sometimes when progress seems slow, a personal tragedy will cause a hitherto unknown individual to step forward and become a catalyst for change by lobbying legislators for a better law. “It’s happening now with the seat belt issue,” she said.

Another project on her team’s list is the issue of bicycle safety. She advocates bicycle rodeos for children as a fun way of teaching skills and educating kids and parents to wear a helmet while riding a bike. Cool, yes, and possibly life-saving.

When it becomes a safety issue, “Ginger loves to partner with others so that the outcomes of her work are improved and the impact far-reaching,” said Clark.

Like the mail carrier that goes for a hike on his or her day off, she finds time for worthy causes outside her professional scope. The Humane Society and the Girl Scouts are two long-term favorites. True to her aversion to the first person singular, she described a survey in progress that will give the girls themselves a voice in shaping future GS programs.

Despite Ginger’s obvious people skills, and even with the support of her husband and friends, perhaps the most astonishing achievement of her life so far has been largely a solo effort. Last August, she was seriously injured in an accident while trimming ivy; she fell off a ladder and broke her back. "My friends called it 'Extreme Gardening,'" she said.

The recovery promised to be long and slow, partly due to Ginger’s age (she is 54). When a health care professional suggested she walk during her recovery, this goal-oriented woman’s eyes lit up. Goals she was good at. She’d used them strategically all along. The goal was to complete a walk around the block. It wasn’t quite enough. Ginger checked her calendar and came up with another target. On December 9th, she’d walk the Tucson Marathon. When she resumed training, amazed friends teased, "Um--where did you say you work? the Bureau of Injury Promotion and Health Prevention?"

The training went so well that in November she decided to walk an earlier event, the Tulsa, Oklahoma, Marathon, in preparation for Tucson. She completed Tulsa in six hours and thirty-five minutes, "My personal best for walking and my personal worst for running a marathon," she joked. The time was roughly a half-hour short of this personal best, running time of 3:31 at St. George.

In her favorite training ground, the Boise foothills, she continued to prepare for Tucson. "I love the foothills," she says, citing their ever-changing seasonal beauty, and the fact that she can be out there for hours alone or with friends, and not meet another human being. Seventeen weeks after the accident that broke her back, she ran the Tucson Marathon.

"You can’t let age stop you," said this woman who, incidentally, changed careers and earned a doctorate at age 48. "Life is too interesting." Her next goal: the Paris Marathon, April 7, 2002. She’ll run it.
My parents tell me that as a small child, I cried when trees were cut,” Renee remembers. Although she realizes now that there are times when the cutting of trees is appropriate or necessary, Renee B. Mullen continues to be passionate about conserving the environment. In fact, she has made conservation her career.

Renee graduated from Wake Forest University with a bachelor's degree in biology. Since then she has been employed in a variety of jobs often involving conservation: from park ranger to head gardener at the Utah State Arboretum to professor of microbiology and conservation biology. She especially loves teaching, noting that her favorite part is “when that light goes on...when the student understands.”

Renee received her Ph.D. in microbial ecology in 1995 at the University of Colorado. Her doctoral work focused on the tiny snow buttercup, Ranunculus adoneus, which lives only in alpine tundra, and its symbiotic relationship with mycorrhizal fungi. She has published her work in various international ecological journals. Lately, however, Renee’s attention has shifted from this tiny flower to a much larger subject: conservation around the world. She works as a scientist for the Nature Conservancy, an international, non-profit organization that specializes in conserving land and waters for the protection of biodiversity. She came to this position through a somewhat circuitous route.

After graduate school, Renee moved to Boise, taught microbial ecology and botany courses at Boise State as an adjunct professor, and procured a postdoctoral fellowship through the national research council in Pensacola, Florida. This work led to a tenure-track position as the microbiologist at the University of Southern Maine, which she accepted in 1997.

Throughout her pursuits of academia, however, Renee worried about the environment and the rapid disappearance of open, natural spaces. Although her work in microbiology was challenging and fulfilling, she felt she was not doing enough to further conservation. Wanting to learn more about what she could do, she worked in Boise as a summer intern for the Idaho chapter of the Nature Conservancy, an experience that was “one of the best experiences of [her] life.” At the end of the summer, a position with the Nature Conservancy’s national science division became available and Renee immediately accepted the offer. Now she works as a conservation planner organization-wide, meaning she works with a small group of people here in Boise on the methods of large-scale conservation planning.

Part of her job is to communicate the conservancy’s work to others. “I am most excited about my upcoming trip to China,” Renee notes. She was recently invited by the Chinese government to travel with a group of other Nature Conservancy scientists to the Yunnan Province of China. As a result of restrictions on logging and an increase in ecotourism, the Chinese government has become increasingly interested in conservation and has asked the Nature Conservancy to hold a workshop for Chinese government officials to learn about the conservancy’s methods for conservation.

Renee is also interested in local conservation matters and has been involved in Boise Foothills issues since moving to Boise for the first time in 1992. She grew concerned that the there seemed to be no thoughtful, long-term plan for conserving open spaces in the foothills. “The city sort of seemed to stamp development permits as they came along.” She wrote to city council members and presented information from other cities proactive about conservation of open spaces and thus their quality of life.

Because of her experience in conservation planning, Renee served as a consultant to the citizens’ committee, which created the plan prioritizing land to be targeted by the Boise foothills serial levy. When the levy passed in May, Renee felt a great relief and became optimistic about the future of the foothills: “People really stood up and said ‘we care’.

Although the future of the Boise Foothills (as well as our planet) is uncertain, Renee believes that there are things we can do to help. Education is foremost. Whether it is exposure to the wonders of nature, information about the effects of too much development, such as erosion and loss of habitat, or simply fostering a love for the environment, Renee feels that as a society, we would all benefit from learning more about our natural world.

“Think about the future,” she urges. “Learn from the examples of Europe and the eastern United States. Examine what they have done well or not so well...Renee reminds us, “Idaho is on the edge...we haven’t ruined our state yet, and we have an opportunity to plan better,” so we don’t ruin the beautiful habitats that we love. Renee’s work draws us to examine the information before us and make a decision on what we value as citizens. If we value open spaces, the intrinsic benefits of a beautiful landscape, then we must act on our values and protect it. Her work provides us with the essential information to make decisions and to plan development in a meaningful way, instead of simply allowing market values to dictate how land is used.

Whether she’s hiking, skiing, mountain biking or gardening, Renee has always loved the outdoors. Conservation is her passion, and she is not afraid to fight for it. Her willingness to make radical career changes and her initiative and dedication with the foothills have shown that she is prepared to take chances in order to protect the environment: “I have a willingness to go for it...to take risks for what I believe in.”
strongly valued individuals, and who were committed to helping others. Interaction with these people of all different backgrounds inspired her to become very active on campus, opening eyes, dispelling stereotypes, and encouraging dialogue on racism. Karen declared sociology as her major with a minor in public health. Along with WOCA, Karen has volunteered for the alliance for dismantling racism, which sponsors workshops and events to increase awareness of all race issues. She has also served on the advisory board to the Boise State Women's Center and participated in the play The Vagina Monologues, by Eve Ensler.

Karen knows that change in attitude will not come easily, but she is committed to working for it. To all who are searching to broaden their perspective, she says, “Seek the truth.” Read books written by people of different ethnicities and cultures. Investigate history, and have educated discussions with people of various backgrounds. Do not accept statements at face value: discern bias and avoid prejudice. Karen herself has provided a wonderful example of broadening one’s own perspective to see the importance of all people. She learned from a difficult situation, and used her experience to help others in the same position.

DANA MILLER, Nampa Idaho

By Wendy Mercer

Dana Miller cares for people. Growing up, she had always wanted to be a school nurse. Her mother’s position inspired her to pursue this dream. She wanted Dana to take hold of her dreams, since she did not give up a career in nursing for marriage. Through her involvement in the Nampa school district and her own personal experience with a supportive mother, Dana understands the importance of parental involvement and how support can make all the difference in pursuing goals.

Travel has also broadened her mind and given her a fuller perspective on the world. When her husband was stationed in Turkey, she took full advantage of all that living in another country offered. Being a diplomat, warm-hearted person, she quickly made friends among the Turks. Fascinated by Middle Eastern culture, she experienced history and learned much from her travels. She was disturbed by the treatment of women in Turkey, however. Coming back to the United States, she became a vocal advocate for women’s issues, especially in the areas of pregnancy and parenting.

Dana earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing at the University of Utah. While she was there, public health began to fascinate her. What a great way to help people, she thought. Preventive care could help people, especially children, avoid the consequences of disease and the trauma of life-threatening illness. She continued her education at the University of Texas. After having her first child, Tyson, she and a close friend, who had also just given birth, decided to start a part-time project for young parents. Backed by the Junior League, the Young Family Resource Center would teach parenting skills, distribute items to low-income families, and ensure that children would get the best start in life. More people joined them, and they co-wrote an article for a nursing journal about their success. The best part was how much fun they had.

Dana really enjoyed actively helping people. When she and her family moved to Nampa, she and another friend started a similar program called Early Parenting Support Services. This project did not enjoy the longevity of the first one, but it did attract attention for the message of healthy parenting. That was what Dana wanted to accomplish.

At the same time, Dana was living her dream of being a school nurse. In the mid-1980s, Dana started working part time for the Nampa School district as the only nurse in one of the largest, poorest school districts in the state of Idaho. Seeing the results of poverty and lack of health insurance, she quickly realized that she alone could not help all kids, especially just working part time. The school district increased her hours to full time, and she increased her influence from lobbying for nutrition to working with petitions for free physicals for students in need. As Nampa School administrators realized through Dana’s example how important school nurses are, the school district hired more nurses and Dana became coordinator of the school nurse program. They respected her “vision, leadership, and caring.”

As Nampa’s school nurse coordinator, Dana supports the role of all school nurses to improve health care for students. Willing to contribute to a worthy cause, Dana jumped on the chance to help with her church’s Open Arms Baby Project. Along with BSU and NNU, the March of Dimes, and greater Nampa community, the project sponsors an incentive program for low-income mothers. Student nurses from BSU and NNU volunteer to receive valuable experience as they assist parents and children from different backgrounds. She is also involved in Healthy Nampa/Healthy Youth.

Considering that Dana is such an active person, one would never think she would ever want to retire, but she has plans for when her working career is over. She wants to spend even more time volunteering as parish nurse for her church and with the Nampa Lions Club. Invested in the lives of young people is another area in which she would like to continue. She also wants to further develop her online marketing business. Dana knows that time is short, but she wants to use it to the best of her abilities to get the most done. What advice would you give to those just starting their nursing careers? “Be open-minded, and research what you want out of life. Don’t just fall into whatever comes around. Nursing is a broad field. And remember, community service is important.”

Dana is a role model herself. Through her warmth, diplomacy, and concern for others, she has made a lasting impression on the families of Nampa. Realizing her dreams, she has joyfully enriched the lives of others in all her activities.

KAREN CROSS, Meridian, Idaho

By Wendy Mercer

To Karen Cross, every person is valuable. She knows that the color of one's skin does not affect their character, personality, or merit. It was quite a shock when she moved to America from Trinidad six years ago and discovered racism for the first time.

In Trinidad, people of African descent predominated. Nevertheless, all people were respected and different cultures were celebrated. People of all ethnic backgrounds could attend the best secondary schools, which were much tougher than their American counterparts. The whole nation was a community devoted to each other's well being.

When Karen moved to Boston in order to attend college, she was shocked. Unknowingly she had abandoned the best secondary schools, which were much tougher than prejudice here. Instead, racism in Idaho seems more aggressive.

Karen remembers an incident at school, which illustrates this point; she shares it, so we can learn from it. In one of her classes, the professor divided the students into small discussion groups to work. During the discussion one student stood up and complained about affirmative action. He said that it was not fair that a person of lesser skills would be favored above a person of higher skills only because the former was from a less-represented ethnic group. Karen stood up and asked, “Why do you automatically suppose that the person of color will not be as skilled as the white person?” She was angered by this internalized, prejudiced assumption that people of color are always less qualified, and thus must be given special advantages to keep up with white people. Like so many others, she did not realize that his statement was inherently biased.

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[Image of Karen Cross]

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SUSAN BURKETT, Boise State faculty

By Bob Evanscho: Bob is a writer for the Boise State Office of News Services. He has a bachelor's degree in sociology and arts & media from Grand Valley State University in Michigan and a master's degree from BSU's interdisciplinary studies programs.

The words trailblazer and pathfinder are often overstated. But in the case of Susan Burkett, they seem perfectly applicable.

While Burkett, a Boise State University professor of electrical and computer engineering, is reluctant to assume that label, she is nevertheless a pioneer in the eyes of many of her colleagues and students — especially when you consider the following:

- Working in the male-dominated field of electrical and computer engineering, Burkett secured a job with the prestigious Center for Materials for Information Technology at the University of Alabama in the mid-1990s, two years after earning her Ph.D. in electrical engineering from the University of Missouri.
- In the summer of 1997, she became the first full-time female professor in BSU's new College of Engineering.
- In November 1998, once the college was up and running, she helped establish the Boise State chapter of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and has been an important role model to female engineering students at the university.
- Since her arrival at Boise State, Burkett is (or has been) involved in four major research projects that have received (or are scheduled to receive) a total of roughly $3 million in funding from outside sources.

Given the scarcity of women at the Ph.D. level in electrical and computer engineering and the fact that she is one of only four full-time female engineering professors at Boise State, Burkett sometimes feels she's in the spotlight, but her relatively high profile is important when it comes to providing a role model for young women who are studying engineering.

Currently, women comprise only 13 percent of the undergraduate and 22 percent of the graduate enrollment in electrical and computer, mechanical and civil engineering at Boise State, while the national undergraduate level is around 20 percent.

Those low numbers, Burkett contends, sometimes create significant hurdles for women in the professional and academic arena — even in BSU's up-and-coming engineering school. "Sometimes I feel like I'm the only person who thinks the way I do, and it gets frustrating," she said. "I think the situation for women [students and professors in the college] will improve when we get more females. But sometimes I feel that the female voice here is kind of ignored. If you are at all aggressive, the perception is different for a woman than it is for a man. If you're a man, you're applauded for being a crusader, but if a woman fights hard for what she believes in, the same respect isn't always there."

What concerns Burkett is that the paucity of women engineers and engineering students can erode a young woman's confidence if she seeks a position in what is still a male bastion. "I think sometimes women [engineering students] don't have the same confidence level as their male counterparts," Burkett said. "They often have the same ability, but not the same self-confidence. I think to a certain extent it's inherent in our nature."

A key for females to overcome such a situation, should it exist, says Burkett, is for them to find strong role models such as advisors and mentors and a common bond, such as the Society of Women Engineers chapter.

"I think a female [faculty] advisor is very helpful for female students," she said. "I think a female can help a student be aware of some of the battles she is going to face. Finding, and then trusting, a good adviser is important. And that's not to say there aren't good male advisers out there.

Burkett has done more than her part to set a good example. Among the projects she has spearheaded was a program called the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU), which is designed to draw some of the nation's top undergraduate engineering students to Boise State. The three-year project received a $200,000 grant from the National Science Foundation and allowed the visiting students the unique opportunity to gain invaluable summer research experience in the microelectronics field by using the facilities and tapping the expertise of professors at Boise State. According to Burkett, the REU program is designed to raise the students' awareness of graduate studies and provide them with opportunities to make contacts with fellow students with similar interests.

Burkett also received a $200,000 NSF grant for research on magnetic materials for "read" heads. The funding is ongoing through 2001.

She has also received $1.9 million in federal funding for her involvement with a project with the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina in the fabrication of a new technology that will focus on materials and processing of three-dimensional structures.

Most recently, Burkett is part of a research team with two colleagues from Boise State's chemistry department that is working to develop an instrument to verify compliance with nuclear nonproliferation treaties. The project, which is earmarked to receive $600,000 in funding from the Department of Energy, builds on the university's ongoing research efforts to develop miniaturized sensors that can detect subsurface contamination.

Despite the frustrations, Burkett believes her college has a niche in the Pacific Northwest in regard to university research. "We aren't going to compete with the big name schools with lots of resources," she said. "But there is no reason we can't be a premier institution in this area."

No doubt, Burkett will help lead the way.

NANCY JACOBSEN, Boise State student

By Barb McEvoy: Barb is a mother and a classmate with her greatest joy and only daughter, Nicole. She studies writing, anthropology, and geology. She is focused on the discovery, interaction, and interpretation of American culture.

"The energy we all have can be used to absorb and deflect the aggressions aimed toward us." Nancy Jacobson

Nancy Jacobson is one of those rare individuals who both radiate a subtle positive energy and who is also acutely aware of the power of optimistic benevolence. I first met Nancy in a non-fiction writing class at Boise State. One day while we were in a group presenting our own work, Nancy read an emotional essay espousing the virtues of vulnerability, which lead to inner peace and tranquil serenity. The class listened as she read each word filled with emotion, written with pure integrity. All was quiet and I remember being mesmerized by the beauty of her insights. After the presentation, she handed me the paper and said she wrote it for me as a gift. Her gesture did not go unnoticed and it appears, as she works toward the close of her college career, she has never forsaken her mission to uplift and value others around her.

Nancy works at the Gateway Center at Boise State, previously as a peer advisor and administrative assistant, and currently as the editorial assistant. Kari Goldade says, "She embodies the concepts of success, determination, kindness, reciprocity, enthusiasm, infinite energy and innate caring for every individual." Like an unseen energy force she listens to those in need and helps them find the power within themselves to move forward and succeed.

Currently she participates as a mediator in small claims court. Although it takes a great deal of courage to place herself between two people who are at odds with each other, she says when the outcome has the adversities smiling and agreeing, she feels she's made a difference. Nancy is driven by her conviction — if she can show others the value of listening to one another with care and attention, then this world will be filled with happier people living fuller lives.

"I hope I'm showing people compassion and empathy... teaching others to care about one another," she says. "I give my mom credit for my empathetic approach; she is a social person who is very kind to others."

Nancy has lived in New York, Massachusetts, and California. The move to California when she was nine years old was due to financial hardships. But while the transitions were wrenching havoc on Nancy and her siblings, she kept faith that all would work out fine and continued this coveted positive attitude throughout her life. "My sister still says I was way too adjusted as a child," she reflects. However, Nancy has overcome other more difficult hardships - hardships that have given her the empathy and strength to better assist her fellow students. She is reluctant to speak of these only to say, "I am very persistent. My biggest hurdle has been when to say no, but I have learned that when things don't go right - allow this." A tough lesson in the face of adversity.

Family is very important to her. With excitement she shows me pictures of her grandchildren, two darling little girls, and praises her husband, Rick, for supporting her. Tears fill her eyes when I ask, "So who is your Nancy?" She proudly says, "He is," referring to the photo of her husband. Tears continue to swell when she speaks of her husband. "That's my Nancy," Nancy says. She was born in Grand Valley, Michigan, and then moved to the Bay Area of San Francisco. In her second year of college in California, she met her husband, Rick. They were married four years later and later had two children, Kyra and Craig. She then continued her studies at New York State University in New York, Massachusetts, and California. The move to California when she was nine years old was due to financial hardships. But while the transitions were wrenching havoc on Nancy and her siblings, she kept faith that all would work out fine and continued this coveted positive attitude throughout her life. "My sister still says I was way too adjusted as a child," she reflects. However, Nancy has overcome other more difficult hardships - hardships that have given her the empathy and strength to better assist her fellow students. She is reluctant to speak of these only to say, "I am very persistent. My biggest hurdle has been when to say no, but I have learned that when things don't go right - allow this." A tough lesson in the face of adversity.

Nancy is particularly proud of her involvement in many campus clubs and organizations at Boise State: Phi Kappa Phi, National Honor Society, the Leadership Education & Development Series (LEADS), Golden Key Honors Society, and serving as a mentor in the Women's Center returning women's mentoring program. She returned to...
FELICIA (FELIX) BOGARD, Payette, Idaho

By Barb McEvey

"Understand yourself, who you are, and what your own traditions are; in this way you can appreciate the differences and likeness in others." Felix Bogard

Felix Bogard is a leader among the Native American community in the Treasure Valley. As her nominator, Gypsy Hall notes, "As a Lakota woman descended from the Red Cloud clan, she has helped other Indian people keep alive the strength and beauty of their culture and shared her rich heritage with the non-Native community throughout the Treasure Valley. Four years ago, Felix became the drum keeper of the Matroska drum (bearwhite), a traditional Lakota drum blessed by a revered Lakota medicine man from the Pine Ridge Reservation. The drum is unique as it is the first in the Treasure Valley composed of women singers and a few male elders and relatives - drum circles are typically composed of men only. As Gypsy reminds us, "For this reason, it took great courage and dedication to introduce this drum to the community."

As Felix talks about her relationship with the drum, she notes that when she touched it for the first time, "I felt alive at first sight. Two hundred years ago women did sit at the drum, but it is only recently that they have been allowed to regain their position and re-institute their presence at the drum and as spiritual leaders.

She does not take her position with the drum lightly and has a deep relationship with tradition that solidifies her sense of responsibility and commitment to humanity. Her community is not restricted to Indian culture. On the contrary, it extends across cultures. Felix takes her drum, and her culture into elementary classrooms, universities functions, and secular engagements, to teach others about diversity and unify people who may be timid or shy among other people.

As an organizer of an annual gathering called Global Village, sponsored by the Ontario and Payette communities, Felix brings people together to experience the unique and common elements of a variety of cultures. In this daylong event, each cultural group creates a village within a community of villages each representing Japanese, Basque, Mexican, Irish, Italian, Finnish, Native American, and Scottish cultures. As Gypsy notes, every group marches in a parade together, and they pray together; then families with their children visit each village, experiencing music, crafts, dance, and traditions of each culture.

I want the public to know about the history, strengths and unique beliefs of each other," Felix notes. "When they see them (participants in the celebration) in the community, they will understand them better. Knowledge is power and with it you lose your fear (of differences)."

Felix consistently reaches out and helps others in her desire to unite our communities. Gypsy Hall shared a very touching example of the generosity and quiet leadership that Felix demonstrates. "A few years ago, Felix showed her Native generosity to a non-Native lady who had been a friend to the drum and cooked fry bread for fund raisers for Indian families in need. The generous lady was now dying of cancer. Felix made sure she was invited to a big feast that she coordinates. When it came time to give the ailing lady her necklace, the new one could not be found. Felix, who always wears her necklace, keeping it safe over her heart, and unbeknownst to all but me who had happened to see, stood quietly alone, took off her own necklace and returned to present the honoring gift to the dying elder. Felix and the drum's singers gathered around her to sing an honoring song and to hug her good bye."

When Felix received the title of drum keeper, she also received special instruction: "Understand peace...take our culture and let it be understood with respect and thoughtful ceremony. If we don't all come to understand each other, we will perish."

"My ancestors are with me every day and I must stay on the good 'Red Road' to show them respect by using good judgment," she says. "I know we are all human and sometimes we falter. It's okay as long as you get back on the path. You make your choices." Felix Bogard has indeed made her choices, and they have come to benefit many people in our community. She has served as co-chair of the Western Idaho Pow Wow Association, is a key success of Global Village and Day of the Drum, has performed at many schools, Garden City Days, Martin Luther King March, Women's Center functions, and a multitude of church services across the area. According to her nominator, her friend, and greatest admirer, Gypsy Hall, "She is one of the most generous, selfless, insightful persons I know." Felix smiles when she reads Gypsy's words and tells me it is with the drum she finds her greatest strength and reinforced belief in women's empowerment. In Indian tradition "women have always had the greatest power [and] each song is a prayer...the creator hears."

DIANNA LONGORIA, Boise State staff

Diana Longoria, a farmer's daughter, is used to hard work and helping others. She worked in her father's and neighbor's farm fields, where she was instilled with a solid work ethic and introduced to people of different cultures.

At an early age she learned about the importance of culture and the diversity that surrounded her. Soon after high school she married and began to raise her own family and worked hard to become a successful sales manager.

When Diana turned forty, with two children still in high school, she decided to go back to college and follow her dreams to encourage young women and men to be successful academically. "In 1965 we were not encouraged to go to college," she reflects. "I wanted to change that. There just wasn't much contact between universities and high schools." She quit her job and enrolled at Boise State; within her first year she accepted an internship where she worked with a recruiter for the university. "I had sales experience so selling Boise State was easy," Diana states about her recruiting abilities, "But I kept wanting to know how he or she was doing" once a student was enrolled.

Her desire for sustained personal connections inspired her to seek a different internship after that, one as a peer academic advisor where she could have a greater impact on students once they were admitted. She worked in this position for two years, all the while maintaining high honor roll status as a student.

As rewarding as this experience was for Diana, she finally resigned from this position to concentrate on her social science and multietnic studies major and minor in Native American studies. Diana fondly remembers an awards ceremony for Phi Kappa Phi when Margie Van Vooren, Dean of Student Services, approached her to offer her a job: "Margie said, 'I have the job for you!' A position was being created to assist non-traditional students to better support and counsel them on a variety of issues. 'It was so rewarding!' Diana reflects. "I remember one time when I was at a football game with my family, a woman came up to me and said, 'You saved my life. I am an honor student now. It's always rewarding to see your work come to fruition.'"

Diana juggled schoolwork, finances and family; she cared for her ailing mother and worked hard in school to finally graduate with high honors. Shortly thereafter, she began work on her master's degree and received another call for her to consider taking another job at Boise State - the same job she now holds as coordinator of tutorial services for the Student Success Program. She also has taught a number of study skills classes. According to Sue Chew, one of Diana's employee's, Diana has never stopped giving to others; the support she offers goes beyond her title. Diana is sensitive and aware, something Sue quickly discovered working with her.

Diana currently works with the student success program, a federally funded TRIO program designed to assist students who have not always been given the tools for success in high school. "If we don't offer them the chance..." Diana states about her recruiting abilities, "[they have not been taught in high school] how can we take their money (in college)?" Diana asks as she reflects on the development of programs to teach students skills to succeed academically.

Diana inspires students with good advice: 1) Progress, not perfection is what is important. Reduce Stress and stop worrying about getting straight A's: 2) Attendance is 100%. 3) Differentiate between the time you should spend on classes for your major and electives; 4) Get active "take" your education and don't expect professors to "spoon feed" you while you "get" an education.

Diana Longoria - grandmother, successful student, community volunteer, and role model - is making history with each relationship she nurtures. "Life is complicated,"
she notes. "The hustle and bustle of everyday traumas can make us lose focus about what is truly important or what is only a momentary setback or crisis. Right now, be sure to give your loved ones an extra hug, and by all means, take a moment, even if it is only a few seconds, to stop and smell the roses."*  

BARBARA MILLER, Kellogg, Idaho  
By Barb McEvoy

My office is in the backroom of a small 1970's track home on a quiet Boise cul-de-sac. The light streams through an eastward facing window blocked by the eaves of my neighbor's house currently in the throes of abatement from toxic mold. From an aged computer screen, Barbara Miller stares at me from a photo I have downloaded from one of a dozen articles about her gleaned off the Internet. Sincerity and conviction mix nicely with her easy smile and gentle posture. I am awed and amazed by the words I read of her accomplishments in Idaho's Silver Valley. Leading the Peoples Action Coalition she began to take action to clean up toxic waste leaching from an abandoned silver mine near her home in Kellogg, Idaho. Toxic waste in the form of lead and heavy metals has caused severe health problems for the children and adults in her community. The Ford Foundation has honored Barbara for her unyielding efforts to improve the lives of Idaho citizens and for her steadfast devotion to her own commitment as a "steward of the earth."

As I scroll down my computer screen, I begin to get a better idea of the environmental devastation outlined in this Ford Foundation article: "Today this is a land of beauty and environmental devastation, designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a 21-mile superfund site, the second largest in the nation. Though the E.P.A. targeted the site for cleanup in the early 1980's, the damage has grown worse over time. As Barbara Miller explains, 'One year, during a flood, the waters spread over a million pounds of mining pollution - arsenic, cadmium, mercury, zinc and lead - downstream to an area covering over 1,500 square miles.' The pollution now reaches east into bordering Montana and as far west as Spokane, and may, through the Columbia River basin, eventually reach the Pacific."

As I pause from my research, I look east toward the efforts of the abatement in progress next door. How does a person garner the strength for the process of cleaning up 1,500 square miles? I re-read her nomination from Dr. Bob McCarl.

Written coherently and with celebrated esteem he sketches a hero, selfless and determined. "Barb Miller is the strongest person I have ever known. Her strength is palpable as she looks you straight in the eye, states her beliefs and her position and challenges you to do the same."

These words daunt me. Again, how do I begin the interview? A little overwhelmed, I continue to read her nomination: "She has suffered physically and mentally for her beliefs in a community that has often shunned and abused her... She is a lone voice... has steadfastly refused to knock under pressure and continues her educational campaign... speaking up for safe living conditions... speaking against media attacks... holding the state of Idaho responsible... letting EPA do what it needs to do..."

Bob McCarl minces no words. Barbara Miller is making history as she works to restore the beauty and health of the Silver Valley in the face of opposition from those who stand to lose financially and politically. His confidence in Barbara as a leader is clear, but there is something more that begins to give me courage to write that first email, for he also speaks of his unpretentious friend: "Barbara is a quiet, unassuming person. She has a very strong personal belief in human justice... She also has a great sense of humor, a true love of the community and its potential."

And so, I begin to feel more comfortable and settle into my chair, my hands resting on the keyboard. Barbara Miller is a lovely, courageous, genuine humanitarian worthy of high praise and friendship. Finally, I am able to send the first email, and as predicted, a selfless, jovial, down-to-earth woman emerges in her own words upon my screen, complete with honorable values, integrity, determination, and friendliness:

All it takes is a desire to make the world a better place and you are inspired to make it happen... There are scores of women in this Valley who deserve to be recognized for outstanding contributions to their community and what they have endured over the years. My story [comes from] a strong value system impressed upon me by my parents and family to care for one another, to be good stewards of the earth and leave the world a better place... My father was a union organizer; he was a strong person, who came out of the depression and fought in World War 2. His own father died when he was about three.... Both my grandmothers lived to be almost 100; they were pioneers of the true spirit! Perhaps I inherited their strength; my own mother raised twelve bright, intelligent children under some tough circumstances... My greatest joys are my children, two sons and two daughters. These individuals have been raised with some amazing situations and have gone on to be good people...

Barbara Miller is a making history by continuing in the spirit of her ancestors. Her heartfelt love of the land and her admirable strength of character surpass those who have gone before her and line the pages in our history books. She is truly a mentor for women like me; her enthusiasm for life will remain in my heart and will be imprinted on my mind next to all of those who fight and live as stewards of this earth. Her story is our story.

FATIMA MOHAMMADI, Boise State student  
By Amber Armstrong

In mid July of 1979, a few months after Fatima Mohammadi was born in Iran, her American mother and her Persian father brought her to the United States. She is an only child and was raised as an Iranian girl with the traditional values of obedience, morality, and a diligent work ethic. She grew up learning Iranian Islamic culture and language at home, despite being surrounded and influenced by the pressures of American popular culture.

Her parents have always been very loving, supportive, and encouraging of Fatima. Her faith and culture are very much a part of her strength from her faith. The early spring of 1999 marked a change in her life when she was able to start at a university that welcomed her faith. She began to question her place in her current faith. She had held doubts about Christianity with the thoughts that she would not be able to be as progressive if she became a Christian. Additionally, according to her knowledge of the Bible, women did not seem to be treated well; they were portrayed as temptresses or prostitutes. She began to learn about women such as Ruth and Mary, women who are portrayed as powerful forces for change; this helped change her views on the Bible and Christianity. Over the course of the next few months, she started going to a biblical-based church and experienced a "whirlwind, hollow feeling... as if something wonderful was just waiting to happen to [her]."

In December of 1999, she went to the pastor of her church and accepted Christ.

The next day, she had doubts, almost regretting what she had done. "Slowly but surely," she began taking steps, realizing that true Christianity is about little more than promoting love, equality, and forgiveness, whereas any institutionalized religion can be shaded and confusing. With her change in faith, she has become a stronger person in that "She has Jesus," the greatest advocate of love and equality, as her example. Through small acts of God and faith everyday, she is constantly strengthened. In her studies of God and the Bible, she finds many reminders of the very service that she finds to be most rewarding: defending and assisting the oppressed.

Fatima is a very strong woman who has gone through many difficult experiences, none of which she completely regrets. According to Fatima, these experiences have given her a better awareness of this world and of human character. Without having gone through these difficult times herself, she would not be able to educate as effectively or act with urgency to help others. Fatima's faith has helped her to better heal from these experiences. She feels that if she does not help others with the knowledge she has gained, then she will have suffered pointless.

Fatima has always been an excellent student and is currently involved with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Human Rights Week committee and is also a member of the alliance for dismantling racism. She first began her diversity work in high school when she became involved with Amnesty International, students for a better earth, and the political science club, as well as working to promote HIV/AIDS & STD education awareness in her school with a few peers. She continued to promote the missions of each of these groups in the Boise school district as an educator. Aside from being active in her diversity work, she also enjoys playing soccer, teaching, lifting weights, dancing, reading, and being with the people she loves. One of her favorite things is the feeling she gets from accomplishment, whether it be at work or school.

Fatima, who is "coming into awareness" of her rights and privileges, realizes that she can be a female student, feminist and part of a minority. These realizations help her appreciate her own history and make history of her own by teaching others. She graduated with her masters in English from Boise State University in December and is planning to attend law school in August. She believes that a "knowledge of the law will give her greater access, opportunity, and a more powerful voice to educate both students and adults of the injustice of oppression."*
LORRY ROBERTS, Boise, Idaho

By Anna Fritz: Anna is a freelance writer. She works for Boise State Radio.

Lorry Roberts lives in a bright turquoise house. You can’t miss it. Soon she’ll paint it bright purple. “It’s just for fun,” she says. Lorry Roberts is a charming, sweet woman who has done some seriously important work in her long and wildly interesting life, but fun seems to dominate it all. First years with Simplot were good ones.

It was an exciting time for a woman rising up in the company, to help low-wage workers learn skills for employment. It was so much fun.” Senior Olympics, working to eradicate land mines, political campaigns: “I always have fun.” Engaging, committed, loving, and lovable, Lorry Roberts is the very picture of a woman who enjoys her life, because she is full of life. And she has made a lot of history along the way. Lorry left Nebraska with her infant daughter and determined to send them all to work for JR Simplot.

Lorry began her career in Caldwell, running the printing press to put out a newsletter and print forms. She had a lot of fun. In a meeting back in the seventies, “I heard it when she talks about her father, who she just adored,” and speaks movingly of her parents’ strength, honesty, and humor. You can hear it when she talks about how proud she is of her children and her grandchildren. You can hear it when she speaks of helping women all over the world. You can even hear it when she talks about donating her body to the Idaho State Anatomical Donation Project. After she dies, to use for medical study, teaching, and research.

It’s no wonder Lorry Roberts enjoys her life. No wonder she is so committed, so effective. No wonder she is so loved. No wonder she continues to make history. All in good fun, of course.

LALANI RATNAYAKE, Boise, Idaho

By Anna Fritz

Practicing dentistry for the government of Sri Lanka is a world away from preventing teen sex, alcohol, drug, and tobacco use in southwest Idaho, but that is the path that Lalani Ratnayake’s life has taken. And thanks to her, many southwest Idaho children will choose a life path that is one of health, knowledge, and safety.

Lalani is a health educator with the Central District Health Department. She is the coordinator of the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (APP) program, and she facilitates programs on dental health, empowerment, and tobacco, alcohol, and drug use prevention.

Lalani’s vision of the future:

“Professional sethback” has turned into a career that makes life better for Idaho’s children. Her knowledge and compassion led her to view and treat others with dignity and respect. “You need to respect each and every person,” she says. “If everyone did that, it would be such a different world.” That different world is Lalani’s vision of the future. “Reaching teens and kids with prevention messages - sex, drugs, tobacco, alcohol - will bring about a better future,” she notes. Making that better future is Lalani’s way of making history - one child at a time.

ELLIE MCKINNON, Boise State staff

By Anna Fritz

“I believe in human potential, that people are put here for a purpose, that life is sacred and should be joyful and celebrated...” Ellie McKinnon believes what she lives. Whether she’s teaching elementary students to write, tutoring Boise State University students, helping high school students earn college credits, or preserving history through storytelling,
They didn’t want to leave each other.

Beyond all her professional accomplishments, Ellie is most proud of her children, not as much for what they’ve accomplished as for who they are. She is also proud of her strong 30-year marriage to her husband Dick, former director of housing at Boise State, who died a year ago after a long illness. “Dick was the kind of man who liked people and cared about them; and they liked him. He was an inspiration to me, and I miss him,” she adds.

Ellie is a woman who chooses to see hope in her life and in the stories she tells. She is continually inspired by those around her, whether it’s the love between her parents, the courage she sees in the faces of the young mothers and mothers-to-be at Booth Memorial School, or seeing herself and Dick in the way their children are living their lives. “You find things to do that bring you joy to get through your loss,” she says. “Rather than dwell on that loss, use the happiness you had as a starting point and stretch it into the future.”*

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**IRENE WILCOX, Boise, Idaho**

*By Delilah Trina*

In 1953 the small town of Boise, Idaho was forever changed by Irene Wilcox, its first clinical social worker. There was no real regard for mental health services at that time, but Irene saw a need for reform. There hadn’t been any changes made in the laws regarding child welfare since 1890. Barely recognized as a problem, child abuse had almost no laws for prevention or punishment. For example in 1953, an abused child was turned away by the “system” with little or no assistance available. Even though Irene was joining that system in Boise, she was determined to help people; she wouldn’t turn her back.

Irene’s educational background is as diverse as her interests. She began her college career at the University of Utah, and then journeyed to San Francisco where she joined the Red Cross. Here her interest in social work blossomed; she worked with many people that genuinely needed help. Irene eventually met her husband in her various travels with the Red Cross and moved to St. Louis, Missouri where she was finishing dental school. There she continued her education, at the highly regarded George Warren Brown School of Social Work. Irene then completed her master’s degree at Howard University. The first year it was open to white students.

She worked in Missouri until they moved.

One of the first things I will never forget is the first child I placed for adoption (in St. Louis). We really made a study of the families. The staff as a whole made a decision about which families they felt would be best for this particular child. I corresponded with the parents of that child until they recently died,” she reminisces.

In 1953, Irene and her husband left St. Louis to make Boise their home. Irene wanted to see a branch of mental health services available to the public. However, she was told there was no need for those types of services - she would prove them wrong.

In a little rock house that still sits on the bank of the river, Irene Wilcox made history for the citizens of Boise. Although the memories rest silently now, the building dwarfed by the commercial buildings that have sprung up around it like weeds, we cannot take for granted the struggles that were made there to improve our system of care.

The small group of social workers was given a modest grant from the government. They treated people for free and began to document the type of care that was necessary and lacking in our community. There was a resistance at the time to believe that this small community could be “plagued” with the kind of problems they were seeing and treating. If the walls could speak now, they would tell of unspeakable abuse that was going untended and stories of pain that was not being confronted by the system at that time.

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Finally in 1958, leaders in the health care system could no longer ignore their work and the documented cases of abuse, neglect, and mistreatment. An old, abandoned wing of Saint Luke’s hospital was appropriated as the first mental health center in Boise.

While a new mental health center facility was exciting to Irene, she and her supporters were not entirely satisfied; they also wanted to change existing laws and create ways to protect people. Irene was president of a group called the “Idaho Conference on Social Welfare.” This group held annual meetings where they devised plans to create new legislation that would affect current laws. In the end, this group saw that eighteen bills were passed in the legislature, all regarding child welfare, including youth rehabilitation services and anonymous child abuse reporting.

“Before then there was no place for kids to go who were being abused and whose parents were failing them. There was no place...” she echoes, still in disbelief years later. Can you imagine no changes since 1890?” she intensively met my eyes with hers.

In 1966, the dean of psychology and social science at Boise State University contacted Irene. The university had given a $5,000 grant, and he wanted her to begin teaching classes in social work. With about two weeks to prepare for the new semester, she accepted his offer: “In retrospect, I still don’t know how I did it... I started the two classes and gradually by hook or by crook we were able to add to the faculty.”

By the time Irene left Boise State, there was a fully accredited program intact and a department of social work where she served as chair through the early 1970’s. After leaving Boise State, Irene went on to begin the first private practice in Idaho, partnering with a former faculty member. This is where she remained until she retired in 1990.

“It really takes a lot out of you, trying to convince people what you’re interested in and that what you’d like to see happen has any value... and then get them to support it,” she notes. She smiled a bit and said, “I’ve enjoyed it, enjoyed the challenges, enjoyed being able to see I could be effective in making life better for people.”*

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**Women Making History**
CLARISSE M. MAXWELL, Boise, Idaho

By Katie Mills: Katie is a senior, majoring in English at Boise State. She has served as a student ambassador and works in the student union.

Clarisse Maxwell has a very full life. "I retired from my paying job, but I might have to go back to work to rest," she said with a laugh. Clarisse is a warm, energetic woman who has made lasting impact on Boise. We met on a cold day in a quiet corner, tucked away to talk. She is from Georgia, I learned. "I bet it's warmer there," I said. We chatted for a few minutes and she started that her roommates works with her at the Idaho Human Rights Commission. We both laughed at the coincidence. She asked me about myself, and because she is a wonderful listener and I like to talk, I had to work to keep the conversation focused on her.

Many of her good listening skills may have come from her work as a high school mathematics and geometry teacher. After graduating from Talladega College in Alabama, she went to work in the same high school from which she graduated. "My old teachers were now my colleagues," she said, laughing. In 1980, she moved to Boise to be with her spouse. Once in Boise, however, she found it hard to find a job. She thought it would be easy to find work with all the companies in town, but she was told she was over-qualified at most of the jobs for which she applied.

After about a year, she accepted a job with Boise Cascade and worked there for seventeen and a half years before retiring. It was then that she really became busy. In 1986, she joined the Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Task Force. "That was before it became an Idaho holiday," she noted. In 1987, after just one year she became chair of the Governor's task force for the celebration. The work included organizing the annual tribute in the rotunda and working with other task forces around the state. She is now a commissioner for the Idaho Human Rights Commission and helps to review cases and make final decisions on human rights cases — whether or not someone's rights have been violated. "It's difficult at times," she said.

One of her most recent and notable accomplishments was to help create the Idaho Black History Museum. She is a member of St. Paul Baptist Church and attended church in the building in which the museum now resides. The congregation agreed that they needed to get a larger building, but Clarisse and others all agreed that they did not want to see the building destroyed. It was built in 1921 and is one of the last remaining buildings in Idaho to be constructed using black labor. After experiencing many logistical problems and with raising funds, the building was moved to its current location in Julia Davis Park. Clarisse stressed to me the building's historical value; it still has its original stained glass windows, which were perhaps ordered from a catalogue. The building was also placed on the national register of historic places in 1982. More then just the value of the building and the windows, Clarisse feels, is how important it is to understand the role African Americans played in Idaho. She is excited that children can now learn about black history while on trips to the other museums in the park. People from as far away as Russia and England have been to the museum and have learned about this important part of Idaho history.

When discussing Clarisse Maxwell it is difficult not to simply list off accomplishments. Along with the Idaho Human Rights Task Force, and the Idaho Personnel Commission. "Do you get a chance to rest?" I asked with a laugh, but in slight worry. She does, but relaxing for Clarisse is to be her church's senior programs coordinator.

Clarisse and I parted with her telling me about the current museum exhibit about the Harlem Renaissance, one she thought I would like as a English major. Clarisse Maxwell has accomplished so much and given so much to the state of Idaho. Her work focuses on civility, dignity, and integrity. She brings history closer to people and certainly impacts it by her commitment to create a fair and welcoming place for everyone to live. I was amazed by her accomplishments and amazed to feel so inspired by a person I had only just met. We all owe Clarisse a great debt for her hard work and commitment to education in our state.

FAIDA MUZALIWA, Boise State student

By Amber Armstrong

Imagine being born in the Democratic Republic of Congo and a few years later, when you are around seven years old, you are told that your father needs to leave the country due to the civil war that is raging on and you will remain with your mother and siblings in Congo. This is the story of 20-year-old Faida Muzalwa.

The people of Congo received their independence in 1960. They opposed the dictator in power and wanted to overthrow the government, the start of Congo's civil war. Faida's father, who was a professor at a local university, had students in his classes who were protesting the government; it was safer for him to leave the country since he was being associated with the opposition. Eight months later, at the age of seven, Faida, her mother, and siblings followed him to Kenya, where they lived until Faida was thirteen years old. She and her family did not want to stay in Kenya as refugees, but they could not return to Congo. Her parents completed applications and petitioned for political asylum in the United States, where more opportunities awaited them. When Faida was thirteen, a Presbyterian church in Nampa sponsored her family to come to Idaho.

The culture shock of moving from Kenya to Idaho was difficult enough, but Faida also had to deal with the ignorance of the students in her classes who had little exposure to people from other countries. When she first arrived in Nampa with her family, there was an announcement over the loud speaker at her new school that there was "a new student from Africa" here and that people should "be nice to her." As if this embarrassing introduction was not enough, she was asked by her schoolmates if she had worn clothes while living in Congo and Kenya, and if there were cars there. She answered them in a smart-aleck way to regain some sense of pride. "Oh, no!" She told them. "I also had a pet zebra," an early insight into her sense of humor.

While her introduction to U.S. schools was a little shocking, she started to find her place as she continued to settle in this new culture. At her high school in Eagle, she had been voted prom queen, was the captain of the cross-country team, and was one of two students to get a Pepsi scholarship after graduation. She still remembers the impact she made on a classmate in high school, a "typical white, small town boy" that was on the cross-country/track teams with her. For the first couple of weeks they never talked. Gradually, they started to nurture a friendship and one day, he shared with her that he had been raised in a racist family; he had been taught stereotypical information about people of color. He told her that he had never known a black person on a personal level before; their relationship had helped change the racist views he was holding about people of color. Just by being herself, she had dispelled negative stereotypes and racist myths that are not true. This memory makes her feel good and proud that she was able to touch someone without intending to, just by being herself.

As a college student at Boise State University she values her academics as well as her activities outside of class. Aside from being a good student, she is involved in the student programs board as the comedy coordinator, is a member of the Financial Management Association, and is also involved in planning the Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Week Celebration and African Night. She first became involved with the Black Student Alliance, a BSU student organization, when she was in high school, but did not become a member until she began attending Boise State. She was elected vice president for her sophomore year and is currently president as a junior. Along with her leadership duties, she helps get African American students motivated and interested in the Black Student Alliance. Faida has also helped encourage local high school students to go to college through events like Black to the Future, a high school recruitment program that introduces young black students to college life at BSU.

Faida has definitely "come a long way" from the culture shock she first experienced when she moved from Kenya to Idaho. She first had to struggle with English and find a way to overcome the cultural differences while still keeping her own identity. One of her many gifts is to make friends and connect with people easily; by getting involved and connected with others, she has learned how to appreciate and respect the people in the United States, and dispelled stereotypes that some hold about people from other countries.

Faida is a finance and accounting major and hopes to return to Africa one day to help establish businesses there. Her future plans include learning more about world politics and possibly working with the United Nations. Faida has learned through her own experiences that ignorance can divide people. She is currently making history by bringing people together to dispel ignorance and the break down barriers of misunderstanding.

ALMA GOMEZ, Boise State faculty

By Kathleen Mortensen: Kathleen is a public relations officer and journalist for Boise State University. She is the mother of four children and lives in West Boise.

One of artist Alma Gomez's favorite pieces is a painting of her daughter, Angela. True to her Chicana roots, Alma's paintings weave elements of Hispanic and indigenous history and symbolism through her works. Because of this, her art reflects not only the identities of those she paints, but also their very souls.

This particular painting, "Religious Syncretism: Coatlicue, Guadalupe and Angélica," incorporates the face of her daughter on the upper body of the Aztec goddess, Coatlicue, and the lower body of Mexico's patron saint, the Virgin of Guadalupe.

"Her face represents my contemporary identity," Alma says. "The other two are indigenous and religious..."
graduates and become professionals," she says. "But more importantly, I want for them to grow as individuals and become more confident about who they are — to embrace their ethnicity. For the most part, they are sure of who they are, but as they see other staff members who are confident of their heritage it helps them become more secure."

Her dedication to students is what prompted her supervisor, Gypsy Hall, to nominate her as an outstanding woman in history. Alma, Gypsy says, "often goes above and beyond the call of duty to assist her students."

"She has motivated them to graduate when the going got tough," she says in her nomination letter, "encouraged them to explore the beauty of their culture, imparted her wisdom about life, loaned them art supplies and guitar cases when they could not afford them, wept with them, taken them to dances when they were so shy but wanted to embrace the fun, celebrated their academic and personal successes and held their hand in the hospital when they were frightened and in pain."

For her dedication, Alma was awarded an Outstanding Professional award by the National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education. But awards aren't what motivates her. "I love to see my students succeed in ways many never imagined possible."

"I feel like I'm in training to make history," smiles Sylvia Dana. "I haven't actually made history yet." Maybe so, but she is off to a good start.

Sylvia, a Detroit native and graduate student in education, has packed a lot of living into her 30 years. People have helped her along the way, and her strongest drive is to give back, to pass along to others the love, support, and encouragement she herself has received.

Sylvia comes from a diverse religious background: her grandmother was a devout Christian, her aunt a practicing Muslim, her mother an adherent of paganism who read tea leaves and the I Ching. At 17, Sylvia became a Christian. Being "saved" was the pivotal point in her young life. She graduated from Central Michigan University with a degree in journalism and public relations, and an added bonus, her young son Ezekiel, now seven. As a pregnant, single woman, she says, "I also want to help them grow as individuals and become more confident about who they are - to embrace their identity."

Sylvia received support from a family who took her in, and a center that helped women in need. When she got her first job as a reporter, she was able to write many columns about the agencies and organizations that support people in need, including those of an indigenous person. Her involvement with the service-learning program, creating a documentary to showcase the program, has motivated them to graduate when the going got tough, "encouraged them to explore the beauty of their culture, imparted her wisdom about life, loaned them art supplies and guitar cases when they could not afford them, wept with them, taken them to dances when they were so shy but wanted to embrace the fun, celebrated their academic and personal successes and held their hand in the hospital when they were frightened and in pain."

"I feel like I'm in training to make history," smiles Sylvia Dana. "I haven't actually made history yet." But maybe so, but she is off to a good start.