Pembroke Associates Honor Innovative Educators with Leadership Award

Mary Vascellaro ’74, P’07 presented the second Leadership Awards to Margot Stern Strom, the executive director and founder of Facing History and Ourselves, and H. Terri Adelman, the executive director of Volunteers in Providence Schools. Both recipients received a $5,000 donation from the Pembroke Center Associates to their organization to further their innovative work.

In presenting the award to Margot Stern Strom, Vascellaro noted that Strom has been a leader for her entire professional life, having founded Facing History and Ourselves over thirty years ago in 1976. Strom grew up in racially segregated Memphis, Tennessee, where she was exposed to institutionalized racism. Drawing on her family’s values of tolerance and equality, Strom became convinced that educators should lead their students in the study of history, facing difficult and painful issues, so that these children could develop a sense of individual responsibility.

The work of Facing History and Ourselves is based on the premise that civic responsibility, tolerance, and social action can be taught to young people. To that end, Facing History provides professional development services and resources to teachers around the world so they can lead their students in a critical examination of history. Vascellaro concluded, “In an era when some leaders deny the Holocaust, turn a blind eye to genocide, and promote intolerance, the leadership of Margot Stern Strom is as significant as it is critical: to educate teachers and students for a safer, saner world.” Continued on page 3

The Pembroke Center Associates developed the Leadership for Change through Education Award to celebrate the power of education to make lasting change. Established in 2005, the biannual award honors women educators who change lives by helping others to see the world differently and who offer new ways of thinking about seemingly unsolvable problems.

On November 27, 2007, before over a hundred people in List Auditorium, Pembroke Associates Council member
From the Director

The occasion of the Pembroke Associates’ 2007 award for Leadership for Change through Education provides an opportunity to draw some connections between the work of the award recipients—this year Margot Stern Strom and Terri Adelman—and the work of the Pembroke Center. The connections have less to do with the specific educational missions of the various parties than with broad concerns about education and change that I think we all share.

Although not all education is explicitly about change, of course, we know no real education takes place if a body of knowledge is simply transmitted in some static form from teacher to student. Indeed, the most exciting education grows out of the experience of students and teachers grappling together with questions, with problems and interpretations, with analyses and understandings. Of course, not everyone has the opportunity to experience education at this level. The fundamental challenge remains to give all students not only the basics skills but also the exhilaration and empowerment of critical thinking. It is only in working and thinking together that we can take on the huge problems we confront nationally and internationally. As local and world issues become more complicated and more pressing, the imperative to think and educate for change becomes greater.

“Thinking for change” is one way of describing the Pembroke Center’s mission. Pembroke is a center for research and teaching. One of the most important things it does is to give scholars at all levels—students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty from Brown and elsewhere—the time to do their research, and the critical and collegial context in which to discuss it with others. At the beginning, twenty-six years ago, the Center set out to understand the seeming intractability of gender imbalance. In spite of centuries of enlightenment thinking, decades of feminist politics, and countless judicial and other civil efforts, gender equity—or the simple taken-for-granted equivalence of men and women—has yet to become the norm in any country in the world. The goal would not be to erase differences between men and women but to promote a world in which the value of females would be thought of as truly comparable to that of males. So the Pembroke Center undertook a series of research projects aimed at understanding gender imbalance cross culturally. In doing so, however, scholars quickly discovered that there is no way of understanding gender differences without exploring the other differences that are so important in culture and society: differences of race and ethnicity, of physical and biological attributes, of socioeconomic class, of religion, of politics. As the Center’s research has continued over the years, it has become clear that understanding gender and thinking for change mean understanding more broadly the interrelationships of such differences.

Two years ago, for example, we had as a postdoctoral fellow a young social anthropologist named Sharika Thiranagama. Thiranagama’s mother, a Sri Lankan scholar and teacher, joined other Tamils in their struggle against the government. In a later political turn, deemed a traitor by the very people she had worked with, she was assassinated. During Thiranagama’s year at the Pembroke Center, she worked on a book project that examined the complex meanings the word “traitor” can take on, looking at the ways communities in struggle can be constituted both as communities of victims and communities of traitors.

Work such as Thiranagama’s teaches us that when confronted with struggles that rise out of differences, it is often crucial to ask new questions—or to look at old questions in new ways. Pembroke postdoctoral fellows like Thiranagama go on to teach in schools and universities in the United States and abroad—in Turkey, Qatar, Britain, India, South Africa, and France, to name a few. The goal of the Center is to give scholars time and support to do their research so that they may go on to think and teach for change. It is in this way that the award for Leadership for Change through Education embodies the ideals of the Center and brings honor to it.

Elizabeth Weed, Director
“Our own classrooms reflect increasing diversity, and as many as fifty languages may be spoken by students within a particular school,” said Strom upon accepting the award. “Our goals must include promoting moral reasoning and interpersonal understanding among students through encouraging personal involvement, self reflection, and prosocial awareness. We know that unless curriculum and pedagogy illuminate individual lives, choices, and narratives they will have little meaning to students for their futures.”

In presenting the second award, Mary Vascellaro praised H. Terri Adelman for her accomplishments in touching the lives of thousands of students who attend the Providence Public Schools. Adelman has served as executive director of Volunteers in Providence Schools (VIPS) since 1993 and has presided over this organization’s remarkable growth. When she took the helm of Volunteers in Providence schools, it served 2,000 students. Today, it reaches 10,000 students each year.

Nearly 26,000 students attend Providence Public Schools. Providence has the third highest child poverty rate in America, and the school district reports that nearly thirty percent of its students are English Language Learners, whose families come from approximately ninety-four countries with forty-nine languages spoken at home.

Volunteers in Providence Schools is dedicated to helping students succeed in school, providing support services, individualized tutoring, and resources students need to achieve academic success. VIPS recruits, screens, trains and manages over 1,200 volunteer tutors and mentors who work with students in all grade levels.

“VIPS volunteers make an impressive difference when they provide individualized tutoring to students to help them overcome these barriers,” commented Vascellaro. “In a study of VIPS-tutored students, seventy-eight percent improved their writing ability. As these figures demonstrate, Providence’s children need the outstanding work of Ms. Adelman and the hundreds of VIPS-trained volunteers.”

In accepting her award, Terri Adelman said, “If public will were in place, greater changes through education could be made faster. For example, with an army of volunteers, we could work with the school district to help all elementary students in restructuring schools to achieve grade level basic literacy and math skills. They will then be prepared for middle and high school, and they will keep off that slippery slope to failure that frequently starts in the fourth or fifth grade. It would be a challenge, but it is doable. Between college students and staff and the retired, we already have a potential army.”

Adelman called for people to volunteer to help tutor Providence students noting, “The impact of these weekly hour-long tutoring sessions is huge. It takes so little to do so much.”

To learn more about Facing History and Ourselves or Volunteers In Providence Schools, please visit their websites at www.facinghistory.org and www.vips4kids.org.

Mary Emma Woolley Receives Posthumous Honor

Mary Emma Woolley (1863-1947) was recently inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame. The first woman to be admitted to Brown, she graduated in 1894 and earned a master’s degree in history the following year. After five years of teaching at Wellesley, she turned down an opportunity to head the Women’s College at Brown, instead serving as president of Mount Holyoke for thirty-seven years from 1901-1937. She was a staunch advocate for women’s education, declaring that there was no limit to what a woman with a trained mind could do: “The ability to master certain lines of thought is a question of the individual and not of sex.” On learning that a man had been chosen to succeed her as president of Mount Holyoke she was incensed and, in protest, never returned to the campus.

Woolley was a pacifist, active in the peace movement between the two world wars, and advised presidents, including Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1932 she represented the United States at the Geneva Conference on Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, the first woman to assume such a major role in that forum.

She was active in retirement and received many honors, including the Rosenberger Medal from Brown. She suffered a stroke in 1944 and died in 1947, cared for by Jeanette Marks, her former student and life-time companion.
Brown Inaugurates Dean of Pembroke College Visiting Professorship

The late Rosemary Pierrel Sorrentino, Dean Emerita of Pembroke College and Professor Emerita of Psychology, and her husband, Dr. Louis Sorrentino, Emeritus Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, established the Dean of Pembroke College Visiting Professorship to support a visiting scholar in the Department of Psychology. At a campus celebration on December 12, 2007 to inaugurate the professorship, attendees were treated to a very moving tribute to Dean Pierrel Sorrentino's accomplishments as a scientist, teacher, and administrator. She served as dean from 1961 to 1974. To many who attended Pembroke College, Dean Pierrel Sorrentino is remembered for supervising the merger of Pembroke College with the men's college to make Brown University a fully coeducational university.

William Heindel, Associate Professor and Chair of Psychology, welcomed guests and expressed the department's deep gratitude to the Sorrentinos for making the professorship possible. Elizabeth Z. Chace '59, AB '96 hon., Brown University Board of Fellows, thanked Dr. Louis Sorrentino and remarked on how much the professorship means to Brown, to the Psychology Department, and to those who attended Pembroke College. Chace noted that Rosemary Pierrel Sorrentino helped build Pembroke College with “great grace.”

Elizabeth Chace and Dr. Louis Sorrentino bestowed Dr. Mika MacInnis '02, SCM '04, PhD '07 with an honorary medal as the inaugural recipient of the professorship. Dr. Sorrentino added that his late wife would not have wanted all the publicity that the professorship was receiving but that he thought it was a great tribute to her. He noted that there were many contributors who helped endow the professorship and expressed his sincere thanks to those who had been involved. Dr. MacInnis said that she could “not begin to express the delight and honor” she felt as the inaugural recipient. She noted that she met Dean Pierrel Sorrentino in 2001 and used much of Pierrel Sorrentino's research in her dissertation.

Professor David Baker, Director of the Archives of the History of American Psychology at the University of Akron, delivered a talk entitled “The Psychology of Rosemary Pierrel Sorrentino: A Woman of Brown University and of Her Times.” He noted that Rosemary Pierrel Sorrentino was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1922 and attended the Lincoln School in Providence. She entered Centenary College, but suffered severe burns during her second year when the costume she was wearing for a play caught fire and she returned to Providence for a series of skin grafts to treat the third degree burns she had suffered. She went on to earn her undergraduate degree and master's degree in psychology at Boston University. Upon graduation she accepted a faculty position at Wheelock College.

“...Rosemary decided to enter the doctoral program in experimental psychology at Brown University in 1950. It was a bold move,” explained Baker. “At mid-century women were slightly more welcome in experimental psychology than they were in 1900. As an example, in 1904, Cornell psychologist E.B. Titchener founded a society dedicated to experimental psychology. An important consideration in forming the society was that it be a purely masculine assembly. It was an attitude that existed for decades.”

Pierrel Sorrentino would focus her research on taste sensitivities and the reaction of taste receptors to electrical stimulation. She completed her PhD in experimental psychology at Brown in 1953. “She continued as an instructor until 1955, when she left for a faculty position at Barnard College, Columbia University,” said Baker. “Her training at Brown in sensation, perception, and learning fit well with the strong behavioral orientation at Columbia at that time.”

Dr. Baker discussed the research for which Rosemary Pierrel Sorrentino is most famous and told the story of Barnabus. Baker cited the description provided by Julius Kling, Professor of Psychology at Brown:

Using the laboratory rat as a convenient example of a nonverbal but eminently teachable animal, Posi [Pierrel Sorrentino] explored the various possibilities for the assembly of responses into sequences. She quickly demonstrated the validity of the reinforcement hypothesis: that chains of behavior units are assembled in reverse order, with the last response before the reward being the first response to be learned and then the other responses in turn being added to the chain. To keep the interest of the Barnard undergraduates who were help-

Liz Chace ’59 and Dr. Louis Sorrentino present Dean of Pembroke College Visiting Professorship Medal to Mika MacInnis, Ph.D (center)
ing with this research, Posi named a test animal Barnabus (there were of course multiple Barnibi). Barnabus learned to step on a pedal because that was immediately followed by the delivery of a bit of food. Then, when Barnabus made some other response Posi had selected, the pedal became available, and of course Barnabus stepped on it and ate the food. In subsequent sessions another more remote response would be required and then another, and so forth, each giving access to a situation in which the next response could be made. In this way a complex and amusing set of responses was learned, always with each response being rewarded by access to the next situation, bringing the rat one step closer to coming into the presence of the pedal, where stepping on the pedal produced the bit of food. Barnabus appeared on television and in newspaper reports, as well as in psychology publications, and the demonstration rather quickly was accepted as evidence that response chains are learned in the backward order.

Baker concluded by noting that “Rosemary Pierrel Sorrentino was witness to and participant in an important time in American history and American psychology. Her professional achievements are well documented. She achieved many of the landmarks associated with the life of the university, both as a member of the faculty and as a senior administrator. She also, as evidenced by those in attendance today, cultivated and nurtured lasting and loving relationships with others. This, by my account, is the index that matters most.”

Upcoming Pembroke Associates Events

Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives Exhibit Opening Reception
March 13, 2008, 6:30 p.m.
John Hay Library
20 Prospect Street, Providence

Please join us for a reception celebrating the opening of the Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives exhibit. On display will be materials highlighting the historical achievements of Brown and Rhode Island women and documents tracing the intellectual gains made by feminist theorists working in universities across the country. Spanning several generations of activists and scholars, the collection recognizes the courage and intrepidity of women who dared to challenge and thereby disturb the status quo—through interrogation, agitation, and persistence.

Featured in the exhibit are the stories of such figures as Nancy Elizabeth Prophet, a Native-American/African American sculptor who battled with poverty as well as her own inner demons to create lasting works of art. The exhibit highlights the successful efforts of Sarah Doyle, the moving spirit behind the Rhode Island Society for the Collegiate Education of Women, and the highly controversial work of such feminist scholars as historians Joan Wallach Scott and Louise Tilly and literary scholars Naomi Schor and Elaine Marks. Each of these theorists questioned conventional approaches to knowledge and contributed to making gender and sexual difference crucial categories of analysis.

The exhibit runs from March 14 to April 9, 2008 and is free and open to the public during normal library opening hours: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday (except March 24–28, Brown’s spring break, when the library closes at 5 p.m.). The Library is also open on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., except for March 23 and 30th.

The exhibit and opening are co-sponsored by the Pembroke Center Associates, the Sarah Doyle Women’s Center, and the Friends of the Library.

Women in Politics: Why They Don’t Run for Office and What Happens When They Do – A Discussion with Assistant Professor Jennifer Lawless, Political Science
Thursday, April 24, 2008
6:30 p.m. reception; 7:00 p.m. program
229 West 97th Street, Apartment 7E
New York, N.Y.

Professor Lawless will talk about her research into political ambition and the manner in which gender affects the decision to run for office. She is co-author (with Richard Fox) of the recent book, It Takes A Candidate: Why Women Don’t Run for Office (Cambridge University Press, 2005), based on the data from a national survey she conducted of almost 3,800 potential candidates. Her research found that women, even in the highest tiers of professional accomplishment, are substantially less likely than men to seek, be recruited, or express a willingness to run for office in the future.

Space is limited and pre-registration is required.
Please e-mail Pembroke_Associates@brown.edu, or call (401) 863-3433 to register. Kindly provide your name, address, phone number, class year, and names of any guests you plan to bring.
Pembroke Center to Launch Research Exchange with Nanjing University in China

In 2007, the Provost's Office called for proposals for seed money in support of the University's internationalization initiative. Forty-two applications were submitted from across the University. The proposal “Transnational Collaborative Project on Women and Gender” was selected to be funded. The award will be used for the first phase of the project, specifically to edit and publish two volumes, one in English and one in Chinese, from an international conference on Chinese female film directors. Nanjing University will host a faculty symposium on gender and feminist theory and an international conference on Chinese female film directors in June 2008. Brown scholars will visit Nanjing University to participate in the symposium. Mary Ann Doane, Professor of Modern Culture and Media, and Lingzhen Wang, Associate Professor of East Asian Studies, will present papers at the international conference on female film directors from diverse Chinese communities, including Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the overseas diaspora. This will be the first conference ever on the subject and is expected to have far-reaching effects on research and scholarship in gender, feminist visual theory, and Chinese cinema. The conference volume will also be the first in English or Chinese to focus on female film directors from diverse and different Chinese communities.

This exciting collaboration between U.S. and Chinese scholars emerged from the understanding that the study of gender has significantly transformed the humanities and social sciences in both the United States since the 1970s and China since the 1980s. China and the United States have approached both the improvement of the status of women and the development of feminist research very differently. During the decades of socialist egalitarianism and the self-defined feminist state (1949–1976), the status of Chinese women in the social, political, economic, and legal realms rose significantly. For the first time in China's history, women enjoyed equal educational and professional opportunities with Chinese men. But in China's tightly controlled public spaces, women's and scholars' voices were seldom heard. It was not until China's embrace of the market economy in the mid-1980s that feminist scholars were able to develop women's studies as an academic discipline independent of the state. Paradoxically, the recent and rapid expansion of market forces has led to a markedly reduced emphasis on gender equity in state policies and a sharp decline in the development and status of women's and gender studies in higher education.

In the United States, the feminist political movement that began in the 1960s achieved some social and political gains for women, though far fewer than in many other countries. During the same period, feminist research flourished, resulting in the establishment of programs in women's and gender studies and in the transformation of numerous traditional disciplines. Today, with the “mainstreaming” of feminist scholarship and increasingly conservative state policies, there is growing concern across disciplinary and generational lines about the vitality of both feminist research and politics.
It is in this context that the project will address both the potential and the problems produced by capitalist globalization with regard to politics, higher education, and gender in today’s world. It will forge important and concrete alliances among scholars in gender studies and feminist theory in China and the United States, highlighting the connectedness of gender studies in today’s highly globalized world. It will promote the critical importance of gender to interdisciplinary teaching and research in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.

Directed by Brown’s Lingzhen Wang, Associate Professor of East Asian Studies, the project will focus on the exchange of short- and long-term visiting scholars, faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students. In 2007-2008, a PhD student from Nanjing University, Xiao Hua, already accepted at Brown as a special student, will conduct his research on Chinese American women writers under the supervision of faculty in the departments of East Asian Studies and American Civilization; he also will participate in activities organized by the Pembroke Center and the Cogut Center. In addition, the project will provide regular opportunities for scholarly exchange.

The Transnational Collaborative Project also aims to promote the translation and publication of significant feminist research and theory into Chinese; the translation and publication of books by both Chinese and American scholars on Chinese women and gender issues; and the formation of a new Chinese scholarly journal on gender studies that will have a collaborative relationship with the Pembroke Center journal *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. The two journals will be independent but will exchange selected journal articles and regularly devote issues to topics of common concern.

---

**Women’s History Month: Preview of Sarah Doyle Women’s Center Events**

The Sarah Doyle Women’s Center at Brown has been working on women’s history month since early this academic year and collaborating with other women’s groups on campus. This year’s theme will be “Women Working Inside/Outside Tradition” to highlight the vast range of interesting, important, and surprising things women do in their lives. Activities will include films, lectures, workshops, readings, and performances.

Cornelia Dean ’69, a science editor for the *New York Times*, will be one of the keynote speakers. Other panels will feature Brown students who are doing particularly interesting work to help women, children, and men around the country and the world. Because Brown itself boasts an impressive range of women workers, the Sarah Doyle Center will begin the “Women Working at Brown” series that it hopes to continue throughout every academic year. This series of lunch-time or after-work talks will feature women who work throughout the Brown campus as facilities workers or police officers, administrators or faculty members, finance personnel or managers.

Included in Women’s History Month also will be an embedded series on women and violence. Byron Hurt, anti-sexist activist and producer of the film *HIP-HOP: BEYOND BEATS AND RHYMES* will give a workshop and lecture and the Coalition Against Relationship Abuse is planning a panel on issues of domestic violence and immigration.

For a complete list of event dates, times, and locations of Women’s History Month activities, please visit the Sarah Doyle Women’s Center website at: www.brown.edu/Departments/Sarah_Doyle_Center/ for more information.

If you are interested in speaking about your own work, or do not have internet access to view the online calendar, please contact the Center’s assistant Wei Ying Wong at 401-863-2189 or by e-mail at Wei-Ying_Wong@brown.edu.
Yes! I’d like to make a gift to the Pembroke Center Associates!

- $5,000 + Sarah Doyle Society
- $2,500 – $4,999 Anna Canada Swain Partners
- $1,000 – $2,499 Elisha Benjamin Andrews Benefactors
- $500 – $999 Patron
- $250 – $499 Sponsor
- $100 – $249 Sustaining Member
- $75 – $99 Contributing Member
- $50 – $74 Associate
- Other $ ________________

Name _____________________________________________________________ Class/Affiliation ____________

Address ________________________________________________________________________________________

City ________________________________________ State ________________ Zip ______________________

- My check is enclosed, payable to Brown University.

- Please charge my credit card:
  - MasterCard
  - Visa
  - American Express
  - Discover

Account number ________________________________ Expiration ________________

Signature ____________________________________________________________

- Please provide information about supporting the Pembroke Center through the Campaign for Academic Enrichment.
- Please send me information about including the Pembroke Center in my will.
- I would like information about donating my papers and/or memorabilia to the Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives.

Please return this form with payment to:
Pembroke Center Associates, Box 1877, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912
You also may contribute online at: www.pembrokecenter.org
Questions? Please call 401-863-2643

Pembroke Center
for teaching and research on women

Brown University
Box 1958
Providence, RI 02912
www.pembrokecenter.org