

CEW Center for the Education of Women University of Michigan

"We all start out with a set of blinders from the way we were brought up. Some never have any doubts that they are going to get an education, and others never realize it's a possibility. CEW takes the blinders off and helps women imagine more possibilities for their lives than they could at first see for themselves." Connie Kinnear, CEW Leadership Council member

Kinnears Contribute \$100,000 to Establish CEW Community Counseling Fund

Connie Kinnear's recent gift of \$100,000 honors her long-time association with CEW and our shared value in the importance of higher education. "For many years, out of the corner of my eye, I was attuned to CEW," says Connie. "I lived about four dorm rooms from [former CEW director] Carol Holenshead when we were freshmen here at the University of Michigan. Carol was a mover and shaker even then, and she carried through the ideals of the founders of CEW very strongly and very well."

Several years ago, Carol invited Connie to help select the finalists for the Center's annual scholarship awards. That experience, as well as her membership on CEW's Leadership Council, had a powerful impact on Connie, motivating her and her husband Tom to support CEW with their donations.



Connie Kinnear

"When I hear the life stories of some of the CEW scholars, so different from mine, I realize how fortunate I have been. The strength of women to overcome obstacles that have been put in their lives is inspiring. So, given the opportunity, why wouldn't I give back to CEW as an organization that does so much to change women's lives?"

Connie also supports CEW because of her belief in the social and economic value of education. "Why education?" she says. "Because if we were able to educate our population well, we would solve most of the other problems our country faces. Education, to me, is the foundation for a life that's meaningful, productive, and economically secure." "I feel very strongly," Connie continues, "that all of CEW's programs are drastically needed. They make a most important level of change for each and every individual who's lucky

enough to come in contact with CEW."

Connie's current gift is intended to support continuing community outreach in the form of counseling. "A lot of the people who come in for counseling are looking to get back into education," she explains, "or they wouldn't come to an organization attached to the University of Michigan. Many of them will end up back at the University. We are doing the University a service with community counseling, getting people the right information, getting them the right skill sets to be able to apply and become students or University staff personnel. It's a valuable service. If it can't be done, we all lose."

CEW Developing New Strategy for Offering Community Counseling

In the face of Michigan's on-going economic struggles and the continuing decline in state-appropriated support, University of Michigan administrators have this year mandated that units reduce their budgets even further and focus their efforts solely on the teaching and research aspects of the University's mission.

What does this mean for CEW? It means the Center can no longer use University General Funds to pay counselors working with non-university-affiliated participants. Instead CEW must raise its own funds for any counseling we do with community members and/or develop new strategies to maintain this essential service.

Continued on Page 3

CEW Welcomes New Development Director

We're excited to introduce Mary Lynn Stevens as CEW's new development director. Mary Lynn's extensive background encompasses all phases of fundraising—from corporate and foundation support to major gifts, annual funds and special events.



Much of Mary Lynn's past experience has been at the University of Michigan, both at the Alumni Association and, for the past ten years, as the Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations and Special Projects at UM-Dearborn. Before that, she spent over ten years as a curator and program director at The Henry Ford.

CEW will benefit not only from Mary Lynn's expertise but also from her strong commitment to our mission. She explains, "As a graduate of a women's college, a mother of two who was the principal breadwinner for most of my career, and a former public historian of domestic life in the US, I know and feel women's issues deeply and on many levels."

Another, unexpected aspect of having Mary Lynn at CEW: Her son, Will Heininger, is currently a defensive lineman for the University of Michigan football team. So we'll all have a greater reason to cheer on the Wolverines!

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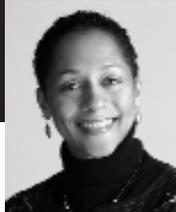
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from THE DIRECTOR

*“...we are certain
that CEW continues
to be a strong
advocate for women
on this campus and
in the community.”*

As with other public universities, the University of Michigan’s financial status depends in great part on the economic health of the state. In this past year, the University has reviewed the activities of many units, assessing their spending and its relationship to the teaching and research core of the University’s mission. CEW spent several months this winter working with the Provost’s office to refine our mission and to focus general fund dollars specifically on activities that align with supporting the teaching and research endeavors at the University.

In the course of this review, we examined program and service outcomes and were pleased with what we discovered. For example, when we compared degree completion rates of our scholars over the past nine years to those of the general

U-M student population, they were slightly better. Also, the funds we use to provide our critical difference grants are fully utilized each year; this funding helps students handle unexpected emergencies, and thus plays a crucial role in student retention and support toward degree completion.

We are also proud of one of CEW’s key services—our counseling available to community members. However, because it is not directly connected to

the teaching and research of the University, the Provost has asked us to fund that service using only private monies. For nearly 50 years, the availability of open-door counseling for community members has been a key component of CEW’s work. Many of these community participants are U-M alums, family members of U-M students, staff or faculty, or individuals who aspire to matriculate at the University. We are delighted that Connie and Tom Kinnear responded immediately to this situation by creating an endowed Community Counseling Fund with a gift of \$100,000. (See stories on p.1 for information on the fund and how you can participate.)

Following our extensive review process, we are certain that CEW continues to be a strong advocate for women on this campus and in the community. We are moving forward with programs that address the needs of students and staff, with research that assesses and evaluates our services and programs, and with campus advocacy for issues and policies that are of particular benefit to advancing the education and careers of women.

CEW Co-Sponsors Grand Rapids Lecture by Nicholas Kristof

With the Christobel Kotelawala Weerasinghe Fund, CEW is committed to supporting cross-cultural dialogues. Through this fund, CEW co-sponsored Nicholas Kristof, *New York Times* columnist, as a speaker in the Grand Rapids Community College Diversity Lecture Series. His talk in Grand Rapids addressed the subject of worldwide gender violence and inequality, as outlined in his book *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women*. Written together with Sheryl WuDunn (Kristof’s wife), *Half the Sky* calls for a human rights movement to address issues such as rape, trafficking, genital mutilation, and slavery and to create economic and personal empowerment of women. (See CEW Newsletter Fall 2010 for an extensive review of *Half the Sky*.)

Kristof has built a reputation for reporting on and addressing issues of violence and poverty in developing countries. He is known for his critique of the invasion of Iraq and for his intensive reporting and writing about Sudan and Darfur – the first to refer to Sudan’s actions in Darfur as genocide. A Harvard graduate and Rhodes Scholar, Kristof has worked at the *New York Times* as a reporter, columnist, and associate managing editor.

CEW Leadership Council Member Emerita Menakka Bailey created the Christobel Kotelawala Weerasinghe Fund in honor of her mother, who continues to dedicate her life to advancing women’s lives and promoting cross-cultural dialogue. This fund enhances CEW’s ability to sponsor speakers such as Nicholas Kristof.



In this Issue:

Page 1,3	CEW Community Counseling Fund
Page 1	CEW’s New Development Director
Page 3	WCTF Celebrates 30 Years
Page 4-5	CEW Stories Project
Page 6	CEW Visiting Social Activist: Mistinguette Smith
Page 7	Update on CEW Scholars
Page 8	Sara Paretsky to Speak Oct. 27

Historically, CEW was one of the first and only units on campus to reach out to people in surrounding communities, especially to help women achieve their educational and career aspirations. Providing counseling and programming to our Ann Arbor neighbors has been central to CEW's mission since Jean Campbell and friends first opened our doors in 1964. In 2009-2010, for example, 52% of all counseling participants were southeast Michigan community members.

According to Director Gloria Thomas, "CEW is certainly mindful of the economy and its effect on all University of Michigan operations. At the same time, we are committed to continuing our community connections. The Center is

re-establishing a program in which MSW interns from U-M's School of Social Work counsel community members.

ship Council and a long-time friend, recently presented Gloria with \$100,000 to help sustain the community counseling

a gift of \$500 for 10 years to the Community Counseling Fund. The gift is in memory of Donna's sister, Leslie Elizabeth Aldridge Reed, who worked in computer technology for the U.S. Army. We thank Donna for her generous support. If you are interested in joining Connie, Tom and Donna by contributing to the newly endowed Community Counseling Fund, please contact Mary Lynn Stevens at 734.764.6005 or malyhe@umich.edu.

In future newsletters, we'll keep you up to date on our remodeled community counseling program. Or visit our website (www.cew.umich.edu) to learn about it and all the other exciting things happening at CEW.

If you are interested in contributing to the Community Counseling Fund, please contact Mary Lynn Stevens, CEW's Director of Development

Doing so would support the University's teaching mission by giving future social workers the opportunity to work with clients under the supervision of CEW's own counselors." While such a program may eventually provide a solution, we must also respond to the imminent problem.

CEW is extremely grateful that Connie and Tom Kinnear have come forward to help. As our related story announces, Connie, a member of the Center's Leader-

program while we work on restructuring it.

We are overwhelmed by the Kinnears' generosity and by their faith in CEW's mission to offer the opportunity for education and personal growth to everyone within reach of our doors. We need everyone's help. Recently, Donna Anuskiewicz, a retired high school teacher and a member of the 2011 CEW Scholarship Reader Committee, has committed to contributing

WCTF: Over Thirty Years of Leadership, Advocacy and Change

The University of Michigan's Women of Color Task Force hosts its 30th annual career conference in Spring, 2012. Task Force members are planning an especially exciting, event-filled conference to celebrate the milestone and to commemorate WCTF's history.

WCTF History

In 1979, Jennie Partee from the Affirmative Action Office and Beulah Sanders from the School of Education created the first Minority Women's Task Force for U-M staff. The format for many of the Task Force's early sessions was small groups of women coming together to discuss their employment concerns, including how to navigate gender bias and racial stereotypes in the workplace.

With support from several campus units, Partee and Sanders also developed a series of work-

shops on topics that built professional skills and supported the career advancement of African American women staff members. Within a few short years those workshops had expanded to the point that the organization held its first annual career conference in 1983, featuring 11 professional development workshops and more than 200 participants.

In 2002, WCTF became affiliated with the Center for the Education of Women. In the course of its history, the Task Force has developed many programs to promote and honor the contributions of staff of color at the University, including an employee recognition program and the Woman of the Year Award, and they have hosted such special events as the Diversity Resource Forum and, more recently, a staff mentoring conference.

Over the years, WCTF members

have contributed both formally and informally to career development and diversity at U-M. Their efforts have kept the voices of hundreds of women of color staff, faculty and students at the table when major policies have been discussed.

When asked why the WCTF makes a difference in their lives, Task Force members say it cultivates a sense of community, with the social benefit of allowing them to touch base with friends and colleagues who work on other campuses or offsite offices. But just as importantly, the group's monthly meetings provide an open forum for women of color from a variety of disciplines and a wide range of job descriptions to discuss issues of importance to them.

For more information about WCTF: Contact WCTF Program Coordinator Janice Reuben at reubenjs@umich.edu



2012 WCTF Conference Keynote Speaker

Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, educator, scholar, author and activist, will give the keynote speech at the WCTF 30th annual career conference on March 2, 2012. Dr. Cole, a professor emerita of Emory University, was the first female African American president of Spelman College, and the 14th president of Bennett College for Women in North Carolina. Dr. Cole is currently serving as the director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art.

This fall, we are preparing to launch a new section of our website permanently dedicated to showcasing the stories of the many women and men who have benefited from our programs or have helped in some way to meet the Center's mission. Over the past summer, we interviewed more than twenty women and men who have either received scholarships, grants or counseling or who have participated in our workshops and committees. The purpose of the CEW Stories Project is to create, maintain and publish an online archive of individual stories that demonstrate the difference CEW has made in many lives.

The CEW Stories Project will be a multimedia presentation including video and audio stories, photos and written biographies. While each story is different, some of the common themes we've heard this summer are about the importance of mentorship, votes of confidence, and safe spaces where frank discussions can be held. Several people describe CEW as a touchstone in their lives that provided some or all of those things during times of change or adjustment. We are proud of the achievements of our CEW family and look forward to sharing their stories with you this fall.

The CEW Stories Project

Ciara Townsend

Ciara Townsend came to CEW this summer as an intern with the University's Arts of Citizenship Program, which supports U-M faculty and students doing "publically engaged, innovative work in the arts, humanities and design." Here, Ciara writes about her experiences as a member of the CEW Stories Project.



When I arrived in Ann Arbor last year to start my PhD in History, I noticed a few things about Michigan: the tornado siren, blistering cold, and a blue sign downtown bearing the inscription "Center for the Education of Women." I was intrigued. What was a Center for the Education of Women? What did it do? Unsure as I was, it made me feel safe, happy and affirmed to know that such a place existed at my University. "Here is a place that values what I am doing," I thought.

The education of women was not a priority in the community in which I grew up. In fact, the very phrase was an indicator of something unnecessary, frightening and even evil. Among my peers in a strict religious community, I was the only woman to earn a bachelor's degree. I owe that achievement to my mother's love of learning and personal investment in my education, a beautiful rebellion that gave me the chance, literally, to walk down Liberty Street. Time and again, I glanced up at the CEW sign and felt a sense of wonder and gratitude for the women whose labors opened this world of opportunity and independence for me.

In March 2011, I received an invitation to apply for the Arts of Citizenship internship program at Rackham Public Humanities Institute. Among the three available positions was an oral history project at CEW that immediately caught my eye. CEW was looking for a researcher to collect,

archive and present stories from its history. At the core of the project was a question about change: How do women change their own lives for the better, and what help do they need to do it? "This is my project," I thought. "I was made for this."

I could immediately identify the catalyst of change in my own life: the literature professor at community college who asked a working-class girl whether she might want to write for a living. "I've always wanted that," I had told him, "but how could I afford to eat?" His answer knocked down my wall of excuses like a pile of baby blocks. "You should go to grad school," he said. "You could become a professor, like me." Bill Meiers' words, coupled with the mentorship of other professors, propelled me from that classroom, through my bachelor's degree at a small liberal arts school and a master's at Cambridge, until I landed in Michigan, staring up at the CEW sign and wondering what had become of my old life.

I applied to the CEW internship eagerly, but with trepidation. I'd never taken a Women's Studies class. I did early modern history—a field in which interviews, as a rule, are out of the question. Would I be taken seriously? I was delighted to be called in within a few days and offered the position.

Working for CEW has been an honor and a pleasure. The commitment of the Center to bettering the lives of women beams out of every story I hear. I've learned at last what CEW does: It is a catalyst for change. It provides scholarships, grants and counseling to women. It offers workshops to deal with thorny issues. It is a "safe space," as numerous women have told me, to discuss and deal with the wearying issues of life as a student, teacher or working woman. CEW affirms, supports, and promotes women's achievement, a necessary beacon of hope in a world where not every girl grows up to believe in herself.

This summer, I've had the privilege to speak to more than twenty participants in CEW workshops and counseling as well as scholarship and grant recipients. I've been a writer, editor and producer for the website on which we'll showcase video and audio clips along with written stories of the lives of CEW alumni. I've learned to organize, plan, and execute a public presentation as well as the details of scripting videos and writing short biographies. CEW has helped that bewildered working-class girl trying on her academic glasses to learn to look in the mirror and see a professional. CEW and Arts of Citizenship have offered me this chance to become a



Simonetta Menossi

Simonetta Menossi is a graduate student, videographer, editor and researcher for the CEW Stories Project. She has assisted with filming video interviews for the project as well as editing and producing video and audio clips for the section of the CEW website that will showcase the stories.



Originally from Italy, Simonetta came to the United States in 2004, after finishing her bachelor's degree at the Università degli Studi di Udine. She went on to earn a master's degree in Film Studies from Emory University, studying space in the 1960s Italian cinema.

Simonetta came to the University of Michigan in 2008. While exploring new topics, she took a course on stardom and developed an interest in the early 20th century intersection of opera and silent film. She is particularly interested in those opera singers who were recruited to perform in the new silent film industry in Hollywood despite the obvious missing element in the new medium: sound. Simonetta plans to explore how class and gender influenced the careers of opera singers in their original context as well as in film.

Simonetta enjoys her research at the University of Michigan, in particular noting its wealth of resources for studying film. "I chose the University of Michigan because it's a great school, because of the resources that it has," she says. She also enjoys her position as a Graduate Student Instructor for her department. "One of the things that I really, really enjoy here is teaching," Simonetta says. "So far I've been teaching Intro to Film, where I help my students analyze films from *The Social Network* to *Terminator*." Simonetta is working on a Pedagogy paper titled "Chalk Power: Teaching Film on the Blackboard," exploring a teaching methodology based in drawing.

"I will have an academic career," she says. "I don't have much opportunity to do editing and shooting. So this project is a treat for me. It's a great environment; I love coming to work every day." Simonetta's expertise in film editing has been invaluable to the CEW Story Project.

Underway

public scholar, to think widely about the influence my work might have and how to leverage my skills in service to the public. That obfuscating word, "public," means very specific things to me: It means returning the faith invested in me to the next working-class girl who has no idea what it means to use her brain for a living, or indeed that life might not just be framed in terms of making a living. It means throwing down the drawbridges and draining the moats that separate the academy from the people whose insights, won through living, it needs to remain vital. It means listening first in conversations outside the classroom and speaking only when I fully understand what needs to be said. It means working for a future wherein "public scholarship" is a redundancy and "the life of the mind" is a choice not determined by one's clothes, accent, color, sex or parents. The word "public" attached to "scholarship" tells the hopeful would-be student standing on the steps of a university with a reckless, audacious, inexplicable need to learn, "Your intellect matters. You are welcome here. The door is unlocked. Come in."

Please Join In

We invite you to share your own CEW story. You are welcome to call us and set up a time to talk or to go to our website and fill out our webform <http://www.cew.umich.edu/webform/tell-us-your-story>, where you can also upload pictures to share with your story. We look forward to hearing from you.

"Abuse Hurts" Campaign Wins Awards

"Abuse Hurts," the groundbreaking, collaborative University of Michigan campaign to prevent and address domestic and sexual violence within the University community, continues to garner recognition. The University of Michigan Department of Public Safety gave Abuse Hurts its 2011 Director's Award, citing its effectiveness in encouraging survivors and those who are concerned about them to seek help. In addition, the College and University Personnel Association-Human Resources Midwest Region presented Abuse Hurts with its 2011 Excellence in Human Resources Management Practices Award. The Abuse Hurts campaign includes cross-campus coordination of policies, practices and programs, training for managers and supervisors, safety cards placed in restroom stalls across the campus by Building Services staff, a comprehensive website (<http://www.stopabuse.umich.edu>) and public media.

Susan Kaufmann, CEW Associate Director for Advocacy, and Kathleen Donohoe, Associate Director of Human Resources Strategy, Planning and Policy, head the Abuse Hurts campaign under the leadership of Laurita Thomas, Associate Vice President for Human Resources. The Provost, the Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs, Human Resources and CEW support Abuse Hurts.



CEW Visiting Social Activist asks

“How Do Black Women Relate to The Land?”



Mistinguette Smith

The Twink Frey Visiting Social Activist Program

Each year, the Twink Frey Visiting Social Activist (VSA) Program brings to CEW a social justice activist whose work affects women and recognizes gender equity issues. The primary goal of the program is to build the capacity and effectiveness of social activists. This is accomplished by giving the VSA time, space and support to work on a project that would not be possible under the activist's usual working circumstances.

This semester, CEW welcomes Mistinguette Smith as the seventh Twink Frey Visiting Social Activist. During her month-long residency, she will interview black women in Detroit, Flint and other Michigan communities about how they use the land and what it means to them. The Black/Land Project was inspired by links Smith discovered between her work on the topic of urban food security and observations she made during visits to her ancestral home places in Alabama and Haiti. Her interviews with African-Americans, Caribbean-Americans and African immigrants have taken her from Vermont to Ohio to California. According to Smith, the Black/Land stories of resilience and regeneration document how changes in people's relationship to land and place affect their lives culturally, economically and politically. By applying the lenses of race and gender, Smith draws connections between issues usually treated as unrelated: the environment, economic development, and civic engagement. Building upon interviews she has already conducted in rural and urban parts of the U.S., Smith will synthesize her findings into a short video documentary entitled *Black/Land: Women's Voices*. Smith sees her documentary as a catalyst for organizing a national conference to educate, celebrate and heal the many relationships between black people and land. "This is going to be a trigger film that documents the insights of black women from the post-industrial Midwest," says Smith. "Women in this part of the country have been dealing with land use issues longer than in many urban areas. They have creative solutions we can all learn from."

Mistinguette Smith describes her life's work as "helping to shape a world that makes possible well-being for black women." That work has taken many forms, from providing reproductive health care to designing a community organizing model that measurably reduces hunger. A performance consultant and trainer for social mission organizations, Smith also serves on the faculty of the Center for Whole Communities, where she offers leadership development retreats to conservation and environmental justice leaders. A graduate of Smith College, Smith holds an MPA in Public and Nonprofit Management from New York University. All presentations and workshop events led by Ms. Smith during her stay as CEW's 2011 Visiting Social Activist will be open to U-M faculty, staff and students, and to community members in Detroit, Flint and Ann Arbor. For updated program information, see www.cew.umich.edu/progevents/programs. Please contact Beth Sullivan at 734-764-6343 or bsulliva@umich.edu for information about Mistinguette Smith's visit. More information about the Twink Frey Visiting Social Activist Program can be found at www.cew.umich.edu/action/tfvs.

As we prepare this newsletter, CEW staff members are also notifying over 45 U-M students that they are recipients of 2011-2012 CEW scholarships. Our scholarship winners typically are nontraditional students who have had breaks at some point in their educational progress. On the surface, one might expect these students to be less likely to complete their educations, given lives complicated by families, illness, work responsibilities, changes in life situation, and so on. The Center has found, however, that a slightly higher percentage of our scholars complete their degree programs than do U-M students as a whole. As the following examples illustrate, CEW scholars' persistence and success is also evident in their achievements beyond the classroom.

CEW Scholars Make Their Mark in the World



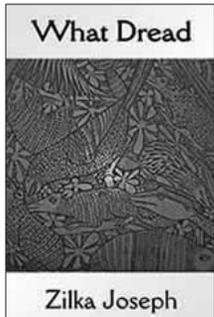
Shani Allison, a 2009-10 Irma Wyman Scholar, completed her master's degree in Engineering Management while working at Ford Motor Company. This year, the Engineering Society of Detroit awarded Shani the 2011 Outstanding Young Engineer of the Year Award "for outstanding contributions by an engineer under 35 to the benefit of the engineering community." This

recognition follows her selection as their 2010 Distinguished Service award winner. Shani works as a program management analyst for Ford Motor Company, overseeing the planning and executing of complex systems and projects related to a global small SUV program.

Barbara Neri was an early CEW Scholar, receiving her award in 1978. She has gone on to become an acclaimed dance and performance artist. As part of her Elizabeth Barrett Browning Project, Barbara has played the title role a number of times. Most recently, she wrote a play that brings Blanche of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* into the 21st century. The play, *Unlocking Desire*, is being staged in Detroit and will run for nine performances between September 23 and October 8 at the Marlene Boll Theater at 1401 Broadway, Detroit. For dates and ticket information, visit <http://www.barbaraneri.com/williamswing.html> (or phone 734 878 2542.)

Zilka Joseph, who won an Elsie Choy Lee Scholarship in 2008, is now the Academic Affairs Program Manager at U-M's Center for South Asian Studies and a poetry instructor for Springfed Arts-Metro Detroit Writers. Zilka was nominated for a Pushcart Prize, and her poems have appeared in publications such as *Review Americana*, *Gatromonica*, *Cutthroat*, and *Cheers To Muses: Contemporary Works by Asian American Women*.

Her first chapbook, *Lands I Live In* (www.mayapplepress.com), was nominated for a PEN America Beyond Margins award, and her forthcoming chapbook, *What Dread*, was a semi-finalist in Finishing Line Press's New Women's Voices contest. (<http://www.finishinglinepress.com/NewReleasesandForthcomingTitles.htm>)



Zilka is currently writing new pieces for continually evolving collaborative projects called "India: A Light Within" and "The Wisdom of the Lotus"—an interdisciplinary experiment with a photographer and Indian classical dancer. The collaborative work has been exhibited and performed at several venues, and some of the work was recently published in *India: A Light Within* (www.blurb.com).

Zilka will be doing a reading and book signing of *What Dread* on Friday, Oct 21, 2011, at the Lido Gallery, 33535 Woodward Avenue, Birmingham, MI.

Another Elsie Choy Lee Scholar, **Beili Liu** (2002), has garnered numerous awards and prizes in her field. Beili, born in China, now lives in Austin, where she is an assistant professor of art at the University of Texas. She says, "I am a Chinese American artist and work primarily with process-based installations. As a Chinese-American, I am more intrigued by the similarities and connections that I observe of various cultures than their differences. I believe that it is my responsibility as an artist to bring attention to what we share that is often overlooked, rather than to focus on the divides between."



Beili won third place in the Grand Rapids ArtPRIZE 2010 with her installation *Lure/Wave*, which was customized to the space where it was displayed. In 2009 she was named Artist of the Year (3D), an award sponsored by the Austin Museum of Art and Austin Visual Arts Association. She has forthcoming gallery shows in London and Oakland, California next year. (*Lure/Wave* Photo by Kathleen Vandervelde)

A Community of Scholars In Spring, 2011, CEW staff members conducted focus groups and interviews with some of our past scholars, in order to learn the perceived value of receiving a CEW Scholarship and to assess how we might strengthen the program. In addition to the importance of receiving critical financial support, one theme that emerged in these conversations was that being selected as a CEW Scholar made the scholars instantly feel part of a community to which they want to remain connected. Many were particularly interested in giving back or paying forward. In response to these comments, CEW has created a closed LinkedIn group called *University of Michigan CEW Scholars*. If you are a CEW Scholar, we invite you to join this new online community.

Detective novelist and cultural commentator Sara Paretsky to speak Oct 27th



CEW welcomes author Sara Paretsky as the 2011 Mullen Welch speaker on Thursday, October 27th, 2011, at 5:30 at the Mendelssohn Theatre, Michigan League.

Paretsky is most famous for her 14 detective novels featuring V I Warshawski, a street smart Chicago private investigator. Fans around the world love V I, whom Paretsky describes as a natural for Chicago, combining grit and glamour. "She's known for her silk shirts and Italian red shoes, but she is also famous for jumping into burning buildings, swamps and sanitary canals. She will not stop to count the costs if she believes in the cause she's working on."

Critics credit Paretsky and Warshawski with forever changing how women are portrayed in crime fiction. V I is neither a victim nor a vamp (a la Raymond Chandler). Instead, she's a smart, tough,

independent woman dedicated to solving problems inflicted upon society's underdogs.

Not surprisingly, Sara Paretsky is equally committed to social justice. In a 2001 *New York Times* interview, Paretsky described herself as "a storyteller, an entertainer, but the stories that come to me are almost always those of voiceless people, not those of the powerful." Paretsky first discovered Chicago in the mid-1960's, as a 19-year old doing community service on the city's South Side. It was, she says, "a time of such passion and urgency in the city, and it got into my blood." She became a permanent Chicago resident in 1968.

The urban life she now lives is very different from Paretsky's Midwestern upbringing. Born in Ames, Iowa, she describes her childhood in rural Kansas as "a time and place where we girls knew our inevitable destiny was marriage, where only bad girls had sex beforehand.... Home was a place where my value lay in housework and babysitting, not in an education."

Her life began to change when Paretsky became a student at the University of Kansas. While earning a degree in political science, she also chaired UK's first Commission on the Status of Women. Paretsky has gone on to complete both a PhD in history and an MBA from the University of Chicago.

Today, in addition to her writing, Paretsky focuses on a number of social justice issues. She also mentors students in the city's most troubled schools and is active with groups devoted to literacy and reproductive rights.

CEW and Sara Paretsky's many local fans look forward to an exciting, wide-ranging and provocative evening with the acclaimed author. We're likely to hear about V I Warshawski and detective fiction, but we're also sure to be inspired by a woman who has spent her life giving voice to ordinary people who "can't speak for themselves, who feel powerless and voiceless in the larger world."

Author Sara Paretsky will speak on Thursday, Oct. 27 at 5:30 at the Mendelssohn Theatre, Michigan League. This event is free and open to the public but registration is requested at www.cew.umich.edu

Body of Work: Paretsky's Most Recent Novel

As a chronic reader of crime fiction, I sometimes ask myself "Do I read mysteries for the mystery? Or in order to learn more about interesting topics?" With Sara Paretsky's books I don't need to ask, because I know that I'll get both. Paretsky's latest mystery is *Body Work*, once again featuring her hard-boiled female detective V I Warshawski. It's hard to believe that V I is now 50 (even though I've been reading her for years) but not at all hard to believe that once again she is taking on a case that forces the reader to consider specific issues of justice and social norms.

Body Work centers on two such themes, one fairly clear-cut and the other more nebulous. While V I investigates if and why an Iraq war veteran with PTSD has killed a performance artist, Paretsky weaves in commentary about the intermingling of military and corporate interests in the U.S. Those who paid close attention to the news during the Iraq wars and the current war in Afghanistan may find V I mighty slow in connecting the dots to unravel her mystery.

At the same time, however, *Body Work* tackles another social issue. The murder victim is a body artist who allowed strangers to paint her nude body. She, along with V I, niece Petra, and other women characters, challenge our understanding of how women's bodies are claimed, described and owned by others in our American culture. Paretsky gives no easy answer to the question of how women can reclaim their bodies (both physically and metaphorically), but she does provide us with some provocative discussions in the course of her story.

If you've never read a V I Warshawski mystery, this is probably not the one to start with (unless you have a significant interest in PTSD and the military-industrial complex in the 21st century). For new Paretsky readers, I'd suggest one of her early books. But if, like me, you've known V I for many years, you'll find lots to consider in this latest combination of story and journalistic revelations that addresses current issues for women and men alike.

—Jeanne Miller

