

# **History of the Mary Rhodes Award 1981-2007**

## **About This Award**

Since 1981, the Loretto Community through the Loretto Women's Network has honored women notable for their accomplishments in working for peace and acting for justice, especially for women, with the Mary Rhodes Award. These women are an eminent group who are diverse in their racial/ethnic backgrounds, age, religious traditions, and occupations. Among those honored have been legislators, educators, community organizers, authors, social workers, musicians, health care providers, ordained ministers, and poets.

The recipients have been awarded original works designed and executed by Loretto artists. Their names will be added to a handsome quilted piece, the third of its kind, which represents not only Loretto's pioneering spirit but also the heritage of one of the founders of Loretto, Mary Rhodes. The works of art that have served as the award have included prints, intaglios, serigraphs, pulp paintings, fans, watercolors, carvings, jewelry, quilted blocks, and silver pendants. Artists and creators of the awards have included Dorothy Mary Bauer, Jeanne Dueber, Gabriel Mary Hoare, Roberta Hudlow, Lydia Peña, Alicia Ramirez, Mary Swain, Susan Swain, Lucina Tighe, and Joan Van Leeuwen.

The award is named in honor of the pioneer founder of the Sisters of Loretto. Like much of women's history, Mary Rhodes' story is largely unknown.

Tradition tells us that this young woman, member of a comfortable Maryland Catholic family, went west in the early 1800s to Kentucky to visit her brother, Bennett, who had settled there a few years earlier. While visiting the family, Mary became aware that there was no education being offered to young women in the area. She determined to change that. She began by teaching her nieces in the family home. Then she took over an old and vacant log cabin where she taught more children. She asked her friend, Nancy Havern, to join her in this work. The two of them lived together in the same cabin in which they taught the girls. Still later they asked Christina Stuart to join them.

So, we begin to uncover the layers of her story. We know that she was a strong woman, an active woman, a woman unafraid to take risks. She was also a woman who could size up a situation, identify a problem and do something to solve it. We may assume that she was not bound by custom since women living together in a primitive log cabin was not the ordinary arrangement.

It is for that spirit that we name this award after Mary Rhodes.

## **The First Award — 1981**

**Gwen Giles  
Della Hadley  
Sue Shear**

In 1981 Loretto faced a quandary: the annual Assembly was scheduled to be held in St. Louis, and yet Missouri had not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. Because the commitment to that location was important to community members who could not attend if the Assembly were to be held elsewhere, it was decided to hold the Assembly as planned but to counteract the effect of breaking the ERA boycott, at least within Loretto itself, by honoring three Missouri legislators who had been struggling valiantly for women's rights and for the passage of the ERA. Thus the first three recipients of the Mary Rhodes Award were selected for their vigorous efforts to promote the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment in the State of Missouri.

**Gwen Giles**, a former Missouri State Senator and the first black woman elected to the Missouri Senate, was at the time of her selection the newly appointed City Assessor of St. Louis. She was the first African American and first woman to hold that post and was serving there when she died in March 1986. Mayor Vincent Schoemehl said of her, "Gwen Giles was a pioneer whose life of public service will serve as a model for generations to come. She was an early and active proponent of civil rights and worked tirelessly to help those in need. Her intelligence, independence and dedication earned her the respect of the entire community."

**Della Hadley** had long been a leader in Kansas City affairs. Active in the League of Women Voters, she was elected to the Kansas City School Board in 1970; to the Missouri State Legislature in 1974, 1976, and 1978. She served on the Kansas City Commission on the Status of Women until 1983 when, because of her husband's terminal illness, she moved with him to another state.

**Sue Shear**, first elected in 1972, served 12 terms as a Missouri State Representative from St. Louis. She worked actively for legislation that gave women equal access and opportunities, especially for jobs and pay. She worked with the St. Louis Abused Women's Support Project to protect victims of domestic violence and worked hard for maternity leave, for insurance coverage for abortion, for extension of group health care after COBRA, and similar measures. An institute at the University of Missouri in St. Louis was named for her, the Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life. Sue Shear died November 15, 1998.

## **1982**

**Dolores Delahanty  
Maureen Fiedler  
Anne Braden**

The Assembly was held in historic Bardstown, site of My Old Kentucky Home State Park. There, two women were honored for their efforts to combat racism and sexism and make Kentucky truly home for all its citizens; and one woman for her work on winning political rights for women.

**Dolores Delahanty** was honored as a social worker — founder of the Human Services Coordinating Alliance, president of the Kentucky Organization of Social Workers and vice president of the national organization, and immediate past president of the National Women's Education Fund. Among her other accomplishments was a challenge of the credentials of the Kentucky Democratic delegation to the 1972 national convention in Miami. She won! When the Mary Rhodes Award was given in 1982, note was taken that because of Dolores's efforts, all delegations to the Democratic National Conventions were to be 50 per cent female.

**Maureen Fiedler SL**, a director of the Quixote Center, had at the time of the Award spent four and a half years working full-time for the Equal Rights Amendment, participating in the 37-day fast for the ERA at the Illinois State capitol in Springfield. She was at that time a Sister of Mercy and has since transferred her membership to the Sisters of Loretto. She is one of the founding members of the Women's Ordination Conference and is well known for her speaking and writing. In more recent years, she has hosted a weekly radio talk show covering many subjects of interest to religious groups.

**Anne Braden**, newspaper reporter and long-time union organizer, was charged with sedition in 1954 along with her late husband, Carl, for selling their house to an African-American couple. Carl was found guilty, was in jail a full year before bail was granted pending appeal, and won the appeal only after several years' effort. Among the groups that have claimed Anne's allegiance are the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the National and Kentucky Alliance Against Racism and Repression, the Kentucky Civil Liberties Union, and the Louisville West End Community Council. Anne said that as a reporter covering the Birmingham Courthouse in the late 40s, she came to an understanding of her responsibility to act when she saw that she lived in a society, the deep South, that negated everything she had ever been told was right and good and just. In 2002 a biography of Anne Braden, *Southern Subversive*, caught the attention of activists and media.

**1983**

**Alice Franco Petry**  
**Guillermina Valdez de Villalba**  
**Margaret Ellen Traxler SSND**

The Assembly was held at the Loretto Academy in El Paso, Texas. Some say the Academy's design represents open arms extending out in welcome to both El Paso and Juarez, Mexico. Fittingly, the Mary Rhodes Award honored two women who have done much for the needy on both sides of the border, as well as a woman whose concern for education and understanding has been worldwide.

**Alice Franco Petry**, a social worker, has made significant contributions to the cause of justice and peace in El Paso. Her many involvements include working with the emotionally disturbed, helping men coming out of federal and state prisons get employment, counseling patients in obstetric and cancer clinics, and acting as translator and interpreter for those who are Spanish-speaking. With Mary Peter Bruce SL she was a co-founder of and an active worker in Lyceo Sylvan, a center for the undocumented. Twice Alice Franco Petry ran for public office “to learn how the system is run and how our money is spent,” and though she lost, she chalks it up as “a real education.” She is a mother and an active Catholic in the life of the Diocese of El Paso. Now divorced and using the name Alicia Franco, she continues to work for women and community. Lately she has been working with a group of art education people called “Poco a Poco.”

**Guillermina Valdez de Villalba**, a native of Ciudad Juarez, is a graduate of Loretto Academy in El Paso. She manifests her concern for the poor on both sides of the border. She was the founder of Centro de Orientacion de la Mujer Obrera, a center for women workers in the Twin Plants (maquiladores), not only in Ciudad Juarez but also throughout the world. She led a community effort in her locale to educate adults and to promote justice in health, work, and service. Resourceful in her attempts to create productive jobs for men where none were available, Guillermina directed the growth of a garbage recycling cooperative. She was honored as an example of Christian commitment in prayer and in service to the poor. A few years after she received the Mary Rhodes Award, when Guillermina was flying to attend her daughter’s graduation in East Texas, she was killed in an airplane accident.

**Margaret Ellen Traxler SSND** was honored for her ingenuity and creativity in finding concrete ways to combat racism, sexism, poverty, and other problems. She was the founder of CHOICE (Cooperative Help for Integrated College Education). This project enables PhDs and MAs to teach in southern colleges enabling many African-American faculty members to use school time to gain more academic credentials while retaining their salaries. She founded Project Cabrini, a school located in a housing complex in Chicago, establishing it as a pilot OEO school that later developed into 38 such schools. She was the co-founder of Project Bridge, a Cleveland experiment that brought together white ethnic and black communities. As founder of Library Lifeline, she persuaded publishers to send boxcars of books to poor libraries in the South. She was a co-founder of the Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry and founder of The Institute of Women Today, which provides non-traditional courses for incarcerated women so that upon their release they may find gainful employment. She published two books, over 200 articles, and fulfilled hundreds of speaking engagements. One of the founders of the National Coalition of American Nuns, Margaret Ellen was a member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Margaret Ellen died in 2002.

**1984**

**Theresa Kane RSM**  
**Pat Schroeder**

## **Nancy Swank**

The Assembly location was Snow Mountain, Colorado, and President Marian McAvoy compared the Assembly's work to a view from the mountain top — looking back, looking at the present, and looking to the future. The description also fit the Award recipients. A U.S. congresswoman, a social worker, and a Sister of Mercy were honored for their work in the past and in the present and for trying to improve the future as they raised powerful voices against the unjust treatment of women in the workplace, in migrant camps, and in the church.

**Pat Schroeder**, U.S. congresswoman who represented the First Congressional District of the State of Colorado from 1972 to 1996 (she left office undefeated), was honored for her work in addressing the inequities experienced by women and minorities and her promotion of legislation for fairness in job pay, health care, and child care. A popular political figure, she was steadily reelected to the House of Representatives by a 60 per cent majority. In addition to her concern for women's rights, she provided strong leadership on the environment and defense, especially in cutting wasteful defense spending. She was cited by the Grace Commission as one of the few politicians to put the national interest ahead of parochial concerns in her attempts to cut spending and balance the budget. Unable to be present at the time of the award, Congresswoman Schroeder made a videotape especially for the occasion. She mentioned in it how discouraging it was to be one of so few women in the United States Congress. She is currently President and CEO of the Association of American Publishers.

**Nancy Swank** was extolled for her years of dedication as a social worker and her efforts for the rights of women and children. Described as an "outstanding example of an older woman who, though officially retired, continued a life-long habit of working for the welfare of others," Nancy Swank was hailed as one of the founders of the Colorado Migrant and Rural Coalition and as a founding member of the Colorado Social Legislation Committee. Rather than make an acceptance speech, she showed slides depicting the deplorable conditions of migrant workers in Colorado.

**Theresa Kane RSM**, completing her term as President of the Sisters of Mercy and former President of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, was best known for her greeting to Pope John Paul II in 1979 in which she asked him to take note of the pain of Catholic women denied full access to ministry. Acclaimed as a prophet for her love in action, her strong rebuke against evil, her powerful dissent against falsehood, and her hope as testimony to a strong faith, Theresa spoke of the serious question of the credibility and authenticity of a church that lacks a vision. In the 1980s she called for a "Decade for Catholic Women," a time for women to work for full participation in the life and ministry of the church. The Loretto Women's Network endorsed this call.

**1985**

**Elise Boulding**  
**Rose Marciano Lucey**

## **Marjorie Tuite OP**

The 1985 Assembly in Estes Park, Colorado, gave new meaning to the word *gathering* as former Sisters of Loretto were sought out and invited to the Assembly. The Mary Rhodes Award went to three others who reached out across the world: a feminist scholar; a peace and justice activist; and a religious whose causes included the rights of women, African Americans, and Central Americans.

**Elise Boulding** was described as scholar and hermit; activist, teacher, and organizer; author and lecturer; futurist and feminist. Many in the community remembered her address to the 1973 Loretto Gathering and remembered, too, that at that time she expressed astonishment that the community was not using gender-inclusive language. Her concern for women's equality has found expression in many ways, including her books, *The International Women's Data Handbook*, *Women in the Twentieth Century World*, and *The Underside of History*. Elise was not able to be present for the award because of activities connected with her retirement from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire where she held the position of Chair of the Sociology Department.

**Rose Marciano Lucey** was the founder of the Third Life Center in Oakland, California, a center that explores alternate forms of adult education and family living. To this role she brought a 30-year history of peace and justice efforts. With her late husband, Dan, she worked with the Christian Family Movement nationally and internationally. They were founding members of the Ecumenical Peace Institute and of the National Peace Academy Committee. To promote the latter, Rose organized committees in 150 congressional districts. She also founded HOPE, a women's rights group in Oakland. In 1990 Rose Marciano Lucey became a co-member of Loretto. She died in 2001.

**Marjorie Tuite OP** was the Director of Ecumenical Action of Church Women United and National Coordinator of the National Assembly of Religious Women. A great champion of women's rights, particularly those of minority women, she worked in the inner city in Chicago and was especially concerned for the people of Nicaragua and El Salvador. She was a founder of the Women's Coalition Against U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. She was unable to be present for the award, having broken her foot just shortly before, but the Loretto Community in New York later made the presentation. Marjorie, a member of the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs, died from a sudden short illness in 1986.

**1986**

**Maria Riley OP  
Eddie Mae Jones  
Jane Corbett**

At the annual Assembly in St. Louis, the theme was “Continuity of Creativity,” and the Loretto Women’s Network honored three women who have demonstrated both creativity and continuity in their efforts for others: a woman who works for women in developing nations, a champion of the mentally retarded, and a woman whose tireless efforts for the poor are centered in St. Louis and Haiti.

**Maria Riley OP** was selected for her international work for women in church and society. She conceived of and was responsible for the implementation of the Karibu Center at the Nairobi Conference. She has attended UN World Conferences on Women in Copenhagen, Nairobi, and Beijing. She has written books, spoken, and given workshops on women’s concerns and feminism. A member of the Adrian Dominicans, Maria is at the Center of Concern in Washington, DC, where she is coordinator of the Global Women’s Project.

**Eddie Mae Jones** was honored for her work in coordinating efforts for the mentally retarded and disabled in Detroit and in the State of Michigan and for her teaching and other work in the rural South. Even after she retired, she continued her work on behalf of the retarded by serving on the Board of the Hancock Center for mentally handicapped adults. Her knowledge of Detroit’s bureaucracy helped the group through a difficult relocation problem.

**Jane Corbett**, well known to the Loretto Community (she was nominated by 51 people!), was the founder with Bob Corbett of People to People, Inc., an organization to provide assistance to the socially and economically disadvantaged in Haiti and metropolitan St. Louis. Since 1978 Jane Corbett has promoted drives to help the needy and to collect and distribute food and gifts to as many as 2,000 St. Louis families at Christmas. Many times since her first trip to Haiti in 1982, Jane and other members of her family have worked there to help alleviate deplorable conditions of hunger, starvation, and disease. In addition to collecting and delivering food, clothing, and medical supplies to Haiti, her efforts are also directed to long-term relief — education, clean water projects, job training, and employment. Jane has made it possible for many in the St. Louis area to help in this work through donations, providing and serving food, and doing stints of medical service in Haiti.

**1987**

**Dorothy Marie Hennessey OSF**  
**Mossie Allman Wyker**  
**Justine Merritt**

The annual Assembly met at Louisville, Kentucky, where the theme was “Loretto’s Past, Present and Future.” Mary Rhodes Awards were presented to women with long histories of working for others and striving for a better future: two peace activists and an advocate for equal treatment of women in churches.

**Dorothy Marie Hennessey OSF**, a retired teacher, took part in the Great Peace March for Global Nuclear Disarmament, walking from California to Washington, DC. A long-time

worker for disarmament and for the people of Central America, Dorothy is committed to putting her principles into action. She is a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Dubuque. She was arrested in 2000 at Ft. Benning for actions in trying to influence the closing of the former School of the Americas. She refused special treatment as a religious sister and served a prison term.

**Mossie Allman Wyker** devoted a major segment of her work to social integration of church organizations and toward equal representation and treatment of women in the churches. An ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for 58 years, Mossie served two terms as National President of Church Women United and was the first woman to give the keynote address to the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches. Mossie Wyker died in 1988.

**Justine Merritt** was cited as an example of one person who truly made a difference by inspiring thousands to embrace publicly the cause of peace. A mother, grandmother, poet, former English teacher, and long-time civil rights advocate, Justine was the originator and spirit behind THE RIBBON, a vast project of joining quilted segments portraying words and symbols of peace into a 15-mile “ribbon,” which was wrapped around the Pentagon in 1985. She even planned a project, RIBBON INTERNATIONAL, to make a “ribbon” to encompass the Earth. All this took its origin from the fertile imagination of Justine Merritt.

## 1988

### **Mara Taub** **Yolanda Tarango CCVI** **Mary Hartman**

The theme of the 1988 Assembly was “El Paso: Crucero — Crossroads.” The three women who received the Mary Rhodes Award reflected that Southwestern and cross-cultural emphasis as their works on behalf of women were focused on New Mexico, Texas, and Nicaragua.

**Mara Taub**, a teacher since serving in the Peace Corps in the Philippines in the early 60s, is a health-educator at a teen clinic in Santa Fe and a founding member of the Women’s Spiritual Center there. Her afternoons are devoted to health education in a small collective which serves women in rural New Mexico. Mara is also co-editor of the newsletter for the Women’s Prison Project/Coalition for Prisoners’ Rights and serves on the board of Casa Libre, a halfway house for ex-prisoners. She directs the Coalition for Prisoners’ Rights.

**Yolanda Tarango CCVI** was introduced as a “true daughter of the Southwest,” since her family has lived for generations in former Mexican territory that became part of the U.S.A. Early in her professional life she held the office of Youth Director for the Diocese of El Paso. She now works for Hispanic women in San Antonio in a transitional living center for women and children seeking safe housing. A member of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word, Yolanda is a co-author and editor of *Hispanic Women: Prophetic Voice in the Church* and editor of *Bridging*



*Boundaries: The Pastoral Care of U.S. Hispanics* (1999). She is one of the earliest writers of *mujerista* theology (theology from the perspective of Hispanic women). She has been for several years the national coordinator of Las Hermanas.

**Mary Hartman** was presented the award for her more than 22 years of work in Central America, especially in Nicaragua, and for her courageous speaking out against U.S. intervention in the region. A member of the Sisters of St. Agnes, Mary started her missionary life as a teacher. Her work centered most recently on human rights. She accepted the award in the name of the “faithful people of Nicaragua,” saying, “The cry of the poor will never be silenced.”

1989

**Jeannine Gramick**  
**Margaret Moran MMS**  
**Holly Near**

The annual Assembly was held in Denver, and the Mary Rhodes Award went to three women whose range of interests seemed at least as vast as the Rockies: an advocate of civil rights for gay and lesbian Catholics, a health worker in Ghana, and a musician who sings for peace. Their works were reinforcement for the Assembly theme, “A Future Full of Hope.”

**Jeannine Gramick** is co-founder of New Ways Ministry, which helps to provide a loving network of support for gay and lesbian Catholics. At the time a member of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Jeannine is widely known for her bold advocacy for civil rights for the lesbian and gay community, for her workshops, and for her writings. She is an editor of *Homosexuality and the Catholic Church* (1985) and *Homosexuality in the Priesthood and Religious Life* (1989). Jeannine is now in the process of transferring to the Sisters of Loretto.

**Margaret Moran MMS** was honored for her work in the medical profession in the villages of Ghana where, at the time of the award, she had spent the last 14 years. In addition to visiting village clinics, she organizes courses for field workers. She has worked consistently on behalf of Ghanaian women who labor in arduous conditions, carrying water for many miles and living under demeaning traditions. She has had a special interest in helping Ghanaians care for AIDS patients in the home. Many women suffer from AIDS, and because AIDS patients are feared and treated as outcasts, they are organizing themselves to help one another. Margaret is a pediatric nurse practitioner and a member of the Medical Mission Sisters.

**Holly Near**, singer and composer, was honored for the great contribution she has made through her music in alerting the public to causes of justice and peace and for the joy and inspiration her concerts have brought to hundreds of thousands of people. Some of her earlier concert tours for issues were “On Tour for a Nuclear-Free Future” (1979); “On Tour for National Women’s Studies” (1981); “Be Disarming: Challenge the Nuclear Mentality” (1982). She has issued more than 20 recordings and has been several times the winner of the Best Album on an

Independent Label Award. Unable to be present because of scheduling conflicts, Holly made a video for the Loretto Community in which she discussed her work.

## 1990

### **Ruth Burgett Bertha Gilkey**

“Walk softly hand in hand on the earth” was the theme of the annual Assembly. St. Louis was host, and the Mary Rhodes Award went to two women who work quietly in St. Louis, but whose influence is being felt across the country. One works in aesthetic education and the other in tenants’ rights. Both have received national attention for their outstanding programs.

**Ruth Burgett**, an alumna of 16 years of Loretto education including a degree in music from Webster College (now Webster University), was honored for the humane, enthusiastic, and artistic qualities she has brought to a life of educational achievements. She created the first secondary level Department of Aesthetic Education in the nation at Nerinx Hall High School and served as its head. This program infuses music, dance, the visual arts, and architecture into every discipline. A partner in an interracial marriage in the early 40s, Ruth has been especially sensitive to making all students aware of the beauty of their heritage.

**Bertha Gilkey** is nationally known for her work in organizing residents in housing projects to take control of their situation and improve it. She was raised in the Cochran Gardens Housing Development in downtown St. Louis at a time when that housing complex was scheduled for demolition. She has been an internationally acclaimed expert in establishing programs of job training, health care, and day care. Women on welfare who live in projects are Bertha Gilkey’s principal constituency.

## 1991

### **Martha Elder Ellen Hummel SCMM Rosemary Radford Ruether**

“Sacred Spaces: Coming Home” was the theme of the 1991 Assembly held at The Galt House in Louisville, Kentucky. This year Loretto Women’s Network honored with the Mary Rhodes Award three women who have worked to educate women in quite different places and at various levels (from GED to doctorate).

**Martha Elder** works as a paraprofessional for adult basic education. For more than 25 years, she has helped some 50 persons per year, in Marion County, Kentucky, mostly women, to

earn their GED's. Martha has been chosen for Leadership Lebanon and the Soil Conservation Service Extra Mile Award, and has twice been named Marion County Homemaker of the Year — once with an additional citation attached because she made classes in auto mechanics and defensive driving available to women. She has created a home with an international flavor, urging her college children to bring home fellow students from foreign countries.

**Ellen Hummel SCMM** is a Medical Mission Sister who spent nearly 20 years working in the Catholic diocese of Kumasi, Ghana. During that time Ellen did background community research to determine the needs of the people and the missionaries in the region, and in response to the needs, she co-founded the Center for Spiritual Renewal in Kumasi. Ellen served as vicar for religious, working to improve the living and working conditions of the women who joined religious communities serving the people of the Kumasi region. She organized and coordinated the Regional Conference of Women Religious and worked, through education and advocacy, to enable the new communities to recognize their own inner authority and to maintain their autonomy as religious communities. Currently Ellen lives in El Paso, Texas, where she gives retreats and works with Hispanic women and their children.

**Rosemary Radford Ruether** has been one of the most articulate and prolific defenders of women's rights in the church and civil society for decades. Her brilliant theological mind has probed the relations between feminism and an authentic Christian faith in more than 30 books and articles. She is a leading theological voice in struggles to overcome racism, establish basic economic justice in the U.S. and the world, and challenge the United States war-making and dominating foreign policy.

## 1992

### **Marie Therese Archambault Susie John Loretta Ortiz y Pino**

The 1992 Assembly was held in El Paso, Texas, at the Westin Paso del Norte Hotel, in the 100th year of Loretto service to the El Paso community. The theme for the Assembly was "El Paso, Al Nuevo Amanecer/El Paso, Toward a New Dawn." The Mary Rhodes Award was presented to women of varied ethnic backgrounds who brought healing of body and soul.

**Marie Therese Archambault OSF**, a Sister of St. Francis and a Lakota, has functioned as a bridge person — between Native American and non-Native American, between institutional Catholicism and Native religious practice and culture. Marie Therese has a license in scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. She chose to specialize in scripture because she believes that unless women learn scripture they will not be able to be interpreters of the Word. She is the only Native American to graduate from this institution. Marie Therese has worked with a Lakota language group for Native American women elders in the Denver area to help them preserve their memories with pride as the last Lakota language speakers. She also coordinates the first National Native Urban Ministry Office and works with Native Catholics

who are trying to express their faith while preserving their heritage. At the time of this award, Marie Therese was teaching Native religious traditions at Regis University.

**Susie John** is a Navajo physician working with the Crownpoint, New Mexico, Public Health Service. Susie is active at The Gathering Place in Thoreau, New Mexico, which provides emergency health care information for young mothers. She has written a series entitled “Mom the Teacher” and co-authored a program for teen mothers with Angela Bianco SL when Angela was Coordinator of The Gathering Place. Angela described Susie as “a dedicated woman, a feminist, an ‘empowerer’ for her people and a trusted friend.” Susie has remained rooted in the traditional Navajo family while educating herself and in turn educating Navajo women. Told by her high school counselor that she was not “college material,” Susie is now a graduate of Harvard and USC at Berkeley.

**Loretta Ortiz y Pino** was educated by Sisters of Loretto in Santa Fe for 12 years. She is a pediatrician at the Taos Clinic for Children and Youth. She has previously worked at Indian Health Services at Shiprock, New Mexico; Arroyo Chamiso Health Center in Santa Fe; and as a visiting instructor in pediatrics at Hospital Oscar Danilo Rosales in Leon, Nicaragua. Loretta has been associated with a battered women’s shelter in Shiprock, volunteered at the Sick Child Clinic in Santa Fe, and serves as a board member and treasurer of the Taos Battered Women’s Shelter. She is working on a project with the Taos Midwife Group in financially supporting Casa Materna in Nicaragua, a home allowing high-risk pregnant women to receive treatment. Unable to be present to accept the award, Loretta sent a message noting that “as professionals we think we have come to help and teach, but we are the ones who come away enriched.”

## 1993

**Josepha Eyre**  
**Mary Hunt and Diann Neu**  
**Rosa Marta Zárate Maciás**

The annual Assembly took place in Keystone, Colorado. Colorado was considering Proposition 2 limiting the civil rights of gay and lesbian citizens. Many Loretto members wore “No to Proposition 2” buttons. The theme was “A Gathering of Gifts.” Gifts to Loretto were those receiving the Mary Rhodes Award.

**Josepha Eyre** — As founder and coordinator of the Women’s Bean Project in Denver, Jossy has demonstrated what one woman can do to help other women take steps toward economic self-sufficiency, human dignity, and hope. While volunteering at a daytime women’s shelter, Jossy realized that although some of the shelter’s clients’ needs were being met temporarily, long-term solutions were missing. She felt that if the women could learn some job skills and social skills, their situations would improve. Through her initiative and ingenuity, and the investment of her own and her husband’s funds, Jossy organized the Women’s Bean Project. Here homeless women and other women in poverty learned how to assemble gift packages of

bean soup mix to sell, how to meet the public, and how to set up attractive booths for selling their wares. Jossy is in the process of becoming a Loretto co-member.

**Mary Hunt and Diann Neu** — Working together as Co-Founders and Co-Directors of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER), Mary and Diann have been national leaders in promoting the rights of women in religious institutions through their theological talks, writings, sacred rituals, and symbols. WATER works for the breadth and depth of justice concerns, including economic justice, care of the environment, peace and human rights on a global scale.

Mary Hunt is a feminist theologian with a growing resume of published articles and scholarly papers. Her book *Fierce Tenderness: A Feminist Theology of Friendship* won the 1990 Crossroad/Continuum Women's Studies Award. Diann Neu is an internationally recognized feminist liturgist who has created and published numerous rituals for a variety of occasions. She is one of the authors of *Jewish-Christian Women's Seder* rituals which are used around the country.

**Rosa Martha Zárate Maciás** is a woman who has struggled for many years for the education of women and in the defense of their rights. Rosa came to southern California over 30 years ago as a young Sister Servant of the Blessed Sacrament, a community based in her hometown of Guadalajara, Mexico. During her early years of teaching, she began to hear of and to witness the suffering of the Mexican people around her. While serving as coordinator of community programs for the San Bernardino Diocese in 1986, she was abruptly and unjustly terminated. She knew that her situation made for a teachable moment for women in the church, a way to become more realistic about how the church hierarchy functions in women's lives when they stand in advocacy for the poor. Rosa Martha became the coordinator of a program for refugees. Currently, Rosa Martha lives in San Bernardino, California. Although she is no longer a religious, she continues to dedicate her life to working with immigrants in California.

**1994**

**Bella Abzug**  
**Patricia McKissack**  
**Rosalina Tuyuc**

The Loretto Assembly was held at the Sheraton Westport Inn, St. Louis, Missouri. The Assembly theme was "Building the Vision." The women honored for their vision included three strong voices: two national legislators and a brilliant storyteller.

For many years **Bella Abzug** steadfastly put her energy, brains, organizing skills, and idealism to work for a better world, especially for women and for victims of racism, prejudice, greed, and militarism. She was a congresswoman, civil rights lawyer, author of justice legislation, initiator of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, and the list could go on. She was a Senior Advisor to the Secretary General at the 1992 UN Earth Summit and worked

diligently organizing in the United Nations halls for future conferences, especially on women and on population. She was co-creator and co-chair of the global organization Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). Unable to attend the Loretto event, Bella sent a video. Bella Abzug died in 1994.

**Patricia McKissack** has contributed to the cause of justice and equality, especially for women, through creatively using her own heritage to promote positive role models of African Americans through literature for children and young adults. Besides the strong young female characters she has depicted in her children's books, she has, in collaboration with her husband, Fredrick, presented to her young readers award-winning biographies of such heroic African-American women as Sojourner Truth and Zora Neale Hurston. The McKissacks have received prestigious recognition for their work including Coretta Scott King, Newbury, Caldecott, and Regina Awards.

**Rosalina Tuyuc** founded CONAVIGUA (National Coordinating Committee of Guatemalan Widows) in 1988 with fewer than 1,000 members. Today they represent an estimated 40,000 women and children, most of whom like herself are indigenous of the Mayan culture. In the midst of the oppressive social, economic, political, and military conditions in Guatemala, Rosalina Tuyuc is an outstanding representative of these women as they work on behalf of human rights for the indigenous, for their sisters, and for others living in poverty and repression. She is currently a legislator in the National Congress of Guatemala.

## 1995

**Edwina Gateley**  
**Frances Kissling**  
**Linda Peeno**

The theme of this year's Assembly was "Vision 2000: Construction Phase 2: Building Understanding and Peace." The location of the celebration was the Holiday Inn Hurstbourne, Louisville, Kentucky. During this Assembly, the Loretto Women's Network also celebrated the 75th Anniversary of U.S. women's suffrage, August 26, 1920. The recipients of this year's Mary Rhodes Award included three strong advocates for women whose names were readily recognizable from their lectures and appearances in television and cinema.

**Edwina Gateley** is founder of the Volunteer Missionary Movement and founder of Genesis House in Chicago, a residence offering services, support, and community to women in prostitution. She is a popular speaker and is the author of several books and audio tapes. Edwina was also the keynote speaker at the 1995 Loretto Assembly.

**Frances Kissling** is president and founder of Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC). In this work she has shown relentless energy in working for women's right to make decisions about their own lives. She has worked internationally in the Philippines, Mexico, Peru, England, and

Poland. Her articles often appear in *Conscience*, and she is frequently a participant in panel discussions as a pro-choice Catholic.

**Linda Peeno**, family physician, medical ethicist, and medical-legal consultant in Kentucky, current Director of the International Society for the System Sciences (ISSS), is an MD who is giving her expertise, talent, and time to medical ethics and the reform of the health care system in the USA and abroad. She is a former HMO physician and was the subject of the 2002 Showtime film, “Damaged Care.”

## 1996

### **Ivone Gebara Catalina Mondragon Graciela de la Rosa**

With the theme “Creating a New Earth: Let the Desert Bloom! Creando un Mundo Nuevo: ¡Qué Florezca el Desierto!” the annual Assembly took place in El Paso, Texas. This year’s honorees included three women dedicated to helping women bloom: a philosopher-theologian, a farmworkers’ organizer, and a sociologist who left the university for the streets.

**Ivone Gebara** is a liberation theologian and ecofeminist who is well known for her teaching and publishing in the fields of theology and philosophy, for her leadership in feminist and environmental issues, and for her work with poor women in her native Brazil. She has taught at the Catholic University of Sao Paulo as well as the Institute of Theology in Recife. She is a member of the Sisters of Our Lady (Canonesses of St. Augustine) and has served in many leadership positions in her community.

**Catalina Mondragon** has dedicated herself to working for justice for farmworkers. She has represented the workers in the Florida orange groves and has tirelessly fought for farmworkers’ right to a decent wage and just working conditions. She is a founding member of Farmworker Ministry, Inc., and is largely responsible for organizing farmworker families to obtain free health care. She is an organizer of Mujeres Valientes, Inc., which works against domestic violence.

**Graciela de la Rosa** is a sociologist who left a university teaching position at the National University of Mexico in Mexico City to work with women prostitutes in the border cities of Juarez, Mexico; and El Paso, U.S.A. She has spent years listening to, organizing, and befriending these women to help them understand the society in which they work and the choices they have about their lives and the lives of their children.

## 1997

**Kristin Furnari CSJP**  
**LaDoria Payne-Bell**  
**Marilyn Lorenz-Weinkauff**

The annual Assembly was held at The Viking Hotel and Conference Center in St. Louis, Missouri. This year's theme was "Loretto: Extending Boundaries," in celebration of 150 years of Loretto service in St. Louis. The Mary Rhodes Award honored women of different ethnic and racial backgrounds, all dedicated to extending the boundaries for women who have little to hope for, and the boundaries of imagination for young women who have much to give.

**Kristin Furnari CSJP**, referring to her Italian heritage said, "Glazer's *The Melting Pot* was not operative in my developmental years. I was 33 before I learned I was an American and not Italian!" In 1885 the foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, built an orphanage on York Street in Jersey City, New Jersey. As the need for orphanages decreased, the building fell into disuse. One hundred years later, in 1985, Kristin supervised the rehabbing of the York Street house. Today it is the location of the York Street Project, which daily serves about 200 women and children. St. Joseph's Home, which Kristin directs, provides transitional housing for homeless and battered women and their dependent children. The York Street Project also offers an alternative high school for women, a child development center, a boarding house, and a soup kitchen.

**LaDoris Payne-Bell** is a grassroots community leader who puts tremendous effort into issues affecting low- and moderate-income women and their families. She works to insure these families are represented, are empowered, and have opportunities for full inclusion in society. An indication of LaDoris's commitment is her founding of WomenSpirit, Inc., a program that provides leadership development and a mentoring process for African-American women in the St. Louis area. Imani Family Center, an outgrowth of WomenSpirit, serves the families of many of these women. Contributing to LaDoris's effectiveness is the fact that she is a networker. Her work encompasses economically poor women in northern Mississippi as well as those in north St. Louis. On March 8, 1997, in celebration of International Women's Day, LaDoris brought the two groups together in St. Louis in Circles of Hope, a community-building process focusing on economic development, health, and violence prevention.

**Marilyn Lorenz-Weinkauff's** connection with Loretto began at Mary Queen of Peace, in Webster Groves, Missouri, where she "received a wonderful education" and "was confirmed in the belief that I could do anything I set my heart on." At Villa Duchesne and Maryville College, "my world became global, my contemplative heart was fed, and my encounter with Jesus among the poor became concrete." In 1975 Marilyn went to live in Santiago de Chile, "where the longings which began in Mrs. Burke's fourth grade class found a home" in her heart. The experience of the civil rights and Vietnam War movements of the 1960s helped her move to a Catholicism which "embraced an ever-expanding world of faith seekers." Through her teaching in the Theology Department at Nerinx Hall, Marilyn has inspired the students to develop their spirituality through prayer, music, dance, acting, and preaching. On semester breaks when many students revel on beaches, Marilyn leads hers on service trips to Honduras and to El Salvador where they live among the poor.



## 1998

Topical Gatherings replaced the annual Assembly this year. Therefore, no Mary Rhodes Awards were given.

## 1999

**Kathy Coffey**  
**Patty Lawless**  
**Pat Washburn**

“A Time Together — Together Time” was the theme of the 1999 Assembly held in Denver, Colorado. This year’s Mary Rhodes Awardees were selected for their steady promotion of feminist principles and ideals in church and society.

**Kathy Coffey** is a local and national voice for women and children, and for those who live in hope that Vatican II will one day be fully realized. Author of several books, she has received national awards for her poetry, books, and newspaper and magazine writing. She co-edits *Leaven*, a bi-monthly newsletter in the Rocky Mountain Region. Through retreats and recollection days, Kathy shares her insights into the roles of women in the gospel and in today’s society. Married and a mother of four children, she frequently uses her family experiences as material in her work.

**Patty Lawless** has dedicated herself to community development, education, health promotion, and the creation of a community-based artisan network in El Salvador and the United States. Over a period of 12 years she and her two children lived in El Salvador. Since returning to the United States, she has promoted Project Salvador to increase understanding of the situation for Salvadoran women as well as to create a market for their crafts.

**Pat Washburn** has been in the feminist and peace movement for the long haul. She established a safe house for women and children, taught classes in feminism, and promoted the ordination of women in the Episcopal Church. Especially concerned about women in transition, she has helped women cope with the stress of trying to keep their faith while going through many difficulties. Pat has been a longtime friend of Elise Boulding, another Mary Rhodes honoree.

## 2000

**Anne Fajardo  
Eleanor Jordan  
Sharon Bandy Kotok**

The annual Assembly took place at the Holiday Inn Hurstbourne in Louisville, Kentucky. The theme was “Imagine.” This year’s Mary Rhodes Award honorees imagine a better life for women, children, minorities, and the poor through their work in rebuilding lives, promoting legislation, and offering global education.

**Anne Fajardo** has been in the forefront of efforts to break the hopeless cycle of homelessness. She is currently Program Director at The Healing Place, a facility in Louisville where homeless women can begin rebuilding their lives physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Anne is a National Certified Alcoholism Counselor, a Master Addictions Counselor, and a Certified Social Worker. Under her guidance, The Healing Place received the “Models that Work” Award in 1998 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**Eleanor Jordan** is an outspoken advocate for women, children, minorities, and the poor through her work in the community and in the Kentucky legislature. In her official capacity, she sponsored legislation dealing with gang intimidation, drug trafficking, domestic violence, pay equity, non-parental child custody, and nursing home funding. She is a member of the board of Metro Human Needs Alliance, Community Coordinated Childcare, Kentucky One Church One Child, and the California Area Family Development Center.

**Sharon Bandy Kotok** has worked for the State Department for over 30 years. She has specialized in women’s issues internationally, serving on the U.S. delegation to the Beijing Conference in 1995. Sharon has been a member of the U.S. delegation at the annual Commission on the Status of Women at the UN. In this capacity, Sharon has worked with governments as an advocate for beneficial policies on behalf of women everywhere.

**2001**

Topical Gatherings replaced the annual Assembly this year. Therefore, no Mary Rhodes Awards were given.

**2002**

**Corita Bussanmas BVM and Berta Sailer BVM  
Joan Chittister OSB and Christine Vladimiroff OSB  
Barbara Lee**

The annual Assembly took place in two locations — the Doubletree Hotel in Overland Park, Kansas, and the Inn at Loretto and the Radisson Santa Fe Hotel in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The theme for this Assembly was “Journey 2002” in celebration of 150 years of Loretto in the Southwest. In their life journeys, this year’s Mary Rhodes Award honorees have devoted their energies to resisting patriarchal policies in church and state.

**Corita Bussanmas BVM** and **Berta Sailer BVM**, through the foundation of Operation Breakthrough in 1971, have invested the last 30 years of their lives in working for the wellbeing of women and children in central Kansas City. They bypassed the red tape of bureaucracy and established a day care center that now serves more than 400 children and their families. Their mission is to provide safe, loving, and educationally enriched care for the children while at the same time enabling their mothers to remain in the workforce and support their families.

**Joan Chittister OSB** and **Christine Vladimiroff OSB** have provided strong confident models of true women of the Church. Through years of scholarship, Joan has shown us in her writings and talks a God who is delighted with women, eager to use feminine talents, and compassionate to the poor and outcast.

Christine has been an effective leader for many years. Nothing has demonstrated that leadership more clearly than her response in 2001 to a Vatican order to silence Joan which she declined to pass along because she judged it to be opposed to Benedictine obedience and monastic spirit. She respectfully treated Joan as her sister and Vatican officials as her brothers.

**Barbara Lee** has voted consistently against military action during her three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, including against waging war in Afghanistan in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks. During her years representing the Ninth Congressional District in California, she has spoken out of her own conscience and concern for the general welfare of her constituents. Taking a stand against an immediate military response represents a stand for women who are so often the ones to lose the most as victims of war.

## 2003

### **Mary Jo Heman OP** **Marilyn Montenegro**

**Mary Jo Heman OP**, a native of St. Louis, has worked for years to transform social systems that create poverty and discrimination for others, especially women. Mary Jo is a Sparkill Dominican. She has been Regional Director for her congregation, President of St. Louis Sisters Council, and Chairperson of Religious Involved in Social Concerns (RISC). Currently, Mary Jo serves on the Intercommunity Housing Association Member Board for Pillar Place and Compton Place. Mary Jo has been awarded the Mary Rhodes Award primarily for her work in criminal justice ministry. She is the founder of the Center for Women in Transition, an enterprise of justice and empowerment for women coming out of prison. Mary Jo continues on the staff as Coordinator of Mentors. She trains volunteers who work with the women to

affirm their abilities while inviting them to further growth and new choices for their lives.

**Marilyn Montenegro**, a friend of Loretto for over 35 years, exemplifies in her work care for the poor and the voiceless. Her work has been against racism and for better programs for women in prison and consistent ethical standards. She was awarded Social Worker of the Year in 2002. Marilyn has worked as Director of South Bay Fair Housing and Director of Program Development as Special Service for Groups, chaired the Los Angeles Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Committee on Institutional Racism and the Los Angeles Chapter of NASW Peace and Social Justice Committee, served as co-editor of the *Trabajadores de la Raza Newsletter*, was a member of the Statewide Advisory Committee for the Chicana Service Action Center, and worked on the board of El Centro, the Chicano Training Center in Los Angeles. Marilyn is currently very active on the issue of "restorative justice," an alternative to "retributive justice" that makes an effort to have the system focus on restoration rather than punishment.

## 2004

*Community is for Mission* Mobile Topical Gathering replaced the Assembly this year. Therefore, no Mary Rhodes Awards were given.

## 2005

**Barbara Boxer**  
**Diane Carman**  
**Mary Pius Fagan OP**

**Senator Barbara Boxer**, U.S. Senator from California, first elected in 1992 after 10 years in the House of Representatives, has been an active voice for women's rights, health care, environmental issues, and the anti-war movement. She has had the courage to stand alone when necessary and has supported many important causes. Examples are after-school programs, medical research to find cures for diseases, comprehensive prescription drug coverage, safe drinking water, and preserving Social Security. While serving in the House, she wrote the Violence Against Women Act, now law.

**Diane Carman**, progressive columnist for the *Denver Post*, writes often of the plights of poor women and of the need for the rights of women in all walks of life. In addition to her support of women and of the poor, she is a consistent voice for immigrants, gays and lesbians, and other oppressed people. Her courage in speaking truth to power includes challenging such sacred cows as church and political leaders.

**Mary Pius Fagan OP**, has been a justice person and a nurturer of women throughout her 50 years in religious life. Through her work for the St. Vincent de Paul Society in St. Louis, she Founded the position of Coordinator of Criminal Justice for the St. Louis area. She was the first Executive Director of Intercommunity Housing Association (Pillar Place). Recently she has been involved in Leadership St. Louis, a group of concerned citizens who want to delve deeper into issues facing the economically poor in the local African-American community.

## 2006

**Joan Fitz-Gerald**  
**Lucia Guzmán**  
**Jane Vennard**

**Joan Fitz-Gerald**, first woman to hold the position of President of the Colorado Senate, has been a voice for women throughout her political career. She has served in the senate since 2000 having earlier been minority leader for Colorado Senate Democrats. She attended the training session at the Center for Women Policy Studies in Washington, DC, went to Marymount Manhattan College and law school at Fordham. Joan has said that it is a challenge to balance decision making in a way that honors the needs of constituents without money but that she is dedicated to doing just that.

**Lucia Guzmán**, has been active in supporting and speaking for poor people of North Denver since her arrival in the area in 1983. She holds a Master of Divinity degree from Iliff School of Theology in Denver where she specialized in liberation theology. In 1994, she left her parish ministry to become the first Mexican American and first woman to head the Colorado Council of Churches. In 1999, she was elected to the Denver School Board of Education. In 2004, she was appointed Executive Director of the Agency for Human Rights and Community Relations. An editorial in the *Denver Post* stated, "She has put moral questions on the front burner of public policy debate."

**Jane Vennard**, ordained in the United Church of Christ to a special ministry in teaching and spiritual direction, was a founding member of the Ecumenical Women's Community in 1993. In 1985 she was chair of the Board for the Center for Women and Religion at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. She was on the faculty of Iliff School of Theology from 1987 to 2005. She is author of four books, one of which won the Colorado Book Award, and is currently on the editorial board of *Presence Journal*, the publication of Spiritual Directors International. Jane currently teaches, gives retreats, and has a private practice in spiritual direction.

## 2007

*Conversations in Community, Community in Conversations* Gathering replaced the Assembly this year. Therefore, no Mary Rhodes Awards were given.

