

The Feyer

Vol XXIV, No. 1

Summer 2003

One third of clergy delegates will be women . . .

Record number of clergywomen to attend 2004 assembly

The percentage of clergywomen at the General Conference of the United Methodist Church will continue to rise following the election of delegates to the 2004 assembly in Pittsburgh. A



record 34 percent of the 400 clergy delegates from the United States will be women. This figure compares with a

recent report that 18.5 percent of all active United Methodist clergy are women.

United Methodist News Service analyzed data on the delegates to develop a profile of the church's top lawmaking assembly in terms of diversity, first-time participants and other characteristics. The research was based on reports filed by the U.S. annual conferences as well as additional information provided by conference communicators.

At the 2000 gathering, 27.8 percent of clergy delegates from the states were female. That compares with 22.5 percent in 1996; 18 percent in 1992; 15 percent in 1988; and 8.9 percent in 1984.

The percentage of laywomen delegates from the United States will remain at 51.1 percent, a figure that is identical to the 2000 report. In 1996, 52 percent of the lay delegates were women, and in 1996, the figure was 53.1 percent.

The percentage estimate for the 2004 meeting is based on reports of

787 of the 800 delegates to be seated at the quadrennial meeting set for April 27-May 7. Percentages from earlier General Conferences are based on surveys by the General Council on Ministries.

Eight hundred of the 994 voting and nonvoting delegates to the 2004 General Conference will be from the United States. A total of 184 delegates will be from other countries, and an additional 10 fraternal delegates— with

voice but not vote—will attend from other Methodist denominations around the world. The number of non-U.S. delegates is up 32 from the 2000 General Conference because of an increased number of judicatories and church members while a number of United States annual conferences have merged and overall membership has declined.

Because of 2000 General Conference legislation that changed the
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2006, 50th anniversary of full clergy rights for women—gather stories now

The United Methodist Church celebrates a unique moment in its history in 2006: the 50th anniversary of our denomination granting full clergy rights for women. As that date approaches, leaders from across the denomination are asking annual conferences and local churches to gather stories of clergywomen.

According to Carolyn De Swarte Gifford, editor of *Writing Out My Heart: Selections from the Journal of Frances E. Willard, 1855-96* (University of Illinois Press, 1995) and a women's historian interested in women's religious experience and social reform activity, "We need to know women's history in order for the story of our church to be inclusive. If it doesn't include all women, Hispanic women, Native-American women, African-American women, Asian women, and European-American women, then we have only part of the story, and we want to have the whole story."

As outlined in an article in *Interpreter* magazine, March 2002, Gifford explained why it is vitally important to collect women's stories: to celebrate women's accomplishments, to offer models of strong women, and to inspire us.

Our denomination's struggle to achieve full clergy rights for women was long and hard. Although the United Brethren voted to ordain women as early as 1889, very few United Brethren women were actually granted full rights. When the Evangelical United Brethren Church was formed in 1946, women were not given rights for several years thereafter. Methodists did not ordain and give full clergy rights to women until 1956.

As Charles Yrigoyen, general secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, has pointed out, "By 2006, many of the women who
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Methodist women's history resource now available on-line

An important bibliography on women in the Methodist tradition has recently become available on the website of the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH). Edited by Susan Eltscher Warrick, former GCAH staff member, the work is entitled *Women in the Wesleyan and United Methodist Traditions: A Bibliography*.

Warrick has revised and updated the resource, originally published in 1991. The current edition includes titles published through December 2001. Its primary focus is The United Methodist Church and its predecessors. It also includes titles from the British tradition, particularly from the time of the Wesleyan revival. Some related Methodist groups are included; notably African American Methodist denominations, along with reference to Free Methodists, Primitive Methodists, and Wesleyans.

Warrick says one of the lessons learned early in compiling the bibliography was that scholars have only begun to recover and interpret the history of the rich variety of women's work in the church.

The bibliography is available at www.gcah.org.

The Flyer Summer 2003 **Vol. XXIV, No. 1**

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Editor: Bonny Stalnaker Roth

The GCSRW, a national agency of the UMC, acts as an advocate, catalyst, and monitor to ensure the full participation and equality of women in the church.

GCSRW officers:

Gail Murphy-Geiss, President
Rose Arroyo, Vice-President
William H. (Bill) Wilson, Secretary

General Secretariat:

Raponzil Drake, Soomee Kim

GCSRW, 1200 Davis St., Evanston, IL 60201
(847) 869-7330; (800) 523-8390

Web site: www.gcsr.org

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Resources

Christ in the Margins, icons and biographies by Robert Lentz; reflections by Edwina Gateley (Orbis Books, 2003). Features men and women, the poor, the broken, mystics and visionaries, artists, children—all who live in the margins and wear the face of Christ in a unique way. \$25.00.

Christianity with an Asian Face: Asian American Theology in the Making, Peter C. Phan (Orbis, 2003). This author draws on the twin themes of liberation and inculturation to examine the meaning of Christ for Asian Americans. \$30.00.

Dictionary of Third World Theologies, ed. Virginia Fabella and R.S. Sugirtharajah (Orbis, 2000). This resource offers 150 entries by over a hundred theologians and scholars from the Third World, including Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. \$25.00.

Hidden Women of the Gospels, Kathy Coffey (Orbis, 2003). This text contains insight into women of the Gospels and the parallels with women today. The chapters conclude with questions for reflection or discussion to help readers uncover the holi-

ness in their own lives. A useful resource for sermon preparation. \$15.00.

The Man Jesus Loved: Homoerotic Narratives from the New Testament, Theodore W. Jennings, Jr. (Pilgrim Press, 2003). Jennings addresses such subjects as sexual minorities in the ancient world, the role of the "beloved disciple" described in John's Gospel, the story of the nude youth in the garden found in Mark, and Jesus' often unconventional teaching about marriage and family relationships in the ancient world. \$45.00.

Retreats That Work: Designing and Conducting Effective Offsites for Groups and Organizations, Sheila Campbell, Merianne Litemari with Steve Sugar (Jossey-Bass, 2003). This practical resource offers help with planning and leading a variety of types of retreats. \$45.00.

Modern Spiritual Masters Series St. Therese of Lisieux: Essential Writings, selected with an introduction by Mary Frohlich (Orbis, 2003). A collection of writings by this French Carmelite nun who died at the age of 24. \$15.00. ☉

Record numbers from p. 1

formula for distribution of delegates, annual conferences from the North Central Jurisdiction will have 164 delegates, down 18; Northeastern Jurisdiction, 144 delegates, down 18; South Central, 170 delegates, up 10; Southeastern, 278, up 8; and Western, 44, down 12. The number of fraternal delegates will remain the same as last quadrennium: Methodist churches in Great Britain, four; the Caribbean and the Americas, two; Mexico, two; and Puerto Rico, two. With detailed reports on 540 delegates, there are 17 people under age 18 (3.1 percent) and a total of 37 delegates under age 30 (6.6 percent). Last quadrennium, 3.1 percent of the delegates were under age 30 (6.5 percent of laity and 0 percent of clergy). There are nine deacons and five diaconal ministers.

Eighty-seven delegates are African American (16.6 percent); 20, Asian American (3.7 percent); 21, Hispanic American (3.9 percent); and seven, Native American (1.4 percent). Two are Haitian Americans, and one, an East Indian American. In 2000, 12.4 percent of the delegates were African American; 3 percent were Asian American; 2.2 percent, Hispanic American; and 0.93, Native American.

Historic elections

Among the historic elections reported are several firsts. Memphis Conference elected its first Hispanic clergywoman, Liána Pérez-Felix, as a member of the delegation. Iowa elected its first African-American clergywoman, Celestyne DeVance. Nebraska elected an African-American woman, Charlotte Abram, as General Conference delegate on the first clergy ballot. North Carolina reports that for the first time a clergywoman, Hope Morgan Ward, was elected on the first ballot. South Georgia celebrated milestones with the elections of James Swanson, the first African American to lead the clergy delegation to General Conference, and Beth Randall, the first youth to be elected to the General Conference delegation. Minerva Carcaño will be Oregon-Idaho's first Hispanic delegate. Alaska Missionary has only two delegates, but it reports that it elected its first clergywoman, Rachel Lieder-Simeon, and first male lay delegate, Lonnie Brooks.

Excerpted from *UMNews*, July 10, 2003

A round-up of Annual Conference action in spring meetings.

Health care costs, elections, social issues take center stage at May, June meetings

United Methodists wrestled with health care costs, elected delegates to the 2004 General Conference, and performed acts of repentance for racism during annual conference sessions this spring.

The 64 U.S. conferences met in May and June, and several regional units outside the United States also held annual gatherings.

Electing representatives to the 2004 General Conference was the universal item of business for all of the church's regional assemblies this year. The church is sending 984 voting delegates from around the world to the General Conference in Pittsburgh, April 27-May 7, 2004, where they will make decisions guiding church policy and also speak out on issues of the day. The results of their work will be reflected in revisions of *The Book of Discipline* and *The Book of Resolutions*.

The U.S. annual conferences elected additional delegates to attend one of five jurisdictional gatherings later in 2004, where bishops will receive their geographical assignments and new episcopal leaders will be elected to fill vacancies.

Reported below, based on excerpts from annual conference reports, are events and decisions that may be expected to have an impact on women and their roles in the United Methodist Church.

North Central Jurisdiction

Detroit celebrated Molly Turner's 10 years of ministry as clergy assistant to the bishop of the Michigan Area. Turner is a member of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Among petitions to the General Conference, one calls for adding to the duties of the staff-parish relations committee the development of a policy manual for direct-hire staff, including a policy on harassment, and adding similar provisions to the duties of the local church council.

Minnesota affirmed petitions that support the ministry of United Methodist Women and call delegates

to the assembly to build an atmosphere of respect and tolerance as they discuss disputed issues and to avoid debate styles that set up winners and losers.

North Indiana petitioned General Conference to call for the use of biblical language, such as "Lord," "King" and "Father," in worship and educational resources.

Wisconsin listened to a presentation by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits on concerns regarding stress-related health factors for clergy and their families.

Northeastern Jurisdiction

Central Pennsylvania approved a resolution for observing a Sanctity of Human Life Sunday.

New England approved a requirement that mandatory criminal background checks be conducted for all clergy and such checks are recommended for local church hired staff, volunteers who work with children, and for conference lay and volunteer staff. Guidelines were approved for achieving these checks. Members added the terms gender identity, marital status and mental capacity to the conference inclusiveness statement.

New York voted support for two resolutions concerning the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, supporting the Division and affirming its present structure.

Troy witnessed a dramatic reading and reflections arising out of an ongoing anti-racism training process. Members approved six petitions that would amend language referring to sexuality. Among the changes proposed by these petitions: Paragraph 161G would state that "All human beings are persons of sacred worth"; Paragraph 306 would include "fidelity in marriage and responsibility in all relationships"; the restriction against the ordination of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" would be removed from Paragraph 304; and Paragraph 806.9 would be removed.

Wyoming passed a resolution to

create a study commission to plan a structured, educational and continuous dialogue on sexual orientation.

South Central Jurisdiction

Arkansas called United Methodist seminaries to be faithful to the doctrinal standards of the denomination; called on the denomination to commit to the current doctrinal standards and to maintain the denomination's current stance on human sexuality and marriage.

Kansas East will send petitions to General Conference, including ones relating to clergy reporting of child sexual abuse and neglect.

Nebraska members and guests participated in a "Service of Receiving, Remembering, Reflecting, and Repenting" for its part in pain caused to Native Americans. The conference passed two petitions to General Conference to delete all portions of *The 2000 Book of Discipline* (in ¶ 161G) that restrict the full participation of homosexuals in the full life of the church and striking phrases referring to not condoning the practice of homosexuality and to considering "this practice incompatible with Christian teaching."

North Texas approved resolutions to urge removal of all vestiges of racial segregation such as signs, images and impressions, particularly in public places; and to amend portions of *The Book of Discipline* to insure inclusiveness in general church board and agency representation.

Oklahoma Indian Missionary approved a petition to General Conference that affirms the sacredness of Native people, the languages, cultures and gifts to the Church and the world.

Texas received a Safe Sanctuary Policy proposal to protect children and youth from sexual or physical abuse in conference programs and churches for review and comment and will be acted upon at the 2004 conference session.

Southeastern Jurisdiction

Alabama-West Florida approved a resolution calling for more inclusiveness in general church board and agency representation.

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Annual conference *from p. 3*

Florida passed a conference requirement that churches develop child and youth protection policies.

Holston established a task force and ministries to strengthen and nurture marriages and families. Mattye Bowman, 95, one of Holston's first clergywomen, led the closing prayer for a service honoring 27 retiring clergy and spouses.

Kentucky passed several resolutions to be submitted to General Conference for eliminating "the stereotypical use of American Indian names and images" and for greater ethnic minority involvement in new-church and congregational development structures.

Memphis held a Service of Repentance and Reconciliation, featuring testimonials from those impacted by racism and responses to the act of repentance by leaders from the Christian Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal denominations and by a United Methodist pastor who was a member of the old Central Jurisdiction. Among resolutions for General Conference are those affirming commitment to the historic doctrines of the Christian faith and resolving that "any bishops, pastors or other leaders... who cannot honestly subscribe to these most basic teachings... are unqualified to hold leadership positions in the United Methodist Church"; petitioning that all general agency staff "shall uphold the doctrinal and ethical standards of the United Methodist Church"; and requiring that bishops exercise oversight "to maintain the doctrinal expressions of the Church within the boundaries of the Doctrinal Standards." Members also resolved that the Memphis Conference expand compliance with its adopted policy on the Prevention of Child Abuse by screening adults serving on the Conference Youth Council or at any CYC sponsored event.

Mississippi approved three resolutions on ministry to and with homosexuals. These resolutions ask the General Church to increase funding for dialogue and education, to provide resources and promote ministry to and with homosexuals, and to prohibit promotion of the acceptance of homosexuality.

Several petitions to the 2004 General Conference were affirmed: A resolution regarding the make-up of general boards, agencies and commissions on how to reconfigure the boards to be more representative of the church's membership; measures to require that bishops exercise oversight "to maintain the doctrinal expressions of the Church within the boundaries of the Doctrinal Standards"; and a resolution that all general agency staff shall uphold and be loyal to the doctrinal as well as ethical standards of the church.

North Alabama adopted a child protection policy that covers all conference events and will serve as a model for local churches and sent a petition to General Conference regarding inclusiveness in general church board and agency representation.

North Carolina adopted a Comprehensive Plan of Inclusiveness; called for the withdrawal of the church from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice; and called for changes in Paragraph 161J on abortion, including opposition to partial-birth abortion except when the life of the mother was in danger.

South Carolina members approved several petitions to the 2004 General Conference, addressing inclusiveness on general boards and seeking to change disparity among the jurisdictions by changing *The Book of Discipline* to require more equity. Members also approved a petition asking to add language to Paragraph 806.9 of *The Book of Discipline* to allow church funds to be expended to discuss issues of homosexuality and a resolution calling for more resources to be spent by the General Board of Discipleship for providing and promoting United Methodist ministry with homosexuals.

Western North Carolina experienced a significant historical moment as Native Americans, for the first time, led the conference's worship service. Members voted to retain current statements in *The Book of Discipline* regarding homosexuality.

Western Jurisdiction

California-Nevada voted to make the following recommendation to General Conference 2004: that the wording of Paragraph 161G in *The Book of Discipline* be changed from saying that

homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching" to "Since Christians are not of a common mind about the compatibility of homosexual practice with Christian teaching, we neither condone nor condemn such practice."

California-Pacific heard sermons from pioneering women in ministry. Eunice Musa, only one of five ordained clergywomen in the Nigeria Conference, preached for the memorial and communion service. She is the conference treasurer and the pastor of Nukka United Methodist Church in the Jalingo District. Vashti Murphy McKenzie, the first woman elected to the episcopacy in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, preached for one of the morning worships. McKenzie serves as the presiding prelate over the 18th Episcopal District, which comprises Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland in South Africa. Colleen Chun, the first ordained Korean-American woman in the United Methodist Church, led two morning Bible study sessions from Peter. She is the pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Pearl City, HA.

Desert Southwest approved two resolutions to oppose the Institute of Religion and Democracy and supported a change of language in *The Book of Discipline* regarding sexual orientation.

Oregon-Idaho approved petitions to change the allocation of General Conference delegates and the make-up of several boards and agencies and to change wording regarding sexual orientation.

Pacific-Northwest will petition the General Conference to alter language in *The Book of Discipline* regarding homosexuality to say that United Methodists are not of one mind on this issue and hold "differing opinions regarding sexual orientation."

Yellowstone approved a petition asking to replace a sentence in Paragraph 161G of the Social Principles with one that reads: "Although faithful Christians disagree on the compatibility of homosexual practice with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all."

For more individual reports of annual conference actions, visit the United Methodist Communications website: <http://umns.umc.org/acreports/index.html>. ☉

Status Report

Budget still work-in-progress for United Methodist agencies

The General Council on Finance and Administration applauded the progress general agencies have made so far to streamline their budgets and suggest ways to work together more efficiently in the coming 2005-08 quadrennium.

Still, finance officers and program agency executives left a July 11 Program and Budget Consultation without a final meeting of the minds on how critical ministries of the church could be done within the budget constraints posed by a tight world economy and a slump in giving by United Methodist congregations.

At issue during the consultation was the proposed distribution of World Service Funds to the eight program agencies for 2005-08. (World Service Funds, which come from offerings taken in local United Methodist congregations, fund the bulk of the denomination's national and international missions.) Challenged by a sluggish economy, the agencies were asked two months ago to look for

50th anniversary *from p. 1*

were among the first to be granted ordination and full clergy rights will have passed on to the Church Triumphant. It is urgent that we record their stories while they are still among us."

Leading up to a denomination-wide celebration in 2006, Yrigoyen explains that the General Commission on Archives and History, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, the General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and the Anna Howard Shaw Center at Boston University School of Theology are cooperating on a larger project. They are collecting documents, interviews, and other information related to the ordination and full clergy rights of women to use for the 2006 celebration.

For details on how annual conferences may help prepare to celebrate this important milestone, contact GCSRW at (800) 523-8390 or visit the website, www.gcsr.org.

ways to trim their budgets, reduce duplication of efforts, consolidate similar tasks and staff responsibilities and still accomplish the church's worldwide missions.

The consultation included staff executives and financial officers of the program agencies, members of the General Council on Ministries, which coordinates churchwide programs, and the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA), which must recommend the entire budget to the 2004 General Conference, next spring.

Collectively, GCFA members participating in the July 11 consultation were not satisfied with all of the agency reports. The agencies were asked again to address the concerns about fulfilling the church's mission objectives, to reduce administrative costs and to develop a four-year plan as part of a longer-range strategy to address program priorities. These were the criteria laid out by GCFA for determining whether the recommended program portion of the World Service budget would total \$222 million for the next four-year period or be dropped back to \$186 million.

—UM News Service, July 15, 2003

Three church leaders share common history

Jo Ann Yoon Fukumoto, Kathleen A. Thomas-Sano and Colleen Kyung Seen Chun are three strong United Methodist women with a common history. They are descendants of the first Korean immigrants to Hawaii. Their grandmothers were "picture brides"—women who sailed from Korea to Hawaii to marry Korean immigrants.

Fukumoto serves as co-chairperson of the California-Pacific Conference Committee. Thomas-Sano is a staff executive at the General Commission on Religion and Race, Washington. Chun is the first ordained woman of Asian descent in the United Methodist Church and pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Pearl City, HA.

"My family ate steak with rice and kimchee," Chun says. "And as a teenager, yes, I wore Scotch tape on my eyelids so that my eyes would look, as we called it, 'double.' After all, our

goal was to look like Shelley Fabray ...you know, the daughter in the 'Donna Reed' show. In the back of my mind, I knew I was Korean ... genetics run very deep, but my identity was a hodge-podge uniquely reflective of Hawaii."

Thomas-Sano's father is Irish-Welsh and her mother is Korean. Her maternal grandmother was a picture-bride and instilled Korean pride in young Kathleen.

"My grandmother used to spend six months with us, and she shared a bedroom with me," Thomas-Sano recalls. "I probably looked least Korean of all the grandchildren, and she used to tell me that I should be proud to be Korean. In her broken English and Korean, she would try to explain to me my history."

Thomas-Sano says she really didn't experience racism until she went to the United States mainland. "I identify more with Asian Americans; I was not raised in the white world," she says. She is the first Korean-American elected staff in any of the agencies of the church.

Fukumoto's grandmother was an 18-year-old bride who married a 38-year-old stranger when she arrived in Hawaii. "My grandmother told me the story of her mother taking her to the boat to come to Hawaii," she says. "She gave my grandmother a picture of her future husband and said 'Don't look at it until you are far away and can't see me or see the land.'" When her grandmother looked at the picture of a balding, older man who was to become her husband, she cried and cried, Fukumoto says.

"Quite a few of the young women jumped ship or killed themselves after they got here. My grandmother weathered the storm on the boat and on land. She had six children, and they were all Methodist."

Chun tells the story of learning about her heritage when she was a first-grader at Kaiulani Elementary School. "One of my classmates asked me what I was. I must have been ahead of the times because I thought she was having some gender confusion about me, so I stated emphatically that I was a girl."

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That answer was not what her friend wanted. She was asking if Chun was Japanese or Chinese. Not really knowing, Chun answered "both." The answer seemed to satisfy her playmate and they played for the rest of the day. When her mother got home that night, she asked her, "What am I?" Her mother told her she was Korean.

"The next day I told my new friend, 'I'm not Japanese and I'm not Chinese. I'm Korean.'

She looked at me as if I had a contemptible disease, and said, 'I should have known. Koreans are all liars.' "From that day, feelings about my ethnicity have been clouded with ignorance and embarrassment," she says.

Both her grandmothers were picture-brides from Korea. Her paternal grandfather was a laborer in the sugar cane fields on the Big Island. Her maternal grandfather worked for the city of Honolulu. She recalled how her paternal grandmother worked in the cane fields, accompanied by her young children who were either carried on her back or tethered to her with a rope.

"This rich heritage of courage and faith should be something to celebrate," she said. "Words from a silly 6-year-old should not diminish that pride."

Chun preached at one of the worship services during the April United Methodist Centennial Celebration for Korean American Mission in America.

"When I look at the story of my life, I know that I witness the sheer possibilities that are given by God," she says. "Indeed, everything is possible with God." —UM News Service, May 5, 2003

Mission agency loses 24 staff to retirement

Twenty-four staff from the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) are retiring June 30 because of changes in the denomination's pension plan. The list of retirees was presented during the agency's April 7-10 meeting in Birmingham.

During his address to board directors, R. Randy Day, general secretary, spoke about his regret that pension changes for lay employees could affect the board's operations. "These persons, all of them laity and most of them women, were more or less given an ultimatum: retire now or lose a big part of your benefits," he said. "We have protested this policy directly to the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, to no avail, and we cannot blame persons for acting to protect the benefits they rightfully have earned."

The pensions board has changed its policy for converting pension account balances to annuities at retirement. Effective July 2, lay employees who retire and choose to "annuitize" their pension accounts will do so at a floating market rate rather than the longtime fixed rate of 8 percent. Current market rates are at 5 percent or less, GBGM staff members have reported.

Day noted that "some of our most creative and productive employees" had felt compelled to retire. "This is a blow," he added. "We will recover from it, but we shall greatly miss colleagues we had not expected to replace for five or more years."

Particularly affected is the Women's Division, which is losing five

executive staff—most of whom had 10 or more years of service apiece—as well as two longtime professional staff and one support staff. The board currently has more than 400 employees, including about 100 in the Women's Division.

Executive Women's Division retirees are Maxine West, Mary Louise Head, Ann Needham, Ressie Mae Bass and Marilyn Clement. Also retiring are Melba Smith and Velta Hartstern, professional staff, and Lorraine Walton, support staff.

The general board retirees include Lorene Wilbur, a top executive. Other retirees, including executive, professional and support staff, are Sarla Chand, Peggy Halsey, Ruth Lawson and Andrea Thomas, Community and Institutional Ministries unit; Elizabeth Calvin, Zebediah Marewangepo, Monique Serres and Elaine Steele, Mission Context and Relationships unit; Wilma Roberts and John Kirk, Office of the General Secretary; Fred Christian, Nancy Quigley and Brenda Wilkison, Coordinated Services; Betty Purkey, Mission Personnel and Stella Bolioli, Financial Services.

—UM News Service, April 14, 2003

COPY DEADLINES

To ensure inclusion of job listings, calendar items, and other items to be published in *The Flyer*, please submit written details by the following dates:

Sept. 15, 2003.....Fall 2003
 Dec. 15, 2003.....Winter 2003

Send to: Bonny Stalnaker Roth, GCSRW
 1200 Davis St. Evanston, IL 60201
 (800) 523-8390
 e-mail: gcsrwn@gcfa.org

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Make your petitions count!

Preparing petitions for General Conference

Any organization, clergy member, or lay member of The United Methodist Church may petition the General Conference... (§ 507, *The Book of Discipline*)

An important process for General Conference decision making gets underway this year: preparation of petitions. Petitions provide a means for groups throughout the church to suggest action to be taken by the General Conference 2004, which meets in Pittsburgh, PA, April 27 - May 7, 2004. Here's how the process works.

Legislative committees may divide into subcommittees to read and consider each petition on a particular topic or issue. They may recommend acceptance, amendment, or rejection of each. This is no small task considering that 1,800 were sent to General Conference 2000.

Legislative committees then vote concurrence or non-concurrence on the recommendations and report their actions to the full General Conference. The plenary session eventually votes on the committees' recommendations.

The following guidelines have been adapted from United Methodist Communications web site on General Conference 2004: <http://umc.org/gc2004/petition.htm>.

Guidelines for writing petitions

Petitions to General Conference usually cover a wide range of topics. Your petition may address a particular area of concern about church law and covenant; suggest changes in the church's structure; or create, delete or modify a statement on a social, economic, moral or theological issue.

When preparing a petition for General Conference:

1. Type or print petitions—double-spaced.
2. Use as few words as possible to make your point.
3. Refer to a dictionary, church directory, *The Book of Discipline*, and *The Book of Resolutions* to ensure accuracy.
4. When suggesting changes in *The Book of Discipline*, clearly indicate portions to be added or deleted.
5. Follow the format specified for additions and deletions. Use the appropriate form to accompany each petition. This information is at <http://umc.org/gc2004/petition.htm>.
6. Understand that sending the same petition in quantity is wasted effort and money, although all will be counted and kept on file.

Guidelines for submitting petitions

1. Guidelines for submitting petitions are contained in *The Book of Discipline*, § 507, which stipulates that: The petition must be sent to the secretary of the General Conference or a designated petitions secretary in a for-

mat determined by the secretary of the General Conference. Microsoft Word or any other software that allows files to be saved as rich-text format (RTF) may be used.

2. Each petition must address only one issue if the Discipline is not affected; if the Discipline is affected, each petition must address only one paragraph of the Discipline, except that, if two or more paragraphs in the Discipline are so closely related that a change in one affects the others, the petition may call for the amendment of those paragraphs also to make them consistent with one another.

3. Each petition must be signed by the person submitting it, accompanied by appropriate identification, such as address, local church, or United Methodist board or agency relationship. Each petition submitted by fax or electronic mail must identify the individual submitting it, accompanied by identification as above, and must contain a valid electronic mail return address or return fax number by which the submitter can be reached. Electronic signatures will be accepted in accordance with common business practice.

4. All petitions submitted to the General Conference, except those submitted by individual members of The United Methodist Church and local church groups, which call for the establishment of new programs or the expansion of existing programs will be invalid unless accompanied by supporting data that address the issue of anticipated financial requirements of the program.

5. Petitions must be postmarked by a national postal service no later than 150 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference. That date is Nov. 29, 2003.

6. If petitions are transmitted by a means other than a national postal service, they must be in the hands of the petitions secretary no later than 150 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.

7. Petitions can be filed by e-mail and sent to petitions@umpublishing.org.

8. Petitions (3 hard copies required and 3.5 inch diskette requested) mailed via U.S. Postal Service should be mailed to: Gary W. Graves, Petitions Secretary, United Methodist General Conference, P.O. Box 6, Beaver Dam, KY 42320.

9. Petitions (3 hard copies required and 3.5 inch diskette requested) submitted via commercial overnight carriers (Federal Express, UPS, DHL) should be sent to: Gary W. Graves, Petitions Secretary, United Methodist General Conference, 302 N. Lafayette St., Beaver Dam, KY 42320.

10. Faxed petitions should be faxed to (270) 274-4590.



**The General Commission on the
Status and Role of Women**
in the United Methodist Church
1200 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201

For better health for women and a healthier environment for our children, our newsletter is printed on chlorine-free, acid-free paper.



Ovations

To **Julie Buzbee**, former assistant lifestyles editor at the St. Joseph (MO) News-Press, who has been named director of communications in the Kansas East Conference.

To **Royya L. James**, recent graduate of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, who has been named the 2003-2004 recipient of the Judith L. Weidman Racial Ethnic Minority Fellowship. She will work in the Wyoming Conference in the upcoming year.

To **Vera Moore**, who received the Alice Lee Award, an Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Women honor for the laywoman who has been outstanding in her service to church, community and conference.

To **Susan Resnick Pierce**, president of the United Methodist-related University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA, who has received the Distinguished Leadership Award for 2003 by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, recognizing her 11 years of work in promoting the understanding and support of education.

To **Gwendolyn Purushotham**, district superintendent in the New England Conference, who has become director of clergy supervision and accountability at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

To **Carol Thompson**, director of the Western Small Church Rural Life Center and a pastor in the Oregon-Idaho Conference, who will head the Office of Town and Country Ministries of the General Board of Global Ministries.

To United Methodist communicators who received awards in the DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Awards annual competition, sponsored by the Religion Communicators Council: **Alice M. Smith**, North Georgia and South Georgia conferences; and **Melissa Lauber**, Baltimore-Washington Conference.

To students who will receive aid through two United Methodist Communications scholarship programs in the coming academic year: **Susanna Song**, a junior at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, and **Julia Jovanie Vazquez**, a senior at Columbia College, Chicago, who were named winners of the Leonard M. Perryman Communications Scholarship for Ethnic Minority Students. **Diane Connolly**, a graduate student at United Methodist-related Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, and **Janet Fillmore**, a graduate student at Methodist Theological School in Ohio, who will receive full Stoodly-West Fellowships.

To students preparing for careers in theological education who have received Dempster

Graduate Fellowships from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for the 2003-2004 academic year: **Esther L. Chung**, Duke University, Durham, NC; **Hannah Little Friday**, Emory University in Atlanta; and **Susanna Weslie Southard**, Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville.

To recipients of Georgia Harkness Merit Scholarship for the 2003-04 academic year. The scholarships, awarded by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, go to women over 35 who are preparing for ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church as a second career. The recipients, are **Constance N. Barnes**, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, South Carolina; **Catherine N. Davis**, Hood Theological Seminary, Western North Carolina; **Joanne Marie Davis**, Perkins School of Theology, Missouri; **Johnna Jalene Galloway**, Phillips Theological Seminary, Arkansas; **Stephanie M. Harmon**, Phillips Theological Seminary, Oklahoma; **Jodi Seilars Smith**, Perkins School of Theology, North Texas; **Karen Jean Sorden**, Iliff School of Theology, West Michigan; **Gay Lynn Tonelli**, Union Theological Seminary, Virginia; **Linda A. Warehime**, Wesley Theological Seminary, Baltimore-Washington; and **Sandi S. Wheilan**, Drew Theological Seminary, Wyoming. ☉