

# EXPERIENCE AS STRENGTH IN THE SERVICE OF VISION

March 1997 McFee Award  
Acceptance Address  
by Rogena M. Degge

*This acceptance address was constructed as a slide presentation and adapted for THE REPORT. The paper, with the original 80 images, may be accessible in the near future on the Women's Caucus homepage.*

To be nominated for the June King McFee award by Laura Chapman is, in itself, an honor. There are no two women in our field whose accomplishments I more admire and respect. I'm sure Laura has no idea how much her words of encouragement and support over the years have meant to me, and to many of us. So I thank you, Laura. Also, I extend my gratitude to the nominations committee and those who generously wrote letters in my behalf - Linda Ettinger, Marylou Kuhn, Ron MacGregor, Renee Sandell, and Enid Zimmerman.

## *Inspiration and Implications*

The inspiration for my remarks comes from a poet of our time, the late Audre Lorde. A poster with her portrait has this quote: "When I dare to be powerful - to use my strength in the service of my vision - then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid." That statement had a lasting impact on me. It compelled me to consider the meaning of "our strength" as well as "our vision."

I initially drew upon Lorde's notion of strength and vision in preparing a keynote address for art teachers in New Zealand in 1994. I was asked to address "theories of teaching and learning." In order to give that somewhat daunting assignment some grounding that would be meaningful for teachers, I decided to recount aspects of my own life experiences, intermingling these with historical and political events of the times and with theories of teaching and learning that evolved in our field, and in my work, over the past 30 years. I asked

those (very gracious) New Zealand art teachers to think about their own lives, in those various contexts, while I talked about mine. My purpose was two-fold: (1) to illustrate how their life experiences have influenced the development and nature of their own theories and practices in teaching art, and 2) to emphasize how their lived experiences are their strengths to be brought to the service of their vision.

I describe this keynote to you partly because I've selected a few segments from it for this address. But, more importantly, I believe my approach to that keynote is indicative. In other words, I find myself compelled to operate at that place where my research, teaching, and service collectively intersect. This is predicated on my belief that the most meaningful implications for practitioners reside at that interface.

In being asked to speak about oneself, the risk of revealing more than intended can be unnerving. Even so, I am honored to accept the risk, and I invite you to think about your own life - to join me in some reflection - as I recall a few memories and events that have influenced my life and career in art education.



*Eating a watermelon that my Dad grew*

## *Family and Community*

My parents, like many, took countless pictures of their first child. In one, as you can see, I was holding a watermelon. My husband says it speaks for itself, and indeed it is apt because frequently my mother used to say, "Rogena, your eyes are bigger than your stomach!" At other times she would tell me, "You can do better if you put your mind to it." My father would say, in various ways, "don't be so hard on yourself."

For me life began in 1942 in central California. I was a long awaited, well-loved child. My father came from a long line of ancestors from Oklahoma and Texas. Born in 1911, his late teens included a grapes-of-wrath trek driving his family to California to find work. My mother is of Russian-German heritage. These were Germans who had been invited to farm the lands along the Volga River, and then fled in the early 1900's when opportunity and privilege in Russia turned to oppression. My grandmother, Mary Bier, came alone to America by ship, at age 15. A few years later in Fresno, California she married Philip Kinzel who had also fled. Many of similar plight settled together in that town. It is where my mother was born in 1915 and where she met and married my father in 1937.

Fresno is also where I was born, during World War II. To my mother's joy, my father's efforts to join the army were thwarted due to a hearing loss. Patriotism was at an all time high. My Dad was a machinist in the war effort. My mother refused to speak her first language in public during this time, finding contemptible any possible association with German Nazis.

My elementary school days were spent in a small farming town, Tipton, with a population of less than 2000. Our small community had many first generation Portuguese-American residents and a great number like myself with a very mixed heritage (including a bit of Blackfoot Indian from my father's side). Our town had one school, for

grades one through eight.

The machinery and plows of ranchers and dairymen were the focus of my father's welding and blacksmithing business. I have vivid memories of welding sparks flying, of seeing him remove red-hot steel from the coals, hammer and forge it, then thrust it into water that sizzled, cooled, and hardened the objects of his labors. Harry Degge was a gentle, quiet man. He worked hard all his life, yet, to see his hands you might think they were those of a surgeon or pianist.



*My father painting, after retirement.*

Forced to retire at age 60, he took up painting, enrolled in community education art classes, and later taught painting at a senior center. Those 19 years with angina were increasingly debilitating for him, but the desire in his last years to master watercolors was testimony to his lifelong traits of determination and hope.

My mother, Edna Kinzel Degge, had a large capacity for nurturing. She shared values of work and self-sufficiency with my Dad, and neither suffered fools gladly. Both parents were active in the community and honest almost to a fault. My Mom's labors focused on caring for my father, my younger brother, Rollin, and me, supporting us in all we did, and being Dad's bookkeeper. She sewed most of my clothes, and I feel certain that her ancestors invented the phrase "cleanliness is next to godliness." (I believe I did not realize that

bathroom chrome faucets spotted until I went away to college and shared an apartment with three other young women.) My mother's caretaking of my father in his last years was emotionally strenuous, loving, and unwavering - a kind of stoicism devoid of superficiality and replete with silent actions that spoke volumes about commitment.



*Edna, Harry, Rogena, and Rollin Degge, @1950.*

My childhood memories are filled with school - which I loved, as well as hayrides, 4H club, and visiting the farm houses of my friends. In my neighborhood, I was often the self-appointed organizer of play, whether it was cops and robbers with my cap pistol, or staging performances. If a game was competitive I was determined to win (a trait I've been unsuccessful at harnessing). We were a family that did many things together. One of my greatest thrills was the frequent visits to our cabin on the coast, spending hours in the sand and ocean. My Dad loved to fish and we all came to love going fishing with him off piers or at the surf's edge, and crabbing off Morro Rock. I miss fishing - not the fish, but the sun-drenched, comforting, contemplative family times it represents.

My larger world was influenced greatly by those of Portuguese heritage in our town, and by my Russian-German relatives, who lived 45 miles north of

us. Both groups of people, with great gusto, practiced most of the social and religious rituals and holidays of their mother country with wonderful food, drink and dance, exuberant weddings, and parades. Our family participation in these many celebrations was frequent, and the memories vivid - especially the food and dancing. These aspects when blended with the Oklahoma/Texas heritage of my father and his large family offered, in one sense, what seems an expansive set of experiences.

However, like most children, I had little sense of the post-WW II era, where some said "we never had it so good," while others saw us in a decade "when humans seemed ready to incinerate their planet, a time recognized as 'the age of anxiety'." I was completely unaware, for example, of circumstances that led Cesar Chavez a short time later to draw international attention to immigrant laborers just forty-five miles south of my home.

#### *School and Community Art Experiences*

Opportunities for me in the arts were probably typical of those in most small towns in the 1940's and '50's. I took piano lessons for five years (reluctantly), and played the saxophone in seventh and eighth grades. I sang duets with my Mom, and solos for school, church, and community events - and for anyone else that would listen. I frequently forced friends and family to sit still while I drew their portraits. The paper dolls I created had expansive wardrobes. A few years ago at a funeral I saw my fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Matusko, who said she still had a story that I wrote and illustrated in her class.

Regarding school, it was expected that I would bring home top grades, which may be why one particular event stands out. It was in the seventh grade and remains my only memory of an elementary school art lesson. Mr. Stewart, the school principal, was our substitute teacher and he asked us to copy a picture and turn it in. Later I learned that he gave me a grade of B. With trepidation I asked him, "why a B?" He had put everyone's on the wall and it was clear (at least to me) that mine was well drawn and carefully completed. His answer was that I had added things not in the picture. And so I had. I was

crushed about the B. Certainly, such an insignificant hour in a child's school life would not last vividly in her memory for more than 40 years.

This same principal encouraged my parents to consider teaching as a career for me. So I have two things to thank Mr. Stewart for - suggesting a career that has been deeply rewarding and challenging, and my first exposure to theories of teaching and learning in art.

When I was 15, we moved ten miles north to a new, middle class house in a town of 15,000 where the high school was. (I remember my Mom was featured in a local newspaper advertisement in her new gas kitchen.) Throughout high school I studied dance production - jazz and modern - and performed in school and community productions, and later regional operettas assisted by Hollywood choreographers. I had given up singing for fear of embarrassment (which, in reflection, is amusing given the costumes I performed dances in). In high school, my social life enlarged and my grades became more diverse. My favorite singers were Elvis Presley and Fats Domino. Having recently seen the Broadway play, *Grease*, it seemed the writers must have known me!

For the first time, in high school, art classes were available and I enrolled all four years. We painted Christmas scenes on downtown windows, decorated for dances, did figure drawings and landscapes, made holiday cards and countless mosaics, and even read a little about art. I was thrilled to have my program cover design selected for the senior play, *Anastasia*. To me, art was designing and making things. For a time I wanted to be a fashion designer, like in the Winnie Winkle comic strip. My art teacher, Mrs. Pappas, encouraged me to consider teaching art.

### *Getting a College Degree*

There was never any question that I would go to college, even though no one in my family history (that I know of) had a college degree. My father's education ended after the sixth grade. His family needed the income and by age 12 he worked from sun-up to sunset in fields, on farms, and for his blacksmith grandfather and father (who was also a preacher). Dad was a great story teller of his past. Without warning we would find ourselves hearing yet another tale of his younger days, including those of

great mischief with his friends, on his horse, and decked out as a cowboy. Other stories were poignant and telling of times - before, during, and after the depression - of his hunger and sleeping on damp river banks while searching the length of California for work, for example. Even in the last months of his life, we heard recollections we'd never heard before. (The inquirer in me always wished I had tape recorded some of those stories. I felt similarly when I occasionally drove my Grandmother to visit the cemetery and she'd talk about the past - like skinny-dipping in the Volga, and of her many friends and family that she had outlived, and missed.)



*My mother today at age 81*

My mother finished her high school requirements early. An A student, she was able to take a few college classes during her senior year. She is 81 years old now and very fit, and still resents her parents' decision to deny her a college education. Rather, they sent her older brother to Berkeley; he later dropped out. Money she had subsequently saved for college was taken to help build a new kitchen onto their family home. Currently, she has a computer and is composing some of her own memories of times with family and friends.

At age 18 I voted - for John F. Kennedy. It was not until college that I went to a gallery, or knew what art history was. I was a Fine Arts major and an English minor, at Fresno State. I also took choreography classes and con-

tinued performing. My art education professor, Sunshine Williams, promoted Lowenfeld's theories and a materials and design-based art curriculum.



*The "good" painting - dormant grape vines*

Lasting impressions from my studio courses include my painting professor remarking loudly in front of the whole class, when my work was on the wall for the end of term critique: "How could ANYone do ANYthing so bad! . . . [he paused] . . . And so good!" He was looking at two of my paintings next to each other. The one that he thought was so bad he had, earlier in the term, painted on with a large brush, covering a third of my large blank canvas with orange while saying something incomprehensible to me. Then he left me, and my classmates, in that campus garden to paint those big, red-orange poppies. The other painting, the "good" one, was an oil painting created from ink drawings I had done of dormant vines while sitting in a vineyard. Guess which painting I still have today (Fig. 4). Another memory is of my ceramics professor, in his thick German accent, yelling from behind me, "What the hell are you doing?!" My clay was too dry, he then explained, as I made my first attempt to pull a pot.

My favorite studio professor was a painter, Mary Maughelli. In drawing, she saw me through the embarrassment of nude models, including a pregnant woman whose fascinating belly swelled in front of my 19 year-old naive eyes. Gratefully, not all the male models posed nude. It was also Professor Maughelli who announced to our class the assassination of President Kennedy.



*Ink rendering from my first college drawing class, 1963*

Memories from my art history classes include wondering if I should switch to Biology. My professor, in his very South Carolinian accent (and having just come back from months in Europe), would dramatically pronounce the artists' names and painting techniques, attempting (I believed) the proper accent of the artist's country. Though he was a caring new teacher, the result was that few of us could recognize the names of artists or techniques. By contrast, for me, learning multisyllabic botanical terms was a piece of cake - even in a class of 150 - thanks to a great teacher.

These professors unwittingly influenced, quite profoundly, my early decisions about what to teach, and especially how not to teach, more than any theory of teaching and learning I had encountered as an undergraduate. I am very grateful to them.

### *Becoming a Teacher*

I couldn't have known it at the time but my first art teaching job would shape my life dramatically. I was hired to teach English and then art at Sequoia Junior High in Fresno. At least 65% of the students were Mexican-American. Many were from migrant families and lived across from the school in "the projects." Their fathers followed the crops, and in summers entire families worked

in the fields. These students plus some with Armenian, other Caucasian, and African heritage collectively made up my classes.

As perhaps you can surmise, in my first year of teaching I was very enthusiastic. I loved teaching. I still do! I proudly displayed their art all over the school. My curriculum that first year, in my view, had little relevance to my students. Gradually I learned about their lives, their values, their cultural heritage. The class activities didn't change so much in terms of materials we used or design concepts I taught. But, the content of their art took on a dramatic shift. During the next five years I averaged 240 junior high students a day. Art exhibits in the cafeteria were annual events. In the summers I taught grades one through six, and high school. I also guest-lectured at Fresno State, had many student teachers, was on the district art curriculum writing team, helped found the Fresno chapter of CAEA, and was on a local board for Self-Help Enterprises.

In my classroom, art assignments were sometimes geared to social and political issues, such as the death of Martin Luther King. We studied muralists, and the students created 48-foot-long ceiling murals decrying hate and prejudice and projecting hope for the future. The TV news media came and my Principal subsequently (and kindly) handled a few outraged citizens' phone calls. Students also studied their neighborhoods and designed changes; they critiqued advertising which denigrated their economic status and cultural values; they addressed recycling, and more. This orientation seemed so relevant in the late 1960's. Already, drugs were in our school, prejudices were variously expressed, knife fights broke out in classes, a student's brother was shot by police just across the street - an incident that emerged later in his art.

This was the Vietnam War era and the drafting of young men was a prominent issue. Fortunately my brother was stationed in the states. But others, including my students, lost family members and loved ones. Still others protested the war; some fled to Canada. Some of us helped them.

This was also a time when African-American activists were rewriting the discourse of identity within the cultural and political parameters of the black

power movement. The brown power movement - that of the Mexican-American, or Chicanos - was taking shape and gaining voice. And women (though I was not yet aware of it) were asserting a new relationship among politics, experience, and identity by organizing within a second generation of feminist struggles.<sup>2</sup>

In 1968, protesters outside the school fence encouraged our Mexican-heritage students to boycott classes that were taught by white people. We teachers were surrounded by 1,200 highly-charged students when police took the activist-agitators away. More examples like these followed. They had legitimate concerns. We were largely well-meaning teachers and administrators, simply not amply prepared to teach students from contexts so very different from our own. These concerns touched me deeply.

Within this restless, changing social environment my own values took shape. My political orientation and evolving convictions did not endear me to my parents. At this same time, along with a changing self-definition, I brought divorce into our family.

### *Graduate Study*

Most summers, and sometimes during the academic year, I would take graduate classes at Fresno State. It was interesting to me that while my teaching about art became more directed to social content, my paintings reflected imagery seemingly removed from societal and political concerns. It may surprise you that I also took graduate art history classes, from a wonderful professor, Mr. Opper. I recently found a letter I'd saved from him that complimented my work - the letter still amazes me.

Around 1968 in the college library, I discovered art education research in *Studies in Art Education*, and June McFee's book, *Preparation for Art*. In it she talked about the interrelationship of environment, culture, and readiness. As a practicing teacher I could relate to so many of those issues. At a state conference in 1970 a professor of art education at the University of California at Santa Barbara, James D. Smith, heard me present on my students' work. He said the University of Oregon was where I belonged. He was very persuasive - even wrote to Vincent Lanier.

He could not have been more right, and I hope he knows how grateful I am.

I took a year's leave from my school district, and in 1972 I received a Master's Degree in Art Education. Dr. Lanier was my advisor. My master's project was an instructional video for teachers, advocating the socio-political study of art. During that first year, June McFee was on sabbatical; and in her place a recent graduate, Graeme Chalmers, taught her classes. He was great!

It was Vincent Lanier and Gordon Kensler who encouraged me to enter the doctoral program. Given Lanier's social-consciousness perspectives I so related to and McFee's anticipated return, I could think of nothing I would rather do than stay. Three years later, with coursework in education, art history, anthropology, telecommunications, museology, statistics, and aesthetics (and still loving school), I defended my dissertation under the able direction of Dr. Kensler.

But I am ahead of my story. June McFee returned from sabbatical and we met. Prior to her return and without her knowledge I was assigned as her research assistant for The Institute for Community Art Studies that she created and directed. I have been fond of telling how June brought in folding screens to establish two personal, private spaces for us in opposite corners of this large office we were to share. As the year progressed, the screens were gradually moved aside and then away.

I never had a class from June, which is my loss; but in that year I learned about her culturally and environmentally focused theories, and she about my experience-based views of society-centered teaching. At her invitation, we embarked on my most cherished professional collaboration, the co-authorship of *Art, Culture, and Environment*. We worked on it the next two years while I finished my coursework, taught elementary art education classes and photography as a teaching fellow, and completed my dissertation, "A Case Study and Theoretical Analysis of the Teaching Practices in One Junior High School Art Class." Some say it was the first of its kind, methodologically, in art education.

Doctoral programs spawn special, life-long friendships among students.

Among the many special to me were, and are: Molly White, Greg Hawkins, Mike Youngblood, Wes Chapman, and Jean Ellen Jones. Jean Ellen and I wrote our dissertations in adjoining offices; we still share a room frequently at NAEA conferences.

### *Becoming a Professor*

I accepted my first university faculty position in 1975 at The Ohio State University. Prior to my arrival, Department Chair, Ken Marantz sent postcards (more like missiles) to Oregon. One example read: "Needless to say, Ms. Degge, we are out on a limb regarding your 'soon-to-be-completed Ph.D.' So I hope this rather early decision will be an uplifting force that carries you to a successful conclusion this August."

My great fortune filled me with trepidation. My new colleagues would include the already esteemed Arthur Efland; and, of course, Marantz, who scared me to death. There was also Terry Barrett and Tom Linehan - terrific colleagues who gifted me with their lifelong friendship; and Nancy MacGregor, who was a friend and consummate example of professionalism in the midst of twelve male colleagues. Every member of the faculty was very supportive, with demanding standards, throughout the time I was in Ohio. No one could have had a better initiation into the academy.

June and I continued our work long

distance and the first edition of *Art, Culture, and Environment* came out in 1977. One of my graduate classes enthusiastically embraced the book, and even had McFee's Perception-Delineation Theory put onto T-shirts. We sent one to June. This class may also have been the one to shorten the book's name to "ACE".

This was my first opportunity to work with graduate students. They included: Maurice Seviigny (whose dissertation I read on my camping vacation), Renee Sandell (who also taught at our branch campus and became a friend), Georgia Collins, Mary Ann Stankiewicz, Jacquelyn Kibbey, Norman Yakel, D'Vora Krueger, Doug Blandy, Christie Parks. And very importantly, Marilyn Stewart, who I have not forgotten pressed me to realize the importance of women faculty as role models for women students. Needless to say, I was stretched immensely in this rich company.

A bit to my surprise, *Art, Culture, and Environment* was instrumental in providing me with many opportunities in the next decade - to lecture, travel, write, and be welcomed into professional groups. Sometimes those opportunities came too frequently, or before I felt ready to competently handle them. Working with June McFee was a gift that underscored the value of collaboration and the lasting power of true mentorship, and friendship. My commitments to the potentials of women par-



*Some of my Ohio State University graduate students.*

tially sprang from that extraordinary relationship and provided a basis for working with such able graduate students and remarkable colleagues.

Many opportunities have come from former students, as well, such as Angelika Plank. She was one of my OSU master's students who returned home to Vienna and later phoned - offering me my first taste of international travel to address an INSEA Congress. Subsequently, INSEA and USSEA have been a significant part of my professional growth and commitment, thanks in part to Ken Marantz's encouragement. These organizations have also been a source of many lasting international friendships, including Angelika's.

With mixed emotions, after four years at Ohio State I left to become a University of Oregon faculty member with June, Vincent, and Gordon, be nearer family, and return to the Northwest that I had come to love. I brought with me to Oregon the responsibility of the Women's Caucus Presidency.

### *The Women's Caucus*

Even before completing my Ph.D., I was drawn to the Women's Caucus where I met Judy Loeb, Sandra Packard, Francis Anderson, Jessie Lovano-Kerr, Mary Lou Kuhn, Laura Chapman, and later Marilyn Zuermulen, Enid Zimmerman, Maryl DeJong and others - all so impressive to me. I was present for the first June King McFee Award in 1975. To be elected president a few years later was difficult to imagine.

As I noted earlier, responsibilities we take on sometimes come before we feel prepared. That was never more true than for this role that my predecessor, Marylou Kuhn, had groomed me. NAEA elected to have its 1980 conference in the non-ERA state of Georgia at a time when other national organizations were boycotting those states for their refusal to support the Equal Rights Amendment. So, the Women's Caucus chose to meet instead in Columbus, Ohio, at the invitation of Marantz. I coordinated this event from Oregon in the face of many confrontational phone calls and surprising challenges by some NAEA board members and leaders in the field.

It was, at the very least, character building

But, it was worth it. That 1980 meeting in Ohio was rich with people, content, and energy, and a bonding time for the many men and women who attended. Affirmations and reaffirmations in the form of scholarship and celebration highlighted the collective power of conviction regarding human rights and served as a springboard for new professional endeavors. In retrospect it is a cherished memory.

### *Reflections and Appreciation*

People have asked what I regard as highlights of my professional career. In addition to working with June McFee, certainly one is being a graduate from Oregon. June, Vincent, and Gordon produced a number of remarkable doctoral graduates - among them Ron MacGregor who showed me what editing was all about on my first *Studies in Art Education* paper.

As head of the Art Education Department at Oregon for five years, being able to serve my colleagues and students was so much more rewarding than I had expected - though the stress was also more than I expected. Ironically, being appointed department head immediately followed a set of promotion and tenure experiences that initially devalued my co-authored work, and ignored extraordinary teaching overloads during the years of faculty retirements and illnesses - teaching that, nevertheless, produced high evaluations. I believe that others have subsequently benefited from that experience, but I was more than fortunate to have inherited the strengths and determination of my family.

While I was department head, we added Doug Blandy to our faculty and placed more emphasis on cultural services and arts policy. Concurrently, I served four years as editor of USSEA's *Journal of Multicultural and Cross-cultural Research in Art Education*. I was soon to learn that the responsibility for JMCRAE was far beyond the norm of editors of established journals. It included not only overseeing blind reviews and editing manuscripts, but also designing layout, printing, keeping records of and mailing to all the subscribers here and abroad, and more. I could not have done any of it without graduate student Liz Hoffman as the managing editor. Though intensely demanding, I enjoyed the challenge,

and created a Journal Publications class for our graduate students. It was these experiences with JMCRAE that made it possible to create a new journal *Controversies in Art & Culture* (currently on hold). When I reflect on personal professional highlights, they frequently have to do with service, such as the journals and the caucus; or being co-founder with James Hutchens of the NAEA Public Policy and Arts Administration Affiliate, for example, and co-editing its first PPA Proceedings with Linda Ettinger.

But it is teaching that energizes and challenges me daily. I have enjoyed beyond description my 20 years working with art education undergraduates. And, it is so true that particularly doctoral students seem to teach us more than we teach them. Some of those who have passed their knowledge on to me at Oregon, their names you will recognize: Robyn Wasson, Linda Ettinger, Paul Bolin, Martin Rayala, Laurie Hicks, Kristin Congdon, Joanne Kurz Guilfoil, Richard LaTour, Ann Calvert, Joan Walters, Barbara Boyer, LeVan Miller, Heather Anderson, Ju-I Yuan, Judy Perry, Neal Johnson, Larry Moody, Karen-Keifer Boyd, Elizabeth Hoffman, Wei-Pirn Lin, Sandra Finlayson, Yuh-Yao Wan, Heinz Klein, Fran Yates, Dierdre Madrigal, and many others.

### *Evolutions and Current Endeavors*

In the early 1990's, the greatest tax reduction in Oregon's history impacted higher education dramatically and permanently closed the doctoral program and altered our curricular direction. I felt devastated professionally. Under great pressures and working together as a faculty, we made ourselves new. Other campus programs faded away; but art educators are used to fighting for their cause. Today we offer a graduate arts management program with specializations in museum studies, community arts, and performing arts. This is a program grounded in the art education, cultural services, and community-based expertise of the faculty, a program built upon the philosophical foundations that June and Vincent had laid. Our students are equally challenging and our unique curriculum compelling.

Of course I have such committed, intelligent colleagues: Linda Ettinger whose on-the-job competence as our program director is outstanding, and

her 18 years of friendship cherished; Doug Blandy whose combined moral goodness and clarity of focus are enviable - I learn from him constantly; Beverly Jones whose research skills have guided so many graduate students and faculty; and Jane Maitland-Gholson whose "large picture" insights ground and stretch us all. And I still miss Paul Bolin, whose love of the past and warmth are infectious.

My professional endeavors, like yours, have evolved. Currently, my research falls into three categories. The first, and most challenging, is in comparative, cross-cultural research and policy studies projects that I have participated in with colleagues based at UCLA and in Japan. This includes a recently co-authored chapter with Dr. Takuya Kaneda, from Tokyo, on cross-cultural, comparative evaluation of community arts programs. The second area of inquiry is feminist biographical methodology and includes publications, dissertations I have chaired, and endeavors such as the McFee video that Kristin, Karen, and I did together so joyfully. The third area is art education pedagogy for arts management, with particular emphasis in community arts and museum studies. Amidst this, June and I are completing what is probably our last revision of *Art, Culture, and Environment*.

In the simplest of terms, I believe that the arts are basic to human experience, and are a unique, central path to cultural knowledge and human understanding. My research, teaching, and service have always been directed toward increasing people's access to the arts so that they may have those basic human experiences. What teachers teach - whether in schools or community settings - and what policies and values underlie this, have been a recurring subject of my research since my dissertation. My orientation is pluralistic and socio-cultural. My goal is to provide an art education that is socially responsive and humane at the core, whether I am working with students, teachers, or arts administrators. One of my greater challenges these days is teaching *Art & Gender to 75 undergraduate, non-art majors twice a year*. Equally rewarding is teaching *Art in Society* (originally a McFee course), and also *Museum Education and Cultural Policy in Art*.

### In Conclusion

Persons such as Audre Lorde and June McFee have been inspirations to many of us. They help us recognize and celebrate our strengths and stay the course of our convictions. Maybe it's okay if our eyes are sometimes bigger than our stomachs. The downside is we take on more than we can handle and frustrate ourselves and those to whom we make promises. (This is my public apology to those I've disappointed due to my eye/stomach problem.) The upside is the satisfaction of occasionally being able to finish off that watermelon and being energized by that accomplishment to continue.

What I have been attempting to convey, through the content and format of this paper, is how life experiences collectively comprise our strengths and shape our visions and our work. If there is a vision that drives my work, it is a world that transcends individual and cultural tolerance. If I have any strengths, they come from my experiences, heritage, and community - the wisdom and assistance of my family, teachers, students, mentors, and peers. My most important source of strength and unwavering support is my husband, Doug DuPriest. He along with my current colleagues and other close friends complete me, in a way, by providing the strengths that I lack. I grow daily through their friendship, convictions, compassion, and insight.

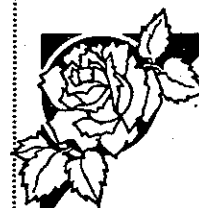
Many of you in the Women's Caucus have taught me and honored me in multiple ways these more than 20 years. You, we, represent a collective strength that is largely responsible for maintaining and perpetuating a vision for art education that places social, cultural, and political issues, including human rights and equity, actively before the NAEA membership. This awards evening is part of our annual reaffirmation of that vision.

Inviting me to recount a few segments of my life has been challenging and gratifying. Prior to this evening, had you asked me if there was an event in my life that I should like to relive, I might have said, "Yes, to have just one more of those fishing days with my family." You have given me another to cherish. I cannot sufficiently express how much this award means to me. Because I have been privileged to know June McFee's

strengths on many levels, I could not be more honored; and I thank you.

1Wygant, F. (1993). *School Art in American Culture, 1820-1970*, Cincinnati: Interwood Press, p. 99.

2 Giroux, H. (1993). *Living Dangerously: Multiculturalism and Politics of Difference*. New York: P. Lang.



**“Women’s  
discontent  
increases  
in exact  
proportion  
to her  
development.”**

*Elizabeth Cady Stanton  
1815-1902  
American Suffragette*

