

## **Third Consultation on Women's Networks in Multireligious America Biographical Sketches and Organizational Profiles**

### **Hajja Salwa Abd-Allah**

Member, Muslim American Society

**Salwa Abd-Allah** has been striving to be a Muslim for nearly forty years. She found her peace in the Qur'anic reminder that our Creator, the One, true Living G'd never changes His way! This has given her a tireless love for Qur'anic study. She made Hajj and 'Umra and traveled to Egypt, West Africa and throughout North America as a lifelong student. She has edited five publications and several newsletters. She was published in the *Journal of Religion and Education*. Salwa is Research Coordinator for the American Ijtihad Institute, Inc. She was the principal of Masjid Al-Quran's Sister Clara Mohammed School for over five years, as well as the academic instructor for the girls in grades 8 through 10. They went to "mainstream" schools at this point in order to benefit from the financial scholarships and the like that students in Islamic schools were not privy to during the 80's. Sister Salwa has worked in Islamic education for over 25 years and has worked with the Boston and Cambridge school systems as well as the Council of Islamic Schools of North America (CISNA) and the nationwide Clara Mohammed School system. She has served as adjunct faculty at both New Hampshire and Springfield College teaching "Social Change." She sincerely tries to adhere to the concept of lifelong learning.

**The Muslim American Society** (MAS) is an Islamic community in association with the leadership of Imam W. Deen Mohammed. It proclaims in deed and word the universal message of Al-Islam that there is but one G'd and one human family. We are committed to establish a balanced community life in its broadest sense, witnessing the eternal wisdom of the Words of G'd and the life exemplified by Prophet Muhammad. We will cultivate the patterned growth of human excellence and good character through building valuable relationships with all G'd conscious people.

### **Dr. Leila Ahmed**

Professor of Women's Studies in Religion, Harvard Divinity School

**Leila Ahmed** was appointed to the Women's Studies in Religion professorship in 1999 at Harvard Divinity School; she is the first person to occupy that chair. Since 1981, she had been Professor of Women's Studies and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. While at the University of Massachusetts, she was Director of the Women's Studies program from 1992 to 1995 and Director of the Near Eastern Studies program from 1991 to 1992. In 1992, she was Distinguished Visiting Professor at the American University in Cairo. In 1997, she was elected to a life membership at Clare Hall in the University of Cambridge. Her publications include *A Border Passage, Women and Gender in Islam: The Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* and *Edward William Lane: A Study of His Life and Work and of British Ideas of the Middle East in the Nineteenth Century*. She has also published many articles, including "Arab Culture and Writing Women's Bodies" and "Between Two Worlds: The Formation of a Turn of the Century Egyptian Feminist."

### **Ms. Sharifa Alkhateeb**

President, North American Council for Muslim Women (NACMW)

**Sharifa Alkhateeb** is the President of the North American Council for Muslim Women (NACMW), an educational, legislative, policy-making, and advocacy group. NACMW is a national, independent, non-profit organization with members of very diverse expertise, ethnicity, and approach to Islamic identity. Sharifa is also the President of the Muslim Educational Council, a Mid-Atlantic non-profit organization educating public school staff and administrators about Middle Eastern Culture, Muslims, and Islam. She has an M.A. in Comparative Religion, edited the *Marmaduke Pickthall Translation of the Qur'an*, co-authored the *Arab World Notebook* used in public school history classrooms nationwide, is a working journalist to the present time, and was the Managing Editor of the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*. She has 39 years of grassroots experience in social work within the

Muslim communities of several different ethnicities including Bosnian/Albanian, Arab, Pakistani/Indian, and Afro-American, among others. She has been a youth advisor for the largest Muslim youth organizations (MSA, ISNA, MYNA) for over 20 years. From 1993-1997, Sharifa produced, wrote, and hosted a monthly television program for Virginia's Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) called "Middle Eastern Parenting," and was a diversity trainer for FCPS for five years. In 1993, NACMW was the first national Muslim organization to nationally and publicly address the issue of violence against women and children. She is the creator and Director of the Peaceful Families Project – a nationwide survey of domestic violence within the Muslim community, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, VAWO Office.

**The North American Council for Muslim Women** was created by 150 multi-ethnic, multi-approach, multi-age Muslim women in February 1992 as an educational, advocacy, and legislative independent non-profit organization dedicated to improving the knowledge of Muslims about Islam and about the society in which we live. We have done groundbreaking work on Islamic Law and the United Nations' concepts of women's rights, on measurably improving the image of Muslim women in the U.S., on creating a public discussion of violence against Muslim women and children, and on open-mindedness across former barriers of race, religious practice, and cultural background. In 1993, as part of the Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion, NACMW helped pass into law the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. NACMW has remained a major networking organization providing accurate information and speakers to academia, the media, organizations, and government.

#### **Ms. Wendy R. Anderson**

Facilitator and Independent Political Consultant

**Wendy R. Anderson** has extensive experience in international affairs and peace building, having worked on policy initiatives with G8 governments and with policymaking bodies in the Great Lakes region of Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Until recently, she served as the Deputy Director for External Affairs at the Women and Public Policy Program (WAPPP) at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Prior to joining WAPPP, Ms. Anderson received the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship, enabling her to spend a year in Russia, Israel, the Palestinian territories, and India working with and advising women's political, faith-based organizations. She later served as a consultant to The Shimon Peres Center for Peace in Tel Aviv, the Anti-Defamation League in Boston, and the Harvard Global Peace Project in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She holds a Master's degree in Philosophy and Religion from Harvard University, with a focus on analyzing how religion can be both a destabilizing and stabilizing force in the resolution of violent conflict. Currently, she is working as a political consultant to a U.S. Senate campaign and several international non-profit organizations.

#### **Rev. Dr. Dorothy A. Austin**

University Chaplain, Memorial Church, Harvard University; Lecturer, Harvard Divinity School

**Dorothy A. Austin** is Associate Minister in The Memorial Church at Harvard University and Chaplain to the University. She also teaches as a Lecturer in Psychology and Religion at Harvard Divinity School and is Co-Master of Lowell House. Before returning to Harvard, she was Associate Professor in Religion and Psychology at Drew University and Drew Theological School. Dorothy has taught on the Harvard faculties of Divinity and Medicine, and served as Director of the Erik H. and Joan M. Erikson Center, dedicated to interdisciplinary and intergenerational work in psychology, arts, and humanities. She is an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church.

#### **Dr. Ann Braude**

Director, Women's Studies in Religion Program, Harvard Divinity School

**Ann Braude** is Director of the Women's Studies in Religion Program and Senior Lecturer in the History of Christianity at Harvard Divinity School, where she teaches courses on the religious history of American women. As Program Director she works with visiting scholars in women's studies at Harvard Divinity School and leads outreach efforts designed to bring the program's scholarship to the public. Her publications include *Women and Religion in America* (Oxford 2000) and *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in 19th-century America* (Beacon 1989). Her current research focuses on the religion of American women in the contemporary period, and

seeks to disprove the notion that women's public activism and religion are opposing forces in American culture. The work will bring attention to the central roles of women's organizations in American religion.

**The Women's Studies in Religion Program** at Harvard Divinity School promotes critical inquiry into the interaction between religion and gender. It sponsors research and teaching in feminist theology, biblical studies, ethics and women's history, as well as interdisciplinary scholarship on women throughout the world's religions. Each year the Program conducts an international search resulting in the appointment of five visiting scholars who are appointed to the faculty as visiting lecturers. Each conducts a book-length research project on women and religion and teaches a related course to Divinity School students.

**Sister Helen Marie Burns, RSM**

Vice President, Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas and Past President, Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR)

A native of Independence, Iowa, **Helen Marie Burns** is a secondary educator by preparation and an administrator by experience and practice. She has spent seventeen years in administrative roles within the Sisters of Mercy of the Union and is currently serving as the Vice President of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. The Institute has a membership of 5,500 women who serve in over twelve countries throughout the world. In August, 1988, she was elected to a three-year term in the Presidency of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. Helen Marie has served on several educational and health care boards, currently serving on the Catholic Health Association Board and the Sisters of Mercy Health System Board in St. Louis. She also currently co-directs a Commission on Women within the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy. She completed a doctoral degree from the School of Religion at the University of Iowa in May 2001.

**The Leadership Conference of Women Religious** is a membership organization open to Catholic sisters who are principal administrators of their religious institutes (orders) in the United States. Its purpose is to promote understanding of religious life by assisting members to carry out more collaboratively their leadership in their congregations; fostering dialogue and collaboration among religious congregations within the Church and in the larger society; developing models for initiating and strengthening relationships with groups concerned with the needs of society, thereby effecting change. The goals of the organization for 1999-2004 are 1) to develop and model effective leadership, 2) to work for a just world order, and 3) to foster a transformed religious life. The goals will be accomplished by mentoring leaders, creating and offering resource materials, learning skills and processes of systems thinking, deepening our understanding of systemic change, continuing to promote a positive image of women religious, and articulating our evolutionary understanding of the spirituality underlying our call as consecrated religious.

**Ms. Elora Chowdhury**

Program Associate, The Ford Foundation

**Elora Chowdhury**, a Program Associate in the Education, Knowledge and Religion Unit of the Ford Foundation, works in the fields of Higher Education and Scholarship and Religion, Culture and Society. She is a doctoral candidate in Women's Studies at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. Prior to joining Ford, she taught Women's Studies at Tufts University, Clark University and Ohio State University.

**The Ford Foundation's** mission is to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation and advance human achievement. The field of Religion, Society, and Culture supports this mission by supporting innovative people and organizations working to build the capacity of religious traditions to engage both their own internal pluralism and the pluralism of religions, societies, and cultures.

**Ms. Sheila R. Decter**

Director, Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA)

**Sheila R. Decter** is one of Boston's outstanding professionals in the Community Relations field. She has initiated and staffed broad interfaith and interracial coalitions for over two decades in support of civil rights, public education, affordable housing, reproductive rights, provision of services to persons with AIDS, advocacy on behalf of human services and immigrant needs, and efforts to improve responses to domestic violence. Sheila presently serves as Director of the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action, a new Boston area group devoted to development of progressive public policy and efforts for social and economic justice. Previously she served as Executive Director of the New England Region of the American Jewish Congress, a position she held for 22 years, and as Assistant Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Metropolitan Boston. She came to professional community relations work after 13 years of teaching at the college level at the University of Wisconsin, Lasell College in Newton, Massachusetts and Northeastern University. At Lasell, she served as Chairman of the Faculty. She participated in the UN Decade of Women Conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985 and on numerous boards and commissions to improve the status of women.

At the **Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action**,

We believe that the passionate pursuit of social and economic justice that has characterized so much of Jewish life in this country and elsewhere derives authentically from the Jewish tradition and deserves full and energetic expression in our own time.

We believe that very many American Jews, of all generations, are eager to reconnect to that pursuit and would welcome the opportunity to do so in concert with others.

We believe that the effective transmission of these central Jewish values to new generations requires agencies and institutions that speak and act boldly in defense of civil rights and civil liberties, that work on behalf of social and economic justice, and that join with other like-minded groups in our society on behalf of these ends.

We believe that American Jews have been and must continue to be a powerful voice on behalf of a society more fair and more free, and that in so being we contribute both to American democracy and to Jewish continuity.

Accordingly: We hereby declare ourselves The Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA), a membership organization based in New England, eager to enter into partnership with other progressive Jewish organizations across the land, ready to do battle on behalf of the values we cherish, open to all those in our community who share our hopes and our commitments.

**Dr. Diana L. Eck**

Director, The Pluralism Project, Harvard University

**Diana L. Eck** is Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard University and Director of the Pluralism Project. As a scholar of the religious traditions of India, she has published *Banaras, City of Light* and *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. Her book *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras* is about interreligious dialogue and Christian faith in a world of many faiths. Her latest book, *A New Religious America*, was published by HarperSF in June 2001. With the Pluralism Project, she has turned her attention to the United States and produced the CD-ROM, *On Common Ground: World Religions in America*, for which she received a National Humanities Medal in 1998 from President Clinton. She is a member of the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, the Committee on the Study of Religion, and the Divinity School Faculty. She and her partner, Dorothy Austin, are Masters of Lowell House, one of Harvard's twelve residential houses for undergraduates.

**The Pluralism Project** studies and documents the growing religious diversity of the United States, with a special view to its new immigrant religious communities. In the research of the Pluralism Project, we have had three goals:

1. To document some of the changes taking place in America's cities and towns by beginning to map their new religious demography, with old and new mosques and Islamic centers, Sikh gurdwaras, Hindu and Jain temples, Buddhist temples and meditation centers, Zoroastrian and Taoist religious centers.
2. To study how these religious traditions are changing as they take root in American soil and develop in a new context. How are they beginning to recreate their community life, religious institutions, rites and rituals, and forms of transmission in the cultural environment of the United States?
3. To explore how the United States is changing as we begin to appropriate this new religious diversity in our public life and institutions, and in emerging forms of interfaith relationships.

For more information about the work of the Pluralism Project, please see: <http://www.pluralism.org>

**Ms. Blu Greenberg**

President, Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA)

**Blu Greenberg**, author and lecturer, is President of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA) and chaired the First and Second International Conferences on Feminism and Orthodoxy, 1997 and 1998. Blu has served on the boards of many organizations, including EDAH, the Covenant Foundation, Project Keshet, U.S. Israel Women-to-Women, the National Jewish Family Center and the Jewish Book Council. She was founding chair of the Federation Task Force on Jewish Women. She has participated in many interfaith and inter-ethnic enterprises and was co-founder of the Dialogue Group of Jewish and Palestinian women. Blu Greenberg is the author of several books including *On Women and Judaism: A View from Tradition* and *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household*. She is married to Rabbi Irving Greenberg; they have five children and fourteen grandchildren.

**The Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance's** mission is to expand the spiritual, ritual, intellectual, and political opportunities for women within the framework of *halakha*. We advocate meaningful participation and equality for women in family life, synagogues, houses of learning, and Jewish communal organizations to the full extent possible within *halakha*. Our commitment is rooted in the belief that fulfilling this mission will uplift individual and communal life for all Jews.

**Ms. Emira Habiby Browne**

Founder and Executive Director, The Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC)

**Emira Habiby Browne** is the founder and Executive Director of the Arab-American Family Support Center, established in November 1993 to serve the Arabic-speaking community in New York City. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Sociology from the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. She has extensive experience in social services administration and management, program development, social research, and fundraising. Her expertise is in family and children's services where she has developed and administered many programs. Emira Habiby Browne has been honored for her work in the community by the Brooklyn District Attorney, the Brooklyn Borough President, the New York City Council, and most recently she received a Union Square Award from the Fund for the City of New York. In 1997, she was also appointed to the Mayoral Task Force on Police/Community Relations.

**The Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC)** is the first and only Arabic-speaking social services agency in New York City that targets its services to Arabic-speaking immigrants. It was established in 1993 to help newly-arrived Arab immigrants overcome the many cultural obstacles to successful integration into American society. AAFSC's goal is to develop effective strategies to strengthen the family unit and ensure the well being of its children. It is non-sectarian and is staffed by Arabic-speaking professionals of all faiths who are sensitive to the religious, cultural, and language needs of families of Arab background.

AAFSC's programs include a child welfare preventative services program servicing 60 families. It also provides mental health services, English language and citizenship classes, immigration and legal services, domestic violence services, a tutoring and youth activities program, parenting education, Child/Family Health Plus and Medicaid enrollment services, translation/interpretation services, information and referrals, and cultural sensitivity training. It

currently has 19 bilingual staff for its 7 main programs. AAFSC is meeting an urgent need because service providers, schools, hospitals, mental health clinics, and community organizations are unable to provide the appropriate services due to the cultural and language barriers facing this community.

**Ms. Karen McLean Hessel**

Special Assistant to the General Secretary and Program Director, Justice for Women Working Group, National Council of Churches (NCC)

**Karen McLean Hessel** has served as Program Director of the Justice for Women Working Group at the National Council of Churches since 1992. Since January 2000 she has also served as a Special Assistant to the General Secretary. Karen is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary ('83) and worked with the Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia as Director of the Delaware Valley Interfaith Coalition on Public Policy. Prior to seminary she was an active Presbyterian elder involved in the Presbyterian Hunger Program, ecumenical hunger and poverty initiatives, and women's leadership. Current work includes women's spirituality and leadership and poverty initiatives in ecumenical contexts. Personal: Karen and Dieter Hessel live in Princeton, New Jersey. They share 3 children and 2 grandchildren.

**The National Council of Churches (NCC)** is the nation's leading organization in the movement for Christian unity. Its 36 Protestant and Orthodox member communions (denominations) include more than 50 million adherents in nearly 140,000 congregations nationwide. Through the NCC, members join with partners in more than 80 countries, including the United States, in ministries of disaster relief, development and refugee assistance, unity, justice, education, and public witness.

For more than 23 years, The Justice for Women Working Group of the National Council of Churches has offered a place for collaboration, partnership and program leadership of education and advocacy for justice for women in church and society. Justice for Women has published resources for worship, reflection and meditation. Other work includes advocacy on the topics of women in prison/jail, prostitution, economic justice, housing, and women's health issues in a faith perspective. Justice for Women produced a video, "Through Women's Eyes," documenting experiences of women of faith at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, Beijing 95, (*Women at the Well*, Vol. 2 by Judson Press, 2002). The Justice for Women Working Group has a special focus on poverty and women during this NCC Decade for a Mobilization to Overcome Poverty.

**Dr. Mary Hunt**

Co-Director and Co-Founder, Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

**Mary Elizabeth Hunt**, Ph.D., is a Catholic feminist theologian. She is the co-founder and Co-Director of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER) in Silver Spring, Maryland. Dr. Hunt is active in the women-church movement, a network of feminist base communities rooted in the Catholic tradition. During the 2000-2001 academic year she was a Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Values in Public Life at Harvard Divinity School where she worked on issues related to same-sex love and religion in the United States. She is currently writing on sexual ethics from a feminist religious perspective. Her many publications include *Good Sex: Feminist Perspectives from the World's Religions* (edited with Patricia Beattie Jung and Radhika Balakrishnan) and *Fierce Tenderness: A Feminist Theology of Friendship*.

**The Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual** is a feminist educational center, a network of justice-seeking people that began in 1983 in response to the need for theological, ethical and liturgical development for and by women from a variety of faith traditions. WATER works locally as well as nationally and internationally on programs, projects and publications that help people bring their feminist religious values to the service of social change. WATER offers workshops and resource materials, liturgies and counseling, study opportunities and exchange programs to share this wealth of insights and commitments.

### **Ambassador Swanee Hunt**

Director of the Women and Public Policy Program, Harvard JFK School of Government

**Swanee Hunt**, Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy, is Director of the Women and Public Policy Program at the Kennedy School. She served as the U.S. Ambassador to Austria from 1993-1997, where she hosted negotiations and international symposia to focus efforts on securing peace during conflicts in neighboring states. She has worked extensively with Bosnian women and with religious leaders to unite across war lines and, for this work, was named “Woman of Peace” by the Together for Peace Foundation in Rome. She has published articles in the *International Herald Tribune* and *Boston Globe*, among others. She is a contributing editor to *American Benefactor*, and in 1997, “Women’s Vital Voices” appeared in *Foreign Affairs*. She is a founder of the Women’s Foundation of Colorado, and her own foundation, the Hunt Alternatives Fund, worked with over 400 neighborhood-based organizations during a 16-year span. She has a B.A. in Philosophy, two Master’s degrees (in Psychology and Religion) and a doctorate in Theology. She is married to symphony conductor Charles Ansbacher; they have three children.

The mission of the **Women and Public Policy Program** (WAPPP) is to analyze and respond to public policies that impact women, and to both inform and learn from women who impact public policies, with the ultimate goal of creating a world more balanced in opportunity, more secure, and more hospitable for all people. Primary activities concern:

- **Encouraging and enhancing teaching on women and public policy:** developing new courses, case studies, executive programs, and materials for classroom use and coordinating information about available gender-related courses throughout Harvard University.
- **Facilitating scholarship on women and public policy:** conducting, coordinating, and commissioning research; developing fellowships and small grants for practitioners and scholars; acting as a clearinghouse on gender-related research; and organizing conferences, seminars, and workshops.
- **Enriching the culture at the Kennedy School of Government:** organizing events that facilitate interaction among high-level and grassroots women leaders, students, and faculty at the School; enhancing the dialogue on policy issues to include gender; providing role models, networking contacts, and examples of leadership for women; assisting women students in their professional development; and bringing the interests and participation of women of color into central focus.
- **Disseminating materials on women and public policy:** distributing occasional papers and research results; maintaining close working relationships with and maintaining a web site with links to related research centers.
- **Influencing the public policy process:** advancing women’s leadership in the public arena; strengthening the advocacy power of grassroots women; and mobilizing women and men, political leaders, and activists around policy initiatives of concern to women.

### **Dr. Kathleen Hurty**

Consultant for Communities of Faith, Service and Learning, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Department of Ecumenical Affairs

**Kathleen S. Hurty** is a consultant, grant writer, and researcher for non-profit organizations, focusing on issues of justice, peace and gender. Currently she is assisting the U.S. Office of the World Council of Churches in their work on the Decade to Overcome Violence and in efforts to stimulate interreligious dialogue. She is a contributor to the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*. Dr. Hurty’s previous positions include Executive Director of Church Women United and Director for Ecumenical Networks, National Council of Churches. Her experience also includes a number of years in public education in California where she served as a teacher, staff developer, and principal.

Kathleen holds a Ph.D. in Education from the University of California at Berkeley. She is a recipient of the Wittenberg Award from the Luther Institute. She sits on the boards of several organizations including the Trustees of the Interchurch Center in New York City, representing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of which she

is a member. She is on the Ecumenical Board for the Sisters of St. Benedict in Madison, Wisconsin, working to form an ecumenical monastic community for women. She has authored a chapter in *Women and Church* (Melanie A. May, Editor) and in *Women Leading in Education* (SUNY Press, 1995). She and her husband, the Rev. David L. Hurty, have four grown children and six grandchildren.

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**, organized in 1987 out of three predecessor churches, is the oldest of the major U.S. Lutheran Churches. Begun and continued by generations of immigrants, the church today has moved beyond its German and Scandinavian origins. Its more than 5.1 million members are found in over 10,800 congregations, organized into 65 synods throughout the United States.

The Department for Ecumenical Affairs assists the bishop of the church in coordinating inter-Lutheran, ecumenical, and interfaith activities, and gives guidance to congregations, synods, and church-wide units for the ecumenical activities. The office encourages study and discussion of theological issues with other churches and assists this church in its relationship to ecumenical organizations. For further information on the Department of Ecumenical Affairs see <http://www.elca.org/ea>.

**Ms. Semeen R. Issa**

President, Muslim Women's League

**Semeen R. Issa**, President of the Muslim Women's League, has been a public school teacher for 18 years in Southern California and taught in the sixth-largest public elementary school in the nation for 16 years before moving to a suburban school district. She has been a board member of the Muslim Women's League since 1994, and is responsible for having established the very successful Muslim Girls' Sports Camp, the only one of its kind in the nation, which takes place in Pasadena, California. She is a vocal advocate for Muslim girls being able to participate in sports and fitness activities in order to engender a positive attitude towards health and fitness for life. She was also instrumental in establishing the first Muslim women's soccer team in Southern California.

In addition, her involvement with the Muslim Women's League also includes community outreach projects, speaking events, and networking with other Muslim and non-Muslim women's groups.

**The Muslim Women's League** is a non-profit Muslim American organization working to implement the values of Islam and thereby reclaim the status of women as free, equal and vital contributors to society. The Muslim Women's League accomplishes its mission through:

- Cultivating and asserting the relationship of Muslim women with their Creator through spiritual retreats, study groups and dialogue;
- Supporting and promoting the efforts of individuals and organizations working towards similar goals through conferences, symposia and other educational forums;
- Informing the American public, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, of the perspectives of Muslim women and articulating our concerns to the media and relevant decision-making authorities;
- Publishing articles, position papers, and other texts which express our understanding of Islam, with careful attention to alternative perspectives on issues of concern to Muslim women;
- Networking with grassroots, civic, religious and other organizations;
- Participating in global efforts to improve the lives of women.



**Mrs. Alma Abdul-Hadi Jadallah**

Representative, Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

**Alma Abdul-Hadi Jadallah's** work focuses primarily on the intersection between conflict resolution research and practice in communities and organizations. She is currently a doctoral candidate at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University. Her research explores the perceived work and role of those working in conflict resolution post-September 11. Professionally, she is an organizational consultant at Freddie Mac.

Active in her community, Mrs. Jadallah serves as a board member for the Institute for Victims of Trauma, Al-Hewar Center, and Partners for Peace. She is currently President of the Board of Northern Virginia Mediation Services. Mrs. Jadallah is a certified mediator in the State of Virginia. She is married to Sami Jadallah and mother of Jamil, Laila and Diala.

**The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR)** at George Mason University is one of the leading centers specializing in the study of deep-rooted social conflicts and the processes that may lead to their peaceful resolution or transformation. It awards degrees of Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution to students who successfully complete these programs. The institute also conducts independent research and applied practice programs at the local, national and international level.

**Ms. Cherrefe Kadri**

Past-President, Islamic Center of Greater Toledo

**Cherrefe Kadri** has been a practicing attorney in Toledo, Ohio since 1993. Prior to that time, she taught in a public elementary school for five years and then went to Kuwait and taught in a private American school for three years. She has been an active member of the Toledo Islamic community since she was a youngster and is in her ninth year on the Council (Board of Directors) of the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo. While on the Council, she served as a Committee Chair and on the Executive Committee as Secretary for 3 years, Vice President in 2000 and President in 2001. She doesn't know if she was the first woman president of an Islamic Center, but she was the first woman president at the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo. She is proud that the Islamic community put its faith in her to uphold its ideals and principles. She is a member of the Toledo Bar Association as well as the Lucas County Bar Association, the Greater Toledo Arab American Association, and the Arab American Institute.

**The Islamic Center of Greater Toledo** is a diverse community of 500 Muslim families. The Center is located on 48 acres of farmland in Perrysburg Township, near Toledo, Ohio. The community has been in existence for over 50 years and began with a few Lebanese and Syrian families in Toledo. The objectives of the Islamic Center are to further the understanding of Islam and its culture and principles among Muslims and non-Muslims.

**Dr. Azza Karam**

Program Director, Women's Department, World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP)

**Azza Karam** is currently a Program Director at the Women's Department at the World Conference on Religion and Peace. She has worked since the 1980s in the fields of gender, development, human rights, democratization, conflict, and political Islam. From 1996 to 1998, Dr. Karam worked at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in Stockholm, Sweden, where she founded and managed the Gender and Arab world programs. From 1998-2000, she was a Program Manager at the Centre for the Study of Ethnic Conflict, and a Lecturer in Politics at the Queens University of Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Her books include *Islamisms and the State* (Macmillan, 1998); *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* (Stockholm, 1998); and *Transnational Political Islam* (Pluto, forthcoming). She has worked with the UNDP, UNESCO, and OSCE on enhancing women's political performance through carrying out training programs to that effect in a number of countries. Dr. Karam is also a member of the Board of the International Dialogue's Foundation in the Hague, a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Women in Development in Washington, a member of the Consultative Committee of the Women's Global Forum in Manila, a member of the Management Board of the

Women in Politics Project in Belfast, as well as a Core Group Member of the Euromediterranean Charter of Peace and Change at the Bruno Kreisky Foundation for International Dialogue in Vienna.

**The World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP)** started the Women's Program in May 1998 to ensure that religious women's commitments and concerns were taken into account in all areas of Religions for Peace involvement, and promoting the role of religious women's organizations for the common good. The program is operated in close cooperation with the Women's Committee of WCRP. In its two years of existence, the program has been involved with an extensive global compilation of a database on women's religious organizations. In addition, the program organized a women's pre-Assembly meeting during WCRP's 7th World Assembly in November 1999 in Amman, Jordan. For many participants, it was the first time they were brought together under the auspice of religion, with a mandate to discuss and share their views on working for peace in their respective societies.

**Ms. Nancy K. Kaufman**

Executive Director, The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston

For the past eleven years, **Nancy K. Kaufman** has been the Executive Director of The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Greater Boston, which is an umbrella for 42 Jewish organizations. JCRC also serves as the social justice arm of Boston's Jewish Federation, Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP). Nancy Kaufman holds a Bachelor's Degree from Brandeis University, a Master's in Social Work from Boston College, and a Master's in Public Administration, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, where she received the Littauer Award for Excellence. She was the recipient of an honorary degree, Doctor of Public Service, from Northeastern University in June 2001. Before coming to the JCRC, Nancy worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as Deputy Director of the Governor's Office of Human Resources, Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services and Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Public Welfare. She is the recipient of an award for "Greatest Contribution to Social Policy and Social Change" from the Massachusetts NASW chapter, as well as Boston Ten-Point Coalition's Community Leadership Award. She also received the Warren B. Kohn Award for Jewish Communal Service, and was noted among the top 50 American Jewish leaders in *The Forward* newspaper in 2000. Ms. Kaufman is the author of numerous articles on Judaism and social justice, homeless policy, advocacy strategies and Black-Jewish relations. Ms. Kaufman lives in Swampscott with her husband Mark and her daughter, Sandra, who is a student at Washington University.

**The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Greater Boston** is the representative voice of the organized Jewish community. Rooted in Jewish values and informed by Jewish history, JCRC also reflects the ideals of American democracy. Comprised of constituent organizations, JCRC:

- serves as a catalyst for building a strong and vibrant Jewish community in Boston and around the world;
- advocates for a safe, secure, democratic state of Israel;
- promotes an American society that is democratic, pluralistic and just.

In pursuit of its goals, JCRC facilitates dialogue and forges an action agenda by encouraging collaborative partnerships within the Jewish community and between the Jewish community and the broader society. To this end, JCRC:

- educates, assists and enables the Jewish community to pursue social justice;
- advocates on issues of Jewish communal concern;
- build coalitions for effective action and opportunities for community involvement;
- convenes the community in times of crisis, celebration and commemoration.

**Ms. Harpreet Kaur**

Coordinator, Sikh Network

**Harpreet Kaur** is a Sikh American who channels her energy towards educating Sikhs and non-Sikhs on the principles of Sikhism. Currently she is a coordinator of the Sikh Network and is responsible for organizing its retreats, seminars and workshops. Over the past 6 years, Ms. Kaur has volunteered in the fields of human rights (Sikh Human Rights Group), human development (Fellowship of Activists to Embrace Humanity), women's empowerment (Sikh Sisterhood), media awareness (Sikh Network, Sikh Media and Resource Taskforce, Sikh Coalition), and post 9-11 concerns (New England Sikh Study Circle).

**Sikh Network** is a network of local chapters scattered across North America looking to promote the spiritual and political growth of the Sikh Nation through personal and collective development. In doing so, the Sikh Network hopes to inspire selfless activism and self-sacrifice for the betterment of all of God's creation. In order to accomplish this goal, the Sikh Network conducts retreats and seminars to discuss current affairs, history, and social issues while learning the teachings found in Sikhism. These retreats have served as the inspirational birthplace for many activism projects and organizations. The Sikh Network also published an information package for media to serve as a reference and resource guide for Sikh issues in North America. The second edition of this resource guide is currently underway and will expand its audience to include policy makers and law enforcement officials.

**Ms. Irene S. Korenfield**

Administrative Assistant, Religion, Society, and Culture, The Ford Foundation

**Irene S. Korenfield** is a member of the Religion, Society and Culture grants team in the Education, Media, Arts and Culture Program at the Ford Foundation. Prior to joining Ford in 1997, she was a development assistant at New Visions for Public Schools, New York City, and an administrative assistant in the Family Life and Women's Issues Office of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries. She holds an MFA degree from New York University and is currently a candidate for a Master of Library and Information Science degree at CW Post. She is a member of both the Town and Village Conservative Synagogue and Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, New York City's lesbian and gay synagogue.

**The Ford Foundation's** mission is to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation and advance human achievement. The field of Religion, Society, and Culture supports this mission by supporting innovative people and organizations working to build the capacity of religious traditions to engage both their own internal pluralism and the pluralism of religions, societies, and cultures.

**Ms. Debbie Kram**

Director and Co-Founder, Ma'ayan: Torah Studies Initiative for Women

**Debbie Kram** is the Director and co-founder of Ma'ayan: Torah Studies Initiative for Women, a program in its tenth year of providing serious classical and contemporary Jewish text study opportunities for adults in Greater Boston. She currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies, as a founding member and past Co-Chair of the Greater Boston's Jewish Women's Studies Coalition, and as a member of the Me'ah / Adult Learning Steering Committee. Among her varied communal activities Debbie has served as an officer of the Brookline Infant Toddler Center [among the nation's first such day care centers], as a co-founder and officer of Yal-Day-New Day Care Center [the country's first infant-toddler center under Jewish auspices], as a board member of Congregation Beth Pinchas [the first woman to serve in such capacity in this chasidic synagogue in Brookline], as Regional Vice-President of AMIT [an educational and social service organization for needy children in Israel], and as the Volunteer Coordinator of Visitor Services for ROFEH International [a medical referral and social service agency]. She is a recipient of the Charlotte Bloomberg Award for innovative Jewish communal service, the BJE Keter Torah Award, and is an alumna of the Jerusalem Fellows. Debbie received her undergraduate education at the City College of New York, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Teachers Institute for Women of Yeshiva University. She earned a Master's degree in Library and Information Sciences from Simmons College, first practiced as an academic librarian at Brandeis and MIT, and then established and operated a literary agency prior to devoting her professional efforts to lifelong learning.

**Ma'ayan: Torah Studies Initiative for Women** is an independent, grassroots, award-winning, community-based program, currently celebrating its tenth year of offering women of Greater Boston both an entry point and a journeying point into the wealth of classical Jewish sources in a supportive and inclusive environment. Ma'ayan is a Hebrew word which means "wellspring." In Jewish thought the well metaphorically represents Torah, the source of Jewish knowledge. Ma'ayan seeks to bring women to that source, develop their understanding of classical Jewish texts, engage them actively in the process of learning, and strengthen their ability to analyze Torah sources independently. To wit, Ma'ayan also serves as an acronym for *Machon Iyun le-Nashim*, translated from Hebrew as an institute of intensive study for women. Ma'ayan seeks to encourage seriousness of purpose, intellectual and spiritual growth, and respect for the texts of our tradition. It has attracted hundreds of Jewish participants from across denominational affiliations, and from across the generations, building a vibrant women's community of Torah study.

### **Dr. Carolyn Kunin**

Director, Department on Religious Action, Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ)

**Carolyn Kunin** is Director of the Department on Religious Action of Women of Reform Judaism, which includes the Critical Issues Task Force and Interreligious Committee, among others. In this capacity she works on social policy advocacy and resource development. She also taught Anthropology for many years, primarily at Manhattanville College and SUNY Purchase.

A past President of her congregation, she has also been a Vice President of the New York Federation of Reform Synagogues and sits on her Sisterhood board. She has been chair of her congregation's Social Action Committee and has served on the Croton Lay Interfaith Council as well as other community committees and boards. Currently Carolyn is chairing the community steering committee of Walking Together, a program to teach appreciation of religious diversity for Jewish, Christian and Muslim youngsters and their families. A graduate of Goucher College in Towson, MD, Carolyn holds a Ph.D. from New York University and has done field research in a Mexican village and on a family court in the New York metropolitan area.

**Women of Reform Judaism** (WRJ), the women's affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, comprises 100,000 members in 600 Sisterhoods in the United States and Canada, with affiliates in the cities of fifteen overseas nations. WRJ maintains a far-reaching program of service to Jewish and humanitarian causes throughout the world. Through association with Jewish, interreligious and secular groups, WRJ represents and acts on its members' concerns for the family, women's rights, Israel, and World Jewry; and through its advocacy programs it addresses the critical issues of the hungry, the homeless, the aging, environment and world peace.

### **Mrs. Kamal Misra**

Founder and President, Asian American Support and Resource Agency

**Mrs. Kamal Misra** was born in India, and came to the U.S. in 1974. She is a business owner, managing her own print shop for some 20 years. She is married with two children. Kamal Misra first became active in the local community through her involvement with the P.T.A. Later, she turned her attention to the local South Asian community, serving as Treasurer, Vice President, and President for the India Association of Greater Boston. In 1996, she formed a South Asian support group called Saheli. More recently, she established a new organization, the Asian American Support and Resource Agency (AASRA). She currently serves on the board of the Asian Taskforce Against Domestic Violence.

**The Asian American Support and Resource Agency**, or AASRA, is a non-profit organization founded in May 2001. Its mission is to provide support and resources to women and families of the Asian American community in the New England area. AASRA provides opportunities for women to come together, network, and share ideas. The AASRA organization is women-centered but is not women-exclusive. AASRA works to develop solutions within a supportive framework that values the individual and is deeply sensitive to the unique needs of women of all ages. AASRA takes pride in New England's multi-cultural society; it aims to draw upon its strengths and serve the needs of its community. AASRA offers programs that provide information on health, nutrition, immigration, finance, and provides assistance to the victims of domestic violence.

**Ms. Diana N. Rowan**

Writer/Activist

**Diana Rowan** has worked as Editor and Writer for *The Atlantic*, and has published articles in *The Christian Science Monitor*, *CSM International Weekly*, *Time*, *Boston Globe*, *North American Review*, *The National Observer*, and international Buddhist publications. She currently serves as a Contributing Editor for *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*. She is a member of the Advisory Board at Tara Mandala, a Buddhist mountain retreat in Colorado, founded and directed by an American woman, the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Tsultrim Allione. A writer/activist for human rights, women and children's welfare, and the environment for over three decades, Diana Rowan has served as trustee on a family foundation concerned with these issues, and worked for equality for women in religious life, including Anglican women priests, American Buddhist teachers and Tibetan nuns. She has been an activist in the international struggle for Tibetan human rights, supported Tibetan refugees, grassroots re-development and education projects inside Tibet, and has hosted His Holiness the Dalai Lama in support of The International Campaign for Tibet. She has also studied with the Women's Studies in Religion Program (WSRP) at Harvard Divinity School, and served on that program's National Women's Leadership Committee. She also participated in planning a collaborative conference, "Women, Religion and Public Policy" between the WSRP and the Women and Public Policy Program at the Kennedy School. She is working to support Afghan women's networks and Afghan relief and redevelopment efforts. Diana Rowan holds a B.A. in English and an M.A. from the University of Chicago.

**Ms. Jeanine Shama**

Representative, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

**Jeanine Shama** is the former Chairperson of the New York City chapter of ADC, and acts as their liaison to various organizations and projects in the New York area. Recently, Jeanine joined Mutual Housing Association of South Central Connecticut, a non-profit housing developer, to work on affordable housing development as well as community economic development initiatives. One such initiative is working with a local masjid to acquire and renovate several blighted buildings in the West River section of New Haven for residential units and an education center for the masjid. She is also collaborating with the International Festival of Arts & Ideas to coordinate post-performance discussions for the Palestinian theatre group, Al-Kasaba. In 2001, she received a Master of Public Administration from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs with a concentration in non-profit management. Prior to going to graduate school, Jeanine worked for Citigroup. She is fluent in Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic.

**The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee**, which is non-sectarian and non-partisan, is the largest Arab-American grassroots organization in the United States. It was founded in 1980 by former Senator James Abourezk and has chapters nationwide. ADC is at the forefront combating defamation and negative stereotyping of Arab Americans in the media and wherever else it is practiced. ADC acts as an organized framework through which Arab Americans can channel their efforts toward unified, collective, and effective advocacy; it promotes a more balanced U.S. Middle East policy and serves as a reliable source for the news and educators. By promoting cultural events and participating in community activities, ADC has made great strides in correcting anti-Arab stereotypes and humanizing the image of the Arab people. In all these efforts, ADC coordinates closely with other civil rights and human rights organizations on issues of human concern.

ADC's achievements demonstrate the success of Arab Americans in building vibrant institutions which not only draw on the strength of the Arab American community, but also engender the support of individuals and groups who are equally committed to deterring discrimination against all people.

**Ms. Maureen Shea**

Chief of Staff, People For the American Way Foundation

**Maureen Shea** is Chief of Staff at People For the American Way Foundation (PFAWF) and People For the American Way. She oversees the four program areas – litigation, public policy, research, and field – as well as four regional offices in New York City, Chicago, Miami, and Los Angeles.

Ms. Shea served in the Office of Public Liaison under President Clinton where she was liaison to the religious community. Before that, Ms. Shea was Director of Outreach to Women at the Democratic National Committee, and she has served as a consultant to a number of progressive groups. She lives with her husband, Kenn Allen, and son Christopher in Washington, DC where she is a member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Capitol Hill.

Founded in 1981 by Norman Lear, with the help of Rep. Barbara Jordan, Father Theodore Hesburgh and other distinguished Americans, **People For the American Way Foundation** organizes and mobilizes Americans to fight for fairness, justice, civil rights, and the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. Since its beginning, PFAWF has seen one of its primary missions to be challenging the political agenda of the religious right and helping to raise progressive religious voices. PFAWF promotes the democratic values that sustain a free and pluralistic society, including guarding the important wall separating church and state. People For the American Way is a leading progressive voice in Washington and in state legislatures.

**Ms. Lynn Szwaja**

Deputy Director, Creativity & Culture, The Rockefeller Foundation

**Lynn Szwaja** is Deputy Director for Creativity & Culture at the Rockefeller Foundation and is responsible for developing and administering programs in the arts and humanities. The division's annual budget of \$17 million, which she helps to oversee, supports humanities scholars, media and performing artists, museums, and civil society initiatives in cultural, educational, and religious institutions in the U.S., Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Lynn manages the Rockefeller Foundation Resident Humanities Fellowships Program, and an international initiative on the role of religion in building civil society. She studied religion at Yale University and has worked at the Shaker Museum at Sabbathday Lake, the Yale Art Library, and as a private consultant to several foundations and arts organizations before joining the staff of the Rockefeller Foundation.

**The Rockefeller Foundation** is a knowledge-based, global foundation with a commitment to enrich and sustain the lives and livelihoods of poor and excluded people throughout the world. The work of the Foundation is carried out by four programmatic themes and a single cross-theme. The four themes are: Creativity & Culture, which works to preserve and renew the cultural heritage of people who have been excluded from the benefits of a globalizing world, to promote the free flow of ideas in the public sphere and to support diverse creative expression in the arts and humanities; Food Security, which provides support for work that helps achieve food security for all through the generation of agricultural policies, institutions and innovations that can provide sustainable livelihoods for the rural poor in regions of developing countries bypassed by the Green Revolution; Health Equity, which pursues the reduction of avoidable and unfair differences in the health status of populations; and Working Communities, which seeks to transform poor urban neighborhoods into working communities by increasing employment rates, improving urban schools, and enhancing participation in the democratic process. The cross-theme, Global Inclusion, works to ensure that globalization processes are more democratic and equitable and benefit the most vulnerable, disenfranchised populations, cultures and communities around the world.

**Ms. Christina Safiya Tobias-Nahi**

Project Assistant, The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University

**Christina Safiya Tobias-Nahi** joined The Civil Rights Project as a Project Assistant in the summer of 2000. Prior to that she worked for a number of years with the Islamic Legal Studies Program, also at Harvard Law School, and became very familiar with the challenges facing the Muslim community in the U.S. She came to Cambridge from Paris, France where she was working for the Permanent Japanese Delegation to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). Tobias-Nahi holds a B.A. from the University of Hawai'i-Manoa in Dance Ethnology with a minor in Asian, Pacific and Hawaiian Studies (with fieldwork conducted in China) and an M.A. in International Relations (minor in International Law) from the Boston University - Paris Overseas Graduate Center. She has also completed further graduate work at the Université de Paris VIII (with fieldwork conducted in Morocco) and is pursuing a second Master's at the Harvard Graduate School of Education on bilingual education and cultural and religious diversity issues. She was asked to write an essay for the *Boston Sunday Globe* after September 11 and is currently working on a second piece; additionally she is in process of co-writing a chapter forthcoming in *Invisible Children in the Society and Its Schools*, Sue Books (Ed.), Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Publishers. On Saturdays she leads a discussion group with immigrant mothers at a multicultural youth and family center on issues of early childhood, literacy, testing, and school preparedness.

**The Civil Rights Project** at Harvard University is an interdisciplinary initiative founded in 1996 by Professors Christopher Edley, Jr. of Harvard Law School and Gary Orfield of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Its central mission is to mobilize the resources of Harvard and the broader research community in support of the struggle for racial and ethnic justice. We achieve this by interweaving strategies of research and advocacy, toward the objectives of: 1) raising the visibility of – and attention paid to – the racial justice dimension of key policy debates nationally; 2) arming local and national civil rights and educational organizations with credible research to bolster their legal, political and public education efforts; 3) building and supporting collaborative networks of researchers, lawyers, community advocates and legal academics as well as the infrastructure to connect those communities. By building strong collaborations between researchers, community organizations, and policy makers, we hope to raise the level of discourse on targeted issues and to reframe the tone and content of many of the current legal and political debates.

In over four years, The Civil Rights Project has demonstrated an impressive ability to: a) convene leaders from the educational, civil rights and policy communities to consider largely ignored civil rights implications of controversial issues; b) produce and commission new scholarship to fill critical knowledge gaps; c) distill, translate and disseminate this research for varied constituencies, including civil rights advocates, policymakers, and the media. Thus far, some of the issues we have focused on include affirmative action and diversity in higher education, the impact of high stakes testing on minority children, resegregation trends and remedies, the racially disparate impact of “zero tolerance” and other school disciplinary measures, minority issues in special education, dropouts in K-12 education, the relationship between religion and civil rights, and urban demographic change.

#### **Rev. Dr. Emilie Townes**

Visiting Scholar, Women’s Studies in Religion Program

**Dr. Emilie M. Townes**, an American Baptist clergywoman, is a native of Durham, North Carolina. She holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from the University of Chicago Divinity School and a Ph.D. in Religion in Society and Personality from Northwestern University. Dr. Townes is Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary. She is editor of two collections of essays, *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil and Suffering* and *Embracing the Spirit: Womanist Perspectives on Hope, Salvation, and Transformation*. She has also authored *Womanist Ethics*, *Womanist Hope*, *In a Blaze of Glory: Womanist Spirituality as Social Witness*, and *Breaking the Fine Rain of Death: African American Health Issues and a Womanist Ethic of Care*. Her current writing project considers the interrelationship between culture and evil. She is focusing on two areas of research: the interrelationship between culture and evil, and women and health in the African diaspora, with attention to Brazil and the United States.

**The Women’s Studies in Religion Program (WSRP)** was founded to explore the fundamental role played by religious traditions in defining roles for women and men. Research on religion and gender sheds light on questions about the changing roles of women both inside religious communities and in broader public spheres. It examines the sources of cultural beliefs about leadership, authority, and values, and offers resources to change them. Because religion is often offered as a rationale for proposals regarding women and the family, critical scholarship in this area is essential to women’s welfare and to the formation of public policies. Feminist criticism has affected every field of religious and theological studies, calling for a rethinking of basic assumptions in view of women’s presence and full humanity. The Program’s goal is the production of new primary research addressing these issues and the dispersal of that information through courses, publications, and public programs.

#### **Dr. Jyotsna Vaid**

Coordinator, Committee on South Asian Women (COSAW)

**Jyotsna Vaid** is a Professor in Cognitive Psychology at Texas A & M University and holds an adjunct appointment at the Center for Asian Studies at the University of Texas, Austin. She received her doctorate from McGill University in 1982 and has held post-doctoral research positions at Michigan State University, UC San Diego and

the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, and visiting positions at the University of Provence and Delhi University. Her primary research is in psycholinguistics and neuropsychology, with a particular focus on bilingualism, and more recently she has been studying figurative language use. She has also done research on self-presentation in matrimonial advertisements in the Indian immigrant press (to appear in a forthcoming volume, see below). Vaid is the founding editor of the only pan-South Asian publication focusing on gender, the *Committee on South Asian Women Bulletin*. She has published two overviews of South Asian women's groups in North America; one appeared in the 1989 book *Making Waves* (Beacon Press), and the other in the 2000 special issue of *Amerasia Journal*, UCLA. She is co-editor (with Sucheta Mazumdar and Rajni Srikanth) of a social science anthology on South Asians in America tentatively entitled *Opening Act: The First 200 Years of South Asians in North America*, currently in preparation.

Founded at Michigan State University in 1983 and currently housed at Texas A & M University, the **Committee on South Asian Women (COSAW)** is a global, grassroots network of individuals interested in promoting awareness and discussion of issues affecting women in and of South Asia. COSAW is a voluntary effort. Membership in this network is open and based primarily on subscription to its publication, the *COSAW Bulletin*, which publishes original essays, reviews, interviews and creative writing on various aspects of women's struggles and achievements in South Asia and the concerns of first and second generation immigrants settled in North America and elsewhere. COSAW occasionally facilitates visits by feminists from South Asia, organizes and participates in seminars, conferences and workshops (e.g. at the annual Association for Asian Studies meeting and at the Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin) on issues pertaining to immigrant women, and provides information and referral to interested scholars and activists worldwide. For further information, including a list of Bulletin back issues, refer to the COSAW web page at: <http://http.tamu.edu/~e305jj/cosaw.html>