

## Women's fight for equality far from over

**By Vicki Hyman**  
Staff Writer

Ladies, the writing is on the wall: "The feminist mistake."  
"Feminism: the Great Experiment that Failed."  
"The myths of the women's movement."  
The revolution is over. Someone better tell Thelma and Louise.

Despite efforts by the media and politicians to the contrary, the women's movement is not dead, said Leslie Wolfe, executive director for the Center for Women's Policy Studies in Washington, D.C.

"We've been through 12 years of an incredible right-wing backlash that changed how we look at women's issues and has cut back our progress, but it has not in any way eliminated the women's movement," she said. "Feminism has not changed except to get more sophisticated and broad-based."

Anita Hill's charges of sexual harassment against Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, the William Kennedy Smith rape trial and the upcoming challenge to Roe vs. Wade have brought women back to the movement, Wolfe said.

"In the 1980s, we were too busy trying to survive the Reagan-Bush hostility to equality. In the '70s, this rage was a common thing to talk about," Wolfe said. "This rage is coming back."

### Feminist generation gap

Although barriers to women still exist, the women's movement has broken them down a little, said Ruby Sinreich, an environmental protection major from Chapel Hill. "We can vote and we can, at least in theory, hold certain jobs outside the home we couldn't hold before."

But sexism can't be eliminated simply because it is prohibited by law. "Even when sexism is formally abolished, it still exists because you can't legislate what's in people's minds," Sinreich said.

The political and social conservatism of the 1980s and, some say, the 1990s made feminists seem like rabid dinosaurs in an era of complacency.

"Our mothers were the bra-burning generation. They had to be totally radical — extreme to prove a point," said Elizabeth Bass, a senior political science major from West Palm Beach, Fla. "We can be a little more moderate now, and hopefully that will make our generation more readily accepting of feminism."

The fact that women now constitute almost half of the work force, and one in every two women works, shows that the agenda of feminism has changed, Bass said.

The issues most important to today's feminists involve basic human rights — equal pay for equal work, equal treatment in the workplace, child care, maternity and paternity leave and the right to walk at night being raped.

"In the 1970s, we were fighting to

integrate medical and law schools," said Susie Gilligan, spokeswoman for the Fund for the Feminist Majority. "Women are fighting at a different level now."

"We've integrated little league teams. Now we're trying to break the glass ceiling."

### Still women in silly hats?

While a majority of women support the goals of feminism, many are reluctant to call themselves a feminist, said Susan Faludi, a Pulitzer Prize-winning Wall Street Journal reporter and the author of "Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women."

The hesitancy to use the feminist label may be because some women have a rigid definition of feminism.

Wolfe took the hard line: "In order to call yourself a feminist and to be one, you have to believe in the full equality of men and women, not 'full equality, but ...,'" she said.

"You have to believe in each woman's right to have a child, their right to have an abortion, their right to say no to sex and not have to be raped," she said. "You can't call yourself a feminist if you don't support those things."

Others say that the women's movement has been stereotyped negatively over the last ten years.

"Reagan and Bush have promoted the image of feminists as hairy-legged, fat and ugly, homewreckers, manless or lesbians," Sinreich said. "Most feminists don't fall into those categories."

Bass said that today, feminism is considered a dirty word. "It's like being radical, because it threatens the traditional way society has done things."

"The '80s saw a big return to family values," said Melinda Manning, a sophomore political science major from Hazelwood and member of the UNC Women's Forum. "There's all this media and political hoopla saying that women don't have to work, that they can stay home and have a 'Leave it to Beaver' lifestyle. A lot of people think feminism has achieved its goals, but there's still a lot of work to do."

Women have to get beyond the semantics of the term and start concentrating on the issues that are really important, Wolfe said.

"Though the attempt to make feminism a bad word has been somewhat successful, I'm not worried," she said. "This was the way it was in 1972, in the '20s. I'm not worried."

### The anti-feminists

The "post-feminist" image hyped by the media and politicians emphasizes a return to family values and a lack of concern for women's issues:

■ Barbara Bush, in her controversial 1991 commencement speech to Wellesley, said, "At the end of your life, you will never regret not ... winning one more verdict. You will regret time not spent with a husband, a child."

■ Good Housekeeping launched its "New Traditionalist" advertising campaign, in which career women long for a traditional lifestyle: "My mother was

convinced that the center of the world was 36 Maplewood Drive. Her idea of a wonderful time was Sunday Dinner. She bought UNICEF cards, but what really mattered were the Girl Scouts. I'm beginning to think my mother really knew what she was doing."

■ In covering a much-touted study of marriage demographics in the United States, Newsweek reported a severe "man shortage," and said a 40-year-old woman's chance of getting married was 2.6 percent — she had a better chance of being killed by a terrorist.

Pam Hartley, a junior political science major from Andrews, said that the media had not covered all the aspects of the women's movement. "It's only picked up on the extremist points. In doing this, it's alienated a lot of women whom the cause is about."

"Feminism is not reaching people who need it. It hasn't touched women who need the freedom, who need the power, who need the self-respect," she said.

### The Reagan-Bush effect:

Because such opposition to women's issues stems from the government, the feminist agenda must include electing feminist candidates. "Those who come out and vote for them will also vote against George Bush," said National Organization of Women President Patricia Ireland at NOW's 25th anniversary celebration on Jan. 12.

■ One-third of the budget cuts from Ronald Reagan's first six years as president — \$50 billion — came from social programs that directly serve women, according to Washington, D.C.'s Coalition on Women and the Budget. But these programs only make up 10 percent of the entire federal budget.

■ The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that women get paid about 71 cents to every man's dollar. Yet Clarence Pendleton of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission said in 1984 that equal pay for equal work was "the loneliest idea since Looney Tunes came on the screen."

■ According to a 1989 U.S. Census Bureau report, women represent two-thirds of all poor adults, and the average female college graduate earns less than a man with only a high school diploma.

"I am less than interested in playing with the boys in the Democratic Party anymore," Ireland said. "The reality is that as each more-and-more conservative justice has gone on the Supreme Court, they have been confirmed by a Democratically controlled Senate."

### Abortion in limbo

During the past two decades, the issue of abortion has triggered more debate than any other controversy. And now that Clarence Thomas sits on the Supreme Court, the right of women to have an abortion faces a very real threat.

The Supreme Court will begin review in the next few weeks of a Pennsylvania case that might reverse Roe vs. Wade.

But the abortion challenge does have one good effect: it is bringing many women back to feminism, Wolfe said,

"especially women who are young enough to have always believed they had the right to an abortion."

They are being mobilized by the attempt to take that right back, Wolfe said. "Women in my generation had to fight to believe we were entitled to it, and then fight for the right to have it."

Wolfe said she remembered the days of illegal abortions and the numbers of women who died from them.

"Women 16, 18, 20, 30 years old don't remember that," she said. "The idea was that they would never have to learn that except in history."

Young women now they find out the Supreme Court can take their rights away. "Some guys can say 'No, we changed our minds. You are no longer persons,'" Wolfe said.

### Destructive or constructive?

Other developments that appear destructive to women's rights actually are beneficial, many say. The Anita Hill controversy is a prime example of this.

"The fact that the Senate Judiciary Committee did not have a clue about what to do about, or any respect for, the charges brought up by Anita Hill made a lot of women angry," Wolfe said.

The Thomas hearings has had a positive effect on women, Gilligan said. "Although the lack of consideration given to sexual harassment outraged women, twice as many sexual harassment suits are being filed."

"Just bringing those issues to the forefront had a positive effect on those women who are dealing with those issues, and thought they were all alone," Sinreich said.

Women are beginning to show their anger at the polls. In the March 17 Illinois Democratic primary, Carol Moseley Brown defeated incumbent U.S. Sen. Alan Dixon, ending his 42-year political career. Dixon cast the pivotal vote in the Thomas hearings last October, confirming the judge to his Supreme Court seat.

The first black woman nominated for a Senate seat by a major political party, Brown's success can be partially attributed to Dixon's approval of Thomas.

"It was not the bad-check scandal; there was no anti-incumbency feeling," Wolfe said. "A lot of male political analysts are trying to say that. People were just furious at how Anita Hill was treated."

### What's to come

The white flag is not rising; women aren't surrendering. Despite the omens in advertising, television, film, court rulings and the workplace, women are becoming more aware of the inequality of the sexes, and recognizing that the status quo doesn't work is the first step towards equality.

A sign of the times: The writing may be on the bathroom walls. A debate about the politics and ethics of abortion rages in the stalls of the women's lavatory in Lenoir. One woman observed: "We must be oppressed if we are reduced to writing on bathroom walls."



Mary McRae, admitted in 1897, sits with her fellow Tar Heel editors

## UNC women battle for equality through the years

**By Sonja Post**  
Staff Writer

"Ladies and Gentlemen,"

During the month of March the University focused its attention on the former in celebration of National Women's History Month. But for the past 95 years the University has largely focused on the latter.

"This University has always been a college of, by, and for men, which largely accounts for its strengths of character," said The Tar Heel newspaper in a stance opposing the building of Spencer Hall for women in 1923.

The battle for coeducation was fought in small increments.

According to Pamela Dean's "Women on the Hill," the "angels on campus," as lady visitors were called by male students, began the quest for equal educational opportunities in the mid-1800s. Women could take classes if their families lived in town, but even those women often were relegated to a separate room so as not to distract the young men, Dean said.

The summer normal school, a coed summer program, opened in 1877. Enrollment of women reached almost 50 percent, but then the program was closed in 1884.

In 1897, University President Edwin Alderman persuaded the Board of Trustees to admit women to post-graduate courses. He liberally interpreted the trustees' resolution to include junior- and senior-level courses.

Women who spent their first two years at schools like Guilford or Meredith could transfer to UNC.

Beginning in 1917, daughters of local residents were admitted as freshmen and sophomores, Dean said.

But even though women were admitted to the University, they were not accepted. Female faces were missing from yearbook class pictures, and women received their diplomas privately rather than at graduation.

Graduation rates reflected the campus mentality that didn't take female students seriously. More than half of those who enrolled in the first class of women did not graduate, Dean said.

Inadequate housing left women stranded, Dean said. Women lived in town — either at home, with faculty or in boarding houses. In this way, women missed an integral part of campus life.

"To continue to admit ... (women) in the half-hearted way, and to furnish them with classroom instruction without the other features which make up college life, is a rather doubtful kindness to them," President Edward Kidder Graham said in 1917.

Responding to demands, the University built two houses in 1921 on adjoining lots for about 45 of the 65 women enrolled. But even two houses did not stifle the pleas of Inez Stacy, the women's adviser. Stacy pressed for a women's dormitory to be built in honor of Cornelia Phillips Spencer.

The "Battle of Spencer Hall" ensued. The Tar Heel printed an extra edition "for the avowed purpose of preventing the building of the dormitory," Dean said. The paper ran two stinging editorials, "Women Not Wanted Here" and "Shaves and Shines but no Rats and Rouge."

The women won the battle despite the overwhelming male student opposition. The cost of victory totaled \$100,000, the amount approved to build Spencer Hall. The dormitory opened in 1925. In 1929, 77 of the 136 women enrolled lived in Spencer.

But victory was incomplete. Spencer Hall lacked two wings approved in the original plan. "Women's adviser Stacy asked the University's business manager, 'When do you think I'll get my wings?' He said, 'I think you'll get your wings when you get to heaven!'"

The faculty was unanimously in favor of coeducation, Dean said. Frank Porter Graham said in the early '20s,

"My belief in co-education at the University is part of my belief in the University."

Even though some were committed to coeducation, June West, a 1938 graduate in pharmacy, said, "Only five percent of the freshmen class could be women (in 1934)."

Both West and her twin sister, Jean Bush Provo, also a 1938 graduate in pharmacy, were a significant and impressive minority. Of the 21 students in the pharmacy class, only four were women, West said.

Sometimes the sisters received special treatment. "You were a peculiarity," West said. "They would put you on the front row." One professor always greeted them, "How are you girls today?"

Both sisters refuted the stereotype that then women studied only for their "Mrs." degree. "We didn't think about marriage," Provo said. "We thought about getting by the (pharmacy) board."

Only the most dedicated and motivated women played intramural sports. "There were no lockers, and we had to practice at night. It was really a glorified physical education class, but at least you got some exercise," West said.

Exercising was one of the few privileges women could enjoy. The rest of their lives were highly regulated. Dormitories closed at 11 p.m. on weekends, Dean said. All women, even those on boarding houses, used a sign-out system. Six people had to be present for a female student to visit a man in his apartment.

William S. Powell, UNC history professor emeritus and member of the class of 1938, said, "Women had to wear hose if they went downtown. Slacks and shorts were unheard of. Men dressed in shirts and ties."

The status of women at the University did not change significantly until 1951, when freshman women from across the state were admitted to the School of Nursing. In 1954, the Schools of Medical Technology, Dental Hygiene and Physical Therapy admitted freshman women.

Enrollment of women increased 50 percent — from 1,000 in the early '50s to more than 2,000 in 1963. Freshman women were admitted to the fine arts programs in 1963, and then later to all other programs.

In 1972, "discrimination on the basis of sex in admission, financial aid, housing, and other comparable facilities" ended with the passage of Title IX of the Federal Education Amendment.

"By the early '70s, the requirement that women live in University housing was gone, closing hours were gone, the dress code was gone ... the walls of women's rules were gone," Dean said. "Even the Dean of Women was gone; women were on their own."

University women vigorously sought the status that had been denied to them. In 1977, UNC teachers and students filed sex-discrimination charges over the distribution of lockers in Woollen Gym, because men were assigned 85 percent of the lockers even though women made up 40 percent of the student body.

The women's fight for equality in admissions culminated in 1977 when women outnumbered men in the freshmen class for the first time. Since then, undergraduate women have outnumbered their male counterparts. This spring, 60 percent of the students enrolled are women.

In the summer session of 1916, The Tar Heel commented on the abundance of women: "It was women, women everywhere. Curtains fluttered coquettishly out of all the dormitory windows."

If they could only see the numbers now.

## A minor in women's studies is a major deal

**By Yi-Hsin Chang**  
Assistant Features Editor

In May, 30 students will graduate with certificates in women's studies. They will be the last class restricted to do so.

For the first time — 16 years after the establishment of the women's studies program — the University will offer a minor in women's studies.

Barbara Harris, director of the women's studies program since 1989, said the requirements for the minor and for a certificate are essentially the same. The only difference is that cross-listed courses in a student's major will not count towards the minor.

To be eligible for a minor in women's studies, a student must take 15 credits, or five courses. Credits must include Women's Studies 50, an introductory course, and must come from at least four divisions of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The women's studies program still will award certificates to students who do not fulfill the minor's requirements but do satisfy the requirements for a certificate, Harris said. But administrators plan to phase out the awarding of the certificate in the next few years.

A certificate recognizes a student's expertise in women's studies and is noted on the student's transcript.

Since its founding in 1976, the women's studies program has offered a major in women's studies, but students can major in it only through the interdisciplinary studies program.

But most students don't even realize they can major in women's studies, Harris said. Many students choose another field despite an interest in women's studies because students majoring in interdisciplinary studies cannot double major in another discipline.

"If we had an independent degree you could double major."

The women's studies program hopes to let students do exactly that. Program administrators are writing a proposal to establish an independent curriculum with a separate major, Harris said.

"It marginalizes women's studies that we're the only program in interdis-

ciplinary studies that's not a curriculum."

The same proposal to establish a women's studies curriculum was made in 1988 and approved by the College of Arts and Sciences, but it did not gain approval from the General Administration of the UNC system, she said.

Last year, 1,500 students enrolled in women's studies courses, Harris said. "Women's studies is the kind of program that is going to draw a great number of students even if the number of majors and minors remain low."

Women's studies courses include four that are exclusively in women's studies and 30 in other departments that are cross-listed as women's studies courses.

Harris teaches Women's Studies 50, which is offered only once, usually in the spring, every academic year. "We don't have enough money to teach it twice a year," she said. "I can't teach it twice a year because of my obligations in the history department."

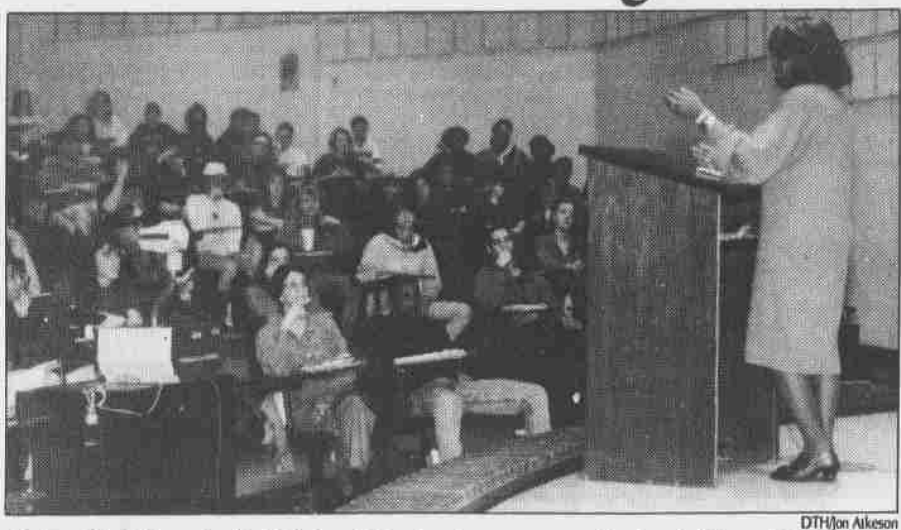
Harris teaches a history course on English women in the early modern period.

To offer the class both semesters, another professor would have to teach the class one semester, and money would be needed to hire teaching assistants, she said.

About 300 students register for Women's Studies 50 each year, and 250 to 275 stay in the course, Harris said.

"Students regularly tell me the class changes their lives," she said. "I know they're not just telling me that for a better grade because I don't give the grades. My TAs do."

Men make up about 10 to 15 percent of Harris' class, she said. "I would like more men to be in that course. Women's



Darlene Clark Hines, a leading historian of Afro-American women, guest lectures in Women's Studies 50

studies is about women and men living together. The fact that few men take the course is the very reason we need it."

But Harris has gotten positive response from male students. "Last year I had a guy come up to me and say, 'I took this course to fulfill my social science perspective, but you've convinced me there's something in women's studies.'"

Erin Sullivan, a freshman biology major, said she liked the class. "It gives a lot of different views on a lot of different issues."

Senior psychology major Blake Campbell plans to graduate next year with a minor in women's studies. He has taken four of the five courses needed to complete the minor.

"I had started out wanting to be a marriage counselor, so I started taking courses because of that," he said. "I'm interested in women. I wouldn't have stayed in it if I didn't like it."

Even though his friends, male and female, laugh when he tells them he is minoring in women's studies, Campbell is glad to have taken the courses because they have been enlightening, he said. "I never knew that women weren't spoken about (in other classes)."

Freshman Alison Roxby said she took Women's Studies 50 because the topic

interested her. "It's one of my favorite classes this year," she said.

Matthew Conigliaro, a senior political science and psychology major, is taking "Women and Politics," a political science course cross-listed as a women's studies course.

But Conigliaro didn't register for the course for his major. "I took it because I wanted to be exposed to a field I hadn't taken a course in," he said.

Conigliaro said he had become more understanding of women's issues. "I've learned a lot about things I didn't know about."

He said he would recommend the course to everyone, so they could be exposed to women's issues. "People should take it, especially guys."

Harris said women's studies has become a well-established field and discipline in most first-rate institutions.

Christina Greene, project director of the Duke-UNC Center for Research on Women, said it was important to keep women's studies programs around.

"It's important to incorporate women's studies into mainstream studies to reflect the experiences of a diverse population, and at the same time to have special women's studies programs."