

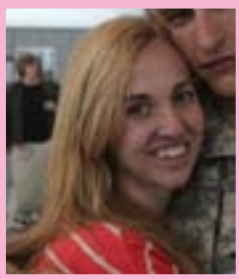
Global Neighborhood

The Women's Leadership Center Newsletter

Alfred University

Volume 4, Issue 2 Winter 2013

Staff Spotlight: Jessica Mitchell



I am the part-time ELEAD secretary at the Women's Leadership Center. I am also looking to attend Alfred University's MBA program in the spring.

I really enjoy working at the Women's Leadership Center. Even after just a few weeks, I have learned so much about empowering myself and others. That is what feminism stands for in my mind – the drive to better yourself while

New Staff

Muhammad Ali and bell hooks: Name Politics

read more inside

Introducing the first ever

Saxon Torch Bearer: Lydia Prabucki

Lydia was the director of Rocky Horror Picture Show sponsored by Spectrum this past October. This is one of Spectrum's biggest events and she took this role to support the club. From her peer leader experiences and being an orientation guide at Alfred, she felt she had the communication, motivation and strategic skills needed for this job. During the one week they had to put the show together, she noticed patience and flexibility were key.



Congratulations Lydia!

Come Join!!!

the **Women's Leadership Center**. We are here to provide high quality, personalized and practical **leadership education** for women students to promote confidence, efficacy and effectiveness. **All students**, Men, Women, Undergraduate, Graduate, Queer, Straight, traditional, non-traditional, International, Domestic, Christian, Muslim, and other identity groups are all **encouraged to participate**.





Muhammad Ali

In February 1964, Cassius Clay became the heavyweight champion of the world. **A month later, he changed his name to Muhammad Ali.** For months – in some cases years – journalists, members of the boxing establishment, and occasionally his competitors refused to call Ali by his new name. Grant Farred contends that Ali's name change was “simultaneously an act of negation (denial of his slave name) and **self-construction** (adoption of his Islamic name), both... the acquisition of an unprecedented ideological agency”.

The controversy that erupted over Ali's name then hinged largely on the perceived ideological danger of **a black man in America refusing “safe” narratives of black masculinity and politics.** Ali's choice to rename himself, alongside his conversion to Islam, and later refusal to serve in Vietnam were treated as anti-American, threatening, and unstable. **The social and economic consequences were years of denigration in the press, alongside a formal ban from boxing in the United States.**

In what can only be described as a combination of social and political progress and severe historical amnesia, Ali is now commonly lauded as an American hero with little acknowledgement from the media of the ways he was socially disciplined for his decisions. Contemporary constructions of Ali rarely discuss in any detail the anti-colonial politics that lead to his dissent around Vietnam or the domestic racial politics that lead to his identification with the Nation of Islam and name change. Ali's identity then continues to be shaped by forces outside of himself, but the necessary negotiations around it have left **a lasting mark on the way our country understands sports, politics, and race.**

New Staff: Jessica Mitchell continued...

helping others in the process. I am finding my voice here by learning and growing with the people around me.

Almost two years ago I went through an experience that caused me to look at empowering myself in a much different light. My now fiance was deployed overseas for 11 months with the National Guard. We lived together in a one bedroom apartment in the middle of downtown Hornell. I not only felt alone emotionally, I felt terrified to be alone in that apartment. I then realized this was an opportunity. I could push myself to be stronger and no longer so dependent on another person to get by. I pursued a new career while continuing my schooling. I joined a gym to work on my physical being. I surrounded myself with old and new friends. While I love my fiance being home now, that 11 months on my own gave me the opportunity to work on myself as a woman and as a part of the community.

I respect my maternal grandmother. She became a Pediatric Doctor at a time when most women were pushed to be nurses. She pushed through the walls of being a woman in a male dominated field. She wanted to do what she loved and nothing would stand in her way. This is why I have decided to pursue more schooling. I want to do what I am interested in, and nothing should hold me back. I only hope that one day I can inspire women to pursue their goals without the fear of failure.



What's in a Name

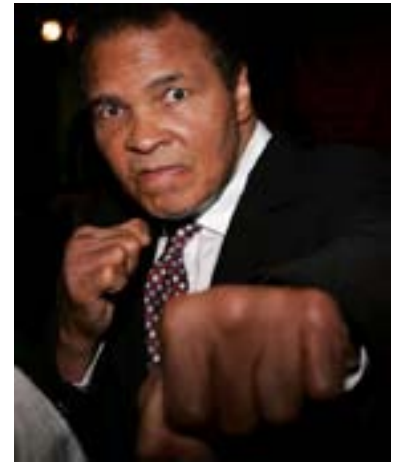


Muhammad Ali and bell hooks (read more about her in two pages) adopted new names in very different personal and political contexts, but both recognized **names as malleable but consequential**. As citizens of a country where naming conventions are not only deeply entrenched in patriarchy but in histories of slavery, Christian colonialism, and cultural assimilation, they recognized that names influenced not only how others saw them, but also **how they**

saw themselves, and the ideologies they endorsed.

Examples like Ali and hooks are often highlighted and celebrated in progressive political conversations about naming politics and identity.

However, most marginalized American communities have experienced name-changing not as empowering, but as



oppressive.



Many Native Americans were forced (within the context of colonization, forced assimilation, and extermination) to adopt surnames and Anglicize their names. As a result of the stripping of identity, culture, and family that was a **primary characteristic of the American slave system**, the majority of African Americans have no knowledge of their original family naming traditions. At various points in history, non-Anglo immigrants to America, as well as Latina's whose ancestors occupied

the Southwest United States long before it was designated as such, were expected by educational, professional, and governmental institutions to Anglicize their names.

While many U.S. institutional norms requiring denial of non-Anglo identity have dissolved, it is not difficult to find citizens – especially of Latina and Asian descent – who continue to Anglicize their names in educational and professional settings that might otherwise be less accepting.

There are very **real social and political consequences to names**. Individuals with distinctively “ethnic” (read non-Eurocentric) names are often discriminated against in housing, employment, and education applications. Thus, when we tell people they can define their identities or politics through naming, we are also asking them to take certain risks, especially if they already experience marginalization based on their class, race, sexuality, gender identity, and/or nationality. **The risk a transgender man takes when he asks his family, friends and coworkers to begin calling him Ryan is much greater than the one taken by a cisgender man balking at marital name change traditions.**



Ryan Sallans
Fall 2013 AU Speaker

The New Name: Women's and Gender Studies Program

This October, faculty of the Women's Studies program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Alfred University voted almost unanimously to include gender in the title. Students who choose to pursue the minor will now become a part of the Women's and Gender Studies program, which includes faculty from various disciplines including Business, Communications, English, Language Studies, History, Performing Arts, Social Sciences, among others.



When the program began in 1983, its major focus was women's issues in society, including history, media representations, and women writers. That focus became more gender inclusive over time, especially amidst increasing awareness of LGBTQ issues within the past few decades as well as the contributions of feminist and queer theory. French Professor and Executive Director of the program, Dr. Cecilia Beach said the change has been a long-time coming and that there has been "recognition that you can't really talk about women without talking about men," and that "it's not binary, not women or men but it's much more complex and diverse." The program hopes that the title will reflect the direction the field has been moving for some time now.

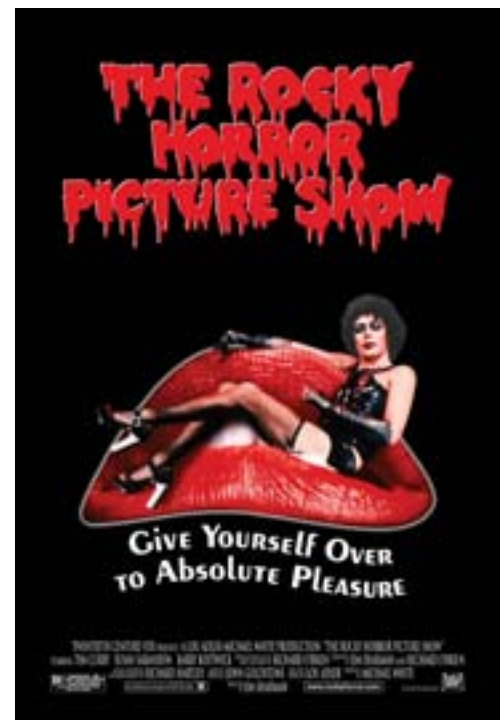
Many WMST members felt strongly that women should not be removed from the title, however, because women's issues are still relevant and persistent today. Assistant Professor of Spanish and active member of the Executive Committee, Dr. Erin Redmond explained that women should not be erased from the title in the same ways they have been erased within society throughout history. "Feminist theory and practice, in many ways, can be seen as the basis for gender studies," she said. "We wanted to acknowledge that."

With the change, the program hopes to draw-in a greater diversity of students. The assumption that Women's Studies is a girls-only program could be diminished with the more inclusive title. Two male students are currently

Lydia Prabucki, Winner of the first awarded Torch Bearer Award

Her biggest problem was not having the whole cast together to rehearse until the day of the performance. She became flexible by working with others when their schedule allowed it and also asking them to learn things outside of rehearsals. Lydia said, "Everyone was really good and respectful to putting on a good show. But as a director it was still scary not having everyone together". Afterwards, she had gained organization and time management skills.

Her nominator said, "Lydia is one of the most motivating and friendly people I have ever met. She is becoming a strong leader and the whole cast felt as though Lydia created a mini "family" within us".



Women's and Gender Studies Program continued... enrolled as WMST minors and this year's recipient of the Abigail Allen Award went to the current dean of CLAS, Lou Lichtman. Student organizations like Students Advocating for Gender Equality (SAGE) and Society of Women Engineers that have been affiliated with Women's Studies in the past will be joined by Spectrum, the LGBTQ student awareness group. The hope is that this growing trend of diversity will continue alongside the growing interest in gender studies.

While the change is ongoing, it will be interesting to see what courses will be offered to students of Women's and Gender Studies in the future. As the field grows, faculty in the program are anticipating growth in participation and involvement by students and teachers alike. The WMST program is happy to recognize gender studies as an inherent part of its curriculum.



Written By:
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Contact the Women's Leadership Center!

Call Us! (607) 871-2971 Email Us! leadership@alfred.edu

Luke us on Facebook! @ www.facebook.com/JudsomLeadershipCenter

Visit Us! At the corner of Ford and Sayle3s St. in Alfred NY!

bell hooks

In the early 1980s Gloria Watkins began using the pen-name bell hooks. Watkins has explained this pseudonym choice as one that is feminist in multiple ways. The first, and most frequently recalled: hooks drew her authorial **identity from her maternal grandmother's and mother's names** as a way to highlight the otherwise un-named significance of these women – and that of other black women—in her life.



However, the politics of hooks' naming choice asks us to consider more than the question of **patrilineal versus matrilineal naming customs**. hooks also chose to work under a pen name—an uncapitalized one at that—because she felt the very institutions in which she worked, namely the academy, the literary world, and the larger political sphere, were ruled by patriarchal norms that placed value on thought and labor based on the titles held by, and name recognition of, its source. In

other words, as Cynthia Carter writes, “above all else, she (hooks) wanted to avoid having her work more highly evaluated than it might otherwise be (on its own terms) simply because of her academic status. **By using a pseudonym, she felt that she would highlight the ideas instead of her identity**”.

hooks' critique of naming conventions is one often lost in neoliberal conversations about women “getting ahead,” “breaking the glass ceiling,” and “leaning in.” It is one that suggests, in fact, that these concepts privilege patriarchal values like individualized success and power, self-promotion, and money over matristic ones like communal wellbeing, collaboration, reciprocity, and humility. **hooks' naming politics then asks us to consider a reordering of the very systems in which names, successes, and other social conventions are established as opposed to an effort to “get ahead” within these systems.**



Saxon Torch Bearer Award



AU students are known for being great campus citizens who make Alfred the special place it is. A **Torch Bearer** can be any undergrad or grad student in any leadership role (or not) who you want to recognize for 'lighting the way to leadership' in our AU community.

**Nominate someone you know who is
“lighting the way to leadership”!**

Nominations: Accepted any time and will be reviewed every other week. One person will be chosen as the Torch Bearer of the Month.

How to nominate: Email leadership@alfred.edu with the nominee's name and why you think they should be recognized.

Contact: Meredith Laubert with any questions, mpl2@alfred.edu

Leadership Opportunities at the Beth Robinson Judson Leadership Center



Gary Horowitz Leadership Development Certificate—
essential leadership skills for any AU student

Saxon Sidekicks—a first-year mentor program that enriches first-years' first semester experience and provides **mentoring** experience as any AU student can volunteer as a mentor

E-LEAD—scholarships and leadership training for **engineering** students in the Inamori School of Engineering

Omicron Delta Kappa—the **national leadership** honor society
JLC opportunities are encouraged for **graduate students**.