

Episcopal Women's History Project

www.ewhp.org

Fall 2009

Dear Friends,

We are at a historic moment in the history of women in the Episcopal Church. In a few short months it will be 2010, forty years after the General Convention opened the diaconate to women and first seated women in the House of Deputies. Then further ferment happened to bring more change so that now we take for granted that we have women in all orders of ministry and in all positions of service. We have come a long way!

As I observed at General Convention this past summer, the change is exemplified in many ways. Women made up 43% of the House of Deputies, which was presided over by a woman. The House of Bishops, also presided over by its first woman, has a way to go toward parity, however, lest we think all battles have been won. As they say, "You've come a long way, baby, but if you'd gone as far as you can go, you would no longer be called 'baby.'"

There are still many of us who can remember a mostly male or entirely male House of Deputies and priesthood. Those forty years are beginning to take their toll, however, and we are losing women who have been part of the story. I think of Suzanne Hiatt, Jeanette Piccard, and the two women we lost this summer—Phyllis Edwards, ordained by Kilmer Myers as a deacon, not a deaconess, before the 1970 convention, and Judge Constance Cook, a fervent supporter of women's ordination in New York State.

The Episcopal Women's History Project was founded in 1980 to remember these women and others who have opened the church for the expanded ministry of women. We have some women's stories in the national archives, but there are many whose stories are still to be told. And there are vast throngs of women whose names alone will be forgotten if we do not begin to write them down, to remember them, with love and gratitude.

Every year EWHP has an All Saints Appeal to the women and men of the Episcopal Church for the names of women who have been important to us and to our church. For a donation of any amount, we list the names of the women and any brief description of them that the donor offers. This is a tribute to them; it is an act of thanksgiving for those who do it, and it is a lesson in history for us all. There are now women and men who have grown up in a church that has always had women in all orders of ministry; but we do not want them to forget the story of how this happened and the wonderfully strong and smart lay women who are the ones who ultimately made it possible. We also want to remember the many women who have never been called to ordained ministry but have served in parishes and dioceses with distinction, including those who were among the first to serve as General Convention Deputies.

We invite you to contribute your names and your donation. The names will appear in the quarterly newsletter of EWHP, and your donation will be acknowledged personally. Your generosity is appreciated especially since it is the only way EWHP is funded. The Board members pay all their own expenses, and your donations help with the newsletter and the collection of women's stories.

God's Every Blessing to you,
The Rev. Barbara Schlachter,
All Saints Appeal Chair

ALL SAINTS APPEAL, EPISCOPAL WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT, 2009-20010

Name _____

Address _____

Phone no. or email address (if clarification is needed) _____

Names of women you would like to have honored. Please give us their address if you have it and their parish or diocese, and how you would like them described. Please indicate if they are living or deceased. Use the back of this page or additional sheet if needed.

_____ I would like to receive EWHP's newsletter, "Timelines."

_____ I would like to receive information about how to do oral histories.

_____ Names of women that you think should be interviewed.

_____ Amount of donation enclosed. (Checks should be made out to "The Episcopal Women's History Project".)

Thank you for your generosity!

Please send the above to

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Questions? barbaras@christepiscopal.org