

## **A Conversation with Ashley Carson OWL's Executive Director**

On a visit to Washington, D.C. recently, I had the opportunity to meet with national OWL's executive director Ashley Carson in her office. Ashley has been a tireless supporter of Health Care reform, and spoke about the effort now being made by OWL and others to eliminate age rating in insurance coverage. Age rating presently makes health insurance policies unaffordable for some midlife and older people not yet covered by Medicare, as many OWL members under age 65 know.

OWL is one of 26 members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), a powerful advocacy group. LCAO recently addressed a letter to all members of the House of Representatives urging them to use community rating, rather than age rating to set premiums for health care policies sold in the individual and small group markets. Ashley and staff member Natalie Zimmer deserve full credit for bringing this issue to the attention of other LCAO members.

On the positive side, Ashley said that the current Health Care bills in Congress do not include gender discrimination, meaning women will not be charged more than men for the first time in the history of health insurance.

OWL is a regular presence in the White House, Ashley told me, invited to visit there about once a week with various staff and even with the First Lady. A former staffer of OWL, Ann Widger, is now in the White House Office of Public Engagement, working on issues of seniors and Health Care reform.

For more information about OWL's advocacy at this very critical time, participate in the monthly Health Care conference call by contacting [owlinfo@owl-national.org](mailto:owlinfo@owl-national.org) or phoning 800-825-3695. Updates on Health Care reform and other topics can be found on national OWL's website, [www.owl-national.org](http://www.owl-national.org).

*Fran Sisson*

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## ***Creative Writing and the Challenges of Aging at November 10th Chapter Meeting***

Colleen McKee, an author and teacher, will bring us a program at the November 10th Chapter meeting demonstrating how women can use creative writing to help cope with the challenges of aging and build community with their writing. Colleen is co-editor of the anthology "***Are We Feeling Better Yet? Women Speak about Health Care in America***". It features personal narrative essays about being a patient or a caregiver written by twenty one women from all over the U.S.

Presently teaching at UM-St. Louis and Lindenwood University, Colleen has published fiction, journalism and poetry. She started writing as a child and was first published at the age of 22. She earned her MFA at UM-St. Louis in Creative Writing, often focusing on gender, class, history and health care. Along with Colleen on the program will be two authors who have written about women's health, Mary Ellen Havard, co-author of the book "**Breast Cancer: One Illness, Two Women, Four Seasons**" and Corinne McAfee, author of the piece "**Midterms**", a humorous look at a GYN appointment.

**The November 10<sup>th</sup> meeting starts at 6 pm, with the program at 7 pm, at the Ladue Chapel. Books will be available for purchase and signing by the three authors. Everyone is welcome!**

## *To our members and friends of OWL*

After a somewhat relaxing summer, we are all back – full steam ahead. As I write this we are down to the wire organizing all the details for our WOW dinner. It is amazing how much time and energy goes into planning an evening like this, our biggest fundraiser of the year. Our co-chairs, Arlen Chaleff and Ernie Edelman, along with Barb McQuitty, Executive Director, and our WOW committee are tireless in their efforts.

Our advocacy continues both at the state and national levels. Myrna Fichtenbaum is actively involved and keeps us informed about important legislation - especially the big issue right now, Health Care Reform. Our staff members in the Washington, D.C. office make many appearances on Capitol Hill and are well respected by our Senators and Congressmen.

Gateway OWL continues to plan programs which will benefit many women. Our Financial Education Series, which teaches women about many money matters, is again underway. The peer leaders of our Divorce Support Group have some ideas as to how we can reach out to midlife and older women who are challenged by many different life changes.

We plan to host workshops on women's health concerns in the spring of 2010. We are writing grants and hope to receive monies to fund these important events.

These are a few of the programs we sponsor. Please know that all of you are very important to our organization. If you have an idea for membership programs or services we can offer women, we would appreciate your suggestions and involvement. Call Barb McQuitty at the OWL office at 314-725-5862 to offer your ideas. The potential harvest for OWL is great but the laborers are few. We must have your help so we can continue the goals and dreams that began 25 years ago.

Good wishes to you for a peace-filled and happy Thanksgiving and holiday season.

*Maryann Sexton President, Gateway OWL*

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## **Help Combat Elder Abuse**

The Elder Justice Coalition, the national advocacy voice for elder justice, is working to obtain passage in Congress of the Elder Justice Act (S.795 and HR. 2006). On <[www.elderjusticecoalition.com](http://www.elderjusticecoalition.com)> you can find a description of this legislation and may support the work of the coalition by joining, with an optional donation.

## **OWL's Big Event A Success!**

*By Arlen Chaleff, WOW co-chair*

Over 300 people helped make the '09 *Women of Worth* awards dinner a sparkling evening. At the 19<sup>th</sup> year of this event, the largest ever, thirteen women were honored for their commitment and achievements in service to the community. Each of their acceptance words carried the passion they felt for their causes.

**Honorees were Mary Bruemmer, Betty Coll, Eileen Edelman, Glenn Johnson Sheffield, Diane Meatheany, Jane Mendelson, Kathleen O'Brien, Dr. Cordie Reese, Peggy Ross, Pam Ross Toder, Carol Weir and Malva Williams.**

Rosemary Terranova once again graced our event as guest speaker. Christine Buck, who received OWL's Lifetime Achievement Award, was recognized not for her skills in the anchor room or because she was the daughter of Hall of Famer Jack Buck, but for the leadership skills she brought to the many non-profit organizations to which she gives generously of her time and attention. Honorary co-chairs Barbara Washington and Laurie Waters kept the evening moving with professional skill, with Barbara treating us to another of her deeply moving acapella hymns.

The WOW program book sadly noted that we had lost three of our past WOW recipients this year, Lynn Stockman Imergoot, Betty Manlin and Mary Kimbrough, as well as Sandy Stoliar, OWL Board member and Divorce Support Group Leader.

The event was co-chaired by OWL members Arlen Chaleff and Ernie Edelman. Thanks to all of our advertisers and underwriters, as well as to the OWL committee members Dinorah Bommarito, Celeste Curran, Marilee Martin, Bea Renna, Fran Sisson, Marge Polcyn, Maryann Sexton, Kathleen Kinderfather, Valerie Rovira and Barbara McQuitty, OWL's Executive Director. And a warm word of thanks to Barbara Frommer, a guest who pitched in and made our work easier.

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**You can help OWL by attending Chapter meetings, following up on advocacy emails with your phone calls, joining a committee, bringing a potential new member to a meeting and of course, by your donations in the form of tributes or gifts.**

Visit [www.owlstlouis.com](http://www.owlstlouis.com), the Chapter's website and [www.owl-national.org](http://www.owl-national.org) for the big picture.

**Welcome to new member Nellie Back!!**

**August –October Tributes & Gifts**

**Tributes:**

In Honor of Glenn Sheffield

Laurna Hutchinson

Jacquelyn Dowell

Marilyn Fox

Karen Goodman

Ellen Soule

Mary Ritter

Susan Nall

Alice Handelman

Gwendolyn Packnett

Allan R. Cohen

Marjory Jaffe

In Honor of Mary Bruemmer

Woman of Worth

Margaret L. Beaman

In Honor of Eileen Edelman

Woman of Worth

By Roberta Deutsch

By Rabbi Carnie Shalom Rose

By Gail & Myron Kodner

By Burt & Elaine Wenneker

By Linda Hilton

By Chavurah Ruach group

By Natalie Sukhodolsky

By Joan Adler

Maxine L. Cohen

Maureen Greenberg

Judith A. Deutsch

Norman Stricof

Ilene Litvag

Delores Kling

Leslie Perlmutter

In Honor of Pam Toder

Woman of Worth

By Elizabeth Rubenstein

In Honor of Peggy Ross

Woman of Worth

By Elizabeth Rubenstein

In Honor of Jane Mendelson

Woman of Worth

By Caroline Sant

By John McGowan

By Cecilia Lacks

In Honor of Christine Buck

Lifetime Achievement Award

Verna Green Smith Ph.D

Women of Worth

Marilyn Probe

Sylvia Holtzman

Carole J. Pustinger

Lucy Lopata

Jane Berwald

Kathryn Lass

Bernice Mange

Rachel Miller

Ellen Brasunas

Kathleen Kinderfather

Dorothy Hanpeter

Janis Silverstein

Judith Ann Deutsch

Dr. Kathleen Kinderfather on 80<sup>th</sup> birthday

Maryann Sexton

Bea Renna

Dorothy Hanpeter

Jan Benz

Kathleen Kaiman

Michael Peterson

Robert & Carole Tucker

Carol Gerwitz

Raymond Cliffe Jr.

Barbara Braun

Joyce Hallmark

Gift to OWL

Cordie G. Reese

Leola Tolen

Janet Shipton

**In Memoriam:**

Betty Manlin

Bea Renna

Mary Kimbrough

Bea Renna

Nancy Buechler

Linda B. Hiette

**OWL Chapter meeting**  
**November 10<sup>th</sup>**  
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