



red
state
perspectives on
reproductive
justice

3rd annual conference :: February 15-16, 2013
Norman, Oklahoma
take-root.org

hosted by:
Women's and Gender Studies Program,
The University of Oklahoma

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take root 2013

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Collective

Wise Women Concierge

take root: red state

perspectives on reproductive justice

2013 Conference Schedule

Emcee: Rashid Campbell

Friday, February 15th, 2013

4:30 - 5:00 pm Registration and Check in

5:00 - 6:15 pm Break Out Session - participants may choose one of three options

Option One: **Religion and RJ: Educational Storytelling through Faith**

In this discussion folks can share their personal experiences with religion how they negotiate specific reproductive justice issues in their faith communities, work, social and community life.

Facilitators: Carly Palens, Shai Fenwick

Moderator: Helen Kerwin

Room: B1

Option Two: **Queer Health Workshop**

This workshop helps to educate participants on queer and trans* terminology, HIV/AIDS prevention, and related issues. This is our guide to why queer health IS part of our fight for reproductive justice and helpful ways to talk about it in your work and activism.

Facilitator: Ricky Hill

Room: B2

Option Three: **Nothing About Us without Us: Red State Narratives in New Media**

This roundtable discussion addresses new media platforms and strategies that are transforming RJ conversations and organizing approaches.

Panelists: Jessica Luther, OK4RJ, Pamela Merritt, Ariel Dougherty

Moderator: Penny Pasque

Room: B6

6:15 - 7:00 pm Dinner and Welcome

7:00 - 8:00 pm Friday Plenary: **Red State Perspectives on Reproductive Justice**

This large session addresses all Take Root participants about red state challenges and solutions in reproductive justice, reflecting the organizing principles of the conference.

Panelists: Molly-Rattler, Bianca Westrup Carol Mason, Sandra Criswell

Moderator: Wyndi Anderson

Forum Room

8:00 - 10:00 pm Entertainment: **Lauren Zuniga and Melissa May**

Forum Room

2013 Conference Schedule

Saturday, February 16th, 2013

8:00 - 8:30 am Registration

8:30 - 9:00 am Welcome

9:00 - 9:50 am Keynote Address: Loretta Ross
Forum Room

9:50 - 10:00 am Break

All Day: OJ Student Organizers Collective Zine Making Room: We're making a zine about this conference! Come to room B1 to contribute your drawings, comments, and reactions about #takeroot13

10:00 - 12:00 pm Break Out Session One - participants may choose one of three options

Option One: **Reproductive Justice Policy Roundtable**

This roundtable discussion covers current pro and anti-reproductive justice legislation trends in red states along with strategies to address them.

Panelists: Sen. Constance Johnson, Martha Skeeters, Farah Diaz-Tello, Kate Richey, Alee Breland

Moderator: Sandie Holguin

Room: B3

Option Two: **New Tools in the Box: Remote Organizing in Flyover Country**

This panel features stories and strategies from organizers in red states who take virtual organizing beyond the symbolic and into the applied realm.

Panelists: Wyndi Anderson, Jessica Luther, OK4RJ Rep

Moderator: Misha Klein

Room: B2

Option Three: **Depriving People of their Personhood**

This mixed format session features discussion and individual panelist presentations about dehumanization experienced during pregnancy, transition, travel, and documentation processes.

Panelists: Lynn Paltrow, Valeria Cruz, Toby Beauchamp

Moderator: Julia Earhardt

Room: Conference B

12:00 - 1:00 pm Lunch: Couch Restaurants

1:00 - 2:45 pm Break Out Session Two - participants may choose one of three options

Option One: **Reproductive Justice at Any Stage in Life: Health and Service Provision within RJ Framework**

This panel explores the ways in which service providers are giving comprehensive and full-spectrum care in least access and hostile states.

Panelists: Omare Jimmerson, Molly Oakley, Britt Wahlin,

Moderator: Clemencia Rodriguez

2013 Conference Schedule

Saturday, February 16th, 2013

1:00 - 2:45 pm Option Two: **Consent, How Does It Work? Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Workshop**

This workshop helps educate participants on how to negotiate consent, disclose STI status, and develop concrete communication strategies for healthier relationships.

Facilitators: Jen Cox and Jordan Ward

Room: B3

Option Three: **Queer Story Telling**

A chance for queer folks to share their stories about living, leaving, and returning to red states. A chance for everyone to learn first-hand how to talk about queer folks in the reproductive justice movement and what matters to us.

Facilitator: Bianca Westrup

Room: B2

Break

2:45 - 3:00 pm

Break Out Session Three - participants may choose one of three options

3:00 - 4:25 pm

Option One: **Hostile Attitudes, Hostile Environments**

From tense conversations with neighbors to clinic violence, how we all negotiate standing for reproductive justice in hostile environments.

Panelists: Carol Mason, Julie Burkhardt, Tommy Chesbro, JT Hammons

Moderator: Lisa Funnell

Room: B2

Option Two: **Obstacles to Access**

Panel discussion of legal, financial, and logistical challenges and strategies to access reproductive health care services.

Panelists: Tina Hester, Judie Matthews, Lynn Jackson

Moderator: Elyssa Faison

Room: B3

Option Three: **Stories from the Movement**

Powerful stories from members of all ages in this movement toward reproductive justice; wisdom from every step of the way, whether you're just beginning or you've been here from the start.

Panelists: Loretta Ross, Lynn Paltrow, Sandra Criswell, Carly Palans

Moderator: Jill Irvine

Room: Conference B

4:45 - 5:00 pm

Presentation of the Carol Mason Award

5:00 - 5:30 pm

Closing Remarks: Deborah Small

take root safer spaces guidelines

from the student organizers collective

What is a safer space? A safer space allows for members of the group to feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of harassment or ridicule. That being said, a safer space is not necessarily a free-for-all. No space can be 100% safe, but we can promote an environment of accommodation, respect, and accountability.

It is important to use language that is respectful and inclusive. Words to avoid include (but are not limited to): racist, sexist, cissexist, homophobic, classist, and ableist ("lame," "crazy," and "retarded") language.

Refraining from making assumptions about gender or pronouns is part of creating a safer space. We invite everyone to list their pronouns on their name tags!

As advocates for survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence, it is important that we not make jokes that are triggering to survivors. This includes (but once again is not limited to) rape jokes, using rape as a synonym for something that is not rape (I "raped" that test, that video game "raped" me), and "I ran into the door" and other jokes that make light of the danger that people in IPV situations face. To avoid triggering survivors, we should strive to steer clear of violent rhetoric whenever possible. Preparing people before discussing triggering content is an incredibly helpful way to accommodate survivors.

Part of a safer space is recognizing that people can and should be held accountable for their words and actions. Remaining conscious of social location and privilege is vital in spaces where many folks have been excluded or dismissed in conversation about abortion politics. Often, that means many of us will need to prioritize listening. If we are challenged about the limitations of our perspective because of social location and privilege, checking defensiveness and trusting that the correction or challenge is made in an effort to maintain a safer and productive space would be helpful.

We also want to make sure everyone is aware that we aren't the only ones using the OCCE Forum building during our conference. Because other folks are sharing the building with us, we were not able to re-label the bathroom facilities to reflect a safer and more inclusive attitude. The conference organizers sincerely apologize, because this is inadequate. We will make every effort to provide solutions to this problem in the future.

The conference organizers have taken several steps to ensure the security of everyone attending our conference. There is a chance that a disruptive presence might gather around the conference site. While we respect the need for folks to react to this sort of thing in their own way, we propose a collective front of refusal to engage any protestors of this conference. It can be argued that reserving our energy for the conference so that we may listen, share, and plan attentively is the most strategic plan. Please reach out to a conference organizer (wearing a Take Root shirt) if you feel unsafe or want to bring up concerns at any time.

Thank you again for attending this lovely and powerful event we've been looking forward to all year. Please stop by room B6 to contribute to the Take Root Zine: share your reactions, art, poetry, and whatever else has moved you at this conference! The Zine will be distributed electronically to all conference participants and used in the future to help Take Root grow.

WGS

The Women's and Gender Studies Program at OU is an interdisciplinary program that seeks to enhance students' knowledge of gender roles and gender relations across cultures and history. Women's and Gender Studies courses investigate the intersection of gender and such diverse phenomena as politics, religion, society, economics, war, communication, music, art, family life, and popular culture. Our 68 faculty members come from numerous departments across the university. Women's and Gender Studies students learn a variety of marketable skills including critical thinking, writing, public speaking, organization, conflict resolution, diversity training and project design. The interdisciplinary and global perspective students gain in the Women's and Gender Studies Program will enable them to achieve their highest potential in their chosen field of study and as citizens of the global community. Women's and Gender studies majors will be well-prepared and sought after for work in for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, social help agencies, human rights advocacy, victim's advocacy as well as graduate study in law, medicine, human relations, education, business, information science, communication, fine arts, public health or academic research.

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The OU Women's and Gender Studies Program **Center for Social Justice**

The Center for Social Justice is an initiative of the Women's Studies Program to promote gender justice, equality, tolerance, and human rights through local and global engagement. As a discipline, Women and Gender Studies critically examines how institutions and social organizations seem natural are often structured to hide and perpetuate gender, class, and racial inequality. The Center adopts a feminist perspective, recognizing that while questions of social justice concern all human beings, women and children are harmed disproportionately when it comes to the allocation of political power and economic resources.

Our programs include the Social Justice Minor, Activist-in-Residence Program, Engaged Research, Internships, Service Learning, Social Justice Awards, Social Justice Events, and Activism.

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meet our speakers

Wyndi Anderson is the Senior Director of Programs at Provide and is a leading feminist and social justice advocate who has been working for the protection of human rights for over ten years. Her recent work for the rights of drug-addicted women has earned her national recognition as a leader in both the women's rights and the drug policy reform movements. She has led efforts to establish state and local initiatives in the southeastern US for the National Network of Abortion Funds, managed an EC campaign in Georgia for NARAL Pro-Choice America, and served as fundraising chair on the board of Choice USA. She has been profiled in national publications, such as Ms. magazine and Glamour, and she is frequently sought out for comment by members of both the United States and international press.

Toby Beauchamp is an Assistant Professor with Gender and Women's Studies at Oklahoma State University. He is currently completing a book manuscript on transgender politics and US surveillance practices.

Ailee Breland founded Parents Against Personhood to advocate against personhood amendments and legislation nationwide, and was a prominent figure in the successful campaign against Mississippi's Initiative 26. She is a native computer programmer, a mother of three, and a 1998 OU graduate.

Julie Burkhart first held the position of Chair for the Wichita Choice Alliance, where she led the charge against the anti-choice organizations that attempted to "finish the job" of closing Dr. Tiller's Women's Health Care Services during the 2001 Summer of Mercy Renewal. Julie then served as spokesperson for the Clinic. In 2002, Julie became CEO of ProKanDo, the largest political action committee in Kansas, founded by Dr. Tiller. Julie now carries Dr. Tiller's vision for reproductive rights as the Founder and Executive Director of Trust Women and the South Wind Women's Center.

Jen Cox is Deputy Director at Oklahomans for Reproductive Justice and a graduate assistant with the OU Women's and Gender Studies Program. They blog a lot.

Sandra Criswell is the Executive Director of Oklahomans for Reproductive Justice. She first became involved in RJ activism as a Women's and Gender Studies student at OU, where she co-founded the Women's and Gender Studies Student Association, now known as the Student Organizer's Collective. She recently started working for Trust Women and moved to Wichita, KS, but her heart will always and forever be Thundering up for OKC.

Valeria Cruz is a Junior at the University of Oklahoma majoring in Women and Gender Studies with a Minor in Middle Eastern Studies. She is passionate about issues regarding Women of Color, even more specifically those that affect Latina Women and Immigration. She hopes to pursue education past her undergrad but most importantly wants to work on issues pertaining to race and fight for an immigration reform.

Farah Diaz-Tello, Staff Attorney, is a graduate of the City University of New York School of Law, where she was a Haywood Burns Fellow in Civil and Human Rights. Her work at NAPW has focused on the rights to medical decision-making and birthing with dignity, and on using the international human rights framework to protect the humanity of pregnant women regardless of their circumstances. A proud Texan, she is an alumna of the University of Texas at Austin.

meet our speakers

Shai Fenwick is a newcomer to Oklahoma, from Trinidad and Tobago by way of Houston. She attended Catholic and Anglican schools in Trinidad, while living with Shia and Sunni Muslim parents in a largely Hindu neighborhood. After arriving in the United States, she found Unitarian Universalism, and has been a practicing UU for many years. After recently graduating from OU with a degree in Anthropology and minor in Social Justice, she has joined Teach for America and will be teaching middle school science in the Oklahoma City area while living in Norman.

Tina Hester has been committed to social justice and women's health causes for a quarter-century. She has worked for Planned Parenthood Federation of America in New York and its state affiliate in Kentucky, lobbied for the American Association of University Women's California chapter and led a state pro-choice project for the Kentucky Civil Liberties Union. Hester currently serves as executive director of Jane's Due Process, a legal services organization for pregnant minors in Texas.

Ricky Hill is a doctoral student and instructor at the University of New Mexico, and a member of the Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico's speakers bureau. Their research centers on LGBTQ health equity, specifically assessing and addressing trans* health disparities. Ricky is a proud Oklahoman, raised right here in Norman.

Omare Jimmerson has been a mover and shaker in the reproductive justice movement in Oklahoma for over a decade. She currently works to increase proper referrals for women of all ages throughout Oklahoma in the area of reproductive health. In her spare time she enjoys being a mommy, being active in her church, and planning parties.

Senator Constance Johnson represents District 48, which includes Oklahoma County, since 2005. She's an advocate for reproductive justice and sensible drug policy reform in Oklahoma.

Carol Mason is author of two books about the rise of the right, and working on a third titled Oklahoma: The Sexuality of Terrorism in the Heartland. She is professor of Gender and Women's Studies at University of Kentucky.

Pamela Merritt (Shark-Fu) blogs at AngryBlackBitch.com. Pamela Merritt is a member of the Center for American Progress' Women's Health Leadership Network and is a founding member of the Trust Black Women Partnership. Merritt is the Statewide E-Organizer for Planned Parenthood affiliates in Missouri, a staff writer for the award winning RH RealityCheck.org, and has been a featured contributor to National Public Radio's (NPR) "Tell Me More" with Michel Martin. Merritt's writing has been published in the Chicago Sun-Times, The Guardian and Salon.com.

Molly Oakley is University of Oklahoma Women's & Gender Studies Alumni and and OK4R Jr. She currently works for Trust Women Foundation in Wichita, KS where she will soon take on the roll of Operations Director for South Wind Women's Center as Trust Women Foundation prepares to open the doors to the newest reproductive health care center in the nation.

Carly Palans is a senior Women's and Gender Studies major and Judaic studies minor at the University of Oklahoma. She writes for the Oklahomans for Reproductive Justice blog and is an active member with the Student Organizers Collective.

meet our speakers

Lynn Paltrow is the Founder and Executive Director of National Advocates for Pregnant Women. She has worked on numerous cases challenging restrictions on the right to choose abortion as well as cases opposing the prosecution and punishment of pregnant women seeking to continue their pregnancies to term.

Kate Richey works as a policy analyst in Tulsa for the nonprofit, nonpartisan Oklahoma Policy Institute. Her research interests include all things gender, poverty and policy and she has studied and taught business, political science, and public administration. She is a military brat, a world traveler, and has been told that she is pretty bossy.

Loretta Ross is the founder and National Coordinator of SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective and co-author of the book *Beyond the Politics of Inclusion: Women of Color in the Reproductive Rights Movement*.

Martha Skeeters grew up in a small town in segregated East Texas, where her social consciousness and conscience were first engaged by race and class. In college in the 1960s she became a feminist. Currently she is co-founder and president of the Oklahoma Coalition for Reproductive Justice and Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Oklahoma.

Deborah Peterson Small is the founder and Executive Director of Break the Chains, a national organization committed to supporting the development of a movement within communities of color to promote progressive drug policies based on public health, compassion and human rights.

Britt Wahlin is the Director of Development and Communications at Ibis Reproductive Health. Before joining Ibis in January 2007, she was a consultant specializing in philanthropy and social-issue media. She spearheaded film-based public awareness campaigns for the nonprofit media organization, Active Voice, as well as helped secure foundation funding and new business for Active Voice campaigns on topics ranging from immigration and political asylum to gender equity in science.

Jordan Ward is a Women's and Gender Studies alumna from the University of Oklahoma. She led student organizing efforts to change sexual assault policy and help secure justice for students at OU.

Bianca Westrup is a queer Chicana from South Texas who is currently working to be a radical full spectrum doula, herbalist, and plans to start a tamelera in her neighborhood. She lives in a house called Steerz n Queerz in Denton, TX and was involved in much student organizing with the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance at UNT and more recently worked with the Tar Sands Blockade.



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Lauren Zuniga is an internationally touring poet and teaching artist. A three time national slam finalist and passionate On. Org called her work, "message." Daily Kos can change the

phoma, she is the College's Now featured on television and she served as the Activist-In- for the University of Oklahoma author by the Oklahoma Gazette. She is the

author of two poetry collections, *The Nickel Tour* (Penmanship Books, 2009) and *The Smell of Good Mud* (Write Bloody Publishing, 2012). *Punk Magazine* said, "If imagery and language are the sea on which Zuniga's poems sail, then her ability to reach the shared human experience is the boat in which she rides." She lives with her two kids in an artist collective named Clementine where they experiment with weird things like kombucha and cooperation.



Melissa May is a spoken word poet and youth advocate from Norman, OK. She is the Slam Champion of Red Dirt Poetry in Oklahoma and helps organize open mic events in the community on as well as individual events since

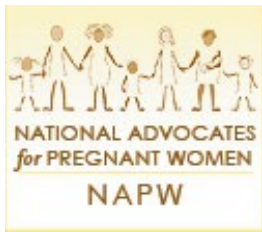
starting spoken word in 2008. In 2012, she numbered among the top 10 female poets in the country and in October of last year, she became the 3rd ranked poet in the world at the Individual World Poetry Slam. She is a fierce and dedicated lover of people, and writes primarily about the issues surrounding being a woman, being an ex-minister, and about positive body advocacy. Mostly she writes when her heart gets full. Her second book of poetry, *Swallow the Wild* will be published by Tired Hearts Press in August of 2013.

taking pictures?
tweeting about panels?
instagramming the awesome?

Use our #hashtag!

#takeroot13
@Take_RootRJ

Not on social media? Email pictures to:
center.for.social.justice@ou.edu



**OSU Gender
and Women's
Studies**



Student Organizers Collective



civil liberties & public policy
building the movement
for reproductive freedom



Ibis Reproductive Health

