

ATTUNE

“Oppression can only survive through silence.”

—Anonymous

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Dr. Joycelyn Elders to Speak at TTU



Dr. Elders is represented by the American Program Bureau. This article is from www.apbspeakers.com

Former U.S. Surgeon General, and the first African American woman to hold that post, Dr. M. Joycelyn Elders is the eldest of eight children. Now a Distinguished Professor of Public Health at the University of Arkansas, she never saw a physician prior to her first year in college. At the age of fifteen, she received a scholarship from the United Methodist Church to attend Philander-Smith College in Little Rock, AR. Upon graduation at age 18, she entered the U.S. Army as a first lieutenant where she received training as a physical therapist.

Dr. Elders attended the University of Arkansas Medical School (UAMS) on the G. I. Bill. After graduation in 1960, she was an intern at the University of Minnesota Hospital in Minneapolis and did a pediatric residency and an endocrinology fellowship at the University of Arkansas Medical Center in Little Rock. She ascended the academic ladder to full professorship after her fellowship and board certification in 1976. She also holds a master of science degree in biochemistry.

Dr. Elders joined the faculty at UAMS as a professor of pe-

diatrics and received board certification as a pediatric endocrinologist in 1978. Based on her studies of growth in children and the treatment of hormone related illnesses, she has written many articles for medical research publications. She was appointed Director of the Arkansas Department of Health in October, 1987. While serving as director, she was elected president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers.

Nominated as Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service by President Clinton in July of 1993, she was confirmed by the Senate on September 7, and sworn in on September 8. During the Senate hearings on her confirmation, Dr. Elders stated, “I want to change the way we think about health by putting prevention first. I want to be the voice and vision of the poor and powerless. I want to change concern about social problems that affect health into commitment. And I would like to make every child born in America a wanted child.”

She was listed in “100 Outstanding Women in Arkansas,” “Personalities of the South,” and “Distinguished Women in America.” She has won awards such as the Arkansas Democrat’s Woman of the Year, the National Governor’s Association Distinguished Service Award, the American Medical Association’s Dr. Nathan Davis Award, and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women’s Candace Award for Health Science.

Dr. Elders has also received multiple honorary doctorate of sciences degrees and honorary doctorate of letters degrees.

Dr. M. Joycelyn Elders will be speaking on Global Healthcare in the 21st Century on November 8th at 7 p.m. in Derryberry Auditorium.

Letter From the Editor:

A new year, a fresh start for ATTUNE. I am Hannah Holland, a senior history major at TTU. This is my first year on the staff at the Women’s Center, and ATTUNE is my first editing project.

The theme of this issue is “The Many Faces of Oppression in America.” I gave the meaning of oppression a great deal of thought, and I have concluded that oppression is rooted in power. There cannot be oppression without a distinction between the oppressed and the oppressor. What defines each class, oppressor and oppressed, is different depending on the situation. However, the common theme in every oppressive situation is that one party retains the power, and the other party remains powerless. I believe talking about areas of society where oppression still exists and what continues to feed the power of the oppressors will begin to bring an end to the cycle of oppression. With these thoughts in mind, this issue of ATTUNE was created. I hope you will find that I have achieved my goal.

My thanks to the entire staff of the Women’s Center (Dr. Gretta Stanger, the director, Leslie Burk, the secretary, and my fellow students, Tara Bates and Erica Nation) for all their help and support in this endeavor. Thanks to the contributors, as well, who brought brilliance and depth to this edition.

— Hannah Holland

From The Women's Center

***My Life So Far* by Jane Fonda**

It takes more than courage to expose one's underbelly to the public; it takes unyielding self-acceptance and a sense of valor that refuses to be compromised. Jane Fonda's new autobiography, *My Life So Far*, provides proof that stardom does not automatically equal self-assuredness and that gaining a sense of inner peace is not without its heartbreaks.

Fonda reveals her family secrets and shares her deepest insecurities in an earnest attempt to understand herself. During her adult life men and politics figure prominently and it is through these very channels that she fortifies herself while awakening to a deeper yearning for spiritual connection.

I found Fonda's writing crisp and her personal photographs poignant as they gently seduced me into a believable state of shared sister-

hood. I was also impressed to learn how she successfully empowered herself by selecting her movies in accordance with her growing awareness and passion for political and gender issues.

Let's face it: personal growth endeavors are no picnic, especially when one hails from a Hollywood background and has had to grow up under public scrutiny. Yet, Fonda triumphantly travels full circle, allowing herself to embrace all her gifts and shortcomings with an element of excitement at what has yet to be revealed.

— Review by
Leslie Burk

For Your Information:

The Rape, Abuse and Incest Nation Network (RAINN) is the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization. RAINN's national sexual assault hotline is available 24 hours a day at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) for counseling, resources, prevention tips, and referrals to available service in local areas.

***Out In Public* by Alison Piepmeier**

The terms public sphere and private sphere are familiar within the study of gender. During the nineteenth-century it was "understood" that only men served in the public sphere, while women maintained their duties within the private sphere of society.

Piepmeier provides an in-depth study of five women who, while living during the nineteenth-century, navigated their femaleness in such a way that it became acceptable for them to serve in the public sphere while maintaining their private womanhood.

Piepmeier writes that Anna Cora Mowatt, a popular stage actress, used sentimentalism and sensationalism to direct her audience toward admiration and acceptability of the female body in public. Whereas Mary Baker Eddy all but eradicated the female body by conflating God, Spirit, Love, and Mind, to create an erasure of the body, which

empowered women on similar terms with men. Next, the well-known campaigner and activist for women's rights and abolition, Sojourner Truth, is featured. Truth associated her body with heroism and power manifested in the tall tale. Next in line is Ida B. Wells who was considered the single most important writer to expose the widespread lynching of blacks during this time period. And lastly, Sara Josepha Hale, editor of the *Godey's Lady Book*, is introduced as having established the world of print as an embodied space by capitalizing on the print culture to gain access to women nationwide.

Piepmeier does a superb job on her research and brings the entire picture into focus by asserting that all the women studied here constructed their bodies strategically within and against the various opposing forces of the time.

— Review by
Leslie Burk

New News!

Videos For Checkout

Currently in the Women's Center we are changing our video availability program. Soon, we hope to have all the videos listed on our website along with descriptive summaries for each. Also, we are working with the library to interface our database with the Media Center. Therefore, anyone searching the library's media database will find a reference to our available media.

These videos will be available for faculty checkout for classroom usage and will be located in the Women's Center.

In-House Videos

This list comprises a variety of recorded media from television and will only be available for public viewing in the Women's Center.

"Survivors"

"Survivors" is a new addition to our Women's Center media library. This video contains stories of women who have been raped and yet have managed to overcome their individual traumas in order to rebuild their lives. These "survivors" serve as an inspiration to all women.

"Counterpoint For Her"

A second new addition to our Women's Center media library is a video titled "Counterpoint For Her." This film describes human trafficking, which is the illicit trade of men, women, and children for sexual purposes. One woman interviewed chronicles her experiences and observations about how difficult it is to escape this hideous cycle of being used and abused.

— Erica Nation

TECH LADIES COALITION— “We CAN do it!”

The Tech Ladies Coalition is an organization born out of the desire to create an environment at TTU where individuals can share their thought free of persecution based on their gender.

The TLC initiative “We CAN do it!” is based on the idea of **Concrete Action Now**. In order for gender equality to spread, there must be actions with ideas. TLC has taken this concept to new levels at TTU. They planned TTU’s first annual *Take Back the Night* rally with the help of the TTU President’s Commission on the Status of Women and the Women’s Center. This event occurred in April 2005, and was a great success in spreading the message of gender equality and rape prevention.

TLC is still active at TTU. TLC will be involved with “Engineering A Future,” a math and science program

for 4th-8th grade girls in February 2006. Take Back the Night 2006 is scheduled for April 4, 2006.

Other functions of TLC are community and member education on current women’s issues. One of the methods is the TLC Book Club. (See the next column.) Each month, a book is chosen and read. The members then meet and discuss what they liked or disliked about the book. Another method of education is the “Teach-In’s” at the TLC meetings, where a member is assigned a topic and comes to the meeting prepared to educate other members.

Organizations like TLC are necessary on college campuses to fight for gender equality. If you are interested in learning more about the Tech Ladies Coalition, contact us at ttuwomen@yahoo.com.

— Chris Fuller


TLC BOOK CLUB CHOICES for 2005-2006
October- *Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood
November- *Bastard on the Couch* edited by Daniel Jones
December- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi
January- *Feminism is for Everybody* by bell hooks
February- *Odd Girl Out* by Rachel Simmons
March- *Queen of the South* by Arturo Perez-Reverte
April- *Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston
May- *Good Body* by Eve Ensler
June- *Lucky* by Alice Sebold
July- *The World According to Garp* by John Irving
August- *Reviving Ophelia* by Mary Pipher

Dates To Remember

October represents
 Breast Cancer Awareness
 Substance Abuse Awareness
 Domestic Violence Awareness
 October 19– Love Your Body Day
 October 21– National Mammography Day

November represents
 National Adoption Awareness
 Alzheimer’s Disease
 Diabetics Awareness
 Native American Heritage
 November 17– National Smoke Out Day

December represents
 December 1– World AIDS Day

January represents
 Women’s Center Anniversary 
 March of Dimes Birth Defects Prevention Month
 National Autism Month

TTU Takes Back the Night

A revolution started last April on the campus of TTU. A revolution that sent a bold statement to the community: no longer will people stand idly by while women are abused here and around the globe. The newly formed Tech Ladies Coalition wanted a way to spread this message on campus and found its efforts directed towards a march called “Take Back the Night.” Take Back the Night, started in London in 1973, is a worldwide community action and initiative effort to end domestic and sexual violence and abuse. In addition to providing an organized platform from which communities can proclaim their refusal to tolerate continued violence

and abuse, Take Back the Night also aims to promote and encourage healing for survivors, helping them realize that they live within a community of support that is ready and willing to join the fight against violence.

TLC joined forces with the President’s Commission on the Status of Women and the Women’s Center to make this march a reality. The date was set for Tuesday, April 5, and preparations had to be made. A speaker had to be secured and for this TLC turned to Dr. Alison Piepmeier, who was then Assistant Director of Women’s Studies at Vanderbilt University. “We wanted someone with links to the University and the

community and someone with links to Women’s Studies as well. Alison was the obvious choice,” says Liz Kasser, one of the founding members of TLC. Dr. Piepmeier started her academic career at TTU and had made quite a name for herself in the area of Women’s Studies at Vanderbilt. She has since become Director of Women’s Studies at the University of South Carolina in Charleston. After a speaker was secured, a march route had to be planned and a survivor was asked to tell her story during the candlelight vigil to be held after the march.

What felt like a lifetime of planning finally turned into a night of action. April 5th arrived and we were all

anxious. At 7:30 Dr. Piepmeier took center stage and spoke out against domestic and sexual violence. She told how as professor, she had heard countless stories of students being raped and abused on her campus. This was a poignant and honest way to begin the evening. Signs were then raised with messages like “Men and Women Together” and “Unite to Take Back the Night!” creating a rainbow-colored crowd. Hearing the sound of a bullhorn, people on a mission began to march. Led by a police escort, over 100 people moved through campus and Cookeville city streets, ending on TTU’s Main Quad.

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Female Body Image and the Media: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression

Oppression is not possible without power, and with power comes influence. In American society, no institution holds more power and influence than the media. Studies show that women by age 17 have viewed over 250,000 commercial messages (www.mediascope.org). Advertisements are everywhere, on billboards, in magazines, on television, on pop-up ads from the Internet, on shopping carts, and the list goes on. No one can completely remove themselves from being subjected to advertisements. But, more important than the sheer volume of exposure to advertisements are what messages convey and how these messages are affecting women's lives.

In my opinion, advertisements determine and portray the current standard of beauty in American society. Today, it is nearly impossible to find an ad portraying a "real woman." Most of the models pictured have no flaws, pores, fat, or anything else deemed undesirable by the advertising executives. Photographs are airbrushed to remove imperfections, or

if the perfect woman cannot be found she is created. Photographs are edited, the perfect body parts selected from pictures of different models, and then "cut and pasted" together to create the desired marketing image. These are the images the public is exposed to daily. So what, one might say? The problem is these women are not real! Exposure to unrealistic ideals of female beauty corrodes the self-esteem of girls, young women, and older women alike. Women with lowered self-esteem often become uncomfortable with their bodies. This can cause women to develop unhealthy attitudes toward food and exercise, or even worse, develop an eating disorder or obsessive need for plastic surgery.

Having been female for almost 22 years now, I have experience with what happens to self-esteem when feeling inadequate. I am not "pencil-thin" and never have been. I was the tallest girl in my class every year, and I inherited my grandmother's hips. I spent my teenage years constantly undermining my self-worth because I did not fit the standard of

beauty. I measured myself against the models I saw on television or in magazines. My behavior was reinforced by females in my family and my peers, all of whom were experiencing the same feelings of inadequacy. Thankfully, I never slid into the cycle of eating disorders, but I still had unhealthy attitudes about food and my consumption of food. Although I never had plastic surgery, I am ashamed to admit, it crossed my mind on many, many occasions. It took a long time before I was able to break myself of this unhealthy behavior. Only through a great deal of self-reflection and growth did I realize that I am fine just as I am.

Sadly, some women never learn to love their bodies. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, last year, 8,018,157 women had plastic surgery of some kind. Women made up a staggering 87% of all cosmetic surgery patients in 2004. Where are women learning that their bodies are not good enough without a tweak here or a lift there? The media. The media invade our personal space on a

daily basis enforcing and reinforcing their convoluted standard of beauty, and only because they have the power to do so. But does the public freely give the media this power?

I feel it is an injustice and certainly a cruel exercise of power by the media to present to American women unhealthy and unattainable images of female beauty. I know that not all women buy into the proposed standards of beauty, but even one woman who feels insufficient because of an image presented to her by the media, to me, is too many. It is time for women across America to band together against this oppressive standard of beauty. The next time you hear someone complain about her looks, tell her she's beautiful. The next time you see a woman buying diet products, tell her she's beautiful just the way she is. The next time you find yourself comparing your own beauty to a model in a magazine, remember, that image was created to sell you a product to help you with a problem that you do not have. You are beautiful, just the way you are.

— Hannah Holland

TTU Takes Back the Night— Continued from Page 3

During the march, participants chanted the message, "2,4,6,8, no more violence, no more hate!" and "whatever we wear, wherever we go, yes means yes and no means no!" To end this powerful night, marchers were each given a candle for the vigil. There, in the heart of campus, a survivor told the account of how she had survived sexual and domestic abuse for years. The final word was given by the director of the Genesis House rape and sexual assault unit. She read statistics from Putnam County on rape and abuse that were, to say the least, startling. It brought home the message of the entire evening; this type of abuse is happening in our immediate surroundings. People left with a somber yet strong feeling, hopeful that this night would be a beginning to the end of violence against women.

— Michelle Winebarger

TLC—TECH LADIES COALITION

During the Fall Semester, TLC will be accepting donations for the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, benefiting hurricane victims in the Gulf Coast Area. Members would like NEW socks, underwear for women and children, diapers, toiletries, hair and skin products for all ethnicities, pajamas, pillows, blankets, sheets, kids backpacks, art and writing supplies, books, small size toys, stuffed animals, hand lotions, and make up bags/cases. If you have products to donate, please take them to the Women's Center in Pennebaker Hall room 203 or contact us at ttuwomen@yahoo.com

The Fortunate Son

All men are pigs. All men are dogs. All men are only after one thing. All men are such jerks. All men are the same.

These are but a few of the phrases I hear on a daily basis. For the most part, social norms allow me to disregard them. I can laugh them off because that is what society has taught me to do. Men *are* pigs. Men *are* dogs. We *are* all sex-obsessed animals with no regard for the emotions of women. I know this because television sitcoms and romantic-comedy movies tell me it is so.

That being said, is it true? Are all men such simple, primitive creatures? Can an entire gender be summed up in a few simple statements? Speaking as one of the pigheaded masses, I would say no, not every man suffers from such shortsighted tendencies. We are not all evil oppressors out to keep all non-males beneath us, and I for one am sick of being lumped into that category. Before you judge a book by its gender, let me tell you a

short story.

Marylou Albers came from a time when women were supposed to be subservient to men. Her only job in life, according to society, should have been to have children, raise them well, and die in her husband's arms. To say she deviated from society's plan would be an understatement.

While she did marry and have four children, Marylou Albers, now Marylou Whitaker, wanted a life outside of the kitchen. Starting as a secretary in a very male-dominated real estate office, she soon rose to be Broker-Owner of one of the most notable real estate offices in northern New Jersey. After several heated elections, a string of terms as President of the New Jersey Board of Realtors followed. Suddenly, all those egocentric, chauvinistic men in their off-the-rack suits had a new leader. A female leader. My mom.

Whenever I tell this story, it is usually at this point that I start to hear negative comments depending on who I'm talking to. They tend to run

from "She only got that far because her husband let her" to "She only did that because her husband didn't have control over his woman."

No, she accomplished what she did not by my father's neglect or weakness, but by his love and understanding. My father married my mother, he did not buy her. He asked for her to be his wife and she *chose* him, a fact she never lets him forget. Their relationship is one of equality and not oppression. My father did not try to dominate her, he respected her. He did not love her in spite of her independence but because of it. Neither did my mother overbear my father. They share in their relationship equally.

These are the values they preached without ever meaning to. From my free-spirited older sister to my incredibly independent younger brother, all their children understood the lesson. Men are no stronger, and women are no weaker, because of their gender. Biology doesn't make you a leader, who you are does.

That being said, I refer back to my original question: can an entire gender be summed up in a few simple statements? Hopefully, this article shows that the answer is not simple, not cut and dried. A thousand factors play a part in how a human is shaped. Men can no more be pigeonholed than women can be. I am not a pig. I am not a dog. I am not after only one thing. I am not a jerk, and I am not the same as every man. No two men are the same.

My parent's tale is not an isolated case. All around the world there are men who were raised in the same vein as I was. We are the products of equal and understanding marriages, sons of partnerships between strong men and powerful women. Do not make the mistake of isolating men who are as strongly against oppression of women as any woman, simply because they are men. Believe it or not, there are more men like Marylou's son out there than you realize.

— Michael Whitaker

Rules to Live By

The Bible Belt. We are all familiar with this term, and to many, it brings to mind the image of a red-faced minister screaming a fire and brimstone sermon at his congregation. However, to me, the Bible Belt conveys a sense of oppression. That's not to say that religious fervor of southerners should be viewed negatively, but this fervor often prevents the aforementioned southerners from keeping an open mind or tolerant attitude concerning alternative lifestyles. It is perfectly acceptable to believe that abortion, for example, is morally wrong and angers whichever divine being you happen to worship. But to me, it is appalling to ostracize and malign, in society at large, people who believe differently. If they are members of your particular church, fine, kick 'em out, if that's what you choose, but don't make those people's private beliefs an issue that affects their professional lives.

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Rules to Live By— Continued From Page 5

This oppressive tendency, I have noticed seems to be rooted in conservative interpretation of biblical passages. I like to compare how religiously active people interpret the Bible and how politically active people interpret the Constitution. A devout Christian may interpret the Bible very strictly with literal interpretation and speculation about what the writers intended the passages to mean. Or he/she may interpret the Bible more liberally, focusing on the moral lessons behind the stories. Comparatively, politically active people either interpret the Constitution with stringent adherence to the literal phrasing of the manuscript, or more loosely in a way meant to benefit the people of America. Yet what seems to be overlooked is the fact that the Constitution is the ruling document of this country, not the Bible. The Constitution was written to guard the rights of man (and woman, though it wasn't specifically expressed at first) and to protect us from oppression.

Problems arise when people in positions of power use their personal interpretations to try and influence others. Imagine, if you will, this scenario: A man is elected President of our great democratic nation. This man feels that gay marriage is wrong and bases his feelings on his interpretation of biblical readings. He feels so strongly that the marriage of homosexual couples should not be allowed that he attempts to pass legislation that will turn his personal belief into law. This example illustrates the Bible's usurpation of the Constitution. The United States is a democracy, not a theocracy. Our country is not meant for church rule— it is far too diverse for that to ever work. Inevitably, certain groups would be oppressed if religion were the basis of our government. The Constitution, however, provides protection against oppression. Of course, the actual degree and definitions of "protection" and "oppression" vary, but are still measured against the rights outlined in the Constitution.

The Bible does teach significant moral lessons, but it is not the basis of our government. The bottom line is: the Constitution is the "supreme law of the land," not the Bible. The Bible is not meant to oppress, but like the Constitution, depending upon interpretation, it can cause men, women, and even children to feel as though some aspect of their lives is being oppressed.

— anonymous

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