

# Unitarian Women

## Introduction suggestions for the presentation –OUTSTANDING UNITARIAN/UNIVERSALIST WOMEN

*(Change freely, disregard, eliminate some of the selections, or add your own)*

**Today we are celebrating six Unitarian women who have indeed made a difference in different arenas.**

**We take pride in celebrating these women and claiming them as part of the Unitarian family.**

**Our first presenter (*name the presentors in turn*) will tell us about a woman (*S. B. Anthony*) who is perhaps the best known of all the women. Her single minded efforts spanned 50 years and we all owe her a very deep sense of gratitude.**

**Our second presenter discusses a woman (*Clara Barton*) who was a contemporary of Susan B. Anthony's. We have no information that the two of them ever interacted.**

**Our third presenter discusses a woman (*Annette Brown Blackwell*) who came to the Unitarian Church later in life.**

**In 1969, the Women's Alliance of the First Unitarian Church of Dallas, following study of the then current highly restrictive abortion laws, determined that the laws needed to be repealed. Action next led in 1970 .....to the filing of an amicus brief to be heard in the Fifth Federal District Circuit Court, then located in Dallas. The brief aided in moving the case, Roe V. Wade, to the Supreme Court of the United States where it legalized abortion in 1973.**

**Our fourth presenter tells us about a woman (*Louise Raggio*) –a member of our own congregation, who was indeed a pioneer for women's legal rights.**

**Our fifth presentation, discusses a women (*Ellen Solender*) who was a member of the Women's Day Alliance—a frail woman who came with an aid during the last year of her life. Many of us will be surprised to learn details of her life taken from a monograph she herself wrote for a journal of her profession.**

**Finally, our sixth presenter highlights another woman (*Rev. Hallman*) whom many of us were privileged to know and love. Although no longer in this area, she is still very much alive and active.**

**Special thanks to today's presenters: And, I am \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you.**

## **ANTOINETTE BROWN BLACKWELL** Mary Lee Kilgore

Good Morning. I am the Reverend Antoinette Brown Blackwell. I am pleased to speak before you this morning as I am told this is a group of learned, accomplished and interesting women. The coordinator has said that you might be interested in my long life and varied experiences though you likely would not have heard of me. In my time I was known as quite an orator so I will assume you will be able to hear and appreciate my lecture today.

I was born in May of 1825 and lived a long and productive 96 years. I spent my childhood with my parents and my nine brothers and sisters on a farm in upstate Henrietta, New York. Being described as a precocious child and not wishing to be left behind, I followed my older siblings to school at the age of three and I was drawn to the ministry at a young age. My family was deeply affected by the preaching of evangelist Charles Grandson Finney in near Rochester during the Second Great Awakening and before my ninth birthday, I joined the Congregational Church. My parents upheld the educational aspirations of both their sons and daughters though my father was a bit slow to support my wishes to preach. He and my Mother did support the reform movements of the era-anti-slavery, temperance and moral reform- which would be the basis of much of my life's work. As a child, I attended local schools and the Monroe Academy before becoming a teacher there at the age of 16 in 1841.

I very much wanted to attend Oberlin College in Ohio. The college was known for its evangelical theology and its principled commitment to the equal education of women and African Americans. After 5 years teaching, I set out for Ohio in 1846 and set upon non-degree "Course for Ladies" even though the ladies were paradoxically not allowed to speak. I did receive a literary degree in 1847 and remained at Oberlin for three more years, classified as a "resident Graduate." The faculty refused to grant me regular enrollment in the theology department even though I continued to train for the ministry. In 1850, I completed my advanced studies but the faculty refused to grant me the degree. Long after I was ordained, the college did choose to recognize me with an honorary Masters in 1878 and a belated awarded Doctor of Divinity in 1908.

Let's return to the story. While completing my advanced studies and despite widespread opposition to public speaking by women, I spoke extensively in Ohio and New York against slavery and in favor of women's rights. In 1850, I had given a speech at the first national women's rights convention in Worcester, Massachusetts beginning my career as an independent lecturer. Though not everyone supported lectures by women, I spoke in Pennsylvania, Ohio and New England on women's rights, antislavery and temperance, and preached church sermons on Sundays when I was invited.

In 1852 at the age of 23, I received an invitation from the Congregational church in rural South Butler, New York, to take up its ministry. At the same time I had received an offer from Horace Greeley to support my preaching in New York City. The call to South Butler was more compelling to me at that time and I took up its ministry. In September of 1853, I was ordained as minister of the Congregational Church of South Butler. With that it is my belief that I was the first woman to be ordained in a regular Protestant denomination in the United States.

My congregation in South Butler supported my continued reform activities, even as I became the center of controversy at the 1853 World's Temperance Convention. My fellow delegates, mostly men, received my credentials but hoisted me off the platform, refusing to allow a woman to

**speak. It was a difficult time as I was increasingly troubled about reconciling science with the basis for my orthodox faith and with a heavy but resolute heart, I resigned my pastorate in July 1854.**

**After some months of rest and reflection, I returned to New York City working for women criminals and prisoners and writing for Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*. During this time, I was courted by fellow reformer Samuel Charles Blackwell and we were married in 1856. From 1856 to 1869 Sam and I lived in Northern New Jersey and I bore seven children. Five daughters survived to adulthood and two became medical doctors and another, an artist. I am quite proud of each of them.**

**Much of my life's work is reflected in my published writings. I was consistently focused on the reconciliation of my belief system and science. In 1869, I published *The Making of Science* and I explored equality in sexuality, a somewhat startling subject for woman of my time. In my late eighties, I wrote *The Making of the Universe* and I argued time and again that Darwin had not paid sufficient attention to issues of gender.**

**I am pleased to report my continuing activity in the women's movement well into the twentieth century. Importantly, I was the only one of the first generation of suffragists to witness the passage of the 19th Amendment of the Constitution. I exercised that right at the age of 95 in November of 1920.**

**So you may be wondering by now what is my connection with you Unitarians. After raising my family and as I pursued my writing and continued activism, in 1878 I requested and received recognition from the American Unitarian Association as a minister. After I settled permanently in Elizabeth, New Jersey, I worked and spoke to Unitarians there. I also made a grant of land for a church in Elizabeth. I am proud to report that in 1908 the Elizabeth Society recognized me as minister emeritus of All Souls Church.**

**How would I describe the arc of my life? I and my fellow suffrage pioneers stood at the vanguard. Personally, I withstood opposition to my ministerial career and I persisted to build on the successes of our causes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Using the evolutionary science popularized by Darwin and Spencer I built philosophical foundations on which I argued for the equality of the sexes. I trust you will continue our work on the lingering inequities of the 21st century.**

**Mary Lee Kilgore, First Unitarian Church, Dallas, 2016**

## SUSAN B. ANTHONY

I was born in Massachusetts in 1820 into a Quaker family of Abolitionist supporters. Early in life I realized that I was an unattractive child-I had crossed eyes-and I mention this in partial explanation of why I chose not to marry and devoted my adult energies to feminist causes rather than raise a family. This may explain why in various history books my photographs are shown in profile. My education was limited, although I attended a good school in Philadelphia. In my youth, a girl needed to know how to read her Bible and count her egg money, and very little else. I taught school for a while in upper New York State, but soon found great discrimination against women, especially in wages. I was hired to teach for \$2.50 a week, whereas the male teachers earned \$10.00. Gradually I became involved with various causes.

I did not become involved in the suffrage movement until I joined forces with Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1851—three years after the historic first Woman’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls in 1848. I helped publish a newspaper called THE REVOLUTION. The motto was “men their rights and nothing more; Women their rights and nothing less.”

My language of those days may seem quite strong to you. For example, I said, “Of all the old prejudices that cling to the hem of women’s garment, and persistently impede her progress, nothing holds faster than this—the idea that she owes service to a man instead of herself and that is her highest duty to aid HIS development rather than her own.” At another time I said this; “The day will come when man will recognize woman as his peer, not only at the fireside, but in the councils of the nations. Then, and not until then, will there be the perfect comradeship, the ideal union between the sexes that shall result in the highest development of the race.”

As a Unitarian, I was displeased with the Protestant interpretation of what the Bible says about Women. In one talk I said, “You women are not yet out of bondage to the idea of the infallibility of the Bible...Everything spoken by Jew or Greek, Gentile or Christian or by any other human being whomsoever is not too sacred to be criticized by another human being...I think women have just as good a right to interpret and twist the Bible to their own advantage as men have twisted and turned it to theirs. While I do not consider it my duty to tear to tatters the lingering skeletons of the old superstitions and bigotries, yet I rejoice to see them crumbling on every side.”

I suppose that you could call me a social reformer. Some of you may consider me as something of a revolutionary-although I understand the meaning of that word in reference to women has changed quite a bit since my day. So, to be obliging, I always wear something red to show that I am a radical.

One incident people are always eager to remember is the time I was invited to the White House to meet President Teddy Roosevelt. I asked for his recommendation to Congress for a Suffrage Amendment and I added that I hope you, Mr. President, would not be a candidate for office again.

I really worked hard for the suffragists and faced much opposition. For example, when I met Horace Greeley—you’ll remember him as editor of the NEW YORK TRIBUNE who was defeated by General Ulysses S. Grant for the Presidency in 1872-He said to me, “Miss Anthony, you know the bullet and the ballot go together, if you vote, are you ready to fight?” “Yes,” I retorted, “Just as you fought in the late war—at the point of a goose quill.” You may remember that men could pay others to fight in their place during the Civil War.

Later, I became determined to help women attain a college education, so much so that while in my 80’s, I helped raise \$100,000 so that the University of Rochester in New York State could become co-educational. As I close my talk, let me say one more thing. I understand that the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution-granting women the right to vote-was ratified by the State in 1920, 14 years after I said goodbye to the world. It pleases me so much, and makes me think of the last words I spoke in Washington; “Failure is Impossible.” May that be your motto as well in the years to come as you continue fighting for rights for women.

# #

The basic text of this speech was taken from an earlier Women’s Day Alliance (WDA) program, First Unitarian, Dallas, TX, with some editorial changes and additions by PJantho, for a WDA program, January, 2016.

NB: Whether Anthony ever signed the Unitarian membership book has not been concretely confirmed.

## Clara Barton

I was born in Oxford, Massachusetts in 1821 and was named Clarissa Harlowe Barton but I preferred the simpler "Clara" as I was known throughout the world until my death in 1912. I attended the Universalist Church in Oxford with my parents and was a devout Universalist throughout my life.

I began teaching school at a time when most teachers were men and was among the first women to gain employment in the federal government as a clerk in the U.S. Patent office. When the first federal troops poured into Washington, D.C. in 1861 there was much alarm and confusion among the citizens as the first wounded casualties came in the city. It was apparent to me that the soldiers and victims of war were in dire need of help with food, bedding, clothing and nursing...It became my quest to fill those needs then throughout the Civil War by ministering to thousands. With my associates we drove supply wagons in the midst of battle at sometimes great risk to our own lives. At the end of the war I established the Office of Correspondence which helped to locate missing men of the U.S. Army which eventually identified over 13,000. These early years planted the seed for the big accomplishment of my life...The foundation of the American Red Cross many years later.

After the end of the Civil War and the aftermath of reconstruction, I traveled to Europe in search of rest. That was not to be...as I read a book by Henry Dunant founder of the global Red Cross network. Dunant's idea was to foster international agreements to protect the sick and wounded during wartime without respect to nationality and for the formation of national societies to give aid voluntarily on a neutral basis. This plan had been ratified in Geneva in 1864 by 12 European nations and was called the Geneva Treaty, The Red Cross Treaty and/or the Geneva Convention.

I passionately wanted this plan to be put in action in the United States. I stayed in Europe for a few years participating in activities of the European Red Cross specifically the Franco Prussian War in 1870. For protection as a volunteer in combat areas, I fashioned a red cross of ribbon on a white background which was the international symbol of the Red Cross.

After my return to the United States in 1873 and inspired by my experiences in Europe, I corresponded with Red Cross officials in Switzerland. They recognized my leadership abilities and the advantage of influencing the U.S. government to sign the Geneva Treaty. Armed with a letter from the head of the international committee of the Red Cross, I took the appeal to President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1877. He looked on the treaty as a possible "entangling alliance" and rejected it. His successor, President James Garfield, was supportive and seemed ready to sign it when he was assassinated. Finally, his successor, Chester Arthur, signed the treaty in 1882 and a few days later the Senate ratified it. All of this taking 5 long years.

As first president of the American Red Cross our work was chiefly disaster relief not only in the U.S. but around the world. My first job was to issue a public appeal for funds and clothing to victims of a devastating forest fire in Michigan. In 1892, I organized assistance for Russians suffering from famine by shipping them 500 railroad cars of Iowa cornmeal and flour. After a hurricane and tidal wave left over 5,000 dead on the Sea Islands of S. Carolina we worked for 10 months helping predominately African-Americans recover and re-establish their agricultural economy. In 1884, we chartered steamers to carry supplies up and down the Ohio and Miss. Rivers to assist flood victims. In 1889, I and 50 volunteers rode the first train into Johnstown, Pennsylvania to help the survivors of a dam break that caused over 2,000 deaths. Then in 1900, in one of my last relief efforts we distributed over \$120,000 in financial assistance and supplied to the survivors of the hurricane and tidal wave that struck Galveston, TX and caused more than 6000 deaths. Largely due to this disaster relief, at the Third International Red Cross meeting in Geneva in 1884 an amendment to the Geneva Treaty was proposed calling for relief operations on behalf of natural disasters. There were some dubious objections but the resolution passed and became known as "The American Amendment." Because of work like this in support of the global Red Cross network, I was honored with decorations such as the German Iron Cross for relief work in the Franco-Prussian war and the Silver Cross of Imperial Russia for the supplies provided during the famine of 1892. As age and the inevitable criticism of management style began to plague me, I resigned as leader of the American Red Cross in 1904 at the age of 83.

But I had other interest. I, throughout my life was a champion for education, prison reform, women's suffrage, civil rights and even spiritualism. I was struck by periods of depression many times, but seemed to revive quickly when a major calamity called for service. I rose early and worked late into the night. My appearance was very important to me and although I realized I was not a pretty woman I was very careful about my wardrobe. I liked dashes of bold color on my clothing, especially red. "It's my color."

**By word and deed, my religious belief as a Universalist was apparent. Recalling a letter I sent to my dear friend, Mrs. Norman Thrasher in March 1905, I quote:**

**“My dear friend, Your belief that I am a Universalist is as correct as your greater belief that you are on yourself, a belief in which all who are privileged to possess it, rejoice. In my case, it was a gift, like St. Paul, I ‘was born free’, and saved the pain of reaching it through years of struggle and doubt.**

**My father was a leader in the building of the church in which Hosea Ballow preached his first dedication sermon. Your historic records will show that the old Huguenot town of Oxford, Mass. erected one of, if not the first, Universalist Church in America. In this town I was born, in this church I was reared. In all its reconstruction and remodeling I have taken part, and I look anxiously for a time in the near future when the busy world will let me once more become a living part of its people, praising God for the advance in the liberal faith of the religions of the world today, so largely due to the teachings of this belief. I remain your devoted friend, Clara**

**POST SCRIPT: Clara Barton died on April 12, 1912 at the age of 91 at her home in Glen Echo, Maryland and was buried in the family plot in Oxford, Massachusetts. Her family donated her papers and other mementos to the Library of Congress. The National Park Service manages what is now the Clara Barton Historic Site in Glen Echo which is open for tours.**

**It is impossible to calculate the impact of the work of this remarkable woman whose dream has aided millions upon millions throughout the world. We can simply in all humbleness, salute her.**

**Barbara Powell, First Unitarian Church, Dallas, TX  
2016**

## Mary Ellen Richmond 1861-1928

I was born shortly after the start of the Civil War in 1861. Life was difficult in Baltimore, Maryland at that time. As an orphan, I was reared by my grandmother and an aunt who regularly discussed the concerns of the day such as woman's suffrage, racial problems, spiritualism, antivivisection and other "radical movements," as they were then called.

My grandmother and aunt were not in sympathy with the educational policies of the day and I was kept out of school until I was 11. This was before the days of compulsory education. I borrowed books from a family friend with the stipulation that I had to make a report on each book before I got the next. This helped me gain techniques that I used in my research later on. Finally, I graduated from high school at the age of 16—one of the four youngest students in my class.

After briefly working in New York City, I returned to Baltimore in 1881 at the age of 20. For the next seven years, I worked in a stationary store and later as a bookkeeper in a Baltimore hotel.

It was at that time that I found the Unitarian Church. I developed a religious connection that brought me in touch with people, apart from my family, whose tastes were congenial and whose philosophy and thinking were stable and sound. These were the first friends who became truly constructive forces in my life. My knowledge of the arts had been confined to literature. But now the world of music was added that provided a wonderful escape from the narrowing influences of my life. I taught in the Sunday School and conducted a Shakespeare study group of people my own age. It was a wonderful time of education and self-discovery. Finally, the monotony of my job at the hotel drove me to seek other work. At that time, the only employment with any intellectual aspect open to women was teaching. But in order to teach, you had to have either an education or political connections. I had neither. One day I saw an advertisement in the newspaper for an assistant treasurer for the Charity Organization Society of Baltimore. I was offered temporary employment for \$50 a month—just what I was making at the hotel. My aunt cautioned against leaving a steady job for one that seemed so indefinite. The organization was young and struggling and I felt a challenge and I took the risk.

The job was a combined the role of financial secretary and director of publicity. I made 30 speeches in my first year to various organizations. Subscriptions—what you would call 'donations'—greatly increased. This was the first time that my daily occupation became a challenge to my intellect. The Charity Organization movement in America was only about 10 years old. It was organized as a protest against uncoordinated and unintelligent relief giving and it was initially an unpopular movement. Some critics felt—and I quote—"that all charitable endeavors were a mischievous interference with the operation of natural laws."

Then in 1891, I became the General Secretary of the Society—the first woman to head it and without the benefit of a college education. During this time, I developed my early theories about charitable work that today you would call social work and social welfare. We were introducing a new approach—one that said—that to just give money and food to the poor was not enough. Our philosophy was to help people to help themselves, to continue to meet with the people and keep a diary of individual development. This would in time become known as "case work"—a model which we adapted from one developed in England.

Later in 1899, I felt challenged by the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity to help them restructure their effort. Later—1909 through 1917, I joined the Charity Organization of the Russell Sage Foundation in New York City and began independent research. I wrote a number of books on social issues—some of which I am pleased to say are still used as references in the School of Social Work at the University of Maryland. My published works were later translated for practitioners in Europe, South America and Asia and were said to have shaped the profession on those continents.

Finally, I owe so much for the personal enlightenment of my early life that continued to grow during my long relationship with Unitarian church.

Information taken from "The Long View"—Papers and Addresses by Mary E. Richmond—compiled by Joanne C. Colcord & Ruth Z.S. Mann, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1930.

PNJantho, Feb/2016, First Unitarian Church, Dallas, TX, revised account  
First presentation, First Unitarian Church of Baltimore, MD, circa 2005

## Louise Raggio

Louise Ballerstadt was born June 15, 1919 on a small farm in Central Texas. Both her parents were determined that she would get a college education. But her mom was her mentor and Louise said she probably tried to give Louise the kind of opportunities she would have liked. Louise didn't disappoint her parents, she understood the value of hard work. She graduated high school as valedictorian in 1936. Her Mom was given grief by her neighbors for insisting that a poor farm girl should go to college. Louise graduated from UT at Austin. She worked the whole time she went to school. Her Dad worked extra jobs so they could pay for her tuition. He was so proud of her that he kept her teaching certificate in a safe deposit box. She wanted to study journalism, but girls' professions were mostly secretary, teaching nursing and librarians in those days, so she got her teaching certificate so she could always earn a living. She became a Rockefeller Fellow and spent a year in Washington, DC. She got a job with the National Youth Administration and called back to Texas.

She had a date with a handsome, dashing, personable creature Grier Raggio. And, on their first date he proposed and she accepted. They were married in April 1941. After she had their first child he was drafted into World War II. He served two terms in combat including bloody fighting on the ground at Iwo Jima. He came back with what is likely PTSD. He had flashbacks and nightmares his whole life about what he witnessed.

He was a federal attorney in the McCarthy era. He was targeted as a Communist and fired. He was not a Communist, and one of the very few who were reinstated after the wholesale firing of liberal or progressive-leaning people who worked in government service due to Joe McCarthy's Red baiting. Louise said this led her to believe she needed to be able to earn a living to support her 3 boys. Grier was emotionally volatile and could be targeted again.

With his encouragement in 1948 she enrolled in SMU Law School at night and worked during the day, at times riding her son's bicycle to class carrying her baby tucked into the carrier. At that time, no law firm would hire a woman lawyer, but they could not keep her out of law school. They said they didn't want her to take the place of a man who could do the job when she couldn't but she graduated law school in 1952 as the only woman in her law school graduating class, and began to try to find a job.

After 2 years of being turned down for being a woman, she took a job in District attorney Henry Wade's office taking cases of family law and custody. Judge Sarah T Hughes was the first woman appointed as a Federal Judge, and she believed in helping women to break the barriers she had broken herself. Judge Hughes nagged Henry Wade until he made Louise the first female criminal prosecutor; earning half of what her male counterparts earned. This, according to Louise who quoted him saying, "He just did it to get Sara T off his back." Only one year before, women gained the right to serve on Juries. In 1955, she had the first criminal case in Texas tried before an all-female jury. This was sensationalist news to the papers. "All Women jury convicts Man."

Her husband convinced her to join his law firm, and she found that even as a lawyer, her signature was worthless. He had to co-sign her bonds, and anything else legal. It was a joke among the married female lawyers, doctors, accountants and other professionals that they couldn't legally own or sign anything on their own in the 1950s and early 1960s because their husbands had to sign everything for them. Louise's take on that was "that once a woman got married husband and wife were one and he was the one." She could not enter a legal contract. Theoretically, according to state law, her signature was not valid once she got married. She could no longer own property, secure a bank loan or start a business without her husband's consent.

In the 1960s Louise was earning a leadership role in the State Bar of Texas. She said, in Texas a married woman had the same rights as idiots, convicts, and minors. A single widowed or divorced woman could run their own affairs, and own property. But once she married she could not sell property she had owned independently before she had married. Because she had made many friends in the good old boy network through the state bar with her pleasant demeanor and wit she accomplished more with honey than vinegar. One of her sons said she played dumb, and asked for their help and the good old boys wanted to help the little lady.

To explain that, The Business and Professional Women had been trying to get the Equal Rights Amendment passed in the 1960s with little effect. Louise was the Chair of the Family Law Session. At a party where there was a lot of drinking she asked her good friend Clint Ball if he would please assign the new Marital Property Act to the Family Law Session instead of assigning it to a committee. To which he said, "Honey, you can have anything you want." So, she put it into writing to him in a letter the next day, thanking him profusely. And she began forming a task force of the best legal minds the state of Texas to work on the new legislative bill for the marital property act. (It later became a model for all the other states.) But there were doubts about whether it would pass the legislature in the late 1960s. There were demonstrations outside the state capitol asking for equal rights. Louise told me she was talking with one of the men who needed to sign off on it and he asked if she was one of those women, or if should disavow them. She agreed she was not a women's libber, bra burner if he would sign the act. He signed it without reading it. And another of her progressive legislator friends said he would get up in front of the legislature and mumble and mumble and that's what he did, so they did not hear the details. And with a wink and a nudge from Ben Barnes, she agreed to speak against the equal rights amendment, calling it premature if he would make sure the bill passed. They were so mad at the demonstrators that they passed her bill without reading it and Governor Connally signed it. She travelled the state explaining this new law which laid the groundwork for the Equal Rights Amendment and made it possible for that to pass in 1971. It was win/win.

Raggio is known as “The mother of family law in Texas, and the Texas Tornado.” But, the Marital Property Act was just one of her accomplishments on behalf of women. As chairwoman of the State Bar of Texas Family Law Section she ran a project that overhauled and consolidated the Texas Family Law Code which was completed in 1979 after 14 years of work. She was the first woman ever elected to the Board of the State Bar of Texas and she won election as the Director of the State Bar of Texas in 1979. They gave her the same cufflinks they had given every other man who had held that office. She wore them on a necklace as her “badge of acceptance.” Later, they gave her a pendant with the state bar insignia.

Her life was a series of firsts: First female DA, first female member of the board of directors of the State Bar of Texas, first female Trustee and chair of the Texas Bar Foundation, Chair of American Bar Association’s Family Law Section, former governor of American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, receiving the State Bar’s highest awards: the citation of Merit in 1967, and the President’s Award in 1987. One of the 6 women members of the “Dirty Thirty”: a select group of family lawyers in America. A past member of the Board of First UU Church. She was elected to the Texas woman’s Forum “Women who Made a Difference Award.” In 1997 the Louise B Raggio Endowed Lecture Series was created. These lectures bring women of outstanding achievement to SMU each year to meet with students and deliver a keynote address. She died January 2011 at the age 91. I miss our role model. When I saw her at church I probably annoyed her with my telling her how she was my role model, but she was too kind to brush me off.

Dian McCollum, First Unitarian Church, Dallas  
Women’s Day Alliance, 2016

## **Solender segment: for March 2016 WDA program**

**I was born Ellen Van Raalte Karelsen in 1923, three years after women gained the right to vote. Being reared in New York City, I attended Ethical Culture Society schools followed by graduation from Oberlin College in Ohio. After my 1949 marriage to an Oberlin classmate, Robert Solender, we moved to Dallas where I became an active community volunteer with focus on the League of Women Voters of Dallas. My League experience helped me to further my abilities while serving as Program Vice President. I was in charge of studies that were approved by the Membership. I had to oversee the written materials that resource chairs wrote for submission to the members and the public. I became known for my editing skills.**

**When I contacted government officials on behalf of the League, I found that my questions were not taken seriously. That motivated me to improve my credentials.**

**With three children in school, I enrolled in SMU's Law School in 1967 with twelve other women. Law school was painful. No male student spoke to me until I spoke first. In many of my classes, the faculty overlooked women and some never called on us at all. During my senior year, I started making comments without waiting to be called on and sometimes, I was able to change the direction of the discussion. I learned that law professors can be as inflexible and arbitrary as anyone and should not be respected solely because of their status. Nevertheless, four other women and I passed the bar in 1971.**

**But law firms were not hiring women. After several non-legal jobs, I took a part time job teaching at SMU Law School and I tried to believe that I had been hired on my own merits. This presented a new set of situations. After two years I was directing twelve other instructors. But when salaries were under review, I found that I was not being paid equal to males of my rank and experience. Although I contested periodically, I was consistently underpaid throughout my career and that affected the amount of my retirement pension.**

**Obtaining tenure was another matter: in addition to dated requirements of teaching, scholarship (involving publishing) and service to the community, there was the unarticulated requirement of collegiality-the ability to "fit in." Students were no help and because of their resentment of a female teach-since only males were cited as authority figures-student appraisals became so negative that they went beyond believability and the faculty finally reacted and rallied to my defense.**

**I tried to change the atmosphere in my classrooms from one of terror to one of cooperation, that we were engaged in a cooperative enterprise that would ultimately enable justice to prevail. I introduced topics of family violence in my Torts classes to show how tort principles could be useful. Gradually, there were genuinely affirmative comments mixed in the negative ones. The older students, women and minorities, were as supportive of me as I hope I was with them. This made coming to work each day more joyous, despite continued covert hostility of my colleagues, many of whom continued to use the tack of humiliating students as their teaching modus operandi.**

**Other struggles continued during my effort to gain tenure: publication false starts when given inaccurate advice, service on multiple Law School committees, service to the community, the university and the law school, service on the law school Recruitment Committee, and finally, the need to show forms of Collegiality. Collegiality actually meant hearing sexist jokes and comments together with obscene language. During social events, the wives spoke to me and the faculty spoke to my husband. With the addition of a number of females to the faculty, social events changed.**

**Following my husband's death, I had lost interest in group participation. My family interceded and I was connected to the Women's Day Alliance-which became a prime outlet for me. Although becoming increasingly frail, I looked forward to the companionship as long as I was physically able to attend.**

**The League of women Voters of Dallas honored me in 2011 at the annual luncheon as the recipient of the Susan B. Anthony Award for distinguished service in Making Democracy Work.**

**When I retired from active teaching in 1994, SMU established the Ellen K. Solender Institute in Free Speech and Mass Media Law Fund which I have supported.**

**In 2015, I gave \$2 million to the Dedman School of Law to fund the Ellen K. Solender Endowed Chair in Women and the Law. I worried whether my granddaughter and my great-great nieces will see equality in their lifetimes. I hope this endowed chair could be a catalyst and speed up the journey to equality for women.**

**Looking back over my early years at SMU, I wonder why I persisted but then reminded myself that they did vote for me to be tenured in 1980. Finally, I became the role I was playing, changing from a feisty upfront person to a pleasant, even tempered, devious person enabling me to remain calm even though the sky was falling. For me the greatest gain has been a feeling of validation and I can believe that maybe I was a good law professor. I served the profession and I made a difference.**

**# #**

**(Notes taken from THE STORY OF A SELF-EFFACING FEMINIST LAW PROFESSOR from the Journal of Gender & the Law, Vol. 4:249, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX**

**PNJantho, First Unitarian Church, Dallas, TX  
2016 Women's Day Alliance**

**Rev. Laurel Hallman**

**My name is Rev. Laurel Hallman, and I am currently Minister Emerita of First Unitarian Church of Dallas. I served First Church as Senior Minister for 22 years before my retirement in 2009, when I married Larry Ladd and moved to Boston. I am an author, a wife, mother, grandmother, teacher, mentor. The seven decades of my life have been filled with rich experiences, sometimes despair, indescribable joys, and constant spiritual insights and challenges.**

**During my UU ministry, I have sought to define and construct the concept of “spiritual maturity” within the lives of UUs. I developed a curriculum called Living By Heart, a contemplative spiritual devotional that is used in small group settings as a means to deepen our connection to life in the moment, to encourage “attentiveness to kinship with nature and persons so that we become more aware that we are encompassed by mystery beyond naming.”**

**“I am a rational mystic because knowing the truth is important to me, not so I can practice faithful acceptance, but so that I can be in relationship with a living truth, truth that courses through my body in DNA, and rises up from my heart and mind in poetry. The truth I experience, the truth that calls me forward, the truth that, beyond all I know, sets me free.”**

**Born in 1943, amid the turmoil of the Second World War, I was raised in a solid middle class home in the San Francisco area by parents who had known the extreme poverty of the Great Depression. My mother and father provided love and security for me and my brother. In those days, my family attended the local Baptist church where Hellfire and Brimstone, Sin and Repentance, starred as the major themes of sermons. I spent a good part of my youth seeking to attain the “level of Goodness” so important to the church of my childhood.**

**I graduated from San Jose State College in 1965. Although I wanted to become a high school English teacher, my male adviser said I was too small to be an effective teacher of older students (and I believed him!) so I took my certification in Elementary Education. That same year, I married my first husband, Gary Hallman, whom I met years before at my San Francisco church.**

**We moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, where I taught 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. Gary had become a UU and introduced me to the Unity Church. No Fire and Brimstone there. I was astounded such a church existed; I could go home feeling at peace. My real spiritual journey was just beginning. And I was entering my productive years as the 1960’s were exploding all around us. Civil rights, women’s rights, anti-war demonstrations, and idealism took over the collective thinking. More importantly for me, women were stepping up and assuming leadership roles in every profession.**

**I was introduced to deeper levels of joy, responsibility and love residing within myself when my only child, Peter, was born in 1970. Two years later, as the grief of divorce was fresh on my mind, the minister at Unity offered me a job as assistant to the minister. Although Peter was only two, I took the position and began what was to be my earliest education for**

the ministry. During my five years at Unity Church, I listened, learned, and loved what I was doing. But a funny thing happened to me on my way to a different life—in 1977, I flew home to San Francisco where my father was undergoing open heart surgery. I took a drive one afternoon with my best friend from college—we stopped at a monastery and walked through its rose garden. I remember telling her that my father was going to die, if not in surgery, someday, and that I need to claim my life as my own. In that very moment, I decided to apply to a theological school in the fall, a major and radical decision for me as a single mother with a seven-year-old son and a comfortable job.

I am continually amazed by the intuitive workings of the human mind. Small, subconscious whisperings spring into booming commitments, seemingly all at once. But like water working away at a creek bank, self-knowledge subtly carves a path for each of us.

In 1981, I graduated with degrees from the University of Chicago Divinity School and Meadville Lombard Theological School. I was ordained at the Unity where I had begun my Unitarian journey and then was called to the UU congregation in Bloomington, Indiana, a church I served for six years.

Always the consummate planner, ever tenacious in organizing my life, I hoped to return to San Francisco, my childhood home, but another offer came to me. I was called to serve First Church in Dallas, Texas, an area of the country with which I was unfamiliar. So, in late 1987, I found myself in a new pulpit, worrying about all the things a new minister finds to fret about. But the obstacles we perceive are many times not the obstacles we actually encounter. Nine months into my new job, I had minor day surgery. I came out of that surgery inexplicably paralyzed from the hip down on my left side. My prognosis was unknown, I was far away from family and old friends, and there was a chance that I would have to give up my ministry.

One month after the initial shock, I came back to church and preached probably my favorite sermon entitled “Cheap Grace.” I remember making my way down the chancery on crutches, wearing a leg brace, and leaning on the lectern as I spoke. I could only guess then at where I was going and what I could hope for, if anything, so I preached what I knew then:

Grace, the gift of God/Life/the Forces among us—whatever you call it—comes in ways we can't manage, in response to prayers we can't utter, in the midst of situations where there are no guarantees. It becomes a deep existential trust that we reach not by plan or even intention, but in recognition of that which emerges from the depths of our beings to sustain us.

In the painful months that followed, my mother fell and shattered her hip while visiting me in Dallas and my son fell ill with TB after a trip abroad. I had to rely on the kindness of my new congregation for my care as I tackled the difficult task of intense physical therapy to improve my condition.

Months later, my story would have the best of endings—my mother and son had recovered, and, though I would always experience some weakness in my left leg and foot, I was able to

**resume my ministry duties and would serve as Senior Minister of First Church for 21 more years.**

**In January, 1989, less than a year after tragedy seemed to be appearing from all corners of my life, I preached the companion sermon to “Cheap Grace” wherein I explained my gratitude “in the face of what could have been.”**

**Today, at this moment in time, as I enjoy my life and work, grateful for my beloved husband and family and friends, I continue to find the words of that 1989 sermon meaningful. Let me end with my words from the sermon entitled, “When the Half-Gods Go:”**

**“I was comforted in the knowledge that whether I found meaning in what was happening, meaning was there. It might not be apparent. But the way I lived my life, even in this situation, did make a difference. And it was the very loss of the half-gods of health, vitality, and special blessing which made that understanding clear...[It is] the paradox of life that in brokenness we become whole. May it be for each of us.”**

**Maridel Hoagland  
First Unitarian Church, Dallas  
2016**