

policy for *MFF* that will allow for a very, very small number of pages in each issue to be devoted to such commercial advertisements as the managing editor of *MFF* deems useful for its members. This policy will not affect conference announcements, calls for papers and submissions, session announcements, and the like. Want ads and personals that satisfy Dame Folly's (admittedly somewhat warped) sense of humor will continue to be published free of charge (examples can be found in *MFF*, volume 29).

I know that everyone joins me in again thanking The Center for the Study of Women in Society (CSWS) at the University of Oregon for providing SMFS and *MFF* with a home and an allowance (for operating expenses). And I am thrilled to report that CSWS is stepping up its commitment to SMFS. It has agreed to design, launch, and maintain an SMFS website. The Advisory Board has appointed me as its liaison to work with CSWS on the website during the fall. I'm glad to be able to see this initiative through to its conclusion.

This is my last president's message. Dear members, I have loved serving as president of SMFS and working with dedicated, responsible, thoughtful, smart, and funny colleagues who share a commitment to feminist scholarship, who want to build an organization based on feminist principles, and who like to get things done. I am grateful to have had this opportunity to communally translate, in some small way, shared ideals into practice.

Ann Marie Rasmussen

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

"Feminist Legacies," the special topic of issue 30, is continued here in issue 31 of *MFF*. Essays in the fall issue primarily took the form of narrative reflections on what it has meant to work in the academy as a woman. In those autobiographical or personal narratives, contributors wrote about the professional challenges incurred either because of their gender or because of their political commitments. Some readers, responding to the issue, have said they found the essays fascinating; some have also said they found them depressing—as accounts, realistic rather than uplifting, of careers that have been constrained and even diminished by the network of proscriptions that are part of institutionalized patriarchy.

The five essays in the current issue switch from personal narrative to biography. Four sketch out the careers of important early 20th century scholars in medieval studies: Hope Emily Allen, Margaret Schlauch, and Eleanor Prescott Hammond. A fifth essay, by Mary Carruthers, takes the form of a personal reflection. What links the careers of all these scholars so remarkably, Carruthers included, is interdisciplinarity, the practice of historical and cultural scholarship that has even helped to redraw disciplinary boundaries. Hope Emily Allen, as Marea Mitchell shows, was practicing cultural criticism long before cultural studies

were a discipline; what makes Allen's notes to *The Book of Margery Kempe* so valuable and timely today are their copious references to politics, female devotional practices, and cultural life in early fifteenth century England. Mary Carruthers writes of her own choice to operate outside of conventional disciplinary boundaries, bridging literature and art and intellectual history. Eleanor Prescott Hammond, an independent scholar best known for *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual* and *English Verse Between Chaucer and Surrey*, brought to literary criticism a pioneering socio/cultural perspective, as Derek Pearsall observes. And as we can see from Margaret Schlauch's copious bibliography, over her lifetime her work continued to move between politics, history and literature. Is there something about being female that leads female scholars to interdisciplinary work? Carruthers recounts, at key points in her professional career, what can only be described as systematic persecution; has persecution enabled her to imagine ideas beyond institutional barricades? The career of Margaret Schlauch, as Laura Mestayer Rogers notes, was defined by its troping of exile and displacement, and Schlauch lived in her own career a professional exile that was even forecast in her first major work, *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens*. Hope Emily Allen, who never held an academic post, asked questions about writing and culture that, however prophetic of future developments in new historicism and cultural studies, were entirely unconventional. To what extent did her own professional marginalization as well as her freedom from institutional constraints inspire her to ask then unorthodox questions about Margery Kempe's life, work, and culture?

If these essays are more upbeat than those in the last issue, it may be due to the fact that most of them are views from the outside, rather than personal stories. Narrative and historical distance bring into relief the achievements of these scholars—and suggest strongly that marginalization has had a radical and transformative legacy. The work of these intellectual pioneers in medieval studies, even those who, like Hammond and Allen, did not hold academic posts, has not only helped to map a course for future female scholars in the academy, but has also transformed the intellectual practices of the academy itself.

For help with this issue of *MFF*, I would like to thank managing editor Gina Psaki, president Ann Marie Rasmussen, and associate editors E. Ann Matter, Mary Suydam, and Ulrike Wiethaus.

Sarah Stanbury

