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Women Winners of the Alpha Sigma Nu Book Awards: Making Scholarship Visible

By Anne D. Garner

Alpha Sigma Nu (then called Alpha Sigma Tau) was founded at Marquette University in 1915. Began as the Jesuit answer to Phi Beta Kappa, the Jesuit institutions wanted a tangible way to honor scholarship. As its inception, Alpha Sigma Tau was open to men only. In 1924, Gamma Pi Ipsilon was established for women students. In 1973, the two societies merged and became Alpha Sigma Nu (ASN). The Society is now open to men and women of the twenty-eight American Jesuit colleges and universities, two theology centers, Sojourn University in Korea and Regis College in Toronto.

In 1979 William McInnes, S.J., then president of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), collaborated with the national office of Alpha Sigma Nu to develop the National Jesuit Book Award program, as a way of promoting intellectual life on Jesuit campuses. As McInnes envisioned it, the purpose of the award was to make scholarship visible on Jesuit college and university campuses.

There have been 76 winners of the Alpha Sigma Nu Award since the inception of the program in 1979. Of these, 16 have been women.

The women featured below are but a few examples of the outstanding women faculty now working on Jesuit campuses and of the high quality work that they produce.

Dr. Ellen Winner
Professor of Psychology
Boston College

Dr. Ellen Winner received the 1997 ASN award in the sciences for her book, Gifted Children: Myths and Realities (Basic Books). Winner says:

I wanted to write this book because I felt synapsing my two other books has been synapsing at a field, and I found that most of what was written about the gifted was not sufficiently based on scientific research. I wanted to pull the research findings together to discover what story would emerge.

Her book was declared controversial by the Library Journal for its bold recommendations on how to help gifted children cope with their extraordinary talents and adapt to living in a "normal" world. Supported by comprehensive research, her findings destroyed many of the commonplace myths surrounding gifted students, and opened up completely new possibilities of working with these special students.

I argued that moderately gifted children might not need special programs if we elevated the standards for all children, but that the extremely gifted would still need special programs. Some

Anne D. Garner is the director of administration for the AJCU.
Dr. Amy Haddad
Director, Center for Health Policy and Ethics
C.G. and Mabel L. Critz Endowed Chair in Health Sciences
Catholic University of America

In 2003, Dr. Haddad won the Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit Book Award in the Health Sciences Division for her book, *Health Professional and Patient Interaction, 6th Edition* (WW. B. Saunders), which she coauthored with Ruth Porillo, also at Catholic University. This is a book that received rave reviews, not only from the ASN book award judges, but also from *Physical Therapy*, the journal of the American Physical Therapy Association, who called Hippi "a definitive handbook of professionalism." It's a book about teamwork and collaboration, both between patient and health care professional and among the different health care professionals attending the patient. The basis of the book is respect: respect the individual and respect for oneself as a health care practitioner. In the words of Dr. Haddad:

"The book, *Health Professional and Patient Interaction* (HPI), gives the theme of respect throughout the book to help develop health professionals' understanding of this foundational element in their relationship with patients. Working at a health institution requires skill at eliciting a patient's feelings and how to deal with their emotions. As a patient, a student knows the differences, just like each student's encounter is the classroom setting is different, whether the interaction is with an individual or a group. We need to pay attention to the individual needs of each patient in the book as well as encourage students to rely on their values in this regard. I believe that the audience of this particular issue has had a great impact on the way I teach and I structured the book."

Dr. Haddad received her JN from Catholic University in 1977, her MSN from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 1979 and her PhD in education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1988. She has had a very distinguished career and is a nationally known expert in ethics education, providing leadership at the development of novel methods to shape ethically competent and committed health professionals. She teaches ethics and health policy in the Schools of Pharmacy and Health Professions, Medicine and Nursing, and has been teaching ethics in the health sciences at Creighton University Medical Center since 1989.

Dr. Haddad recently received the Robert K. Chalmers Distinguished Pharmacy Educator Award from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP). The AACP bestows this national award annually on one pharmacy educator who has made major contributions to the profession. In 2001, Haddad was named a Carnegie Scholar by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of the Scholarship of Teaching, a prestigious honor bestowed on select individuals in higher education around the country. I asked whether the book award had any special meaning for her. You asked about what this award has meant to my career. I think it is especially important to recognize such a scholarship because books have a direct impact on student learning in a way that it only approximated by other forms of written scholarship. Sometimes books are viewed as less important than work that results from the scholarship of discovery. Yet a text like Hippi that is meant to be used as a learning tool in a virtual or actual classroom is important work for the word of recognition. The Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit Book Award draws attention to this form of scholarship and affirms the work. I think the award is greatly significant for Hippi because it is addressed to nurses in health care, how they see their obligations, and most importantly how they view their patients. I am deeply humbled to have received this award, considering the caliber of the competition."

Dr. Mara Adelman
Associate Professor of Communication
Seattle University

Mara Adelman received her BA in speech communication from the University of California, Los Angeles, a master's in speech communication from California State University, San Diego and her PhD in speech communication from the University of Washington.
in Seattle. She has been a professor at Seattle University since 1994.

Dr. Adelman won the 1998 Alpha Sigma Nu Jesuit Book Award for her book, The Fragile Community: Living Together with AIDS (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates), co-authored with Lawrence Frey, a professor at Loyola University Chicago.

Dr. Adelman, who is trained in network analysis and ethnography, was teaching at Northwestern University and volunteering at 1st Avenue House, an assisted group living facility for people with AIDS, when the Alexian Brothers, who ran the facility, discovered Adelman’s background. They asked her to study the community so that they could learn how to be more responsive to the needs of the residents.

Dr. Adelman agreed and eventually went to live in the community residence. While there, she videotaped interviews with residents, seeking their views on what constitutes a community, how people enter that community, how people leave. Far from being the unfeeling scientist, Adelman had to maintain the tension between being an integral part of the group and being the unbiased researcher. In 1991, Larry Frey, a communication professor at Loyola University of Chicago, joined Adelman’s project. His background in group communication and research complemented Adelman’s work and together they formed a strong and successful collaboration which ultimately resulted in their book, The Fragile Community. In an interview with the National Communication Association, Adelman spoke about her research.

We consciously tried to produce research that empowers residents of 1st Avenue House. We also want to give the community at large and the practitioners, who work with people living with AIDS, a framework for understanding how people struggle and sustain community in group living environments. It seems to me that we can understand the community process in this very fragile, tenacious, marginalized community, then perhaps we can understand how we build community in our more enduring environments.

Dr. Mara Adelman

In 1991, Mara Adelman joined the faculty of Seattle University and socialized the salon approach to address issues which are vital to today’s world. Adelman invites scholars from across the country to interact with the students on themes such as “sexual justice” and “consumption and poverty,” and she encourages the students to actively participate, to take on the role of the “engaged scholar.” As Dr. Adelman explains it, being an engaged scholar is not about every house and class – it’s about a passion for ideas, challenges to mind and heart, and the openness to change one’s choice based on new learning.

By tackling problematic societal issues with strength and courage, and by coupling truth with compassion, these women have given form to the spirit of a Jesuit university as articulated by Fr. Peter-Ens Kolenbach, Superior General of the Society of Jesus.

The university should be the home of honest and ethical values; it should be the cradle of conscience in society; it should illuminate with its reflection those who are addressing the problems of the modern or postmodern society; it should be the cradle where the diverse women in human thought are debated and solutions proposed.

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