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# Documenting Second Wave Feminism: Regional Collecting R/evolutions, Session “Documenting a Revolution: Second Wave Feminism and Beyond!”

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Documenting a Revolution: Second Wave Feminism and Beyond  
Society of American Archivists  
72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting  
San Francisco, August 2008

Opening Remarks and Introductions, Danelle Moon,  
SJSU Special Collections & Archives

This is session 310, Documenting a Revolution: Second Wave Feminism and Beyond, a program sponsored by the Women's Collection Roundtable.

My name is Danelle Moon, and I am serving as the session chair. I am the Director of San Jose State University Special Collections & Archives, and I am a practicing women's historian. This session is directly tied to my research which is focused on inter-war and post WWII feminism.

Unfortunately, historian Stephanie Gilmore is unable to join us. I will introduce the speakers, Glenna Matthews, Kathryn Jacob, and Kelly Wooten, following this brief introduction. We will reserve time following the presentations for questions and comments. Please turn-off your cell phones and if you could refrain from applause until the end of program, we would be grateful.

**Introduction:**

In 1973 Eva Moseley, curator of the Schlesinger Library, articulated the state of collecting the history of women in the United States. At this time the field of women's history was relatively new. Moreover, few archival programs were devoted to the collection of women's history, with the exception of the Schlesinger Library and Sophia Smith College collections. We have come along ways since 1973....

In 2008 women's history has a secure footing in history programs and is represented across disciplines. Similarly the number of archival collections documenting women's experience has multiplied as well. Karen Mason and Tanya Zanish-Belecher writing on the state on of women's archives in 2000, reminded us of the importance of building women's collections and the role that the archives play in providing important resources for scholars to discover and analyze. The number of dissertations, articles, books, documentaries, and film drawing from the resources we have so carefully

collected demonstrates the importance of stand-a-alone women’s archives, as well as the role that general collections play in documenting the role of women in society. Indeed, we have succeeded in unlocking the vault, adopted new approaches to collection development, improved cataloging so that women are visible, and, thus increased discovery of women’s experience across the spectrum of family, institutional, and corporate archival collections.

These developments represent part of the second wave feminist revolution. Ruth Rose in *The World Spilt Open: How the Modern Women’s Movement Changed America*” reinforces the revolution of the second wave feminist movement and impact on American society. Following the history of feminism from the cold war years to the present, she illustrates the diffusion of feminism across the United States in the 1970s to the reinvention of feminism in our time. The firm grounding of women’s history as an academic discipline and the documentation of women’s experiences by archivists is interconnected. As Rosen reminds us, “each generation of women activists leaves an unfinished agenda for the next generation....Second wave feminists challenged nearly everything, transformed much of American Culture, expanded democracy by insisting that equality had to include the realities of its women citizens, and catapulted women’s issues onto the global stage.”<sup>1</sup>

Second wave women succeeded in changing the terms of the debate and made women matter in society. The next generation (fourth wave?) is held with the responsibility of preserving and securing greater human rights for women globally. As Archivists and Historians we provide an important life-line to future generations of activists through our collecting practices, activism, and through our writings. To this end, I would like to introduce three activists, who have are working toward this goal.

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Rose, *The World Spilt Open: How the Modern Women’s Movement Changes America* (Viking Press, 2000), p. 344.