

## Editors' Note

We are excited to be the new co-editors of *WILLA*. This 2009 issue of the journal brings to you six articles as well as a representative column and coverage of a recent Inglis Award. All of these selections offer insights on the impact of gender in language, literature, and life. We invite you not only to read but also to respond to these texts and the gender issues, challenges, and accomplishments they present.

The journal opens with two pieces about the current situation for young women in secondary schools today. The first of these, Pauline Schmidt's "Beyond Secondary Roles: What the Women of the Canon Teach Today's Girls," demonstrates what is perhaps a more typical approach to teaching literature at the secondary level. The next article is Ginger Goldman Malin's "She Opened a Book Slowly: How Urban Girls Found Their Literate Identities in Book Group," which shows a specific book group approach used in an urban environment to help Mexican-American girls work toward empowerment through the study of women's literature.

The third selection, "Breaking Into the Superhero Boy's Club: Teaching Graphic Novel Literary Heroines in Secondary English Language Arts," addresses the power and potential of gender images in a relatively new literary genre, the graphic novel. Author Katie Monnin demonstrates how graphic novels can align with IRA and NCTE standards, extend definitions of literacies, and expand literary approaches to gender representation.

The final three articles all involve a degree of personal narrative and understanding. Susan Schroeder's "What Teaching Methods of Inquiry Taught Me" shares what the author learned from teaching a new-to-her course and her reflections on the impact of what students learned not only about inquiry, but also about gender identity and sexual orientation. Connie Buskist recounts the experiences

of one of her particularly memorable students in "Request Permission to Come Aboard: Lieutenant Commander Liz Galloway (ret.) Reporting for Duty." In "Taking the Road Less Traveled: A Professor's Path to Becoming Educated," Jan Hogan shares her own experience navigating her higher education experiences while raising a family.

Add to these great articles Pat Kelly's column about her recent trip to Kenya and her impressions of opportunities for schoolgirls there and Lynne Alvine's acceptance speech for the Inglis Award (with a wonderful introduction by Judy Hayn). As and after you read, we hope that you will enjoy this issue, react to and act on its content, and contribute your thoughts and stories to subsequent issues of *WILLA*!

Best wishes,  
Hannah Furrow  
Edna Brabham