

## Editors' Note

Volume 18 of *WILLA* features a collection of nine articles and includes information about the Editorial and Executive Boards and Trustees, the Inglis Awards, a call for manuscripts, and membership. All of the articles offer insights on the impact of gender in language, literature, and life. We invite you to read and respond to these selections and in ways that give you agency for voice and action on issues, challenges, accomplishments, and potentials they present.

This volume of the journal leads with two articles that focus on figures prominent to the history or, more appropriately in this case, the “herstory” of changes in women’s roles and lives and connections between these individuals and contemporary trends in society. The first of these, Martha Diede’s “Subtle Evasions: Mary Sidney and Social Expectations for Women’s Private Roles,” examines women’s public and private persona from past to present. The second piece is “Our Debt to Mary Wollstonecraft, Moral and Intellectual Pioneer for Women” by Susan Roberts, who links history and her story as an instructor of women preparing for service and leadership right along with men at the U. S. Coast Guard Academy.

The next three articles focus on professional issues, opportunities, achievements, and images from the perspectives of women with different careers, paths, charges, and responsibilities as educators. In the first, Connie Mietlicki presents a close look at what one state is doing to improve childcare, a critical concern for many women, and relates the experiences of four women who take advantage of career ladders that enable them to become professionals and “Women Who Make a Difference in the Lives of Children.” In “Professional Conversations on ‘What Not To Wear’ and Other Essential Advice for Female Pre-service Teachers,” ten tips for helping teacher candidates develop awareness of relationships between professionalism and image are offered by authors Shelly Bowden, Tracye Strichik, Carolyn Corliss, and Ronnie Griffon. The third piece, “Narrative Reflexivity in Raced and Gendered Spaces,” brings three vignettes depicting experiences of Terri Rodriguez to readers and shows how she integrates her experiences as a gringa teaching English in Puerto Rico into her work with Latino/a pre-service teachers in the mid-western United States.

The third and last set of articles focuses on the research and practice written about by four educators with students ranging from the university level to second grade. In “Weaving New Understandings of Teacher Research as a Feminist Practice,” Mary Naploi explores relationships between teacher research and feminism, issues of identity and authority, and why she believes that story is the “foundation of teacher research and personal and professional change.” Donna Mahar shares the results of her research on images constructed by young women in “Reading Fabrics of Choice: A Study of Women’s Redesign of Popular Media to Grow Voice and Social Identity” and paints vivid portraits of participants’ use of media to redefine images of success. The last two articles are testimonies

to the impact of children's literature and educators who teach their students to critically read and evaluate gender and racial images presented in literature. In "Why Does She Hear the Heartbeat? Helping Pre-service Teachers Question Power and Gender in Children's Literature," Donna Mahar reports findings from a study that engaged teacher candidates in strategic tactics aimed at revisioning representations of women and men in widely read picture and chapter books. The last article by Cheron Hunter Davis is entitled "Am I a Keeper of the Dream? A Critical Reflection of *The Dreamkeepers*, 20 Years Later." This selection explores racial images in children's literature and achievement gaps between Black and White children across decades and identifies culturally sensitive and relevant teaching practices documented by research as effective and made possible by a growing body of literature written by and about African-Americans.

All of the works in this volume of *WILLA* offer readers gifts of knowledge, glimpses of teaching and learning, research findings, and personal wisdoms based on observations and experiences. These articles highlight relationships between gender and other images that permeate language and literature and structure life expectations and opportunities. We hope that readers will be inspired by these writings and messages about the power and potential of individuals as agents of change in society that they convey.

Sincerely,  
Edna Brabham  
Hannah Furrow