Forward Out of Darkness

Gender, Media, and Suffrage in the United States
IONE SPENCER BENNION (1908–1997)

Utah State University’s Bennion Workshop for teachers was established in 1993 through the generous gift of Ione S. Bennion. She expressly aimed for the workshop to perpetuate democratic principles, namely “to explore the concepts upon which democracy is built, the conditions under which it flourishes, and the dangers to its existence….The seminar participants are encouraged to explore new themes in their teaching and writing with democratic principles in mind.”

In 1945, after the death of her first husband, the Salt Lake City native became the first Dean of Women at what was then known as the Utah State Agricultural College. Ione Bennion served until 1952, when she married her second husband, forestry professor Ted Daniel, and she was forced by the school to resign due to an anti-nepotism law from the 1930s. Never one to be daunted by adversity, she spent the next 28 years homeschooling and teaching the sick and disabled through the Logan school district, and she was instrumental in starting a program allowing pregnant teenagers to finish high school. She was also committed to community betterment, especially in regards to issues of social justice, she worked tirelessly for the arts and underserved communities, and she contributed to the national adoption of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. She also devoted much of her energy to women’s causes, serving on Utah’s Women’s Legislative Council, the League of Women Voters, and the board of the local Planned Parenthood chapter. She was an ardent supporter of the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Ione Bennion went to great lengths to address any need she saw; she was even known to personally pay the college tuition of Iranian and East Indian students who lived rent-free in her home while attending USU. According to a 1979 news story about her volunteerism in the community, “Kindness and action against injustices [were] just an integral part of the fabric of her life.”

“As a teacher from a rural area, I really appreciate that Bennion is a world-class opportunity that provides face-to-face scholarly interaction with top-notch students and excellent professors from multiple universities and institutions across the country.” — Previous Bennion participant
Candi Carter Olson, assistant professor of media and society, researches women’s press clubs as agents of change, newswomen’s history, and the use of social media by women to build community and organize activist groups. She has been recognized as an emerging scholar by both American Journalism and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Cathy Ferrand Bullock is a professor in and interim head of USU’s Department of Journalism and Communication. She is an award-winning educator who was named Honors Outstanding Professor in 2016. Her research interests include media coverage of historic civil rights battles and of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abduction.

Above: Women’s Suffrage picket parade in Washington, D.C., 1917. Colorization by Sanna Dullaway for TIME magazine / Orig. image: Library of Congress. The American Suffrage movement used banner colors to signify loyalty (purple), light and life (gold), and purity of person and purpose (white).

Cover: Official Program—Woman Suffrage Procession. Illustration by Benjamin M. Dale for the National American Woman Suffrage Association parade, Washington, D.C., March 3, 1913. LOT5541. Prints and Photographs Division. LC-USZC4-2996. “The dramatic flair of the program’s cover shows vividly the organizers’ intent to draw attention to their momentous event. The cover also displays recurring motifs of the U.S. suffrage movement: the herald sounding a horn, the motto “Votes for Women,” and the colors purple, gold, and white. Such imagery was easily recognized by the general public and served as unifying symbols for those within the suffrage movement.” —“American Women” collection of the Library of Congress.
Nathan M. Richardson is a performance poet and Douglass historian. His poetry collections include *Likeness of Being*, *Twenty-one Imaginary T-shirts*, and *Voices from the Wombs of Wisdom*. His work has been widely re-published in anthologies, magazines, and newspapers such as the *Channel Marker*, *The Cupola*, *Coastal Virginia Magazine*, and the *Washington Post*. Nathan teaches workshops for emerging writers and is the creator and host of a popular open mic series in Newport News, Virginia. Switching hats frequently from literature to history, Nathan is now in his 5th year of The Frederick Douglass Speaking Tour, a living history performance in which he captures the physical and spiritual essence of the former slave, writer, orator, and abolitionist. A short list of Nathan’s other affiliations include the Suffolk Arts League, the Poetry Society of Virginia, Young Audiences of Virginia, the Association of Lincoln Presenters and the Association for the Study of African American Life & History.

Renée-Noelle Felice brings the stories of nineteenth- and twentieth-century women to life in the interest of connecting twenty-first-century audiences with those who paved the way to the opportunities we now enjoy. She has been portraying historical figures for over 20 years, appearing at the Women’s Rights National Historical Park at Seneca Falls and in libraries, schools, churches, and other venues. Among the women Renée-Noelle incarnates are Lucretia Mott and Matilda Joslyn Gage, luminaries of the abolition and suffrage movements.
WORKSHOP INFORMATION

Date: Monday, June 10–Friday, June 14, 2019
Time: 9:00 AM–5:00 PM daily
(and some evening events)
Place: Utah State University, Logan, UT

The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote in the United States. From the Declaration of Sentiments in 1848 to the opening of the ballot boxes to women in 1920, women deftly showed their knowledge that access to and control of the media was power. Using media as a lens through which to view the struggle for suffrage, the 2019 Bennion Teachers’ Workshop will consider past suffrage struggles within the context of today’s struggles for voting rights and women’s rights.

Participants in the workshop will be guided through an interactive week of learning centered on the ways in which the suffragists were skilled public relations strategists who used everything from newspapers and cartoons to cookbooks, textiles, and marches to shape attention paid to social issues. By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to articulate: 1) the various media and strategies used by the American suffragists to further their causes and 2) the ways in which the voting and women’s rights issues suffragists championed more than 100 years ago continue in today’s advocacy and mainstream media. Workshop attendees will leave with the inspiration to teach suffragist media strategies in a variety of classroom settings and, after organizing a march in Logan, potentially organize a contemporary suffrage-style march with ancillary media at their own schools.

WHO SHOULD REGISTER: The 2019 Bennion Teacher’s Workshop for the Perpetuation of Democratic Principles will appeal to History, Social Studies, Government, English, Media, and Art & Drama teachers (K-12), as well as community college instructors, homeschool teachers, and graduate and advanced undergraduate students who are interested in Gender Studies and major in Journalism, History, Political Science, English, or American Studies.

APPLICATION: To apply for a seat in the workshop, please visit USU’s Mountain West Center for Regional Studies (MWC) website at www.mountainwest.usu.edu. Course and material fees will vary depending on the credit option selected. Due to limited seating, early application is encouraged and a discount may be available.

MEALS, LODGING, AND PARKING: Continental breakfasts, lunches, and the evening events are part of the registration fee. Accommodations should be arranged separately by participants and are not included. On-campus parking is available for an additional fee. For further details, including reasonably priced accommodations on campus, see the MWC website.
**SCHOLARSHIPS:** Thanks to the Ione Bennion Endowment, a limited number of modest scholarships are available for out-of-town participants (to help defray the cost of lodging or travel) and for those in degree programs enrolling for academic credit. Please apply early.

Additional details about scholarships, logistics, and the workshop are available at www.mountainwest.usu.edu.

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**Schedule Topics and Highlights**

**MONDAY:** History of the women’s suffrage movement and parallels to voting-rights issues today. Remembering the 1848 Women’s Rights Convention with an invitation to tea. Evening event with living historians, “Lucretia Mott” and “Frederick Douglass”

**TUESDAY:** Voting-rights public relations strategies then and now. Crafting a contemporary Declaration of Sentiments

**WEDNESDAY:** Examining speeches and media (signs, newspapers, memes, pamphlets). A visit to USU’s Special Collections to examine suffrage-era media. Suffrage-era dinner with music/lyrics from suffrage songbooks

**THURSDAY:** Exploring the textiles, clothing, jewelry, buttons, and colors used by suffragists to convey messages visually

**FRIDAY:** Taking action with contemporary Declaration of Sentiments signing ceremony. Voting-rights march culminating in a meeting with local political leaders

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“Critical for expanding my ability to grow as an educator.”

“The only weakness of the workshop was that the magic had to end, but we will take the magic with us.”

— Previous Bennion participants
Course Requirements:
Participants must attend all events of the workshop to receive course credit, including two scheduled evening events. Prior to the workshop, participants will have reading assignments that need to be completed before the first session. During the workshop, participants will be expected to make use of materials, engage in critical reflection, and participate in individual and collaborative structured learning activities. Some evening homework may be required. A final project for the course will be due one month after the program on July 15, 2019.

Registration:
Please visit the Mountain West Center website at www.mountainwest.usu.edu to apply for a spot in the 2019 Bennion Teachers’ Workshop. Early application is highly recommended, as the workshops often fill up quickly. Workshop costs (see MWC website) will vary depending on the course option selected:

- USU Academic Credit Course (3 credits—Summer semester)
- Continuing Education Course (4.5 CEUs)
- Non-Credit Course (attendance only)

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The Mountain West Center for Regional Studies, USU
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Questions?
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