

Pembroke Center Associates

Newsletter

The Pembroke Seminar is central to the Pembroke Center's research program. Anthropologists Lori Allen and Sharika Thiranagama were postdoctoral fellows in the 2005–06 Pembroke Seminar.



HANK RANDALL

Gifts Make a Big Impact on the Pembroke Center

The Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary this year. As we review our accomplishments and look to the future, we would like to take you behind the scenes at the Center to show you what we do – and how we fund what we do. We hope that this brief glimpse will give you some idea of what a tremendous impact your gifts make on the people and programs of the Center.

The Pembroke Center supports a variety of research programs, publishes a scholarly journal, houses the Gender Studies

undergraduate concentration, maintains the Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives, and is supported by the Pembroke Associates alumnae/i organization. Through its many programs, the Center plays a dynamic role in the academic life of Brown University and sustains a vital relationship with Pembroke College and Brown University alumnae/i.

While a portion of the Center's annual budget is provided by the University, most of its funding comes from contributions by friends of the Center, chief

among these the Pembroke Associates. The support takes the form of gifts and bequests to the Center's endowment – which provides a regular income to the Center – and direct annual gifts. Endowment gifts ensure the long-term health and stability of the Center's programs. Annual gifts have two functions: they supplement endowment income to support the Center's major programs; and, they give the Center flexibility to take advantage of new collaborative opportunities and to host special events, conferences, and programs addressing subjects of current interest.

Over the years, a number of generous donors have chosen to establish named endowments to benefit the Center; others have contributed to the general endowment or have established bequests for the future. Still others have demonstrated their support of the Center through annual giving. Whatever the choices, the Pembroke Center simply would not exist without the Pembroke Associates.

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The Collaborative Work of the Associates

The many members of the Pembroke Center Associates organization work to secure the programs of the Pembroke Center and to maintain strong relationships between the Center and Brown alumnae/i. The Associates organization and its governing body, the Pembroke Associates Council, was founded in 1983, just two years after the establishment of the Center. The Council is composed of twenty-five members who represent Pembroke and Brown classes ranging from the 1940s to recent graduates. Council members serve rotating terms of three years. The Pembroke Center employs a Director of Alumnae/i Affairs, who works with the Associates Council and oversees the Associates' programs. The Associates have long taken a lively interest in the Center's

activities and have indeed contributed to them through their own programs, ranging from career panels and special programs for students, to conferences on important issues such as women's health, to an annual Commencement Forum, and the recently established award for Leadership for Change through Education, awarded last year to Marian Wright Edelman and Sister Mary Reilly. In addition to raising funds to support its own programs, the Associates organization generously contributes annual gifts to directly support the Center's research, teaching, publishing, and archives programs, while many individual Associates also make generous gifts to the endowment.



Founding Director of the Pembroke Center Joan Scott, left, congratulates Sister Mary Reilly and Marian Wright Edelman, winners of the Pembroke Associates' Award for Leadership for Change through Education.

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Scholarly Research across the Disciplines

The Pembroke Center's research programs explore the complex ways that differences – gender, but also ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and so on – affect our thinking and our world. Current international struggles only highlight the fundamental and often deadly ways difference operates in politics, culture, religion, and social organizations. The Center distinguished itself early on by not taking “women” for granted, but rather by asking what meanings are attached to the differences between women and men, not only in our culture but cross-culturally. As scholars from anthropology, history, literature, art history, sociology, economics, and biology examined such meanings, it soon became clear that there was no way to ask the question of gender without addressing other crucial categories of difference. In this way, through its two and a half decades of research, the Pembroke Center has become internationally known as a place for scholars



Members of the 2006–07 Pembroke Seminar (l-r): Eden Osucha, David Bering-Porter, Lynne Joyrich, Eugenie Brinkema, Robert Self.

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to explore the questions of difference – questions that are knotty and fascinating and that also have real impact on the lives and welfare of women and men.

Every year, the Center's Pembroke Seminar focuses on a particular research topic, and is supported, in part, by the Lambert Family Endowment and the [continued next page](#)

Gender and the Politics of “Traditional” Muslim Practices

This Pembroke Center research initiative looks at the central role of Islam and gender in current politics worldwide. Women are central to current international politics involving the Muslim world. The United States counts the liberation of women from the oppression of the Taliban as one of its achievements in the war in Afghanistan. Honor killings (the killing of a girl or woman for acts that are seen to sully family honor) are cited as one of the obstacles to Turkey's admission to the European Union. Transnational organizations mount efforts to eradicate female circumcision in Africa. France's anxiety about immigration and assimilation focuses on the banning of schoolgirls' headscarves. Gendered practices also play a role in internal politics. In parts of Afghanistan,

women retain the burka in a concern for preserving local practices. In Sudan, women take up circumcision in the course of Islamization.

The project takes a cross-cultural perspective and engages scholars from a range of disciplines. Research is focused on better understanding the ways gender is mobilized in politics and how the welfare of women is ultimately affected by the entanglement between these “traditional” practices and politics. The Pembroke Center will host a conference on this project in the fall of 2007, with a possible conference in Istanbul in the spring of 2008. Senior Research Associate and anthropologist, Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf, directs the project.



Senior Research Associate Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf (center) conducts field research in Sudan for the Pembroke Center Research Initiative “Gender and the Politics of ‘Traditional’ Muslim Practices.”

Scholarly Research
continued from p. 3

Pembroke Center Endowment. The seminar, which has become famous nationally and internationally for its exciting and rigorous work, brings together Pembroke postdoctoral fellows, Brown faculty and students, visiting scholars, and affiliated faculty from other institutions. All seminar participants are chosen through a competitive selection process. The year-long seminar is led by Brown faculty members, who are also selected competitively. For those faculty who are selected, it is an exciting opportunity to undertake a yearlong exploration of a research topic of their choice. In order to participate in the seminar, the leader and other faculty require time off from their regular teaching. Support for this time off comes in the form of faculty fellowships: the Chesler-Mallow Senior Faculty Research

Fellowship, and the Edith Goldthwaite Miller and Edwin and Shirley Seave Faculty Fellowships.

Graduate and undergraduate fellows receive research stipends and have the extraordinary experience of participating in a seminar with scholars at all levels, as do the select group of students who are granted permission to take the seminar for course credit. Faculty from other institutions also participate in the seminar, and a series of distinguished scholars come to campus to give public lectures and meet with the seminar group. At the heart of the seminar each year are the Pembroke postdoctoral fellows, chosen among applicants from around the world. Three fellowships provide full support for the postdoctoral fellows for an academic year: the Nancy L. Buc Fellowship; the Artemis A.W. and Martha Joukowsky Fellowship; and, the Carol G. Lederer Fellowship. The fortunate young scholars

who receive these fellowships go on to be the teachers and senior scholars of the future.

The three endowed postdoctoral fellowships and three endowed faculty fellowships that the Center has to date are crucial for its research programs, but the need for support does not end there, of course. There are stipends for students, honoraria and expenses for visiting scholars, annual conferences, research roundtables, colloquia and much much more. And in addition to the annual research theme, the Center funds special cutting-edge research initiatives, such as the current project on “Gender and the Politics of “Traditional Muslim Practices” and the project on “Sex Differentiation in Early Child Development.” All of these endeavors require money, and fundraising efforts led by the Pembroke Associates help provide those critical funds.

The project on “embodiment” began during the 2002–03 Pembroke Seminar led by Anne Fausto-Sterling, professor of

Embodiment

Biology and Medicine. Fausto-Sterling continues to direct the project with the collaboration of faculty in the Center for Human Development. The project’s research challenges long-held views on both sides of the nature/nurture debate and explores the dynamic interaction between bodies and the contexts in which they develop. Research suggests that sex differences in

physiology and behavior begin at birth or earlier, and that there is never a moment when nature precedes nurture or vice versa. Rather, from the very beginning, nature and nurture act simultaneously to differentiate the sexes. This project explores the mechanisms that allow environment and experience to influence biological makeup, and seeks to understand how these biological changes, in turn, become part of behavior and influence future experience. The Ford Foundation has funded portions of the project, including a postdoctoral fellowship currently held by Deborah Schooler, a 1999 Brown graduate, who received



CATHERINE KARNOW

Anne Fausto-Sterling directs the Embodiment research initiative.

her Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of Michigan.

the nature/nurture debate

differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies



The journal was founded in 1989 with its editorial offices located at the Pembroke Center. The leading scholarly journal of feminist theoretical research, *differences* examines scholarly debates across the disciplines and reaches academic readers throughout the world. The journal's intellectual mission coincides with the Pembroke Center's and

many of its contributors have been affiliated with the Center at one time or another. *differences* is, indeed, one of the reasons the Center's reputation is widely recognized within the larger academic community.

The journal and its book series are published by Duke University Press. The journal staff – a managing editor and editorial assistants – are supported by royalties, by Pembroke endowment income, by annual gifts, and by periodic gifts from the Helena Rubinstein Foundation. As with our other programs, there is always a need for ongoing support for the journal, particularly support for student assistants. One of the most coveted student jobs at Brown is that of editorial assistant at *differences*. There, both graduate and undergraduate students get invaluable experience in editing and production and learn about the many facets of academic publishing.

Forthcoming Book

In the *differences* book series, we are looking forward to the publication of *Women's Studies on the Edge*, which will appear in 2007 with Duke University Press. This volume, guest edited by historian Joan Wallach Scott, is an expanded version of one of our most popular journal issues, which takes a hard look at women's studies as a field and asks what its future might be. As Scott describes it, "Article after article in this collection takes feminism to another edge, understood as a place of indeterminacy at once precarious and exciting. Exciting because to be on this edge is to be on the verge of discovering new possibilities, new ways to think about how to disrupt prevailing arrangements and relationships of power. Precarious because in the quest for different kinds of futures, there are never any guarantees."

The Expanding Influence of *differences*



Denise Davis, A.M. '97 is managing editor of *differences*.

In the world of academic print publishing, buffeted by the challenges of online competition, *differences* has been a success story. Its international reputation has steadily grown, drawing submissions from around the globe, including Iran, Nigeria, India, Morocco, Korea, and numerous European countries, as well as the United States and Canada. As the journal has established itself as the premier journal of feminist theory, its readership has grown as well. One reader described *differences* thusly:

"*differences* is one of the few journals I find I still go to regularly in full confidence that I'm going to learn something important. It's because riskiness is so much in the air that the level of essays is by and large so high, the conclusions can't be predicted in advance, the intellectual pleasure quotient is so frequently off the meter. Intellectually speaking, I don't think *differences* has any real competitors in its ever-expanding, ever-venturesome zone of feminist theory and cultural studies."

Emily Underwood '07: Studying Neuroscience at the Pembroke Center

It seems almost inevitable that Emily Underwood '07 would spend part of her Brown career with the Pembroke Center. She relishes the interdisciplinary approach to learning, which is a guiding principle of the Pembroke Center's scholarly research and teaching. Underwood is the undergraduate research fellow in this year's Pembroke Seminar, "Mediated Bodies." The seminar explores the relationships between the body and technology across histories and cultures, relationships ranging from prostheses to cloning and reproductive technologies to media and interactive technologies of all sorts.

Underwood is a Science and Society concentrator. This relatively new concentration, approved in 2004, examines the processes of scientific discovery and the establishment of scientific policies and systems of belief. Concentrators draw from many disciplines in their study of science, including: history, philosophy, anthropology, literary theory, and sociology.

"I have always been an interdisciplinary student," said Underwood. "In high school, my focus was on writing and visual art. Then I fell in love with biology, which has evolved into a fascination with neuroscience. At Brown, I've been able to pursue both interests and to connect them. I hope that I will be able to continue to do so once I graduate, possibly through science writing and teaching."

The selection process for undergraduate fellows in the Pembroke Seminar is highly competitive. Since undergraduate fellows participate in a seminar with faculty, postdoctoral, and graduate student fellows – a seminar known for its rigor – they must demonstrate strong academic preparation. Underwood impressed the selection committee with her proposed research project, which



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Emily Underwood '07 is an undergraduate research fellow in the 2006-07 Pembroke Seminar.

looks at how the brain is "mediated" in society. Underwood uses a historical perspective to examine how the brain is studied by scientists, interpreted by journalists, and understood by the general public, all of which has implications for public policy, education, child-rearing, and much more. Her research has led her to study the pseudoscience of phrenology, popular in the nineteenth century, which claimed to be able to determine character, personality, and other traits by studying the shape of the head.

Participants in the seminar represent a number of fields ranging from neuroscience, anthropology, and political science to literature, film, and performance. "People have been very generous with their knowledge, and I feel free to ask questions. It is an amazing atmosphere, and since I feel so comfortable working with these scholars, I'm able to do the mental gymnastics necessary to pursue research at this level," said Underwood.

"What I'm learning in the seminar continues to pop up in my other work," said Underwood. "It is extraordinarily beneficial to be in the seminar this year because it enriches my thinking in other classes as well. That's the real benefit of a truly interdisciplinary program like the Pembroke Seminar."

Teaching Brown Students

The Pembroke Center houses the undergraduate Gender Studies concentration at Brown, an interdisciplinary concentration that allows students to draw from courses across the curriculum. Established with the Pembroke Center in 1981-82, the concentration has graduated several generations of students who have gone on to work in fields ranging from medicine to the arts.

The Pembroke Center supports the Gender Studies concentration in a number of ways. It provides office space and administrative help; it provides money for speaker programs, course publicity, and other activities; and in some years it has funded instructors. It provides prizes for outstanding student work (the Helen Terry MacLeod Prize for an outstanding undergraduate honors thesis that addresses questions of gender or women; the Marie J. Langlois Prize for a dissertation in areas related to gender studies or feminist analysis; and the Joan Wallach Scott Prize for an outstanding thesis by a Gender Studies concentrator). The Center also offers an internship stipend to help undergraduate students with their research (the Barbara Anton Internship is awarded to one student annually whose research relates to the welfare of women or children), and it is currently working with the faculty director of Gender Studies, Tamar Katz, to establish an alumnae/i network for Gender Studies concentrators. Many of these projects are funded directly by gifts from the Pembroke Associates.

Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives

Housed in the John Hay Library, the Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives is a special project of the Pembroke Center.

This important collection focuses on Brown and Rhode Island women and their organizations and

keeps alive the very special connection between the Pembroke Center and the history of women at Pembroke College and Brown University. The

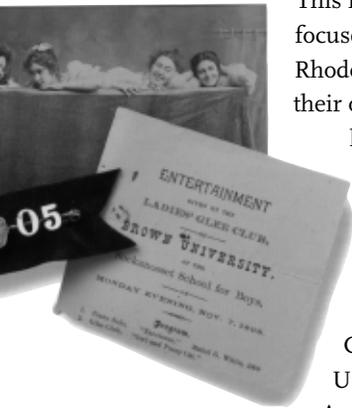
Archives contain papers

of various sorts, including correspondence, diaries, photographs, newspapers,

yearbooks, and other memorabilia.

They also contain numerous fascinating oral and video histories of women at Brown. These materials, which preserve the accomplishments of women, are available to all and are a particularly rich resource to scholars.

The Pembroke Center employs a part-time consultant to direct the growth of the collection and to continue the oral history project. It also pays for the processing of papers. The support of the Pembroke Associates is crucial to the maintenance and continued development of these very special archives.



JOHN FORASTÉ (2)

A Debt of Gratitude

Without the generosity of the Pembroke Center Associates and our endowment donors, it would be impossible for the Pembroke Center to produce such important research, to offer the Gender Studies concentration for undergraduates, or to maintain such strong relations with alumnae/i. We remain deeply appreciative of all who support the mission of the Pembroke Center.

With the Pembroke Center's formal inclusion in the Boldly Brown Campaign for Academic Enrichment, there are exciting new giving opportunities. The Pembroke Center will be working to: strengthen our research program and the support we offer to faculty; move our program offices into a restored Pembroke Hall; and, enhance undergraduate and graduate education. If you would like more information about these initiatives, please contact the Pembroke Center at 401 863-3650.

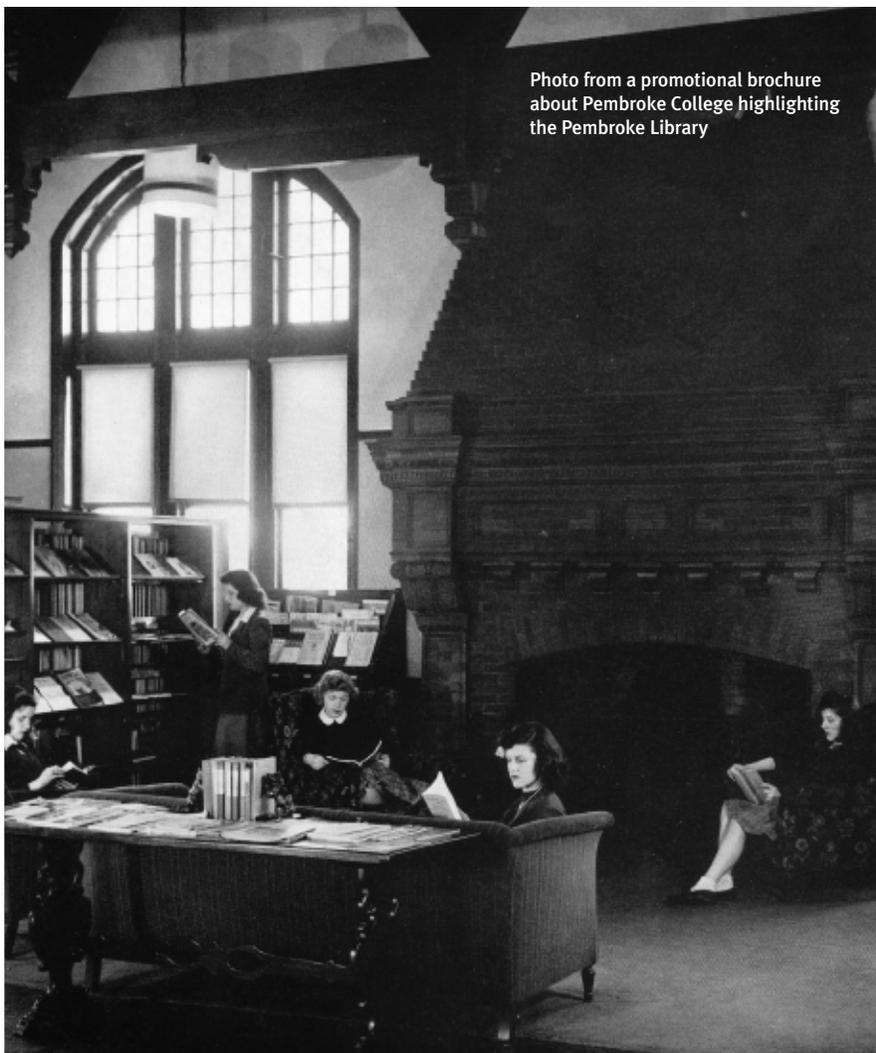


Photo from a promotional brochure about Pembroke College highlighting the Pembroke Library

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