

**The Helen Barrett Montgomery Endowed Fund  
for the Program for the Study of Women and Gender in Church and Society  
at  
Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School**

**Statement for Campaign Support**

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School (CRCDS), an academic institution training women and men for transformative service as ministers, leaders and teachers in church and society, is unapologetically progressive with a firm grounding in the tenets of the Social Gospel and the barrier-breaking message of biblical witness. The school maintains that a vital component of remaining true to the principles of biblical and social justice lies in being a stronghold for nurturing and upholding the voice, education, ministries and leadership of women. Likewise, CRCDS is committed to rigorous engagement and analysis of issues relating to gender, race, class, age, and sexual orientation in solidarity with communities of women worldwide.

Contemporary American society may claim to have achieved the full liberation and inclusion of women, but the lived experience of women tells a different tale. In fact, structures that limit and constrict the roles and responsibilities of women are being re-established in many places with renewed fervor and zeal. In the face of this retroactive trend, it is imperative that CRCDS remain a vigilant force of clarity and conviction in advocating for women in the life of church and society. Wrestling with questions of how best to respond to, strengthen and build on this imperative call, CRCDS turns to the life and legacy of Helen Barrett Montgomery. Embracing her as a model and spiritual touchstone, the school seeks to create the Helen Barrett Montgomery Endowed Fund for the Women and Gender Studies Program at CRCDS. The Fund will raise \$250,000 to ensure that CRCDS will be able to carry out and build upon the work of advocating for women and engaging gender issues both now and well into the future.

Helen Barrett Montgomery, a Baptist lay-woman of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, tirelessly advocated for women through word, work and lived example. Twenty years before women won the right to vote, she became the first woman elected to public office in the city of Rochester. She was the first woman to become president of a religious denomination in America. Her fund-raising work and advocacy in partnership with Susan B. Anthony helped women first gain admission to the University of Rochester. A social reformer, she enabled the creation of numerous programs providing better living, learning and working conditions for women, girls, children and immigrants. Licensed to preach by her home church, she preached frequently from the pulpit and served as a leader of the congregation throughout her life. Montgomery authored several books and was the first woman to publish a translation of the New Testament from the original Greek text

These achievements of Helen Barrett Montgomery live on at CRCDS as women are given the opportunity, education and encouragement to maximize their potential as trailblazers, social reformers, scholars and leaders in the church and in civic, academic and religious organizations. As Montgomery did, CRCDS helps to actualize the abilities of women as they move into positions of ministry, advocacy, and social transformation. In her name and in honor of her legacy, the Divinity School now establishes the Helen Barrett Montgomery Endowed Fund for the Women and Gender Studies Program. The endowed fund will provide resources for programming associated with the CRCDS signature Program for the Study of Women and Gender in Church and Society.

Established in 1992, the Women and Gender Studies Program offers classes, colloquia, collegial support groups, lecture series and the annual Helen Barrett Montgomery Conference. All CRCDS students are required to take a course offered by the Women and Gender Studies Program as part of obtaining their degree, thus ensuring that all graduates are prepared for ministry and work having engaged in learning and dialogue about the intersection of issues relating to women, gender, church and community. The Helen Barrett Montgomery Conference brings speakers of world, national and local renown to campus to addresses contemporary issues such as violence against women; women and a livable economy; women, health and healing; and women in religious leadership. In partnership with local churches, the Women and Gender Studies Program sponsors spring and fall community lectures focusing on church, society and Gay/ Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered issues and theologies.

Embracing more complete realities of inclusion and diversity and breaking down fear-based barriers that divide religious and secular communities reaches to the heart of the mission of CRCDS. By endowing a fund to secure the vitality of the Program for Women and Gender Studies, we ensure the unique role Colgate Rochester Crozer and its graduates play in being agents of transformation and repairers of the breaches caused by prejudice, intolerance and misogyny in church and society. We hear and claim the words of Helen Barrett Montgomery: “...*we can learn to stand shoulder to shoulder in the cooperative prosecution of the great tasks of the kingdom.*”

You are now invited to stand SHOULDER TO SHOULDLER and endow the fund that bears the name of a remarkable and prophetic woman, Helen Barrett Montgomery. Partner with us in securing and nurturing in strength the Program for the Study of Women and Gender in Church and Society at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.

**The Helen Barrett Montgomery  
Conference on Women  
in Church and Society**

*Established in 1995, the Conference addresses contemporary issues relating to women, church and society. Past Conference speakers have included international, national and local leaders such as:*

Rachael Adler  
Karen Baker-Fletcher  
Mary Daly  
Holly Haile Davis  
Toinette Eugene  
Violet Fisher  
Marie Fortune  
Aruna Gnanadason  
Yvonne Haddad  
Beverly Wildung Harrison  
Diana Hayes  
Jose Hobday  
Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz  
Musimbi Kanyoro  
Margaret Kornfeld  
Sarah Kronfeld  
Karen Lebacqz  
Unzu Lee  
Virginia Ramey Mollenkott  
Barbara Moore  
Mercy Oduyoye  
Ofelia Ortega  
Kwok Pui-lan  
Gail Ricciuti  
Rosemary Radford Ruether  
Joyce Rupp  
Letty Russell

Jane Smith  
Mary Luke Tobin  
Emilie Townes  
Phyllis Tribble  
Renita Weems  
Lynne Westfield  
Delores Williams  
Miriam Therese Winter

**Lecture Series on Church, Society  
and  
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered  
Issues and Theologies**

*In partnership with local Rochester churches, the Program for Women and Gender Studies in Church and Society sponsors spring and fall lectures focusing on church, society and Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered issues and theologies. Among the numerous lecturers in this series have been:*

Scott Anderson  
David Bartlett  
Bernadette Brooten  
Candace Chellew-Hodge  
Gary David Comstock  
Kelly Brown Douglas  
Chris Glaser  
Esther Hargis  
Mark Jordan  
Eric Law  
John J. McNeill  
Deborah Flemister Mullen  
J. Barrie Shepherd  
Erin Swenson  
Leanne Tigert  
Mel White

