

Lucile Longview Remembered

by Elizabeth Fisher

† *Greatly inspired by Lucile Longview, Elizabeth Fisher is the author of Rise Up & Call Her Name and Gender Justice: Women's Rights Are Human Rights. This remembrance is a composite of tributes written by Liz Fisher for various publications at the time of Lucile's passing. The obituary on the UU Women & Religion website was written by someone else.*



Lucile Schuck Longview (1911-2010) was a visionary leader, inspiration and friend to many. Her chosen surname of *Longview* aptly conveys her adopted mission. She was an important voice in the Unitarian Universalist Denomination, providing challenges to the status quo as well as pinpointing opportunities for change. Her efforts, along with many other women, initiated an innovative women's movement which has expanded perspectives, worship practices and group processes.

She was the primary author of the *Women and Religion Resolution* passed unanimously in 1977 by the General Assembly. This resolution calls attention to underlying sexist assumptions in Judeo-Christian theology, family structures, and the practices of religious institutions.

Her own words, from an article she authored in the UU publication **KAIROS** in 1979, emphasize her key concerns: "Exploring to what extent religiously authenticated sexist attitudes influence the sex-role stereotypes within our families is no easy task. The undertaking will remain with us to the end of our lives and the lives of our descendents as will the job of avoiding sexist language and assumptions."

Lucile reports in her monograph *The Women & Religion Resolution: Thoughts After a Decade - June 1987* that it was this resolution and its implementation that provided the original impetus for opening the Principles for analysis and revision. In 1979, at the first continental meeting sponsored by the UU Women and Religion Committee, she led a workshop entitled *The UUA Principles -- do they affirm us as women?* The answer was a resounding *No*. Through discussion, these laywomen became aware of the ways in which the then existing UUA Principles reflected and sanctioned hierarchical concepts that demeaned and diminished women.

Coming Home Like Rivers to the Sea, a worship service created by Lucile and Carolyn McDade in 1980, which was reissued in 1997, features their creation *The Water Ceremony*, now so popular in UU congregations. Lucile's values included respect for lay

shared spiritual leadership. This ritual celebrates the uniqueness of each participant as symbolized by the water they offer *and* the importance of community, represented by the combining of these waters.

Representing the *International Association for Religion Freedom* at two United Nations women's conferences, the first ever held (Mexico City, 1975) and the second (Copenhagen, 1980), Lucile developed valuable insights about international feminism which she championed within UU organizations. At Copenhagen, she co-lead, with Rosemary Matson, a workshop entitled *Women as Influenced by Religion*, giving women an opportunity to share the wounds patriarchal religions inflict upon them.

Lucile was a wonderful philosopher. She wrote these words in *Sacred Dimensions of Women's Experience* published in *With Purpose and Principle: Essays about the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism*:

I think of myself now as "Crone Longview," named "Longview" by my unconscious surprisingly but appropriately (because I consider myself a futurist). The term "Crone" claims the wisdom gained from experience in a long life. Each day I enjoy knowing the person I am becoming in this latest sense-of-self. I'm caught up in the sacred task of undermining patriarchy. This involves taking apart and examining the threads of the intellectual cocoon into which I have been acculturated and then constructing a more life-giving and life-sustaining world view, a new consciousness that includes a revised sense of the sacred.

Lucile contributions to raising the consciousness about sexism were many:

- Attendance at the First World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975, representing the *International Association for Religious Freedom* (IARF). She spoke widely upon her return.
- Primary authorship of the *Women and Religion Resolution*, passed unanimously at 1977 G.A.
- Involvement in G.A. resolutions on: Violence Against Women, 1979; Implementation of the W&R Resolution, 1980
- Stimulated interest in revising the *UUA Purposes and Principles* during the Women's Conference at Grailville in 1980.
- Inspiration to thousands of feminist activists in the UUA through writing, speaking and mentoring
- Advocate for lay leadership and exposure of sexist assumptions in religion that become engrained in patriarchal family roles

These highlights from her many contributions to the UU Women's Movement are just a few examples of why we are fortunate to have had Lucile's participation. Let's continue to celebrate her commitment, her insistence on full personhood for women and her unique humor.

¡Presente Lucile!

Lucile had considerable influence on many people. May we always honor her lasting contributions to the cause of full personhood of women and respect for nature.

In 2000, Lucile gifted me her copy of the UUWF book published in 1970 entitled *Voices of the New Feminism*, edited by Mary Lou Thompson, who wrote in vivid red pen this inscription to Lucile: "With thanks for help on this book, for dedicated service to the UUWF, and for friendship much valued."

Lucile added this inscription to me: "I will be happy knowing that you have this bit of Women's Story from the UUWF. Love, Lucile"



January 1986. Lucile and Liz at a Pacific Central District Women & Religion Retreat / Planning Meeting at Rosemary Matson's home. This is where I first met Lucile.



Figure 1 Lucile holding Women's Hall of Fame Award, 1998