

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Living in a world where the default perspective isn't yours

Torch (Female) Editorial Board

We live in a world that is dominated by the male perspective. From language itself to government legislation and everything in between, men are the default perspective.

It's ingrained in our society, and frankly, we're tired of it. There shouldn't be one perspective that is held as the standard. There shouldn't be one perspective that's seen as more valuable, simply because of gender.

It impacts us and the world we live in, in both simple and nuanced ways. Our everyday language at its very core is man-focused. Linguistics is one of the most obvious examples in the world as male-unless-otherwise-indicated. Think about the word "man" in English. Society uses this word to refer to all humanity. "All men are created equally" "mankind" "policeman" and even the action of "manning a ship."

Of course, if "man" had not gained its new connotations since its origins, this would not be the problem. Upon first use, *mann* meant simply "a person." The fact that the word was hijacked to focus only on the male perspective is one of the initial problems.

Even outside of English, languages tend to use the male format as gender neutral. Why? Why isn't there simply a gender-neutral term which does not alienate half of the population? While this isn't the most significant issue of living in a world made for men, it's one of the daily reminders that the status quo is male.

As we discussed this editorial as a group, we all realized that we somewhat hated being girls growing up. There was a desire to be a "tomboy" and reject all things perceived as "girly."

Generation Z is known for our disillusionment with traditional gender norms.

Advocate.com and them.us report that 50% of Gen Zers believe that the rigid gender binary is outdated and archaic.

This does not, however, foreshadow the destruction of gender as a whole. If anything, young people are aiming to deconstruct preconceived notions of the biological sexes while using gender expression as a creative outlet.

One small example of this larger concept is the evolution of the color pink. Many women recall having a deep hatred for pink as young girls. It was often extended to all feminine things such as dresses, or even other women.

As women get older, we see the sense of superiority connected to this hatred. So much of 2000s "tomboy" culture stemmed from the need to be different than other girls. With maturity comes an important question: what is wrong with other girls?

Of course, this is a dead-end question. The only thing wrong with other girls was the fact that they were girls. They adhered to all the things that the world deemed feminine. Tomboy culture was the result of girls realizing that their gender is all too often used as an insult.

We were told we played sports "like a girl" as a way to look down on us and make us feel weak. The word "girly" itself was an insult. These subtle, consistent attacks on our gender as children left a mark.

This need to not be like other girls or feminine came from internalized misogyny, which nearly everyone has to some degree. But as we grew up, each of us at some point all recognized how deeply it ran in us and attempted to unlearn these subconscious biases toward our own gender.

Unfortunately, this idea of internalized misogyny is novel to many, especially the men in our lives. Even the nicest,

well-meaning of the men in our lives often fail to truly examine issues from our perspective, unable to break out of the male lens society functions in.

This commonly arises as an issue when discussing more sensitive topics, such as sexual assault.

In the age of the Me Too movement, the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment has been brought to light.

The Rape, Abuse and Incest Network (RAINN) is the biggest anti-sexual violence organization in the United States. It has found that college students are at a three times higher risk of sexual violence than the general population. RAINN's data shows that 26.4% of female undergraduate college students are victims of rape or sexual assault through violence during their time in college.

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 90% of sexual assaults on college campuses will not be reported.

There is often a culture of victim blaming surrounding assault. Women are often asked what they were wearing or what they did to get assaulted, implying that it's their fault rather than that of the perpetrator. This was recently highlighted in a Minnesota Supreme Court decision, which set an incredibly dangerous precedent for rape trials in the future.

In a decision just this week, the court ruled that the man would not be charged with felony rape because the woman had voluntarily drunk beforehand. The court decided that the language in the law determined a person should only be considered "mentally incapacitated" and incapable of consenting to sex if they were intoxicated with substances "without the person's agreement."

In simple words, if you chose to get drunk to the point where you are mentally incapable of giving consent and are sexu-

ally assaulted, the person who assaulted you will not receive a felony charge. The precedent this sets at the State Supreme Court level is terrifying. And it's just another example of victim blaming.

It feels like in situations like this, women's perspectives are not taken into account. In a court of law, all perspectives involved should be taken into account. Yet this is clearly not the case.

We challenge our readers to think about these issues from women's perspective. Rather than blowing us off as over reactionary, think about what it's like to be reminded by your everyday language that the world does not see things from your point of view, and in most cases, it's an afterthought.

Rather than telling us that the "you play like a girl" insults were jokes, try to understand the way that planted seeds of misogyny in us from a young age and led us to hate anything feminine. Rather than telling us that sexual assault is a gray situation and you see both sides, consider the fear we live in, in a world where one in five of us will be sexually assaulted at some point in our lives.

And don't think of these things from our perspective because you have a mother, sister or daughter. Think of these things because women are people and we have inherent value as human beings.

The Torch (Female) Editorial Board, which was created specifically for the Women's History Month issue, is made of up Editor in Chief Cora Hall, Managing Copy Editor Kaylin Johnson, Lifestyles Editor Marissa Russell, News Reporter Rebecca Vander-Kooi and News Reporter Jessica Oakes.

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Dana King sculpts history



Photo courtesy of Dana King

Alumna Dana King has taken many different turns in her career and they eventually led her to her love for art. She received her MFA in fine art painting when she was 48 years old.

A Ferris alumna's journey through journalism to finding her passion in art

Rebecca VanderKooi
News Reporter

At 61 years old Dana King exudes unbridled joy as she talks with passion about her third career. King, whose love for life is contagious, has an infectious smile and a head full of long grey hair that dances everywhere as she talks about her hopes, dreams and accomplishments.

"This is my third career. I'm going to retire again when I'm 80 or so and maybe I'll do something else," King said.

Disaster Queen

King graduated in 1982 from Ferris with a degree in marketing. She worked for five years at LA KNBC and KABC as a marketer.

When her boss fired the only black reporter at KABC LA, there was panic as to who would replace her. The office secretary recommended hiring King and they did, even though she did not have any intention of working in journalism.

"You might hire me because I'm black, but you won't keep me because I'm black. You'll keep me because I'm good," King said with a chuckle, as she notes that she was terrible at first.

This was the humble beginning to a 25-year storied career in broadcast journalism. She covered disasters all across the globe and her kids nicknamed her the 'disaster queen'.

Her first international coverage was in Honduras after Hurricane Mitch decimated the country. In fact, she won a local Emmy award for her reporting from 1998-2020 covering the effects of the hurricane.

"Everybody lost so much, but they banded together and helped one another and that was so eye opening to me," King said. "I saw that again in New York City when I was the first television reporter from the west coast to make it to New York City three days after 9/11."

King explained that although she reported on many devastating disasters, covering 9/11 was one of the hardest stories of her entire journalism career.

"In my career I went places where people needed help from the United States and here I was in my own country watching it receive the same assistance that I had seen around the world," King said.

King always knew that she didn't want to work in television after age 50 because

she always worked for men and she did not want them to tell her she had to change her appearance. So at the age of 52 she left the business to pursue different dreams.

Taking up space

King received her MFA in fine art painting at age 48. However, a weekend sculpture course with a friend a few years later is what changed the trajectory of her life. She was immediately hooked.

She is now represented by The Thelma Harris Art Gallery and since 2012 she has been a full-time artist. She specializes in creating sculptures of black bodies out of bronze.

"Sculpture inhabits space and space is power and it's really important for African descendants to see their memories, their stories out in the world," King said. "It's especially important for children to see sculptures of people who remind them of their grandparents, or their parents, or uncles and aunts. That they actually see themselves in the world and know that their history is important to the building of America."

King detailed that creating a sculpture is a multiphase process which starts with making a clay piece in her art studio, which typically takes 4-6 months. Through various phases in the foundry and making molds, the final product is created by pouring molten liquid bronze into the mold and then chipping it out.

King has stayed remarkably busy with commissioned pieces that have been installed across the United States, from Connecticut, to Alabama, to California.

Most recently, she finished a sculpture of Dr. Huey P Newton, who was the cofounder of the Black Panther party, per his widow Frederika Newton's request.

The statue is going to be dedicated and installed in West Oakland on Oct. 24. Huey was born and died in West Oakland, so, in a sense, this sculpture is bringing him home, King explained.

Another piece that King created was installed in New Haven, Connecticut in Sept. 2020. The sculpture tells the story of an African descendant who helped build the city's infrastructure.

"His history wasn't known and his history was so important to New Haven and now the history is being told," King said.

Behind every sculpture there is an immense amount of research that King con-

ducts. She aims to tell history truthfully and accurately through her art.

"When you tell stories on tv they last for two minutes and then they're gone. But these stories that I tell in bronze will last as long as the material lasts and bronze lasts hundreds, even thousands of years," King said.

King eagerly anticipates the new projects that are in store for the coming years.

One such project is creating a sculpture to honor the first cohort of black deaf students at Gallaudet University from 1952.

Recently, she has been commissioned by the San Francisco Giants to create a sculpture honoring Toni Jones, an African American woman who was the first woman to ever play major league baseball in the United States.

"(I'm creating this) for all the little girls and little boys who play baseball, but really for the little girls so that they know that if they desire to do it, that it has been done and it can be done again," King said.

Looking Back

Looking back over her beginnings at Ferris decades ago and her career to date King explained that everything she has done in her life informs what she does today. She is grateful for each career she has been able to have and is especially grateful for where she is right now.

"I love history and research and I get to do that with my art and I don't have to put on a nice suit or high heels or makeup to do it. I can be a bum in my studio," laughed King.

Even though she now lives and works in California, she still fondly remembers Ferris State University and is grateful for the start to a unique professional career.

"I grew up in Big Rapids. I went to high school there, went to college and I can always come back. I've never forgotten that and I never worry that there won't be a place for me in the world. I'm very proud that I went to Ferris," King said.

Even though King lives on the other side of the country, she has been able to use her connections on the West Coast, especially with the Oakland Museum, to be a cabinet member for the new Jim Crow museum that is set to be built on the Ferris campus. She noted that all these years later she is grateful to be at a place in her life where she can give back to the school and the Ferris community.

From marketing, to journalism, to art, King's career has had many twists and turns. However, her dedication to telling important stories and sharing the truth with the public has not wavered. As she assists in the development of the new Jim Crow Museum she desires to teach the community about the horrors of racism and to encourage museum goers to think deeply.



Photo courtesy of Dana King

Dana King poses with one of her life-size sculptures.

Books to read by our female faculty

March is also National Reading Month and in honor of that, we wanted to highlight a few books written by our female faculty members.

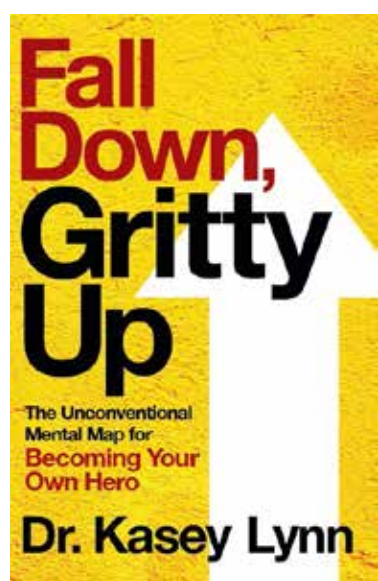
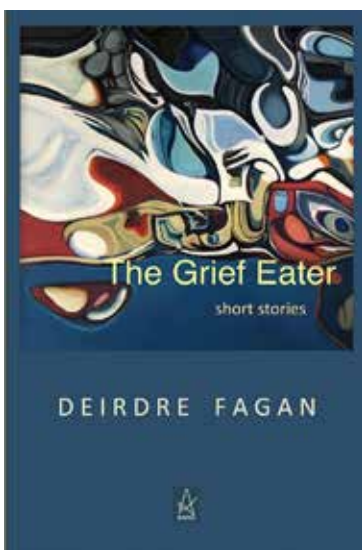
Dr. Deirdre Fagan is a professor in languages and literature as well as the coordinator for the creative writing program at Ferris. Her first book was published in 2007, called "Critical Companion to Robert Frost." Her latest works include a chapterbook of poetry called "Have Love," which was published in 2019. Her most recent work was a short story collection published in the fall of 2020, called "The Grief Eater."

Dr. Kasey Thompson is a professor in Ferris' College of Business. Her career path took her all the way to the position of Director of Menu Innovation at McDonald's, in which she oversaw 35,000 restaurants around the world. She wrote *Fall Down, Gritty Up* in the hopes of sharing the lessons and experiences she has had with the next generation. It is currently scheduled for release in April.

The Grief Eater by Dr. Deirdre Fagan –out now

"My first year of college, I lost a brother to suicide, and the May I graduated with my bachelor's, my mother was diagnosed with cancer," Fagan said. "She passed three months later. Through these early losses, I discovered a great deal about people's responses to grief and my own. At 36, I lost my father and remaining brother two weeks apart, and then I lost my husband and the father of my children to ALS six years later. They say write what you know, but it was not a conscious decision as much as an emotional one.

"The Grief Eater collection is driven by perspectives I gained through my own experiences with grief, but it is largely an opportunity to open a discussion about how grieving people respond to loss, what is considered socially acceptable, and also raise questions about what should be. Grief is a universal experience, but our experiences with grief are individual. The collection is also an opportunity for readers to develop empathy for themselves and others when confronted with what appears unbearable."



Fall Down, Gritty Up by Dr. Kasey Thompson—coming soon 2021

"Fall Down, Gritty Up celebrates where we are. Right here. Right now," Thompson said. "It draws on us to accept and rejoice in the reality of our current state—today's location on the path to achieving our desires.

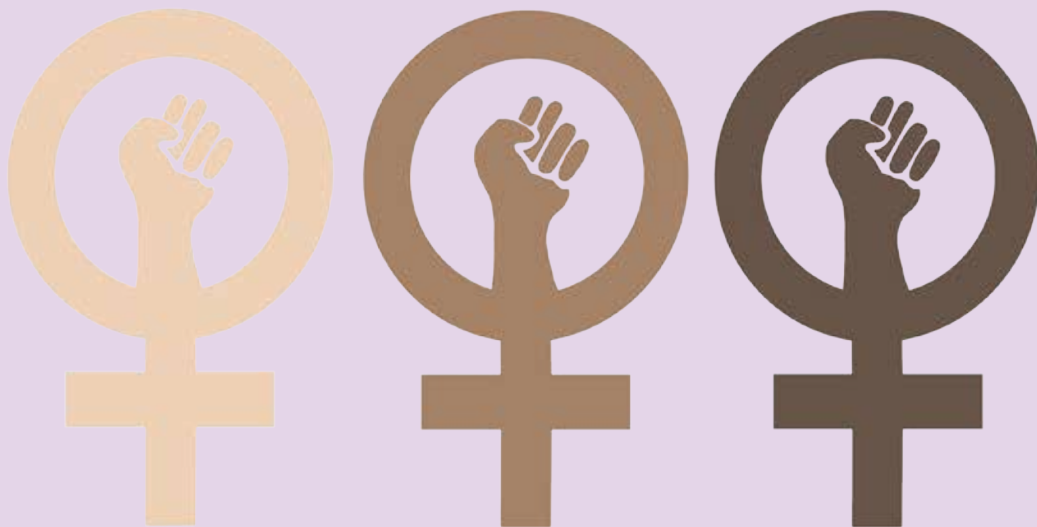
The book serves as a personal challenge to embrace the energy of all life experiences—from the most painful to the most joyous—and to learn how to harness that energy and convert it into a fuel that propels you toward fulfillment.

My ultimate hope is that after reading my book, you will be inspired to "gritty up" in the areas of your life that require strengthening so that you, too, will always find a way to overcome whatever obstacles life presents—and then, ultimately, continue on your path to becoming your own hero.

By 'gritty up' I mean, let's get the hell up from whatever has knocked you down—and get going toward your goals."

Equality for all

There's space for everyone in the feminist movement today



Kendall Rooks Lifestyles Reporter

The very first wave of feminism in the United States began at the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention in Seneca Falls, New York at the Wesleyan Chapel. According to a History.com article, Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott proclaimed, "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal," and that therefore, women deserved the right to vote.

Fortunately, the feminist movement has aided in substantial progress for the rights of women. In the 2010s, feminists brought to light prominent cases of sexual assault, focused on combatting misogyny and ensuring women have equal rights. As the movement progresses, the agenda for the movement evolves as well. Women also think about feminism in different ways.

"Feminism [to me] is an ideology and range of social movements that advocate for equality and equity of genders," humanities professor Rachel Foulk said. "There are many different waves and many different approaches, but I think at its core feminism is about equality of genders."

The 'wave' metaphor confirms Foulk's idea that gender activism in the United States has for the most part been unified around one set of ideas, known as feminism, which focuses on equality for all people.

"There are certainly many branches of feminism, and they have evolved," humanities professor Ann Byars said. "How I view feminism is much like how I would view something like religion or your political leanings: it's a value to me more than a belief. Sure, everyone has a definition. But, as I get up there in years, it changes for me, and now I see myself more as an active facilitator of crusades and a support system because I have gained wisdom over the years."

Feminism has been widely welcomed on college campuses as wide ranges of new ideas and concepts are introduced to college students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 11.3 million college students are women compared with 8.7 million men, and 63 percent of these women identify as feminists.

"As a whole, academia is where people are given creative freedoms and openness

for their mind to work and be a visionary. So, I like the idea that universities take a leading role in inspiring change in the feminist movement, however they see it," Byars said. "I think academia overall is the leader in the feminist movement because that is where young people can be introduced to these ideas, accept them as their own and adopt them."

It is easier to find like-minded women who stand alongside one another in the movement when there is a female majority in higher educations. According to University Stats, there were 7,130 female students and 6,120 male students at Ferris during the 2018 - 2019 academic year. There is a deep recognition for personal worth among women on college campuses today.

Foulk explained that feminism present on the Ferris campus will only work to better everyone else's lives, no matter what gender you are. She added, "Young people are going to college to become educated and start their careers. You are the leaders of our country and our world. I think that it is important we recognize we still have work to do and that you can make an impact."

There are multiple ways to make an impact and be an active feminist. Byars expressed that there is a space for everyone to support the feminist movement; feminists do not have to be an only-female movement. She said that everyone can consciously make the effort to support, whether it be financially or through attending events and volunteering. Foulk feels everyone needs to be more mindful of their biases. Each person has been subject to bias societal systems, and examining these can be helpful to the movement as well.

"In our everyday life we need to make sure we are advocating for others," Foulk said. "Let's say you're hosting a group discussion online. Make sure that women, men and non-gender binary people are included. We also need to where we can safely-call out injustices when we witness them."

Being a feminist means fighting for the equality of all people. Feminism allows people to look at the world not as it is, but how it could be. Byars said, "In the last five years I have seen the most active, politically passionate, driven people in my classrooms. It is outstanding what I am seeing, and you're ready."

Women building a career

Ferris women talk about navigating male-dominated field of work boots and hard hats

Cora Hall, Marissa Russell
Editor in Chief, Lifestyles Editor

Imagine trying to complete some of the simplest tasks of your job and being met with laughter. This isn't a hypothetical for building construction technology senior Hannah Price, it was her reality as an intern.

Price was in charge of a project on her building site, which meant she was tasked with everything from ordering supplies to scheduling. With the flooring scheduled soon, she went to the electricians to tell them the wiring needed to be finished because the flooring was going in soon. Instead of listening, they laughed in her face, not believing she knew when the flooring was getting done.

Once she got them in a room with her superiors, the mood changed and the electricians were on site shortly after. "I was trying to get these guys to do something for three weeks, and it took five minutes for these guys to do it," Price said. "I know it's not just a woman thing, it's an 'I was only in the field for seven months so I don't have as much experience' thing, but still, I told you word-for-word to do the exact same thing, and you're gonna laugh at me, but he's gonna tell you when you'll go do it."

Women only make up 9.9% of the construction industry in the United States according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The number is mirrored in Ferris' construction management program, with 26 of 285 students being women. Suzanne Miller, the program's coordinator since 2013, said that number has doubled since she came to Ferris.

Part of the problem with recruiting women in the field is the fact that most people do not know what construction management entails, the complexity of the process and the coordination skills required.

While Miller said she didn't face obstacles necessarily due to being a woman, she experienced ageism, which she said is all too common of an attitude towards new graduates.

Price feels like she has to fight a little more for respect and acceptance often being the only woman on site.

"It's hard, because if you try too hard, then they kind of back away from you, but if you don't try hard enough, then you'll never get included, you'll never get respected," Price said.

For construction management senior Sadie Pettinger, being the only woman in the room doesn't bother her. In her eyes, respect is earned, regardless of gender, but there are still times when being a woman in a male-dominated field means she gets treated differently.

"There are people that aren't going to respect you because you're a woman," Pettinger said. "I've encountered men that don't want to respect me because I'm a woman, but at the end of the day, in order for all of us to get our jobs done, we all have to work together."

At five-foot-two, most people give her funny looks when Pettinger tells people she's in construction. They'll ask her if she's the one out there swinging the hammer when in reality her career goal is to be a project manager.

Price wants to be a superintendent for commercial construction, a position she grew up watching her father in, who is a Ferris alum.

"I always loved the idea of construction," Price said. "I thought it was really cool to see how things happen, like to get to see the inside people how buildings built and everything so I went to the job sites with my dad."

Construction management is a career that was traditionally promoted towards the boys in high school due to the idea that it was manual labor. Neither Price or Pettinger dreamed of going into this field as kids. Price was dead set on being a cashier and Pettinger a teacher. Pettinger believes with the management side of construc-

tion, the field will continue to see more women involved.

As of right now, though, Price often is still the only woman on site and will get the kind of attention she doesn't always know how to respond to. The flirting and getting asked out while at work is something that doesn't necessarily get to her, but it's difficult to find the balance of responding in the right way.

"You want to joke back, but then you can't, because then you can give them the wrong impression," Price said. "But then it's also, I don't want to come off as, I don't want to be totally like closed off because I wanted to gain that relationship with them."

She began to learn who to joke around with and who to be serious with and eventually found other men on site who became good friends and advocates for her if someone else was really bugging her. But she still struggles with speaking out at times, not wanting to "pull the girl card" and having others think she can't look out for herself.

"I didn't want them to think that I was like, 'Oh, I'm the girl on site and everybody needs to help me, look out for me, this and that,'" Price said. "I wanted to be able to [handle] everything myself and not have to involve other people."

Pettinger has worked as an intern for two years for a company working with power plant projects. She said that while there are a good amount of women in director positions at her company, that's not always the case.

Career advancement for women in construction is not always easy.

With the lack of women in the field in the first place, it's typical for managers to circle back to the men when thinking of promotions. Part of this is the personal relationships outside of work. Pettinger said she's not getting a beer with the men after work or going on hunting trips with coworkers.

"With being such a male-dominated environment, there's a lot of conversations that happen outside the workplace that most women aren't involved with," Pettinger said. "At the end of the day, it doesn't really bother me because if I want to do what I want to do, I'm going to work my butt off to get there and it might take a little bit longer for me because I'm a woman ... but I think that in a lot of environments, you have to work to get where you want and it's no different for me."

Price feels that women are often seen as the ones to do the simple tasks, and when she's on the job people would come to her for copies, even though her male peers that are just a year or two ahead of her never touch office work.

She has seen women in the field struggle to advance and get promoted, even when they're qualified.

"The women in the field that I know moved up a lot slower than the other guys did and that's kind of disappointing to see," Price said. "Even pay is different, they're not in the same position they should be."

Gaining respect from her coworkers is one of the ways Price has succeeded in her field. Asking questions when she didn't know something and letting her male coworkers work through their personal process allows them to feel valued in Price's opinion and helps her work her way up.

Regardless of the issue faced, both women are proud to be in the field and of the experience they've earned already in school. For Pettinger, any challenge, whether it's because of her gender or not, is one she is ready to take on in her career.

"I think that the biggest thing that I am proud of is the fact that I have continued to take these challenges," Pettinger said. "Whether it's a female-related challenge or just normal challenges everyone's facing, and take it as a challenge and not take it personally, not let it like bother me, but just take it head-on and do what I can to better myself and to face this challenge."



Photo courtesy of Hannah Price

Hannah Price often feels like she has to work harder to be accepted as the only woman on most work sites.



Photo courtesy of Sadie Pettinger

At five-foot-two, Sadie Pettinger often gets looks of surprise when she tells people her major is construction management.