

ALL SOULS *at 200+*

THE ALL SOULS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2022, Vol. 2, Issue N° 1

The All Souls Historical Society

"The past matters because the future matters—
history is as much about the future as it is about the past."

—Ann Gronningsater

Editor: Christina Bellamy, President; Production Editor: James E. Moskin, Art & Artifacts Chair

ALL SOULS WOMEN CONTRIBUTIONS TO HISTORY, CULTURE AND SOCIETY

The women of All Souls have been active in the church's affairs since its founding in 1819, when Lucy Channing Russel invited about forty people into her parlor to hear her brother, William Ellery Channing speak. This meeting is regarded as the founding of this church. And very shortly afterwards, the women were organized! For more than two centuries, women have contributed much to the fabric of this church and to society—raising funds to provide social amenities within the church and charitable service beyond its walls. The pattern of individual initiative and organized action continues to the present day. The women who started the Women's Alliance more than 130 years ago would be proud to see how far today's women of All Souls have come and how true they have remained to the spirit and ideals of those who came before them.

The Women's Alliance, founded in 1890, has been affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation (UUWF) since that body's foundation in 1963 through the consolidation of the Association of Universalist Women (founded in 1869 and believed to be the first organization of lay church women in the United States) and the Alliance of Unitarian Women (founded in 1890). After many struggles with the concept of a national organization, an important document emerged: the Constitution of "The Alliance of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women." Velma Wright Williams had written the constitution in the parlor in her home, the parish house of All Souls where she and the Rev. Dr. Theodore Chickering Williams, minister to this congregation, resided. For many years, the Women's Alliance sponsored the All Souls "Fair in Old New York" until it grew into a larger all-church event that funded outreach programs. Now, the Alliance traditionally operates the annual holiday gift table.

The Annie Eaton Society is equally rooted in the history of All Souls but is adamantly independent. The organization—originally chartered as The Society for the Employment and Relief of Poor Women—was renamed for Annie Eaton, one of the incorporators who bequeathed funds to the Society that formed the basis of the Society's present endowment. The "Society" may be the oldest such women's group still operating

today and provides funds for educational and employment opportunities for lower income women, to improve the lives of those women who need it most, and for assistance to older women who encounter problems occasioned by age and/or infirmity. The original funding to start "Friday Meals for the Homeless" came from the Annie Eaton Society.

There have been many women as individuals who have achieved honor as Unitarian Universalists—"Indomitable Women of All Souls". See: [Standing Before Us lectures](#) here.

But throughout our history, women of the congregation have been well-known to society at-large in a variety of ways, and they have enriched the life of the nation with their thoughtfulness, persistence and daring—**Mina Spiegel Rees**, distinguished American mathematician and computer pioneer; **Ruth Roland Nichols**, American aviation pioneer; **Ruth Lubic**, American Nurse-Midwife and applied Anthropologist; **Florence B. McKinlay**; and **Mary-Ella Holst**, poet, writer, and religious educator.

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MINA SPIEGEL REES

AUGUST 2, 1902–OCTOBER 25, 1997

MATHEMATICIAN & COMPUTER PIONEER

MINA SPIEGEL REES was an American mathematician and a pioneer in the history of computing. She had a major impact on the academic and research culture of the United States. Rees would leave her mark in the worlds of computers, mathematics, and education. She became a member of All Souls in 1960.



She graduated with degrees in Mathematics from Hunter College and Columbia University and ran the Office of Naval Research (ONR) after World War II. There, she organized work on early computers such as the Harvard Mark I (an electromechanical computer) used in the war effort during the last part of World War II. Throughout her career, she made many important contributions to the use of computers in solving applied mathematical problems and was known for her strong administrative skills and influence.

At home in Abstract and Applied Mathematics, Dr. Rees was the founding president of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York.

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In 1946, the US Navy invited Rees to become Head of the Mathematics branch of the Office of Naval Research to support scientific and mathematical research. In 1949, she became Director of the Mathematical Sciences Division and then, in 1952, Deputy Science Director.

Rees received many awards for her outstanding contributions. In 1962, she received the first Award for Distinguished Service to Mathematics from the Mathematical Association of America. In 1970, she became president elect of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, an international nonprofit scientific association established in 1849, and in 1971, she became the first woman president of that Association.

As a woman in the field of Mathematics during that time, it was exceptional for Mina Rees to be entrusted with such a prominent position in the community.

RUTH ROWLAND NICHOLS FEBRUARY 23, 1901–SEPTEMBER 25, 1960 AMERICAN AVIATION PIONEER

RUTH NICHOLS once said, “It takes special kinds of pilots to break frontiers, and in spite of the loss of everything, you can’t clip the wings of their hearts.” She was such a pilot. By her willingness to pit her skills against the challenges and adversities of the sky, she proved the ability of women to help push across unknown aeronautical frontiers.



Over her aviation career, Nichols held more than thirty-five women’s aviation records. In 1924, she became the first licensed woman seaplane pilot in the U.S. She eventually flew every type of aircraft developed and was rated in the dirigible, glider, AutoGyro, landplane, seaplane, amphibian, monoplanes, biplanes, triplanes, twin and four engine transports and the supersonic jet.

In August 1929, she and Amelia Earhart were among twenty competitors in the Women’s Air Derby (also known as the “Powder Puff Derby”), the first official women-only air race in the United States.

In 1931, Nichols became the first woman to hold three international records: altitude, speed, and long distance. She flew faster than any woman in the world, as co-pilot in an Air Force Supersonic TF102A Delta Dagger, flying over 1,000 mph, in 1958.

According to her autobiography, *Wings For Life: The Life Story of the First Lady of The Air*, Nichols made her first flight in 1919, and she then went on to fly more than

140 different aircraft, including jets. This is a scarce book about a female aviation pioneer. In 1992, Ruth was enshrined in The National Aviation Hall of Fame as a record setter and daredevil.

Following the war, Nichols became involved in other humanitarian efforts, using her celebrity to bring attention to causes and to raise funds. She organized a mission of support for UNICEF, including piloting a round-the-world tour in 1949. In the 1950s, she served as director of women’s activities for Save the Children, director of the women’s division of the United Hospital Fund, and field director for the National Nephrosis Foundation. She joined All Souls in 1955.

RUTH WATSON LUBIC JANUARY 18, 1927–; MEMBER OF ALL SOULS SINCE 1966 NURSE-MIDWIFE AND APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGIST— CNM, EdD, FAAN, FACNM

RUTH WATSON LUBIC, an American nurse-midwife, applied anthropologist, and visionary, co-founded the National Association of Childbearing Centers (NACC), an offshoot of the Maternity Center Association (MCA), where she was director for twenty-five years. She pioneered and successfully instituted the birthing center as a means of improving the lives of childbearing families, and the role of the nurse-midwife as the primary-care provider for women, particularly in maternity care, as an effective less costly alternative to the physician-based care commonly practiced in the United States. She stressed the need to look to families and communities to focus on the concept of their empowerment to enrich their own lives. Widely used through the industrialized world, this model helped place quality services within reach of underserved, low-income populations.



Known for significant work promoting midwife education in the United States, she inspired the creation of more than three hundred freestanding birth centers. Dr. Lubic founded two legally sanctioned freestanding birth centers in New York City: the Childbearing Center of the Upper Eastside, which served middle class families of Upper East Manhattan, and the Morris Heights Health Center (MHHC) in the Bronx. MHHC had a legacy of being the first community health center as well as an innovator in offering a birthing center in a low-income community. It was also the first Federally Qualified Health Center in NYC to be accredited by the Joint Commission. Dr. Lubic was active in New York City and State politics, lobbying

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support for issues relating to childbirth, alternative birth, reproductive rights, and midwifery.

While maintaining connections with professional and educational organizations Ruth was an active speaker, at home and abroad, relating to childcare, and midwifery. Pursuing her vision led Ruth to Washington, DC to involve the government in this cause. She stepped down as director of NACC to begin her work in the inner-city, where the maternal and infant mortality rates were the highest in the United States. To address these health disparities she founded her third Family Health, and Birth Center to provide care and resources to empower families community wellbeing, to primary and new born care and related social services. Currently Dr. Lubic serves as founder and president emerita.

Dr. Lubic was appointed an expert consultant in the Office of Public Health and Science, US Department of Health, and Human Services. She received the MacArthur "Genius" Award and National Academy of Medicine prestigious Lienhard Award. The National Academy of Nursing named her a "Living Legend."

FLORENCE BAILEY MCKINLAY

JUNE 1911–APRIL 1990

FLORENCE B. MCKINLAY, a life-long Unitarian, was the first woman to serve as President of the Board of Trustees and contributed her efforts and wisdom to almost every committee and church organization. She was a member of the search committee that called Forrest Church to this congregation.



Florence was a bridge to the past, an anchor that held All Souls on a steady course, the conscience of this congregation. As a historian, she knew the importance of learning from the past while the teacher in her kept in touch with the trends of the future. She understood the need for change, but she was an adamant guardian of our congregational and religious heritage.

When this congregation was founded, women were not permitted to speak or vote in formal meetings of the congregation. It was only in "informal meetings," where no formal vote was taken, that women were allowed to speak. In their own organizations, which were legally unchartered, they could participate fully in governance. This would not change until 1923, when Georgina Schuyler and Sarah Jane (Atterbury) (Mrs. John R.) McGinley (usually known as Jennie) were elected to the

Board of Trustees. Then, on January 18, 1961, Florence McKinlay was elected the first woman to lead and to serve as President of the Society and the Board of Trustees.



Georgina Schuyler



Sarah Jane Atterbury
(Mrs. John R.) McGinley

MARY-ELLA HOLST

RELIGION EDUCATOR
POET, WRITER, ACTIVIST
1964—MEMBER, THE UNITARIAN CHURCH OF ALL SOULS

MARY-ELLA HOLST—poet and writer, holds a master's degree in counseling from NYU, and her association with All Souls spans more than fifty years. She participated in all aspects of religious education at All Souls, first serving as a volunteer teacher, then, chair of the Religious Education Committee before becoming Director of Religious Education (DRE), and she served not only as a religious mentor to the children, but as a counselor in family crises, an advisor, a confidante, a comforter, and a friend. In 1987, when she resigned and was named DRE Emerita, a classroom outside Reidy-Friendship Hall was fittingly named the "Mary-Ella Holst Room" in her honor. During the interim, Mary-Ella continued playing key roles at the church, including giving a series of Adult Education Lectures on All Souls' Ministers, published in book form as *The Senior Ministers of All Souls—The First Two Hundred Years*, as part of our Bicentennial celebration. She initiated an Adult Education program with sessions led by congregational members and coordinated a three-part Adult Education series during the summer months.



Mary-Ella served or volunteered in numerous positions: for the Women's Alliance, as a long-standing member and past President. She coordinated the Angie Henry Utt Lecture on "Women and American Culture" featuring accomplished women speaking about their field of professional or volunteer specialization. She also coordinated the annual induction into the UU Women's Federation's Clara Barton Sisterhood that honors women who remain active into their eighties. She orchestrated the All Souls 175th Anniversary celebrations sponsored by the Women's Alliance and the All Souls Historical Society.

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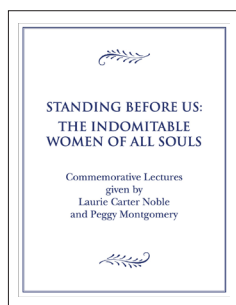
She served on the Board of Trustees and as president of the congregation (twice). She was one of the founders of the All Souls Historical Society (the other two being the late Angie Utt and the late Carol Washburn), and she served as Historical Society president. She is also a long-time member and past president of the Annie Eaton Society.

At the denominational level, Mary-Ella Holst has been an active Unitarian Universalist leader and an engaging and well-informed speaker, often called upon to speak or lecture. She served many organizations with her passion for teaching, history, and fundraising: the UUA, the UUSC, the UU Women's Federation, and the Murray Grove Retreat and Conference Center. She served as Chair of the UUA Youth/Adult Committee and was active in the Women in Religion movement.

She is a (former) Member of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC): She served on its Board, on its Investment Committee and on its 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign Committee. She represented the UUSC in Prague and in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan at ceremonies honoring the anniversaries of the work of the organization in pre-WWII rescue efforts in Europe and in post-WWII humanitarian efforts in Japan. She co-chaired the 50th Anniversary Benefit that honored Martha Sharp Cogan for her work in Europe and reunited her with eleven of the 27 children she rescued from France.

The Mary-Ella Holst Youth Activist Award was created by the UUSC in her honor. It recognizes and honors the achievements of a youth individual or group who is advancing human rights and social justice through activism and leadership in collaboration with the UUSC.

Mary-Ella Holst is listed in *Who is Who in Religion* and in *Who's Who among Women*.



RENEWING OUR WELCOMING CONGREGATION



All Souls was one of the first Unitarian Universalist congregations to be declared a Welcoming Congregation by the UUA in 1994, proclaiming a special welcome to people who are LGBTQ+. Our welcoming history goes way back. Nineteenth century novelist Catharine Maria Sedgwick wrote that All Souls was comprised of all sorts: *"strangers from inland and outland, English radicals and daughters of Erin, Germans and Hollanders, philosophic gentiles and unbelieving Jews..."*

The All Souls AIDS Task Force was created on September 29, 1985 under the leadership of Chuck Weiss, a courageous gay man. When the UUA first listed the criteria for recognition as a Welcoming Congregation, we simply had to describe what was already in place and our certification occurred easily in 1989. The group Interweave focused on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender concerns at All Souls. Several Interweave members led the original Welcoming Congregation application.

Our beautiful Welcoming Congregation plaque (above) was envisioned and created by church administrator Annie Gorycki. Over the years, members of our original Welcoming Congregation team naturally joined the Welcome Committee that seeks to welcome everyone.

The UUA created the Welcoming Congregation Renewal program as worldviews changed, calling for congregations to attest to ongoing commitment to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and asexual, intersex, queer-identified, transgender people, and all other sexual identities. Over the last few months, the Pride Team, led by the Rev. Dr. Audette Fulbright, Rob Caldwell and Bill Bechman, worked together to complete the application, describing the broad array of activities that All Souls has provided that show our welcoming ways.

We were delighted to receive notification that All Souls has successfully completed the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal for 2022, showing ongoing commitment to LGBTQ+ welcome and inclusion in and beyond New York City. We look forward to celebrating this accomplishment with inclusive festivities.

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THE 2022 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALL SOULS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Please Join us! The meeting is open to all.

Will be held on Sunday, October 16, 2022

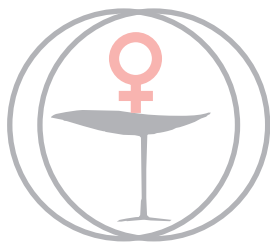
2:00PM–3:00PM

on Zoom

(Link to be sent out separately.)

Please request the link if you are interested
and are not yet a member of the Society.

(Only members are eligible to vote.)



MEMBERSHIP

JOIN ASHS OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Our Members are the heart of the ASHS community and an integral part of the ASHS story. Become a member to help make possible the Society's mission to promote the study of our history.

Annual Dues payable in October

Individual—\$20

Family—\$40

Life Membership—\$100

Mail-in: Download PDF Membership Form:

([Printable Membership Form](#))

(OR) Join online with a credit card at:

(<https://onrealm.org/allsoulsnyc/-/give/now>)

EVENTS

OUR EVENTS ARE OPEN TO ALL.

Recordings of events will be available on our website:

allsoulsnyc.history.org/events

THE CHANNING LECTURE

Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Natalie Fenimore

Lead Minister, The Unitarian Universalist Congregation
at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY

May 22, 2022

2:00PM

on Zoom (All Souls hosting)

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

October 16, 2022

THE BELLOWS LECTURE

Speaker: Dr. Thavolia Glymph

Professor of History and Law
Duke University

Title to be determined

Sunday, October 23, 2022

2:00PM

on Zoom (All Souls hosting)

VIDEO LIBRARY

Bellows Lecture by Dr. Christopher Cameron:

"Unitarianism, African Americans and
Abolitionism" (11/14/21)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zhVn6A7fyQQiQbsKfGO3nLDdDBGq4Wk/view>

Bellows Lecture by Dr. Bernard Unti:

"Henry Bergh: Animal Advocate, 'Riddle
of the 19th Century'" (Nov. 22, 2020)

<https://vimeo.com/482825245/1c7a834c8d>

New York: A Wonderful Town (Dec 18, 2020)

<https://vimeo.com/493409649/68f775ed94>

The Rev. John Buehrens, President of the UUHHS

(Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society)
on his book, *Conflagration: How Transcendentalists
sparked the American Struggle for Racial, Gender and
Social Justice* (Laymen's League reprise of the inaugural
Channing Lecture of Jan. 12, 2020) (Jan. 12, 2021)

<https://vimeo.com/501302889>