

**SPOOKY
ALERT!**

October, 2025

**SPOOKY
ALERT!**

THE WOMANIFESTO



HAPPY HALLOWEEN FROM THE MSU WOMEN'S CENTER!!



HAPPY HALLOWEEN FROM THE MSU WOMEN'S CENTER! HALLOWEEN SEASON BRINGS A LITTLE MAGIC AND A WICKEDLY FUN ENERGY TO CAMPUS. WHETHER YOU'RE CELEBRATING IN COSTUME OR JUST ENJOYING THE FALL SPOOKY VIBES, WE HOPE YOU HAVE A FUN AND SAFE NIGHT! TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR FAVORITE GHOULS AND GOBLINS, MAKE CHOICES THAT HELP EVERYONE GET HOME SAFELY, AND ENJOY THE CHANCE TO UNWIND IN THE MIDDLE OF SUCH A BUSY SEMESTER.

WISHING YOU A WARM, FUN, AND WONDERFULLY SPOOKY NIGHT!

-BETSY, APRYL, & SIENA



OCTOBER NEWSLETTER OF THE MSU WOMEN'S CENTER

A Letter to Jane Goodall

By Apryl Little

The world is mourning the loss of Dr. Jane Goodall, a woman whose name has long been tied to groundbreaking science. Beginning her work in the 1960's at Gombe Stream National Park, she changed how the world understood animals by seeing them as individuals with thoughts, emotions, and relationships. She started her research without much formal scientific training, but her openness and compassion reshaped the field of primatology and ethology. She became a leading voice for environmental protection, animal welfare, and fostering a connection between humans and the natural world.



Goodall's career is often remembered for her innovation, such as naming chimpanzees instead of numbering them, documenting their tool use, and showing their capacity for emotions that are similar to humans. But it's just as remarkable for the way she led. Her work showed that empathy, curiosity, and compassion can be forms of leadership just as powerful as authority or control. She led by watching, by listening, and by refusing to harden in a world that rewards hardness. Her leadership was deeply human and deeply feminine because of its steady, personal, and empathy driven nature.

Dear Dr. Goodall,

Thank you for showing that science and human compassion can, and should, exist side by side. You taught us that curiosity takes courage, and that paying attention can change what we believe to be true. Your work helped women in science see new ways to lead and succeed. You built a different path that made space for observation and compassion. You reminded us that leadership can also look like listening and that persistence does make change.

Thank you for giving us a model of leadership that prioritizes empathy and respect. You reminded us that science begins with curiosity and attention and should always end with care and compassion. Your work will live on in everyone who studies, protects, and speaks up for the nature and environment you loved so deeply.

Rest peacefully, Dr. Goodall and thank you for the shining example you left behind.

WOMEN IN LAW: THE RIDGE WE'VE CLIMBED AND THE MOUNTAIN TO GO

By Apryl Little



The legal field has always been slow to change. Most of what we still practice today is built upon traditions from Medieval England and has long reflected the values of those who historically held power. For a majority of American history, women were shut out of law schools and courtrooms entirely. Arabella Mansfield became the first woman admitted to a state bar in Iowa in 1869 and even then, most states resisted allowing women to practice law for many decades afterward.

The idea of a woman lawyer once seemed impossible and now, women make up the majority of law students in the country. The profession looks very different than it once did, but the pace and direction of that change tell a more complicated story.

The American Bar Association's Profile of the Legal Profession (2024) shows that women are entering law in record numbers. In 2023, about 56% of students at ABA-accredited law schools were women and they made up more than half of all graduates. Women now represent the majority of law firm associates for the first time ever. In legal education, the numbers are steadily improving as well with nearly half of all full-time law school professors being women, and 42% of law school deans being women, compared to only about 10% in 2000. I think these gains show how much the foundation of the profession has changed in a relatively short time, at least in law standards.

But unfortunately, progress in entry-level and mid-level positions hasn't translated to the top. Women make up only about 28% of all law firm partners and even fewer are equity partners, or partners that own a share of the company's profits and losses. Only around 12% of managing partners are women. In the judiciary, women hold about 43% of state supreme court positions but only about one-third of federal judgeships, which is a stark contrast in representation. The gender gap is even more obvious in corporate law with just 34% of general counsels at Fortune 1000 companies being women. It's clear that women aren't as a whole less qualified or less suited for leadership roles than men as a whole, so there must be other driving forces behind the staggeringly few women who make it to the top.

Law firms and legal institutions still reflect outdated norms about who leads, who earns trust, and whose ambition is rewarded. Gendered expectations, both inside and outside the workplace, continue to shape how women's success is perceived and how opportunities are earned. Women are often expected to be more accommodating, less assertive, and more "likeable," while men are praised for the same traits that might get a woman labeled as difficult or combative. This is ironic considering the very foundation of the legal structure depends on some level of combativeness. Combining these cultural biases with the long standing tradition of male-centered leadership, creates barriers that many don't even realize are there but are very difficult to overcome.

Continued on Page 4.

WOMEN IN LAW: THE RIDGE WE'VE CLIMBED AND THE MOUNTAIN TO GO (CONTINUED)

By Apryl Little

Nobody is arguing that unqualified women should be handed power for the sake of equality. The issue is that the same work often earns different scores. Women should be evaluated by the same rubric that makes men successful in law, not by a separate one that makes the same work worth less or wrong. The qualities that are celebrated in men, like assertiveness or ambition, are seen as abrasive or overreaching in women. The work is there, the results are there, but the scoring system isn't the same.

The unequal grading system becomes even clearer when we look at retention. While women enter the legal field at nearly the same rate as men, they leave it far more often, especially during the middle years of their careers. There's no doubt that some of that can be attributed to workplace culture rather than ability or interest. Studies have shown that women in law report higher rates of burnout and bias, with many saying they feel overlooked for promotions or excluded from key cases that lead to advancement. According to the 2023 Bloomberg Law Workload & Hours Survey, female lawyers report feeling burned out 56% of the time, compared to 41% of male lawyers. Over time, those pressures quietly thin the ranks of women who stay long enough to reach leadership roles. The result is a slow but steady loss of talented women who might have otherwise risen to the top of the field.

Going forward, we need to build systems that showcase women's work on the same scale as men's. One way to do this could be to rebuild mentorship systems that include women at every level to guarantee a more nuanced and representative structure of coaching. Other ways could be equal, and earned, access to high-visibility cases and clients or rethinking the very specific image of what leadership in law might look like. I think true progress will depend on valuing a wider range of leadership styles and changing the assumptions that have come with the field for so long.

The progress made so far deserves credit. Women are now the majority in law schools, among new lawyers, and in some areas of government law. These are significant achievements that would have seemed out of reach just a few generations ago. Yet celebration shouldn't mean complacency. The legal field may be built on the idea of precedent, but that doesn't mean it has to stay stuck in the past. The ridge has been climbed, but the mountain ahead is still waiting.



STUDENT ADVOCATES FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS (SARR) UPDATE

By Siena Quesada



Student Advocates for Reproductive Rights (SARR) is a registered Student Organization at MSU. So far we are having a very good semester; at our weekly meetings, we have played birth control jeopardy to educate students about different options for birth control, painted rocks with positive messages to spread around Bozeman and discussed plans for the semester and beyond. Our next meeting will feature a presentation on Unregulated Pregnancy Centers, their operations and goals, and the ways in which they often do more harm than good.

We've seen a lot of new faces this year and if you want to join our meetings, check-out our Instagram at [reproductiverights.msu](https://www.instagram.com/reproductiverights.msu). We send out weekly newsletters and have received lots of positive feedback on the information we provide as well as the updates on club, state, and national happenings. We are looking forward to the rest of the academic year..

Later this semester, we are working on an event co-sponsored with the Women's Center featuring a panel discussion about birth control options, uses and availability.. Details are to come! We will also provide more educational presentations at our meetings and have some guest speakers next semester. If you have ideas for speakers or would like to offer a presentation yourself, please feel free to reach out and let us know! Overall, our goal is to keep educating and advocating for women's health and reproductive rights while also finding and supporting more members and participants. I hope you all continue to have a great year and learn more about SARR on Instagram (mentioned above) or reach out to us through our email: sareproductiverightsmsu@gmail.com!

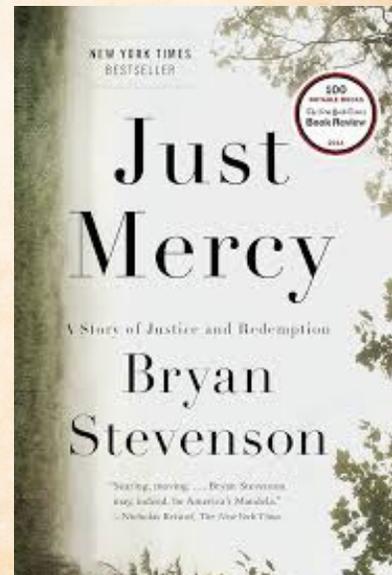
BOOK OF THE NEWSLETTER: "JUST MERCY" BY BRYAN STEVENSON

By Apryl Little

Fitting with the law theme, this summer I read *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, and it's one of those books that stayed with me for quite a while after I finished it. Stevenson is a lawyer and founder of the Equal Justice Initiative and he writes about his work defending people who have been unfairly sentenced or forgotten by the justice system. His stories are heartbreaking, impactful, and hopeful all at once and I think it's a great reminder of how powerful compassion and persistence can be, especially in today's world.

If you haven't read it yet, you can check out a copy from the Geraldine Fenn Library in the Women's Center office, or you can find it pretty much anywhere you usually get your books. There's also a powerful movie adaptation starring Michael B. Jordan and Jamie Foxx who bring Stevenson's work to the screen and I think it's a great companion to the book if you want to see the story told in another way.

It's important to remember that *Just Mercy* isn't fiction and that these are real people, the Equal Justice Initiative is a real organization still doing this work today. If the book resonates with you, I'd really encourage you to learn more about their mission and ongoing projects at: <https://ejl.org/>.



A NEW OBSESSION: K-DRAMAS

By Betsy Danforth



“There are Women Who Make the Impossible Possible”
(Beyond the Bar)

Almost everyone has heard of Squid Games, but I’m guessing it was because I watched Extraordinary Attorney Woo two years ago and started to rewatch the series that I have been fed all sorts of suggestions for South Korean dramas on Netflix. I have happily followed these down the rabbit hole! There is a lot of soul in Seoul (okay, VERY corny, but true!), and the series that I have watched so far have been female forward, extremely interesting, and tell very adult and relevant stories. I have also found that they are often surprisingly intimate, unique, have meaningful plot lines, compelling characters, a longer episode time and usually more episodes per season than current American made dramas. In my opinion, this all makes up for reading subtitles and the occasional corny scene.

For example, right now we (and fyi, my husband also enjoys these shows) are watching Beyond the Bar, a legal drama featuring a young attorney working her first law job at a powerful firm. Her cases include partner abuse, emotional disabilities, early onset Alzheimer’s, the right to die, child abuse, a couple’s decision around having children, artistic copyrights, and sexual consent. The other subject of the drama is focused on the attorneys themselves, struggles for power and money within the law firm, reactions to a new female boss, and the friendships and relationships between the colleagues and other characters. The episode we watched last evening (season 1, episode 8) was titled: “Wonder Woman,” and the first line in the episode was: “In this world, there are women who make the impossible possible.” What’s not to love?

Little Women (very loosely based on the Lousie May Alcott novel) focuses on the three sisters raised in a working-class family and their journey into adulthood--it was also very enjoyable with surprising plot twists, battles between good and evil, rich and poor, and a constant struggle for wealth and status with a nod to the many complications these can bring. The sisters’ familial relationship is complex and rich, as is the friendship between two of the main characters. I was pleased to see that these shows feature strong, professional and capable women. Extraordinary Attorney Woo follows the career, challenges and antics of an autistic attorney set in modern times. Each episode features a different case, and many are exceptionally creative scenarios and the resolutions often very touching.

Though the directors of two of these three series are male, their female characters have depth, strength and an engaging complexity not always found in dramas. I recommend any or all of these shows and look forward to the long wish list I have of other K-dramas!

THANK YOU TO OUR SACK LUNCH SEMINAR PRESENTERS!

By Betsy Danforth

The Women's Center hosted our second Sack Lunch Seminar of the semester earlier this month. Both have been incredibly interesting and educational, and we'd like to take a moment to thank our presenters, disseminate information about their excellent and important work and programs, and to encourage folks to attend future Sack Lunch Seminars!

Public Health Administrator, Sydney Hunsaker (pictured on the right) from MORH/AHEC: [Montana Office of Rural Health and Area Health Education Center - Montana Office of Rural Health and Area Health Education Center | Montana State University](#)

presented a talk on the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) trainings being offered through the School of Nursing to ensure that each community and hospital in Montana have trained nurses onsite when needed. Seeing that over half of Montana's counties lack trained SANEs, and that many patients must travel over 250 miles for exams, the grant writers saw the urgency of getting these trainings off the ground. The grant funded program, Sydney noted, was much more popular than anticipated, and they have trained twice as many nurses as planned in the first year. This enthusiastic response and dedication of Montana's healthcare workers is incredibly encouraging. Nurses are taking extra time out of their busy days to ensure that their communities have trained personnel to serve victims of interpersonal violence and assault. Sydney and her colleagues are excited by the level of interest as well as the ability to keep this program funded and vital. According to federal data, Montana has a state sexual assault rate 10% higher than the national average, with Native American communities, women, and people ages 10-19 experiencing disproportionate levels of sexual violence. SANE trainings will assist greatly in guaranteeing people get the help they need closer to home and more immediately.



Earlier this month, Dr. Rebecca Turk discussed language and identity and the ways in which they affect a sense of belonging in communities and society. As the Director of the Center for Bilingual and Multicultural Education (CBME: [Center for Bilingual and Multicultural Education - Center for Bilingual and Multicultural Education | Montana State University](#)), Dr. Turk has worked closely with both students and faculty to foster an environment that encourages acceptance and helps to broaden people's minds while ensuring the success of all MSU students. I especially appreciated what Rebecca had to say about the notion of "correct English," a concept that harbors both judgement and elitism. If one successfully gets one's point across in communicating, they are indeed using correct English. The work and programs of the CBME are broad and varied and encompass both a safe and comfortable physical space in addition to many curricula including Latino Pathways, Indian Education for All, Teaching for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse K-12 students, and ESL courses. This invaluable resource is imperative to the success of many of our first generation, Indigenous, International and Spanish speaking students in addition to the invaluable resource of raising cultural awareness among Montana students.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Women Shaping the Agenda

Join three local women leaders who are helping shape the future of our community. Lei-Anna Bertelsen and Jan Strout are also co-leaders of the Bozeman City for CEDAW Task Force campaign to adopt the CEDAW ordinance to advance and protect human rights for women and girls in our community

Jan Strout (she/hers)
Study Commissioner,
City of Bozeman

Danielle Rogers, Chair of
the Economic Vitality
Citizen Advisory
Board-(Speaking in my
Personal Capacity)

Lei-Anna Bertelsen,
Current Bozeman
School District 7
Trustee

When:
Wednesday, October 29th
12:00-1:00 PM

Where:
SUB Alumni Lounge

October 29th: *More Than a Seat at the Table: Women Shaping the Local Landscape*

Noon- 1 p.m. SUB Alumni Legacy Lounge

Join Lei-Anna Bertelsen, Danielle Rogers and Jan Strout for a conversation with local women leaders who are helping to shape the future of our community. In their respective positions on the local School Board, Bozeman's Economic Vitality Board, and the Bozeman City Study Commission, these three presenters will share information about current projects, highlight examples of how and why women's voices are making an impact, and the many ways YOU can get involved to make a difference.

October 30: *Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon Session*

11:30-1:00 in the Student Commons (Strand Union Building, room 185).

These meet-ups are informal editing events where editors (and potential editors) of all skill levels are welcome. Experienced editors will be on hand to get you started and answer any questions you may have. If you are an experienced editor, you are encouraged to come socialize with other editors and share your challenges and achievements. We also have a growing list of pages that could use improvement if you are looking for some inspiration or ideas:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Pomemel/MSU_Library_Wiki-Workshops. The library plans to host one of these get togethers each month throughout the 2025-26 school year (September-April), so if you can't make this meeting, don't worry, there will be more! To let us know if you will be joining us, RSVP at <https://montanastate.campuslabs.com/engage/event/11809846>

Join A New Feminist Discussion Group!

Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Student Commons, SUB 185

What does Feminism mean to you? How does the "F-word" make you feel?

If these questions spark something inside, please join us every Thursday evening from 6:30-8:30 pm for Feminist Theories Discussion Group, held in the Student Commons in SUB 185. This group is a student led initiative supplementing discussions in the Intro to Feminist Theories course. You do not have to be an enrolled student to join this discussion group! Our goal is to foster a welcoming environment where we can engage in thoughtful, curious and respectful discussion surrounding feminist theories and movements throughout history and how they have shaped our world and our lives. Diversity is an important part of our mission; all ages and identities are welcome! For more information or access to the reading material covered each week, please reach out to Amanda Christensen at Amanda.christensen4@student.montana.edu.