

MORE THAN 80 ATTEND HANNAH'S VISION
Afternoon Tea with Irene Guenther, Ph.D
Professor, Honors College, University of Houston
*You've Come a Long Way Baby, **BUT...***

On Sunday January 8, 2012 more than eighty enthusiastic NCJW-GHS members and guests attended Hannah's Vision to hear Dr. Irene Guenther discuss the cultural implications of the changing roles of women in society throughout the ages. Dr. Guenther's fascinating lecture and Power Point presentation broadened our knowledge and understanding and challenged us to continue working to improve the lives of women everywhere.



The title, "You've Come A Long Way Baby" was adapted from an advertising slogan for Virginia Slims, a longer, thinner, supposedly more elegant cigarette introduced in 1968. Eventually, this advertising ploy tanked, but the growing woman's movement definitely did not fail! While significant strides have certainly been made for women's rights and equality in the last 50 years, The Public Affairs Committee added the **BUT** because, frankly, we still have a long, long way to go!

Governing Board Chair Bonnie Herst opened the program with the following statement, "The mitzvah Tikkun Olam, or repairing the world, can be accomplished by giving donations, whether tangible or monetary, to those in need. It can also be accomplished by educating those around us, and that is what Greater Houston Section is doing today."

Dr. Guenther discussed the secondary role women have held in society since the beginning of time, how and when things began to change.

- The Seneca Falls Convention, which took place in Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848, was the first national women's rights convention and a pivotal event in the continuing story of U.S. and women's rights.
- In the 1840s and 1850s, as the Industrial Revolution took hold in the United States, more women went to work outside the home. By 1840, ten percent of women held jobs outside the household; ten years later, this had risen to fifteen percent.
- Over time, women began to take more active roles in the workforce and more women sought higher education and work, although most women were paid less than men in the same industries (*as is still the case to this day*).
- Despite these advances, there were few political and legal rights to reinforce women's independence. The idea of women's work and women's traditional gender roles in the home endured for the majority of women. During the early history of the United States, a man virtually owned his wife and children as he did his material possessions.
- In the United States today, men and women are offered a wide range of higher education options. However, women's access to higher education has historically been limited, while men have been offered an abundance of higher knowledge possibilities. Reasons for the inequality of education

between men and women throughout history include the “assumption of superiority,” which held that women were too delicate a creature to undergo the rigor of a real education and fear that widespread education that went beyond the limits of social training might pull women away from her domestic duties.



Dr. Guenther continued by discussing how best to protect and bolster gains we have already made, and work together to insure a future where we are truly equal in every sense of the word.

- Today many females generally earn higher grades than males, but still don't score as well on standardized tests such as SAT, advanced placement tests and graduate school admission exams.
- The second wave of feminism in the United States refers to a period of feminist activity which began during the early 1960s. The movement grew with legal victories such as the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Roe vs. Wade and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Many of these battles continue to be fought today to maintain the status quo.
- American women have had the right to vote since 1920, but their political roles have been minimal.
 - Even today, women make up only 2% of Congress, and there has only ever been one female Speaker of the House.
 - To date there have only been 31 female State Governor's in this country compared to 2,317 males.

frankly; we still have a long, long way to go!

An expert in both European and modern American cultural issues and gender history, Dr. Guenther consistently gets rave reviews on websites such RateMyProfessors.com. January 8th's standing room only audience enthusiastically agreed!

Named after NCJW's founder Hannah G. Solomon, this gathering is the third in a series of briefings on community issues in keeping with NCJW's 14 Core Principals. NCJW believes that a democratic society and its people must value diversity and promote mutual understanding and respect for all. Human rights and dignity are fundamental and must be guaranteed.

Principle #7: Equal rights and equal opportunities for women must be guaranteed.

Many thanks to Rosine Chappell who helped secure the party room at her condominium building for the event. The facility was centrally located, lovely and perfectly equipped for tea with a small kitchen, serving bar, and equipment. Members of the GHS Public Affairs committee who planned the event are Beverly Sufian, Joyce Dauber, Liz Morris and Kathy Silverberg. Publicity was arranged by Halley Trevas and Mindy Gross. Others who were instrumental in the success of the afternoon include Ede Wiener, Thelma Rubin, Evelyn Brass, Arlene Karchmer and Sharon Rance. Finally – thanks to Dave Sufian and Beverly's brother Heshy Solomon.