

# A Place like WATER

By Annabeth Roeschley '07-'09

If there is a place where hard work is sustained by hard laughter, hard play, *I have found it at WATER.*

If there is a space created and cultivated for women to make waves in religion, *I have dug it deeply at WATER.*

If there is an energy sparking from the fingertips of an 83-year old Sister, *I have touched it at WATER.*

If there are voices speaking truth to power, *I have spoken – sometimes loud, sometimes silent – with them at WATER.*

If there is a sacred patch of grass where intergenerational bodies align with the full moon, *I have spurred their rhythm at WATER.*

If there are days where I wonder what bulk mailings, Australian panforte, and website design have to do with feminist work in religion, *I have questioned - and answered - this at WATER.*

If there is a faith community that keeps justice at its heart, *I have pulsed among them at WATER.*

If there is an organization where feminist methodology is not only the goal of the work but also how the work gets done, *I have collaborated as such at WATER.*

If where even our honest and best efforts to be feminist can be critiqued, *I have been here long enough to offer mine at WATER.*

If there are women whose commitments to dismantle sexism reaches from the hegemonies of the Catholic Church to the back alleyway, *I have joined those dissidents at WATER.*

If there is a web that spans language and country, age and faith, profession and perspective,

*I am “once connected, always connected” with WATER.*



**Top Left:** 2018 Interns (l to r): Charlotte Lim and Hannah Dorfman enjoying ice cream at a local watering hole. **Top Right:** 2018 Interns (l to r): Janaya Sachs, Rachel Beaver, and Heureuse Kaj enjoying lunch and conversation at WATER. **Bottom:** Former Interns and current Co-directors (l to r): Emily Harder, Diann Neu, Annabeth Roeschley (author of poem to the left), Cindy Lapp, Mary E. Hunt, Kate Stoltzfus, and Elizabeth Hardt at Hyattsville Mennonite Church where Cindy is pastor.



Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual • NEWSLETTER

Volume 26 • Issue 2 • 2018

## WATER Interns - Simply the Best

By Mary E. Hunt



*Mónica Maher (left), Pastor of Social Ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Quito and WATER's first intern, and Mary E. Hunt (right) in Quito, Ecuador, May 2018. Mónica does outreach to refugees, women survivors of violence, and LGBTIQ people. Mónica is a treasured colleague.*

heart of WATER. The first and the most recent (not the last!) intern illustrate this amazing cohort of WATER's finest.

Mónica Maher came to WATER in 1984, shortly after we opened our doors. A college student finding her next steps, she helped us get up and running. After degrees from Harvard Divinity School and Union Theological Seminary, the Rev. Dr. Maher was ordained in the United Church of Christ. She is currently a visiting professor at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences in Quito, Ecuador and is becoming a Zen dharma teacher. I participated recently in a seminar she organized in Quito on “Religious Fundamentalism, Rights and Democracy” at the Latin American Social Sciences Institute (FLASCO). It had shades of WATER: rich conversation, a simply gorgeous central table of roses and petals, and Grail women in the group. I felt right at home.

Fast-forward to 2018. Charlotte Lim, a student of Political Science at the National University of Singapore, is capping her year of study abroad at Yale University with a summer at WATER. She brings curiosity about the political facets of faith-based feminism, excellent research/writing skills, and a deep commitment to put into practice what she is learning. Like Mónica, Charlotte aspires to share her experiences with others across the world, back home in Singapore, for which her WATER Alliance contacts will serve her well and she us.

As WATER celebrates thirty-five years of challenging feminist work in religion, these women, and all the people who have come between them, take our efforts global, across generations, and into what we hope will be a more peaceful future. ■

*Mary E. Hunt is Co-founder and Co-director of Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER).*

## Apply for an Internship at WATER

The WATER Internship program offers an opportunity to learn how a small non-profit runs and to see what it takes to nurture and maintain a wide network of feminists and activists worldwide who focus on faith and justice. Interns help with program planning and fundraising as well as access to WATER's extensive feminist theological library. Internships are unpaid, though WATER helps with logistics such as finding housing. Interns commit to a minimum of six weeks, and can serve for a year or more. Some interns are placed through their universities and others through religious volunteer programs such as Mennonite Voluntary Service, the Loretto Volunteer Program, and Wesley Theological Seminary. Others simply come on their own. Find more information and an application at [www.waterwomensalliance.org/interns/](http://www.waterwomensalliance.org/interns/)



**Please Stay in Touch**  
8121 Georgia Avenue, Suite 310  
Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA  
301.589.2509  
[waterstaff@hers.com](mailto:waterstaff@hers.com)  
[www.waterwomensalliance.org](http://www.waterwomensalliance.org)

## Who We Are

WATER is a global network, an educational and spiritual space, a center for dialogue on feminism, faith, and justice. We connect activists, religious leaders, students, scholars, and allies who are using feminist religious values to create social change. Founded in 1983 by Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu, we have been empowering people to address structural violence for thirty-five years—making WATER one of the oldest feminist religious non-profit organizations in the world.

Join the WATER community as we work toward inclusive theologies and rituals, push for social change, and collaborate from inclusive perspectives. To learn more about what we do, visit us at [www.waterwomensalliance.org](http://www.waterwomensalliance.org).

Mary E. Hunt, Diann L. Neu: Co-directors | Hannah Dorfman, Janaya Sachs, Charlotte Lim: Staff Associates | Joe Scinto: Volunteer

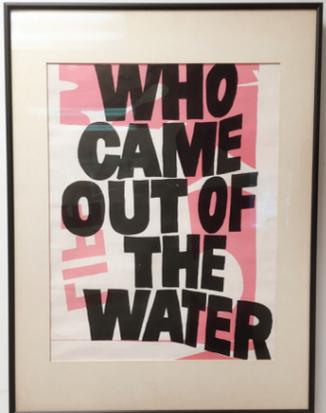
WATER is a 510(c)3 organization. All donations are tax deductible. We thank you for your support. © 2018 Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual.

## Who Came Out of the WATER?

Learn from past WATER interns in our new podcast series, *Who Came Out of the WATER*, inspired by a gift from Jean and Dan Martensen to WATER of original artwork (pictured right) by Sr. Corita Kent IHM. Episodes include:

- “Who Came Out of the WATER: Feminist Mennonites” featuring Cynthia Lapp '95 and Kate Stoltzfus '15
- “Who Came Out of the WATER: Loretto Volunteers” featuring Emily Cohen '11 and Wendy Mallette '13
- “Who Came Out of the WATER: Wesley Seminararians” featuring Clarafrancie Cromer '12 and Heureuse Kaj '18

These episodes and more can be found on the iTunes Podcast app, Stitcher, Spreaker, and Soundcloud. Simply search WATERcast and listen for free!



## Former Interns Tell It Like It Is

**Melissa Feito**

2016 from Tufts University

**Currently Loretto Volunteer, Producer at Interfaith Voices**

"When I first came to WATER I feared it would be just another internship. What I learned instead about myself, or rather confirmed, was that I am happiest when working with and through the Spirit for the justice this world sorely needs. . . WATER was a form of active prayer for me. But that was possible because of the sisterhood and the desire for justice."



**Lucy Tatman**

1991 from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

**Currently Senior Lecturer in Philosophy and Gender Studies at the University of Tasmania, Australia**

"When I think of volunteering at WATER, my first memory is of laughter. Big belly-shaking laughter suffused with warmth, care, and a passion for life."



**Ikhlas Saleem**

2010 from Wellesley College

**Currently a Co-host and Executive Producer of Identity Politics Podcast**

"The most important thing I learned was how to make theology real, how to marry academic pursuit with the actual, lived experiences of communities in pursuit of social justice. I was, and am still, so inspired by the work of WATER. Working closely with Mary and Diann, I learned this isn't something they just do. As a black, muslim woman entering WATER I didn't exactly know what to expect but I know what I received: mentorship, guidance, healing, understanding, free meals (lol), community, a space to breathe and expand. Undoubtedly, WATER has played a significant role in shaping who I am and my work today. I am always in gratitude."



**Cathy Jaskey**

2013-2015 Loretto Volunteer Program  
**Currently Student at Vanderbilt Divinity School**

"You've changed my life and continuously shown me what true hospitality, generosity, humor, creativity and friendship can be."



**Clarafrancie Cromer**

2012 from Wesley Theological Seminary  
**Currently Ministry Leader for Veterans Assistance Ministry at Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington DC**

"While interning at WATER, as part of my Masters of Divinity degree, I did an Intercultural Immersion with the Gullah People in the Low Country region of South Carolina and Georgia. I was able to tie West African spiritual experiences to the spiritual practices of the Gullah People who are known for preserving their African linguistic and cultural heritage. I brought my experience back here to WATER and discovered that the WATER library has books on the Gullah Geechee people. For my graduation, I was able to recite the sermonic texts in the Gullah language at the Washington National Cathedral. Without my Gullah experience, and without the support of WATER, I wouldn't have been able to do that."



**Gade Duerksen**

1998 Mennonite Washington Study-Service Year

**Currently Perpetrator Intervention Consultant at Partnership for Strong Families**

"While at WATER it was as if my world came into focus and I finally was able to begin the incredibly painful but liberating process of letting go of self-defeating faith traditions and, what I had considered up until then, theological norms. Not only did it open up my eyes to urban life. . .but to the basis of feminist and queer theology."



**Kitty Stafford CSJ**

1992 Sabbatical after missionary work in Peru

**Currently a Volunteer with CEASE, Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada**

"From my first day at the office I was enfolded in warmth and love which included the practicalities of finding me a better place to live, allowing me to use WATER resources for a fundraising appeal for our Women's Centre in Peru. . .Those twelve weeks were probably the most energizing I have ever spent in my life."



## WATER Program Highlights

You can find audio of programs and ritual scripts at [www.waterwomensalliance.org](http://www.waterwomensalliance.org). Register for upcoming events on our website or email [waterstaff@hers.com](mailto:waterstaff@hers.com). Join us at WATER or by phone.

### WATERtalks

In April, **Eileen Markey** presented on *Radical Faith: The Assassination of Sister Maura*, emphasizing Maura Clark's dedication to her faith in the face of tumultuous political conditions that led to her death. The whole incident continues to raise questions for us today.



In May, **Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder** shared on the topic of *Motherhood, Mayhem, and Mindfulness* from a womanist perspective. Her insights were instructive and challenging.



In June, **Judith Casselberry** discussed *The Labor of Faith: Gender and Power in Black Apostolic Pentecostalism*, applying feminist labor theories to examine the spiritual, social, and organizational work of women in a male-headed church.



### WATERrituals

**Diann L. Neu and WATER Staff** brought us together in April for *Earth Day: Returning to Life, Returning to Earth*. We were reminded of our commitment to care for all creation.

In the May ritual, Julian of Norwich challenged us to remember that *All Shall Be Well* as we live in these dangerous times.

In June, we celebrated the *Summer Solstice: Goddesses of Fire*. Through the inspiration of goddesses that represent light, fire, and passion, we were in turn encouraged to enact justice in the world.



### WATERmeditations

In April, **Janaya Sachs** led us in a meditation, *Blooming in the Gap*, characterizing the growth that can occur through reflecting deeply on the changing of seasons.



In her May meditation, **Melissa Feito** guided us *In Memory of Ursula K. Le Guin*, a science fiction novelist and poet.



With the invitation of **Judy Bond** in June, we found quietness in the midst of technological diversions as we meditated on the Maren C. Tirabassi poem, *Prayer when there are too many distractions*.



### Women Crossing Worlds

Clara Luz Ajo, Vice Rector of the Seminario Evangélico de Teología (SET) in Matanzas, Cuba will visit WATER in July. We await her return and WATER's continued connections with our Cuban colleagues at the SET community.



## WATERritual Honoring Interns

By Diann L. Neu

Thank you, WATER Interns, more than 80 of you throughout our 35-year herstory. Your generous work during your internship days and in subsequent years continues to echo. We honor you for your perseverance and creativity that have shaped this community. We call you into the ranks of the Wise WATER Feminists.

### Wise WATER Feminists

Beloved Interns, we bless you with water to symbolize the fullness of your role as Wise WATER Feminists. Your ministry with this community as an Intern is now complete. You now number among the Wise WATER Feminists whose loving work continues to create this organization and others. Your compassionate service, loving leadership, creativity, and joy are now a part of that foundation.

Beloved Wise WATER Feminists,  
May your hearts be filled with loving compassion in the work of justice.  
May you be filled with hope, love, and laughter.  
May you know the comfort of community, good friends, wise colleagues, and family.  
May you have strength, courage, and fortitude for the journey ahead.  
May you be blessed with good health.  
May peace live always in your heart and in your home.  
May you always bear witness to the love of Divine Wisdom that brings justice to this world.  
Go forth good and faithful ones! We thank you!  
You are Wise WATER Feminists.

**Blessing Song** by M.T. Winter, Woman Prayer, Woman Song, ©1987

May the blessing of God go before you.  
May Her grace and peace abound.  
May Her Spirit live within you.  
May Her love wrap you 'round.  
May Her blessing remain with you always.  
May you walk on holy ground.

© 2018 Diann Neu, Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER), [dneu@hers.com](mailto:dneu@hers.com)



**More than 80 Interns have graced WATER. We applaud each one and the Donors who have made these Internships possible!**

Mónica Maher '84 • Susan Phillips, Joan Scott '88 • Sally Davis '89 • Barbara Cullom '90 • Marie Therese Martin, Beth Wheeler, Lucy Tatman, Ayanna Beard '91 • Kitty Stafford, Cara Vincent, Susan O'Brien, Dagmar Albert '92 • Helena Johansson, Tisa Anders, Kelly Cregan, Florencia Rivas, Ute Harle '93 • Hetty Irmer '94 • Cynthia Lapp '95 • Lanell Dike, Monique Miyake Maier Paris, Marianna Rivas, Eri Delorier, Richard Russell '96 • Frances Reed, Jean Love Hammond '97 • Gade Duerksen, Pauline Maheux '98 • Nina, Kate Holbrook '99 • Lora Nafziger '01 • Erika Callaway Kleiner, Margaret Mary O'Gorman '02 • Margaret Gonzales, Lauren Dunn '03 • Michelle Mueller '04 • Rachel Ingraham, Sophie Kanter, Katey Zeh, Gretchen Zelle '06 • Shelley Seyler, Eleanor Carey, Meg Cullom-Levine, Julie Bir '07 • Annabeth Roeschley, Megan Sullivan, Sophie Kanter, Emily Derstine '08 • Annabeth Roeschley '09 • Elizabeth Speigle, Nellie Beckett, Ikhlas Saleem, Grace Lauver-Simmons '10 • Emily Cohen, M Barclay, Y. Joy Harris '11 • Anne Lacher, Heather Smith, Clarafrancie Cromer '12 • Wendy Mallette, Elizabeth Lancaster, Molly Bolton, Rebekah Renfro Stone '13 • Cathy Jaskey, Melody Stanford, Jacqueline Small, Ciara Chivers '14 • Cathy Jaskey, Kate Stoltzfus, Mary Grace Steigerwald, Mara Lemesany '15 • Emily Harder, Elizabeth Hardt, Melissa Feito, Dana Tufariello, Mallory Naake '16 • Hannah Dorfman, Mallory Naake, Karis Slattery, Susanna Stutler '17 • Hannah Dorfman, Janaya Sachs, Heureuse Kaj, Rachel Beaver, Charlotte Lim '18