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Von: Betty-Jeanne Rueters-Ward <bruetersward@gmail.com>
Datum: Tue, 17 Nov 2009 16:09:30 -0800
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From: **Starr King Communications Office** <communications@sksm.edu>
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PASSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, UUISM, MOTIVATES LEE LAWRENCE

Editor's note: This is one in a series of articles about people who work behind the scenes to make Starr King an effective, progressive seminary.

She first became a fan of Starr King School years ago, when several students served as ministerial interns at her home church. Today, **Lee Lawrence** is one of the quietly effective leaders on the Starr King board of trustees, working with Starr King students, past and present, to promote progressive causes at the school, in California, and across the nation.

"To see Starr King having such an important role in training ministers to bear public witness is quite wonderful," Lee says. "I'm on the Starr King board because I care about Unitarian Universalism and social justice".

A "cradle Unitarian" who grew up in Massachusetts, Lawrence retired from a career as a psychologist and Harvard professor. Since moving to California and connecting with Starr King School, she has made the lead financial gifts for the Til Evans Professorship endowment and for the successful $8.2-million Centennial campaign. She joined the school's board six years ago, and now serves on its Educating to Counter Oppressions committee, which helps the school grow its commitment to prepare religious leaders who work for more just and sustainable communities.

Beyond Starr King, Lawrence also focuses on justice issues. She works with the UU Legislative Ministry of California (UULM), which she calls "Grand Central" for progressive causes like marriage-equality and health-care reform. UULM executive director **Lindi Ramsden** (a 1984 Starr King alum) says of Lawrence: "Her grounding in UU faith, her insightful analysis, and her advocacy experience have proved invaluable to UU advocates for equity and justice."

Lawrence says she is particularly pleased to see the deepening relationship between Starr King School and UULM. Last year, UULM expanded its staff and hired **Betty Jeanne Rueters-Ward**, a 2008 Starr King grad, as an organizer and supervisor for interns. Two current Starr King students - **Cathy Rion** and **Christy Baker** - and 2009 alum **Megan Dowdell** are paid part-time activists with the group. They're working on passage of the federal health-care reform.

Says Lawrence: "It's nice to see how much our denomination has changed" since her childhood. She adds that she's proud that UUism "is again taking a lead as a progressive denomination in society".

UU World magazine recently featured the health care activism of UULM, Lee Lawrence, and Betty Jeanne Rueters-Ward in the article Unitarian Universalists lobby for health care reform.

Watch a new video featuring SKSM grad and UULM-CA organizer Betty-Jeanne Rueters Ward, sharing her story as a student of the Masters in Religious Leadership for Social Change (MASC) program and activist for social justice in California.

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