

## **Award for Scholarly Distinction in Geography**

### **Dr Geraldine Pratt**

In recognition of her consistent and sustained intellectual contribution to geography in general and feminist geography in particular through a variety of activities including publishing, work with graduate students, and editorship, Dr. Geraldine Pratt is the recipient of this year's Award for Scholarly Distinction in Geography.

Gerry Pratt has defined, and redefined, the contours of academic western feminist geography in North America. She has had an enormous impact on the discipline. For example, despite the fact that the Web of Science does not list many feminist journals, Gerry's work is cited hundreds of times. Feminist geography has flourished in large part through her careful, wide-ranging, accessible, and insightful scholarship. Many of Gerry's articles have been placed into readers and anthologies on social, cultural and human geography; others have been translated into other languages. Her collaborative work on the Dictionary of Human Geography has been a reference for researchers at all stages of their academic careers. She has worked as primary supervisor and committee member for more than 75 graduate students, who are now leading new substantive fields of knowledge related to social, cultural, and political geographies.

Beginning in 1988, Gerry worked with Susan Hanson to publish a series of journal articles concerned with such issues as the geography of occupational segregation, the connections between home and work, and the intra-urban geography of social class, based on the rich survey evidence collected in Worcester, Massachusetts. Evidence from this series enabled Gerry and Susan to make important theoretical contributions to a wide range of debates in urban and feminist geography. The book written from this work, *Gender, work and space*, made its own unique contribution. While it documented what they termed 'containment stories' - evidence that illustrated ways women's lives were contained within tightly drawn spatial boundaries - they also emphasised how place differentiates such generalisations. The book remains an important text on gender and work, a decade after publication.

Beyond her leadership in feminist theory in geography and other social sciences and humanities, Gerry has been foremost in developing and practising feminist methodologies. Feminist methodologies are defined by a commitment to challenge conventional power relations associated with scholarly research and to enable more equitable outcomes for research participants. This commitment is especially visible in Gerry's work with the Philippine Women Centre, where she has, since 1995, engaged with domestic workers coming to the centre to help them to tell their stories in their own terms, with intimacy, complexity and force. Gerry has co-authored academic and policy papers with the Centre, and their experience with her research has helped them to generate funds for and carry out community-based research projects of their own. Gerry's recent book *Working Feminism*, which looks at key concepts and debates within feminist theory in relation to the real problems faced by Filipina domestic workers, resulted in part from this work.

Since 1993, Gerry has been editor of *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. Under her careful hand, this journal has become a leading geographic journal. Gerry's editorial style is thoughtful and insightful, encouraging constructive and provocative discussion. Gerry has also nurtured the emergence of a new journal, *Gender, Place and Culture*. At its inauguration in 1994, we did not know that this journal would become the flagship journal for feminist geography in North America. But Gerry's contributions - to its first issue, to subsequent issues, and as a member of its editorial board - have helped assure its success.

Gerry's open door was sometimes a revolving door for students and faculty, who sought a mix of professional and personal advice to guide them through a sometimes unfriendly academic maze of bureaucracy, uncertainty, and anxiety. Without fanfare or acknowledgement, Gerry offered ways for all these people to speak in their own voices and to find a place for themselves at the university. Furthermore, she spoke up for women students and fellow colleagues in private meetings with other colleagues, in departmental and university forums, and through her written work. By her support, her expertise, and the strategic use of her position, Gerry has ensured that geography (and the academy) has become a more diverse, inclusive, and accepting community of scholars.

Through all of these activities Gerry has helped create a space, no, a place, an intellectual home, and a collegial community for all women in the discipline. Arguably, this is her most lasting and important contribution to the scholarship of geography. In recognition of that contribution, we nominate her for this award.