

## Alumnae Association award luncheon honors distinguished graduates

by Sarah J. Stevenson, MFA '04

A cross-section of reuniting alumnae from across the Mills generations gathered on Toyon Meadow on Saturday, October 3, to honor recipients of this year's Distinguished Alumna Award, Outstanding Alumna Volunteer Award, and Recent Graduate Award.

The third annual AAMC Awards Luncheon began with remarks by President Janet L. Holmgren. Anita Aragon Bowers '63, president of the Alumnae Association of Mills College, then presented the Distinguished Achievement Award to **Stephanie Mills '69** (below), who Bowers termed "an eloquent spokeswoman for ecological sustainability."

Throughout her career in the environmental movement, Mills has spoken and written extensively. She is now featured in the documentary film *Earth Days*, shown during Reunion 2009, and had addressed the campus community at Convocation the day before. Upon accepting the award,

Mills emphasized how fortunate she has felt to advocate for preservation of the natural world. She exhorted the campus community to meet the ecological and societal challenges of our time by instituting "conscious cultural change."

Next at the podium, Mills College Trustee Pauline Royal Langsley '49 presented the Outstanding Volunteer Award to **Leone La Duke Evans, MA '45** (above right). Evans studied music history at Mills, where she interacted with luminaries including Darius and Madeleine Milhaud, and the brothers Howard and Dave Brubeck. Evans headed the Mills Music Training School until 1964, where she led many others to a life of musicianship and teaching. Evans, just days short of her 90th birthday, was escorted to the podium by her former student Pat Taylor Lee '57, and recalled her first impression of Mills College as "the most unusual, the most beautiful place." Evans said those feelings have remained constant for 70 years and she has tried "to repay the institution in what modest way I could."

Over the past seven decades, Leone Evans has repaid Mills and the AAMC many times over through her own gifts and talents and through energetic fundraising on behalf of these organizations. She served two terms as Alumna Trustee on the College's board; held all offices of the Oakland-Berkeley Branch, Mills College Alumnae Association; and was president of the AAMC Board of Governors, of which she is now an honorary life-time member.



The Recent Graduate Award was presented by Sandy Bowe Teora '69 to **Angela Adams DeMoss, MA '99** (below right). DeMoss is an English instructor at Cuyamaca College in El Cajon, California, and was elected this spring to the presidency of Los Angeles Mills College Alumnae, where she has shown tremendous leadership and enthusiasm in organizing events to engage the branch membership, collaborating with Orange County Mills College Alumnae, and planning activities that reach out to recent graduates.

DeMoss described her time at Mills as "a renaissance," and her involvement with Southern California alumnae as nothing short of inspiring. "Joining the Los Angeles branch gave me an instant network of friends and supporters," she said. DeMoss encouraged alumnae to become involved with their local branch or start a group of their own. Her closing quote, borrowed from *The Generosity Plan* by Kathy LeMay, was a fitting end note to the proceedings, as she urged luncheon guests "to serve our alma mater, ourselves, and each other by making a positive difference in the world with simply what you have, where you are."



Read Stephanie Mills' Convocation speech online at [www.mills.edu/reunion](http://www.mills.edu/reunion) or visit the Mills College Facebook page to view videos of Convocation and photos of Reunion.





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## Call for 2010 Award Nominations

The Alumnae Association of Mills College (AAMC) is seeking alumna/us candidates for the following awards:

- The **Distinguished Achievement Award** for distinction in professional fields, arts, sciences, and public affairs;
- The **Outstanding Volunteer Award** for extraordinary commitment and service in promoting the goals of the AAMC and the College;
- The **Recent Graduate Award** for volunteer efforts that exemplify a spirit of caring and community to the AAMC and the College. Alumnae/i within 15 years of graduation may be considered for this award.

Please send information about each nominee's achievements and qualifications to: Chair, AAMC Awards Program, Alumnae Association of Mills College, P.O. Box 9998, Oakland, CA 94613. Please include your name, phone number, address, and email address.

Nominations must be received by May 17, 2010, and candidates must be able to attend the award ceremony at next year's Reunion, September 30–October 3, 2010.

For more information, email [aamc@mills.edu](mailto:aamc@mills.edu) or AAMC President Anita Aragon Bowers at [AnitaAragonBowers@alumnae.mills.edu](mailto:AnitaAragonBowers@alumnae.mills.edu) or call 510.430.2110.

### Save the date for Reunion 2010

Mark your calendar for next year's event: **September 30–October 3, with Convocation on October 1.** This Reunion will celebrate class years ending in 0 or 5, including the 50th Reunion Class of 1960.

## Reunion snapshots

1. The first eucalyptus tree along the “new” Bryant Path takes root at a ceremonial planting with President Holmgren; Nancy Thornborrow, dean of the Lorry I. Lokey Graduate School of Business; and AAMC President Anita Aragon Bowers '63.
2. A chocolate fountain flows freely at a lecture on the history of the tasty stuff by Professor of History Bert Gordon.
3. Nadia Mostafa Saleh '59 traveled from Egypt, earning the title of “greatest distance covered” among the 283 alumnae and more than 100 guests attending Reunion 2009.
4. The President's Garden Reception was well attended by reuniting alumnae and Family Weekend participants alike.
5. Dozens of alumnae gathered to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Summer Academic Workshop and join the Alumnae of Color barbecue lunch. Photo by Glodean Champion.
6. A hearty toast to the Class of 1959!
7. Jane Heberling Egner '59 and Paul Egner Jr. meet Aarthi Sekar '10, a Mills College Annual Fund outreach caller.
8. New Hampshire State Senator Martha Fuller Clark '64 raises a question at a lecture on health care reform by Professor of Public Policy Carol Chetkovich.
9. The Writers' Salon and reception drew 17 alumnae authors—including Arabella Grayson, MA '96—and plenty of interested readers.

# Dedicated volunteers strengthen alumnae programs



## *A message from the President of the Alumnae Association of Mills College*

AS I REFLECT ON A WONDERFUL AND well-attended Reunion 2009, I must acknowledge all the outstanding volunteers who contributed so much to the success of that event. Great thanks go to the many alumnae and College staff—and some volunteers who are both—who planned and executed a lively and entertaining weekend for more than 300 returning alumnae and guests.

The Alumnae Association of Mills College (AAMC) provides a number of ways to remain involved with the College and with your classmates throughout the year and I invite you all to take advantage of these opportunities. Although the Memoranda of Agreement of 2005 and 2007 changed the nature and function of the AAMC in relation to the College, we have continued to provide programs and events through the efforts of board members and volunteers and the support of our excellent accountant and office manager, Bill White.

The nature of the College's role has changed, too: Upon assuming responsibility for alumnae programs in 2007, the College established alumnae relations and communications teams as part of the Office of Institutional Advancement. Today, the College's alumnae relations staff, directed by Laura Gobbi, organizes Reunion and serves as a link between College programs for alumnae and AAMC programs. In addition, the College's advancement communications staff, headed by Dawn Cunningham '85, publishes the *Quarterly* and a monthly newsletter and is developing an online community for Mills alumnae.

The AAMC continues to be a vital organization with a clear purpose. Decisions of the AAMC board—as well as plans

for programs and events—are informed by the document entitled "AAMC Goals, Objectives, and Values," adopted by the Board of Governors in June 2008. The board continues to refine this living document. The six major goals are to:

- Sustain the special spirit, philosophy, and traditions of the AAMC and the Mills College experience by promoting a lifelong personal connection of each alumna with Mills College;
- Work continuously to ensure that the AAMC is a welcoming and inclusive organization for all alumnae;
- Optimize avenues of alumnae communication that will maximize the distinct voice, visibility, and effectiveness of the AAMC;
- Reach out to increase alumnae participation and volunteerism, and thereby to maximize the collective value of our individual efforts;
- Forge a strong collaborative partnership with the College; and
- Ensure effective board governance and management of AAMC.

THE ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION IS ASKING for your help in realizing our goals by volunteering your time and talent. Together, the AAMC and Alumnae Relations offer a multitude of ways for you to contribute. If you live in the greater Bay Area, it is easy to participate directly on the following AAMC committees which connect alumnae to each other, to the College, and/or to Mills students: Alumnae of Color, Alumnae Student Relations, Educational Outreach, Graduate Student, Resource, and Travel.

Alumnae branches throughout the country offer another way to remain involved with the College and classmates.

**Know your board:** Members of the AAMC Board of Governors are (left to right): Jennifer King '00, MA '02, Mills College Director of Alumnae Relations Laura Gobbi (liaison to the Board), Darice Balabanis, MBA '08, Treasurer Karlin Sorenson '92, Vice President Lynda Campfield '00, MA '02, Vice President Linda Jaquez-Fissori '92, Sharon Tong Pierson '06, MBA '07, President Anita Aragon Bowers '63, Viji Nakka-Cammauf, MA '82, Lucy Do '75, Cynthia Guevara '04, Alumna Trustee Lyn Flanigan '65, Michelle Balovich '03, Beverly Curwen '71, and Alumna Trustee Gayle Rothrock '68. Not pictured: Alumna Trustee Julia Almanzan '92, Faculty Representative Vivian Fumiko Chin '89, Rita Stuckey, MA '01, EdD '05, and Rina Faletti '81.

For information about a Mills branch near you, contact Laura Gobbi at [lgobbi@mills.edu](mailto:lgobbi@mills.edu) or 510.430.2123.

We are also seeking volunteers to answer telephones or check AAMC email from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm weekdays as well as volunteers to join the Alumnae Relations Reunion 2010 Committee. Contact me, [anitabowers1@comcast.net](mailto:anitabowers1@comcast.net) or 510.430.3374, for further information.

The Alumnae Association continues to sponsor important traditional events like the Pearl M Dinner and the Winter Celebration for New Alumnae as well as newer events such as the AAMC Awards Ceremony at Reunion, Phenomenal Women of Color, and lectures organized by the Educational Outreach Committee. We eagerly await your ideas for new programs and events, especially as we approach the 20th anniversary of the Strike and Mills' recommitment to women's education. Contact us and find out what the Alumnae Association can do for you—and what you can do for the Alumnae Association and the College.

Warm regards,  
Anita Aragon Bowers '63

## Jarrettsville

Cornelia Nixon

Counterpoint Press, 2009

"I stepped out of the barn and saw a gun-flash in the dusk, on the dark porch of the hotel, not straight up but aimed level, and a man fell backwards off the rail and hit the ground... A dark figure moved quickly, lightly, down the steps into the yard, and I thought I saw a skirt. Was that a woman with a gun?"

This shocking event on April 10, 1869, was perpetrated by an ancestor of Professor of English Cornelia Nixon. In the trial that followed, hundreds of people wondered: What could possibly have driven Martha Jane Cairnes to murder her fiancé in cold blood, in the presence of 50 witnesses, and then beg to be immediately put to death for her crime? Four generations later, Nixon answers that question in a story wrought with love, loss, loyalty, and heartbreak.

Set in Maryland immediately after the Civil War, Martha Jane, part of a family of Confederate sympathizers, and Nick, a family friend and Union army veteran, develop a complicated romance. Despite their opposing stances, the two fall deeply in love and decide to be married. However, rumors begin to circulate that Martha is engaged in an illicit affair with one of her family's black servants; when she becomes pregnant, even Nick can't help but wonder whose baby she carries. He deserts Martha at the altar, she seeks revenge, and the criminal trial that follows is a nail-biting journey to determine whether Martha Jane Cairnes will live or die.

Nixon first learned of Martha Jane's true story as a young adult. "The family kept it from us kids until we were old enough to be told such an R-rated tale," she says. Nixon's delicately crafted version of the tale uses various sources of information—old family letters and papers, photographs, local newspapers, and graveyard records—to reconstruct a deeply buried part of her family's past. —KL

## Living Green: Communities that Sustain

Jennifer Fosket '94 and Laura Mamo

New Society Publishers, 2009

From neighborhoods in downtown Los Angeles to villages in northern Quebec, this book presents informative descriptions of several communities that have been created with the goal of increasing environmental, social, and economic sustain-

ability for their residents. Interviews with inhabitants provide a lively and honest look at the ups and downs of life in an intentional community and due consideration is given to issues of aging at home, eco-feminism, self-sufficiency, and how to "green" the nuclear family home. These examples show several ways to effectively integrate low- and high-tech green technologies with careful planning and social networks to satisfy residents' needs. —LS

## Homegrown: The Terror Within

Cialan Haasnic (Anna Nicholas '79)

Bournos Press, 2009

Richly detailed characters navigate an intricate plot of anti-government sentiment, mathematical analysis, academic intrigue, and bioweaponry in this author's debut novel. Meredith Satter, professor of mathematics at UC Santa Barbara, has been placed on leave for unstated reasons from her faculty position, but is quickly recruited to apply her groundbreaking theories to help the government predict terrorist threats. As a woman with a nontraditional career and a single mother of a challenging teenaged son, she faces more than her fair share of doubters and difficulties. Inspired, in part, by the author's observations of widespread panic and paranoia in the aftermath of 9/11, this story leads into a chilling scenario of what could happen if domestic "homegrown" extremists recruited a few good minds and a few million mosquitos to deliver a deadly payload. —LS

**From the faculty in 2009:** A new book from Brinda J. Mehta, professor of French and Francophone Studies, examines *Notions of Identity, Diaspora and Gender in Caribbean Women's Writing* (Palgrave Macmillan Press).

English faculty have published several new books: Kirsten Saxton's *Narratives of Women and Murder in England 1680–1760* (Ashgate Publishing) and Stephen Ratcliffe's *Reading the Unseen: (Offstage) Hamlet* (Counterpath Press).

From the Math and Computer Science Department, Zvezda Stankova recounts her experience teaching math to young people in *A Decade of the Berkeley Math Circle: The American Experience* (American Mathematical Society) and Steve Givant is co-author of the undergraduate text *Introduction to Boolean Algebras* (Springer Verlag).

