

## Give Us Bread But Give Us Roses, Too!

---

The seventh annual International Women's Day Celebration hosted by CFUW-Ottawa and the Ottawa Council of Women on March 10 at Library and Archives Canada celebrated the Centenary of IWD and 100 years of progress in women's rights and freedoms, through song, speeches, historical displays, recognition of notable attendees and members who recently authored books, not to mention great food, drink and door prizes.

Singer/songwriter Amanda Cottreau and two members of the Vox Femina Choir, Rita Finnigan and Margot Lange, led us in solemnly singing the historic *Bread and Roses* as we "marched" into Salon A to hear our speakers. Originating in 1911 as a poem, set to music in 1976, an inspiring feminist anthem and slogan for fair pay and working conditions, the song is associated with a textile workers strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts led by immigrant women, the 1912 "Bread and Roses Strike".

Dr. Pamela Walker, Joint Chair in Women's Studies at Carleton and Ottawa Universities, told us about three heroic activists for African-American civil rights, courageous women who, despite their disadvantaged backgrounds, stood up to gross injustice and violent resistance: a) Rosa Parks whose investigation of the 1944 gang rape of Recy Taylor by racist white men helped launch the civil rights movement and who single-handedly sparked the 1955 bus boycott; b) Diane Nash, who campaigned to de-segregate lunch counters and interstate travel, and achieve voting rights in the 1960s; and, c) Fannie Lou Hamer, who advocated against discrimination in voter registration in the 1960s.

Dr. Caroline Andrew, Director, Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa, spoke about the concepts of thinking, feeling and acting, about "Bread and Roses" as a powerful holistic vision and metaphor for material and spiritual needs. In referring to Status of Women Canada's 2011 theme "Girls' Rights Matter," she noted that, though people need identity, many young girls have no identity. Even in countries that demonstrably value education, access to education is higher for the wealthy. Political action is needed to improve lives. She spoke about the "Women's Worlds" conference coming to Ottawa in July and invited us to attend or volunteer. The conference will honour aboriginals, diversity and intergenerational dialogue.

Though the event sold-out, the "dark and stormy night in Ottawa" resulted in 24 percent non-attendance. Luckily, 115 registrants, our guest speakers and three of our featured singers braved the treacherous driving and walking conditions to contribute to a most enjoyable evening. See more photos and videos at [www.cfuw-ottawa.org](http://www.cfuw-ottawa.org). Thank you to all for a memorable and successful party!

**Mary Butterill**

For the IWD 2011 Planning Committee