

Jewish Women's Archive



**A photographic lens on being a Jewish girl:
Mothers and daughters explore the
Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution
online exhibit through photos and creative arts**

Materials for Part 1

Excerpted from the Jewish Women's Archive's online
exhibit at

<http://jwa.org/feminism>

Being a Jewish girl through a photographic lens: Mothers and daughters explore the *Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution* online exhibit through photos and creative arts
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Nicole Hollander with mother and friends



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My mother taught me about the importance of friendship. Her friendship with Olga and Esther lasted all their lives. For Olga, the last remaining friend, that friendship is still fresh. When I visit her, she often tells me stories.

The three girlfriends were all witty. At 90, Olga can still tell a good joke and remember the punch line. My mother was the witty observer, master of the telling phrase. I modeled Sylvia, the character in my comic strip, after Esther, the quick witted, long-legged, bad girl.

I noticed that around our house, my father was to be amused and danced around. And he was amused by my mother and me. He had very little humor himself. I always thought of women as the funny ones. My mother's humor was wonderful and inventive. My father was her audience. He would always rather be in the kitchen with the women than with the other husbands. I noted that as well. When the feminist movement appeared on my horizon, I knew I had found my direction.

I always drew as a child, but certainly no one thought it would be a career. I was allowed to be a painting major at the University, because it probably wouldn't hurt my chances to meet a wonderful man and get married. Sexist thinking worked to my advantage.

It was during the Carter administration that I got my chance to blend drawing with humor. I redesigned and then did illustrations for a publication called "The Spokeswoman." It was feminism and humor that made me a cartoonist.

My mother's humor never made her happy. My father was a difficult man. His legacy to me was politics; a vision of the world in which there are "haves" and "have-nots" and your duty is to be on the side of the "have-nots". My dad didn't live to see my cartoon in the *Sun-Times*. He would have gotten a great kick out of seeing me in the paper. My mother was delighted. She often announced she was Sylvia's mother. When people would complain to her that my cartoon was obscure – what the heck was my point anyway – she was dismissive. Try again tomorrow, she would say, as if they would get smarter by tomorrow.

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NOW founding conference



Photograph by Vincent J. Graas
Courtesy of Sonia Pressman Fuentes

Jewish Women's Archive (jwa.org)

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On July 2, 1965, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) commenced operations; it had been created to enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited employment discrimination, including that based on sex, among covered employers, labor unions, and employment agencies. Three months later, I joined the agency as the first woman attorney in the Office of the General Counsel.

Initially, in the area of sex discrimination, the EEOC moved very slowly or not at all. I found myself increasingly frustrated by the unwillingness of most of the officials to come to grips with the issues and to expand employment opportunities for women. I became *the* staff person who stood for aggressive enforcement of the sex discrimination prohibitions of the Civil Rights Act and was ultimately awarded a Superior Performance award for my efforts. It was gratifying to me to receive this award, as it evidenced the Commission's recognition of the importance of interpreting and enforcing the sex discrimination prohibitions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Then Betty Friedan, who had become famous through writing *The Feminine Mystique*, came to the EEOC to interview officials and staff for a second book. I invited her into my office and told her, with tears in my eyes, that the country needed an organization to fight for women the way the NAACP fought for African Americans.

Thereafter, in June 1966, at a luncheon at the Third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women in Washington, D.C., 28 people planned the formation of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Another 26 founders, of whom I was one, were added at an organizing conference in Washington, D.C. that October. In the picture taken at that organizing conference, I am in the front row at the right, one person away from Betty Friedan.

After its founding, NOW embarked upon an ambitious program of activities to get the EEOC to enforce Title VII for women. As a result of pressure by NOW and other subsequent developments, the EEOC began to take seriously its mandate to eliminate sex discrimination in employment and the American public became aware that there was a new national priority: equal rights for women.

A little-known law, a relatively small organization, the developments that followed in this country, and similar movements worldwide have completely changed the face of this country and are well on their way to changing the face of the world.

(This statement is excerpted from the chapter called "Sex Maniac" in Sonia Pressman Fuentes' memoir, *Eat First – You Don't Know What They'll Give You, The Adventures of an Immigrant Family and Their Feminist Daughter.*)

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"The March into the First National Women's Conference, Houston, 1977"



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Amy Eilberg becomes a rabbi



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V-Day Public Service Announcement posters

When violence against women and girls ends, I will...



Gloria Steinem, Activist/Author; New York, NY. Photographed by Joyce Tenneson ©

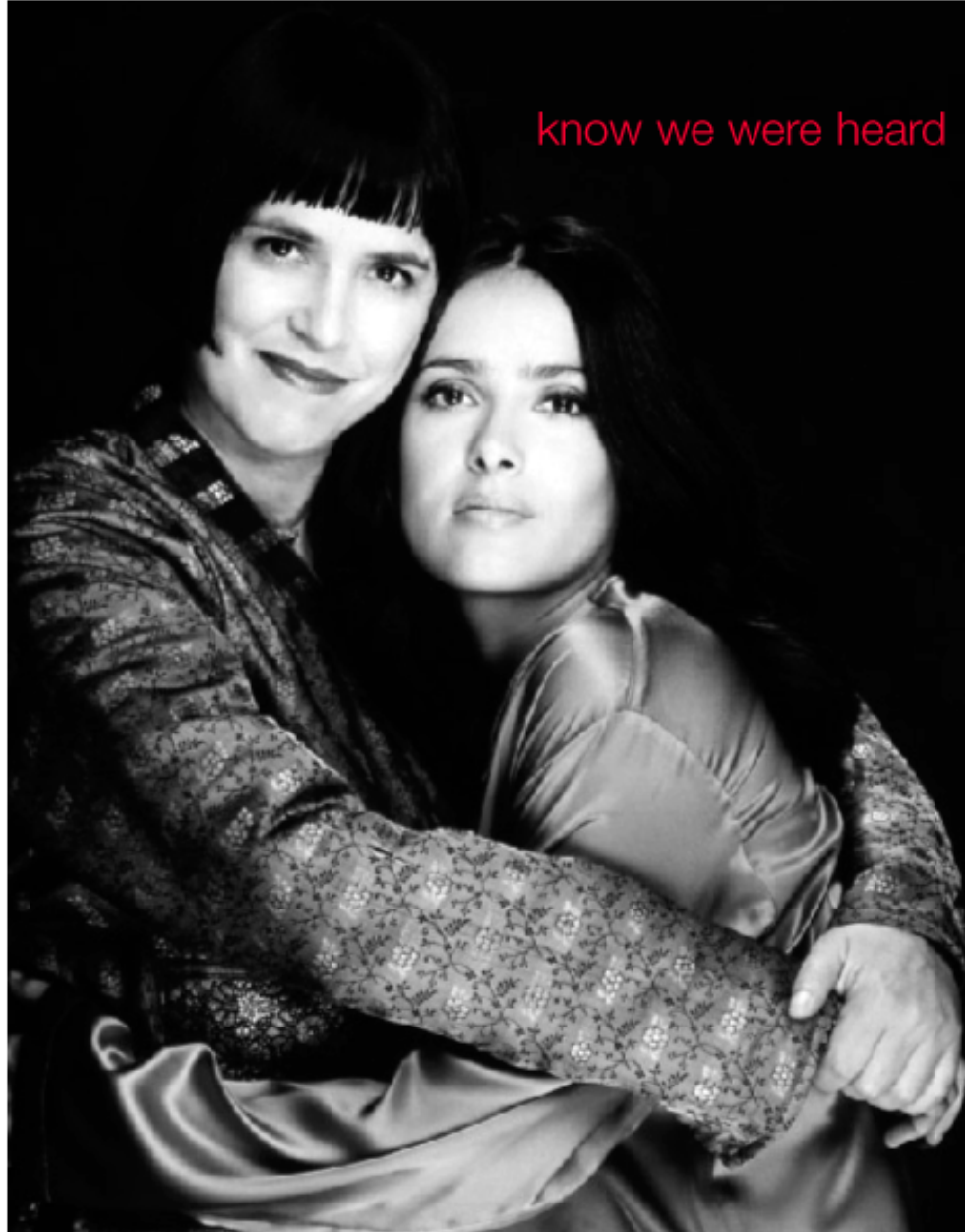
VDAY | UNTIL THE VIOLENCE STOPS
Join us, support V-Day visit vday.org

Join Us.
Envision a world where violence has ended.
Support V-Day. Take action. Mobilize.
Let V-Day become V-World.

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When violence against women and girls ends, we will...



know we were heard

Eve Ensler, Playwright/Founder, V Day/Activist, New York, NY & Salma Hayek, Actress/Producer/Director/Activist, New York, NY
Photographed by Joyce Tennessee ©

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