

WELLESLEY COLLEGE

OFFICE OF MEDIA RELATIONS

Embargoed: April 23, 2012

Wellesley College Appoints Layli Maparyan New Executive Director of the Wellesley Centers for Women, the Country's Premier Research-and-Action Organization

WELLESLEY, Mass.—Wellesley College President H. Kim Bottomly today announced the appointment of Layli Maparyan, Ph.D., as the new Katherine Stone Kaufmann '67 Executive Director of the Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW), one of the nation's largest and most influential organizations conducting scholarly research and developing action programs centered on women's and girls' perspectives. Maparyan will assume her new responsibilities effective July 1, 2012.

"I am so pleased that Dr. Maparyan will join Wellesley in this important role," said Bottomly. "Her work on women's issues and her dynamic leadership abilities are ideal for building upon the Centers' legacy of influential and groundbreaking programming. The invaluable work by scholars at the Centers—undertaken in the United States and abroad—reflects Wellesley's century-long commitment to investing in women and women's leadership."

"As executive director of the Wellesley Centers for Women, I see my role as working to identify cutting-edge frontiers of policy development, expanding sources of funding, and ensuring that WCW continues to attract and support leading scholars to maintain the rigorous standard of research for which the Centers is known," said Maparyan. "I'm committed to women's issues across a wide spectrum—and further, to the role of scholarship in informing meaningful change in the broader community."

From 2003 to the present, Maparyan served at Georgia State University as associate professor in the Women's Studies Institute (WSI) and associated faculty of the Department of African American Studies. At Georgia State, she has been graduate director of the WSI as well as a University senator. Previously, Maparyan had served as an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology and the Institute for African-American Studies at the University of Georgia, where she was founding co-director of the Womanist Studies Consortium. Her civic engagement includes coordinating the National Center for Civil and Human Rights' Women's Initiative in Atlanta. Maparyan will hold a faculty appointment in Wellesley College's Department of Africana Studies.

Known best for her scholarship in the area of womanism, Maparyan has also published significantly in the areas of adolescent development, social identities, Black LGBTQ studies, and the history of psychology. Her scholarly publications include two books, *The Womanist Reader* and *The Womanist Idea*, as well as chapters in books, including *Locating Women's Studies: Theorizing Critical Concepts for a 21st Century Field*; *The Encyclopedia of Race and Racism, Vol. 2.*; and *Evolving Perspectives on the History of Psychology*. Her journal articles have appeared in the *Journal of African American Studies*; *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*; *Women and Therapy*; and *Adolescence*. Maparyan's work has been funded by the National

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Institute for Child Health and Human Development, the Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Fellowships Program, and the Fulbright Specialists Program, among others. Earlier this year, she was recognized with an Elizabeth Hurlock Beckman Award for outstanding teaching that influences social action and change.

Womanism is a social change perspective that focuses on what everyday women from around the world can contribute to global dialogues about social and environmental problems. It is historically rooted in the cultural perspectives of women of color, particularly African women, and integrates social, ecological, and spiritual dimensions into the change process, with the goal of creating well-being for families and communities. Maparyan's work focuses on the global applicability of the womanist perspective, encompassing people of all genders and backgrounds.

"Work at the Wellesley Centers for Women builds on the belief that when the world is good for women and girls, it will be good for everyone," says Sylvia Ferrell-Jones, president and chief executive officer of the YWCA Boston and also a member of the WCW Board of Overseers and Search Committee. "With equal rights, women's status, leadership parity, and accessible, quality education and child care still challenged in the U.S. and abroad, a commitment to research and action for women has never been more needed."

Maparyan received her B.A. in philosophy from Spelman College; her M.S. in psychology from Penn State University, State College; and her Ph.D. in psychology from Temple University. Her doctoral dissertation was entitled "Adolescent Ethnic Identity and Adjustment: Relation to Ethnic Characteristics of the Peer Context."

"This is an exciting time for the Wellesley Centers for Women and Wellesley College," said Ellen Gill Miller, interim chair of the WCW Board of Overseers and co-chair of the Search Committee. "The exhaustive search process that we undertook reflects on the extraordinary combination of personal and intellectual qualities that Dr. Maparyan brings to this position. She is an inspiring thought leader whose scholar-activist vision will contribute tremendously to the Centers' mission and expertise."

"For almost four decades, the Wellesley Centers for Women has made vital contributions to Wellesley's historic mission as an advocate for women's education, women's perspectives, and women's leadership," noted Andrew Shennan, provost and dean of the College. "Under Layli Maparyan's direction, and building on the remarkable legacy of former director Susan McGee Bailey, WCW is poised to extend the reach and influence of its own work in exciting directions, and thereby to amplify Wellesley College's voice in the world."

About the Wellesley Centers for Women

Since 1974, scholars at the Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW) have conducted research and action projects that inform public policy and shape public opinion. At the heart of the Centers' work is the intersection of gender, race, social class, and sexuality—core foundations for future directions. Work at the Centers focuses on three major areas: the social and economic status of women and girls and the advancement of human rights; the education, care, and development of children and youth; and the emotional well-being of families and individuals. With more than 70 staff members and an annual budget of \$7 million, the WCW encompasses a wide range of research and action projects.

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Work at WCW has been groundbreaking. Research undertaken on peer sexual harassment in schools, child care for younger and school-aged children, equitable education, and women's representation on corporate boards raised public consciousness and continues to inform policy and practices. Scholars at the Centers have examined complex issues of gender, racial/ethnic, and sexual identity across the life course and social-emotional well-being. Relational-Cultural Theory, developed at WCW, changed counseling and psychotherapy practices as well as public understanding of factors contributing to psychological health. Some of the Centers' newest initiatives promote women's social, legal, and economic status, including advancing women's human rights in Asia and the Arab world. The Centers is also home to *Women's Review of Books*, the leading feminist review for writing by and about women, which has been published since 1983.

About Wellesley College

Since 1875, Wellesley College has been a leader in providing an excellent liberal arts education for women who will make a difference in the world. Its 500-acre campus near Boston is home to 2,400 undergraduate students from all 50 states and 75 countries.

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