

Jane E. McArthur wins the 2019 Barbara Rosenblum Cancer Dissertation Scholarship

Sociologists for Women in Society is proud to announce the recipient of the 2019 Barbara Rosenblum Cancer Dissertation Scholarship, Jane E. McArthur. Special thanks go to the 2019 Barbara Rosenblum Cancer Dissertation Scholarship Subcommittee: Ana-Porroche-Escudero (Chair), Melissa Day, Susan Ferguson, and Nona Gronert. This scholarship was established with a bequest from Dr. Barbara Rosenblum, an active and longstanding SWS member, who died February 14, 1988 after a long battle with breast cancer. Colleagues, friends, and family made



contributions to the fund in Barbara's memory, and fundraising efforts continue to ensure that a \$2500 scholarship can be offered every year. The purpose of the scholarship is to encourage doctoral research in sociology, anthropology, psychology and related fields on women's experience of breast cancer and other reproductive cancers and the prevention of these cancers. Another goal of the scholarship is to encourage scholars to make this type of research accessible to the public through speaking and publishing for lay audiences.

Jane E. McArthur, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellow in Sociology/Social Justice at the University of Windsor, in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, combines her educational background in communications with her twenty-five years of working on issues of environmental and occupational health through community based research, education and advocacy. With past experience in Research Coordination and Assistance on projects including the "Risk Exploration Project," "Living and Working in Essex and Kent Counties," and "Lifetime Histories Breast Cancer Research Study," McArthur's work is rooted in community based health investigations with a view to prevention. Though her work for improved well-being and justice has often had breast cancer as a focus, she also works through broader issues of health and well-being as they intersect with gender, race, class and inequalities in power, all with a view to empowerment and social change from the grassroots up through various levels of governance. With a recognition of the importance of the role of the media in contributing to the construction of realities in contemporary society, investigating the production of discourses is a pivotal aspect of McArthur's ongoing work in community environmental health perspectives.

McArthur's dissertation research examines how women who work in an environment with an identified risk of breast cancer construct understandings and narratives of their risks and how women perceive and exercise agency in the acceptance, avoidance or negotiation of those risks. McArthur expects to graduate with her Ph.D. in 2019. She has received multiple awards and scholarships for her research, including Social Sciences Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Top 25 Storyteller, is an Informed Opinions Expert, an Affiliated Researcher with Health Research Centre for Violence Against Women (HRCVAW), a Member of the Windsor Cancer

Research Group (WCRG), and is a champion for getting issues from the margins into the mainstream.

The central question of McArthur's research is: How do women who work (or have worked) in an environment identified as posing an increased risk of breast cancer construct narratives and understandings of their breast cancer risks? and secondarily: How do they place environment in their narratives? And finally: How do these women perceive and exercise agency in the context of those risks? The significance of this research will be in its contribution to knowledge around women's understandings of breast cancer, and also in how women are able to assess risks for breast cancer in their own and others' lives and make corresponding decisions about mitigating those risks.

McArthur is personally motivated to conduct this research given her prior experience in the area of occupational and environmental health research and advocacy and, in particular, in studies of women and breast cancer in conjunction with advocacy around research findings as related to these issues. She envisions this effort of obtaining evidence-based understandings of women's perspective on risks for breast cancer, and particularly whether and how they incorporate environmental risks in their narratives, as a continuation of the work she has been involved in for many years towards influencing prevention policy and regulatory revisions. McArthur sees the proposed research as an opportunity to provide insights and evidence of a particular ontological status that can contribute in new ways to the broader issue of environmental breast cancer in the context of improvements for women's public health.

McArthur created a video on her research with women workers at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, ON, Canada, and their stories of environmental breast cancer risks. This video has been chosen as a Top 25 in the national Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Storytellers competition. [Click here to view the video.](#) [Click here to read the article from SSHRC about the Storytellers challenge.](#)

If you are interested in making a gift to support the Barbara Rosenblum Cancer Dissertation Scholarship, please contact Barret Katuna, Executive Officer, at swseo.barretkatuna@outlook.com.