

Civil rights, feminist movements should unite forces—professors

By Diane Andersen

The feminist and civil rights movements should be linked if all people are to achieve freedom, according to Hortense Spillers, associate professor of English and Moira Ferguson, chair of UNL's Women's Studies Program. They spoke Wednesday on women's literature and women's studies in the last program this semester for the Women/Speak series sponsored by the Student Y. Ferguson said people interested in "human liberation" should not work for single issues, but be united in supporting other groups of oppressed people. "We will never be freed as women until other oppres-

ed peoples are freed," she said. Ferguson said UNL's women's studies program started in 1976 and would not have been possible without previous struggles for woman's suffrage, protests against the Vietnam War, gay liberation and the civil rights struggle. Ferguson gave a history of the women's liberation movement, starting with women as underground political writers in the 1600s. She said women's polemics, or writings against the oppression of their sex, has not been recognized as what it is—a literary category. The goals of women writers since the 1600s haven't changed, she said, citing such women as Mary Wollstonecraft and Betty Friedan as polemical writers.

Ferguson said women's studies programs have "mushroomed" in the 1970s. There were two such programs in 1970 on college campuses and 15 such programs by 1971. She called women's studies the "academic arm of the women's movement."

"Students know their ignorance about blacks in Mississippi and yellow people in Vietnam," Ferguson said and therefore have become interested in women's studies.

Ferguson said she is indebted to the UNL Women's Resource Center and the Student Y for their "contributions to the women's movement." She said such UNL issues as the controversy over the donation of the Krugerrands to the NU Foundation concerns both women and men who are concerned with "human liberation."

Spillers said there is a scarcity of black American women authors.

"When a black woman writes, she is giving us a trace of consciousness" about the history and feelings of black women, she said.

Black women are used to existing for someone else, such as a husband, out of economic necessity, Spillers said. By writing, black women are "testing themselves against the pulse of the nerves of history," she said.

Spillers said she planned to offer a summer course on black American women authors, but that it was canceled because not enough people signed up. She mentioned Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* and Toni Morrison's *Sula* as books showing the development of black women's writing.

Spillers said the black movement is "more and more going to be split along sexual lines," because black women are starting to be more vocal about resentment they feel at not being trusted with leadership positions.

She said it is not detrimental to the black movement for black women to be recognized as individuals who have a voice.

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