

More stories of Bethlehem women in leadership roles: stereotypes and epiphanies

The Bethlehem Gadfly Arts, the, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Touchstone Theater November 8, 2019

 70th in a series of posts on Touchstone Theatre 

The Secret

The Secret begins one day, in late nineteenth century Bethlehem, when sixteen year-old, Helen Wolle, mother of H.D., entered a Moravian Seminary classroom to rehearse a song she looked forward to performing. Much to her shock and, in fact, trauma, she was roughly told to be quiet, to end “this dreadful noise” by her pastor grandfather, Papalie. And Helen, who loved to sing so much and so well, would never sing again in public. The focus of the panel will be on women in leadership. We will connect the panel to the play via a question that Mamalie (Hilda’s maternal grandmother) asks Hilda in the beginning of the play, and H.D. asks the audience at the end of the play: “Who will follow the music?”

Here are two more participants on the panel that followed a Festival Unbound performance of “The Secret,” the play about H. D.’s life. Moderator Jennie Gilrain gave the eight panelists about five minutes each to talk about their “dreams, hopes, works” and perhaps to recount a time when they were “encouraged or inspired or discouraged and oppressed from following your music.” Gadfly should have said last time that short biographies of these women can be found [here](#).

Nancy Matos Gonzalez ran into the generational wall that college is for the boys but was fortunate to meet a woman who acted as her advocate

and mentor. When running for office, she realized that she had to work harder after a man told her that Puerto Rican women are only interested in sex and their men are all on drugs.

<https://youtu.be/s7RzDltx3KM>

Dr. Paige Van Wirt's story is a story of epiphanies, one saying "O, my god, that's my path" out of a soul-crushing job as a bond analyst after watching a movie in which a woman wants to be a doctor, and the another saying "I can do that" after leaving a City Council meeting angry and outraged.

https://youtu.be/kEV2_NYUzFY

to be continued . . .