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Final Paper

Looking Back and Moving Forward: A Study of the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence

When the women of the coalition came marching in,
They offered vision, I wanted facts.
Produce them they did—I just can't win!
You ought to see the red tape they dish back!
A political plum is what they've become.
The Governor and Director pay them heed.
They've shown State Government there's much to be done.
These uppity women are just what we need!

A political cartoon from 1981 inside the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence's newsletter depicts a grant monitor from the Illinois Department of Human Services reciting these lines about the members of the Coalition and their tireless agitation for survivors of violence.¹ Using the tongue-in-cheek lines about "red tape" and "uppity women," his cartoon manifestation detailed the sexist attitudes and bureaucratic resistance the coalition faced from state and community organizations when agitating for an end to domestic violence and assistance for survivors. His cartoon manifestation was certainly on point with the line, "There's much to be done." Indeed, the coalition has been hard at work since its incorporation in 1978, rallying advocates to fight for survivors and demanding legislative reform to improve the system's response to domestic violence.

The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV), as defined by their mission statement, is "a not for profit, membership organization that works to eliminate violence against women and their children by promoting the eradication of domestic violence throughout Illinois; ensuring the safety of survivors, their access to services, and their freedom of choice; holding abusers accountable for the violence they perpetrate; and encouraging the development of victim-sensitive laws, policies and procedures across all systems that impact survivors".² The

Coalition is made up of a network of shelters, counseling programs, and community agencies that serve the needs of survivors of domestic violence in Illinois, and it has served the state since 1978. An administrative central office in Springfield monitors the service delivery of its member local agencies.

Drawing from Carol Hanisch's famous quote, "The personal is political," I plan to explore the public and personal accounts of the development of the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence. I have examined the newsletters of the Coalition, *For Better Times*, with a particular emphasis on the early issues. This newsletter is a quarterly publication that details the actions of the coalition, news from its member agencies, and legislation that affects survivors of domestic violence. Its audience includes the coalition's fifty-four member agencies, allied social service professionals, and corporate supporters in Illinois. DePaul University is home to the complete archives of this organization's newsletters, promotional materials, and documents, and I scoured the archives to gain a look at the issues faced by ICADV and how they resolved them. The newsletters are contemporaneous with the events described. I also have scrutinized interviews with a variety of shelter directors, coalition staff, and activist allies in the movement to end domestic violence in Illinois.

The interviews, on the other hand, highlight the experiences of a selected group of activists involved with the coalition. These activists were given the opportunity to look back on their own contributions to the organization and to tell its story in their own words. The interviews took place in 2007 and 2008 and allowed these movement leaders to reflect on ICADV's growth and development, over thirty years after their involvement with the organization. This paper will bring together personal and public accounts of the emergence of a movement to end violence against women and children, tracing the strengths and challenges of the coalition, the role of identity in the work, and collaboration with other allies in the field. I am interested in seeing how

the one-on-one, private interviews and public, widely-disseminated newsletter add to this picture of a movement and its evolution.

I became interested in the story of the battered women's movement in Illinois through my own work with abused women and children. For the past five years, I have served as a rape crisis advocate, and my direct service with victims and outreach work with funders and community partners is informed by my knowledge of the movement's history. In 2010, my coalition consciousness was awakened, when I joined the governing board of ICADV's sister organization, the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA). Through attending their meetings and networking with the representatives from the other agencies, I gained a greater awareness of the power of collective action and the many voices and experiences it took to create a strong, unified movement. In several cases, we worked alongside ICADV in helping to draft policies, stage rallies, and share information to improve treatment of survivors. In some cases, the two coalitions joined forces to stage a rally or a protest to raise awareness of and action against gender-based violence, and I had the opportunity of networking with my sister advocates and learning from their work and experiences. From this beginning, I became interested in the stories of our allies in the struggle to end violence against women and children and how these individual agencies and advocates developed into the coalition they are today.

I will first examine the articles in *For Better Times* and the personal accounts of the pioneering activists in the coalition, and I will examine the advocates' views on the advantages and contentions of being part of a large statewide organization. The personal interviews can reveal the lived experiences of the early activists, while the newsletter serves as the "public face" of the movement, bringing the stories from the women's shelters and state to readers all across Illinois. I will then scrutinize the role of allies and partnerships in the movement to end domestic violence in Illinois, as mentioned in the interviews or featured in the newsletter. Allies include the faith community, philanthropists, and the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA). I

aim to gain a comprehensive picture of the birth and development of a movement and an insight into how these different accounts complement or problematize the story.

A Coalition is Born: Personal and Political Perspectives of ICADV

The movement to end domestic violence was an important component of the second wave women's liberation movement in America during the 1970s and 1980s. The right to lead a safe, self-determined life free from abuse or oppression was vital to the larger struggle for equality. American historian Rosalyn Baxendall credits second wave feminism with exposing domestic violence as a social problem rather than a family matter, contending that "the women's movement's message—that there is never an excuse for domestic violence—was delivered not only through writing and speak-outs—but also through an important innovation: shelters for battered women. While nineteenth century feminists had spoken out against violence and even secretly harbored runaway wives, the establishment of the first shelters in 1975 created spaces in which battered women could connect with one another and with feminist staff, who emphasized that the victims were not to blame".³ ICADV, therefore, was a product and agent of years of feminist activism. A coalition against domestic violence would be able to promote awareness of the horror of violence while linking shelters together to help their staff support one another in their work to empower its victims. With a new movement against domestic abuse in full swing, it was vital for expressly feminist organizations to have a larger organization to back them up and facilitate social change through advocating with institutions.

From the interviews, it is clear that joining a coalition was advantageous for local domestic violence service providers, as it facilitated communication between the agencies' staff, dispensed funding for services, and allowed them to share information and utilize best practices to improve their programs. Additionally, as a funding agency, the coalition could serve as the pass-through funding agent for federal dollars to treat domestic violence survivors while working

with the shelter staff to help their programs become fiscally and programmatically sound. While individual shelters had existed prior to the foundation of the coalition (Carbondale's Women's Center and Urbana's A Woman's Place being two examples), their efforts to coordinate services and organize against violence were highly regionalized and isolated. Bringing together the local programs strengthened and amplified the movement. Barbara Engel of the Chicago YWCA noted that because abusers isolated and shamed their victims, the individual shelters served the purpose of assuring the women with the sense that they were not alone in their struggle and that they had support along the way. Engel explained that the coalition's relationship to its member programs was "doing what we want to see with the women" by providing them with a community of like-minded professionals so they would see that "we were not out here in the wilderness by ourselves".⁴ Because domestic violence is isolating and shaming for its victims, the services provided at a shelter could help them to rebuild their lives and to see that they were not alone in their struggles. The coalition brought together member agencies and helped them to support one another and learn from each other. It built community among the professionals at the shelters, a powerful experience in a culture rife with misogynist misconceptions about domestic violence and its victims. The staff at an urban shelter certainly benefited from the ability to share information and to learn about the programs all over the state to strengthen their own agencies.

Fellow Chicago advocate Leslie Landis would agree with Engel's statement about the importance of building solidarity with other professionals in a coalition and networking on behalf of their clients. As the director of family violence counseling agency Lifespan from 1981 through 1992, Landis saw firsthand how Lifespan benefited from coalition membership through joining their fellow advocates to work for change in the systems that treated domestic violence survivors and brought together leaders to move the anti-violence cause forward. In the early 1980s, the relatively new social service agencies to assist domestic violence survivors built

awareness in their communities through engaging and educating the professionals who also worked with survivors, such as law enforcement, emergency room personnel, and social service providers. Landis mentioned that training the first responders and service professionals was a challenging task due to the prevalent misconceptions about the nature and victims of domestic violence and lack of public support for its victims, praising the coalition for giving the agencies the support they needed to continue this work, despite the sexism and victim blaming the advocates encountered. She mentioned, “the main reason that ICADV was formed was to bring together different service providers so we could work in collaboration”.⁵ The most pressing issue for Lifespan was to help at-risk, underserved populations in Chicago and to train service providers to be responsive to and sensitive to the concerns of survivors. Additionally, due to the size of Chicago, Lifespan (like Engel’s YWCA) played a key role in promoting citywide coverage of counseling and legal advocacy for battered women. However, on the larger scale, the needs of the state coalition were much broader and constantly evolving. Landis explained that, “early on, the focus was really about movement work,” but “over time, as more domestic violence agencies have been woven into the fabric of an institutional response, ICADV has become more of a professional organization, where agencies belong to an association”.⁶ The coalition initially studied domestic violence as the product of a society that denigrated and discriminated against women, and the members examined changing the culture to prevent domestic violence. They saw abuse as the product of a society that saw women as unequal and that in order for abuse to end, the culture had to be changed as well. The coalition is now focused on facilitating changes for survivors on an institutional level, and the urban shelters were part of this change. As ICADV grew and evolved, members’ focus evolved from a sweeping societal change to smaller and more practical issues they could affect change for, such as victims’ rights, support for member programs, and legislation that helped survivors in their search for justice. These are issues that all the members are capable of taking part in and in many cases, seeing a tangible

change as they work towards a society where domestic violence is neither tolerated nor condoned.

While urban shelters were able to grow and develop as a result of becoming part of a larger organization, the staff at a rural program could find the community and solidarity they needed to effectively support survivors and empower the community without the resources or connections of their urban sisters. The coalition newsletter provided a public relations tool for the rural advocates to showcase their work and attract supporters from all across the state. For example, *For Better Times* featured a conference called “Building Stronger Families” held by a southern Illinois network of shelters.⁷ The advocates came from the newly incorporated agencies in Olney, Rosiclare, and Cairo, and the article promoted awareness and appreciation of their work. As southern Illinois is the one of the poorest and most agrarian areas in the state, the showcasing of the conference in the newsletter built awareness and lent them credibility and needed publicity. The name of the conference is notable, as it marks preventing domestic violence as a *family* concern, rather than a women’s issue. It focuses on ending domestic violence as necessary for the strengthening of the family unit. This type of language is both comprehensive and de-politicized. It entreats the conference’s attendees to protect the women and children survivors of violence as a means of promoting the safety and well-being of the entire family, as domestic violence affects men and children as well as women. However, invoking the language of strengthening families also appeals to a broader audience. The communities of southern Illinois have historically been more insular, less densely populated, and more rural than those in the Chicago, central Illinois, or even northwest region. In a region that was more isolated and insular than its urban and suburban counterparts, framing violence prevention as a family, rather than a women’s issue, would appeal to individuals of all political and professional backgrounds and draw them to the cause.

Being featured in *For Better Times*, a newsletter that would be read by all of the member agencies and their community allies, would serve the individual shelters by building awareness of their activism and advocacy. For shelters with rural populations and insular communities, being members of a state organization and being featured in that organization's publication would help the smaller agencies to publicize their work and reach out to new supporters. As rural communities were small and tightly-knit, membership in a coalition would break some of the regional isolation for the shelters' staff and enable them to meet fellow professionals and activists in the field and access needed funding to keep the programs strong. Jeannine Woods, executive director of the Cairo Women's Shelter, explained the importance of coalition work to her agency: "Because we're so far south and isolated, it's extremely important for us to be involved so we can make sure that what we're doing is consistent with the rest of the state as a whole. And it's also reassuring to us that the things we're doing and instituting is on par with what's happening in the rest of the state. If it don't [sic] trickle down through the news and if it doesn't happen in our community, it's happening in some way that whatever's going on affects what's happening to our rural women, and we want to make sure that they have access to the same type of service that that woman has that's coming from Chicago because now we've networked with all of the shelters in the continental United States, but particularly in our state".⁸ Simply because a survivor was coming from a rural community did not mean she would not receive the services she needed, and coalition work provided the avenue for both rural and urban agencies to share stories about effective treatment methods to improve their work.

Location and Identity Politics in the Movement

While all of the interviewees have a strong awareness of balancing their local needs with the interests of the coalition, it is interesting to see how the individual agencies are featured and described in *For Better Times*. In the issues from the early to mid-1980s, a special multi-page spread called "Around the State" detailed the events, victories, and struggles of the member

agencies in ICADV. As the coalition grew, so did the list, proudly showcasing the growth of not only a state organization but also of a movement across a populous state. From the late 1980s onward, however, only a handful of agencies were showcased. In every issue, shelters from all across Illinois are featured, with at least one Chicago-area agency in the list. Perhaps the rapid and continuous growth of the coalition is responsible for this shift from a democratic display of all the shelters to a select few per issue. When the coalition first began to form, its members were far fewer and smaller. As it grew, and as its members agencies developed new and innovative programs, featuring only a few per issue would allow the coalition to focus on them in greater depth.

Balancing the standards of a state organization with the needs of one's own community could be a challenging task. The interviews and some of the articles provided an interesting glimpse into the regional tensions between agencies and their state organization. One salient issue for the coalition was to address the needs of all of its member agencies. Although the women's shelters all shared the same mission of ending domestic violence and providing services for survivors, there was often a tension between the Chicagoland programs and the shelters in more rural areas. Landis noted that "we always had to balance the needs of Chicago while ensuring that we had a spread for the rest of the state".⁹ As Chicago contains over a third of Illinois' population, it would seem logical that much of the funding from the coalition would be allocated to its shelters. Additionally, Chicago-area programs are glowingly featured in every issue of *For Better Times*, serving as an example to the coalition and fellow professionals who received the newsletter.

Although *For Better Times* did cover agencies from all parts of the state in its efforts to highlight the progress of and opportunities for its members, in some cases, it fell short in its coverage of smaller agencies and did them a disservice in how it reported their work. A glaring example of this is its coverage of the small and struggling Anna Bixby Women's Center in Rosiclare. The

article detailed how Rosiclare, a tiny town in impoverished Hardin County, was an unwelcoming and inhospitable environment for center director Barbara Wingo and her staff. Racism, conservatism, and poverty left their destructive mark on the community, and Wingo found it a challenge to rally support for the center. A particularly problematic article, “Change is Slow in Southern Illinois,” described the Anna Bixby Women’s Center and the challenges Wingo and her staff faced. Taking strategic quotes from her interview with Wingo, author Sandra Martin quoted Wingo’s lament about her community: “Minsters preach against us from the pulpit, accusing us of being ungodly, homosexuals, witches, and breaking up the family! People say we run a whore house here!”¹⁰ These are certainly destructive forces and gendered slurs at play in the community that make organizing for battered women a difficult task in such an inhospitable climate. The article took a condescending tone toward the entire region and its struggling shelter, rather than acknowledge the struggles of the center and the bravery of its staff in keeping the program strong and open in the face of hate and hostility. “Everybody hereabouts knows that programs come and programs go. All that endures are the people too tough, too stubborn, or too dumb to mind that times are always hard in southern Illinois,” patronizingly concluded the article.¹¹ This closing statement implied that everyone in the area was “too tough, too stubborn, or too dumb” and that all programs (including the Anna Bixby Center) were destined to “come and go” with no staying power or influence effectively painting Wingo and her supporters with the same narrow brush as their detractors and publishing this stereotypical portrait in the very newsletter that Wingo’s colleagues and allies would read and turn to for news of their sister centers and advocacy events around the state. The article’s conclusion framed Wingo and her shelter staff as naïve and doggedly trying to support a service that was destined to be unsuccessful, rather than detailing the determination and resolve the staff displayed to keep the services strong.

To make matters even worse for the beleaguered shelter, the article was reprinted months later by a newspaper called the *Hardin County Independent*. Now it was no longer simply victims' advocates who would see the article but rather residents of an entire region that the center served. The article angered the shelter's donors and eroded their local partnerships by depicting a negative picture of the entire community and its women's shelter. The very next issue of *For Better Times* showed that the staff of ICADV recognized the harm this article caused, as an open apology was published to the staff at the Anna Bixby Center. The article contritely explained, "We hope that those in other parts of the state do not think that Southern Illinois is a terrible place to live, or that their own communities are exempt from the kind of attitudes Anna Bixby Women's Center supporters have to confront. Most communities have problems with violence that are deeply rooted both in attitudes and institutions."¹² This is one case where coalition membership and a statewide publication demeaned an organization by resorting to stereotypes where it could have provided needed support and validation. The public apology shows their need to be accountable to the shelter as a member agency, and it explained that the shelter's struggles were not simply confined to its region but rather the results of a sexist and violent society. Being accountable would require ICADV to actively work to reduce the isolation between the shelters and provide support to them in their mission. Publishing an article that stereotyped one of the shelters and its community would only isolate it further. It also required them to acknowledge when they made a mistake and to publicly and immediately rectify the mistake.

Regional divides and location-based isolation were not the only challenge that the advocates faced when trying to successfully support domestic violence survivors or their sisters across the state. Most of the advocates interviewed and featured in *For Better Times* would agree that the abuse of women was a symptom of a sexist society that tolerated violence and saw women as unequal. However, for a survivor of color or a lesbian survivor, the problems would only be

exacerbated, as these individuals also faced racism, homophobia, and classism. From early on, the coalition and the member centers needed to be mindful of the concerns of *all* of the survivors. This is evidenced in newsletter advertisements for cultural competency workshops, diversity trainings, and task forces for women of color and lesbians to share their skills in a safe, welcoming environment.¹³ However, this could prove to be a challenge when governmental organizations or funding sources conditioned their support upon the population that the agencies served. Engel recollected a story from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (of which ICADV was a part) in 1985 that forced her own Chicago YWCA to consider its priorities. After applying for a grant from the United States Department of Justice, the National Coalition was informed that it would not receive the funding if the money went to serve lesbians who had faced battering. This restriction was also detailed by former National Coalition conference coordinator Suzanne Pharr. Pharr explained that after the National Coalition was attacked by conservative organizations like the Heritage Foundation and mischaracterized as “pro-lesbian, pro-feminist, and anti-family,” the Department of Justice decided to make the funding conditional upon the coalition allowing them to regulate all of their work “and they assured the conservative organizations that their work would not be pro-lesbian and anti-family”.

¹⁴ This condition *outraged* the advocates and their allies. After all, it pandered to the homophobic nature of their critics and furthermore, it highlighted up the common and erroneous stereotype that feminists were anti-family.¹⁵ Although domestic violence occurs in every population, the message from the federal funders posed a harsh challenge to the National Coalition. If they were to accept the money, it would come at the expense of the lesbian survivors who could not be served, according to the terms of the grant. However, if the National Coalition were to reject the money, it would leave them without a substantial amount of funding for services. Engel pointed out that it forced the advocates in Illinois to question whether they should keep those services in their messaging or remove them. She concluded that “we said we couldn’t take anything out, because if we start to take [services for lesbians] out, then we are

cutting out some of the basic tenets of our philosophy".¹⁶ She understood that this was not simply a problem for the National Coalition to work through but also a challenge for her agency. As eradicating domestic violence would have to include services that were accessible to all women, removing services for one group of women would undermine the purpose. Experiences like these were clearly a product of both homophobia and sexism, and they challenged the shelter staff to define and provide their services on their own, rather than leave it up to an outside agency that could be pressured by prejudiced groups. The National Coalition would eventually reflect Engel's statement by severing its relationship with the Department of Justice on the grounds that they would not refuse services to anyone.

Faith, Charity, and Hope: The Power of Allies

One did not have to be employed at a shelter or counseling program to make a difference in the lives of domestic violence survivors or to support the coalition. Both the interviewees and the articles mention the importance of allies in the fight to end domestic violence. The philanthropy community and the religious leaders from all around the state played a prominent role in the movement, providing vital support to the agencies and validation of their work. Because churches and houses of worship brought together members of the community and provided a social and service outlet for the residents, their support brought the message to their adherents and gave ICADV an audience and built-in base of support for their work. Philanthropic professionals, such as the Chicago Foundation for Women and the Driehaus Foundation, not only financially facilitated program innovation but also provided an avenue for this difficult subject to be discussed. In a time when domestic violence was seen as a private matter, a religious or charitable organization's support sent the public message that abuse was a real problem, one that warranted attention and eradication. Stories of church allies and interviews with foundation professionals such as Chicago Foundation for Women's Hannah Rosenthal and

the Driehaus Foundation's Sunny Fischer highlight the role that charity played in the development of the state organization and member agencies.

Sisterhood is Powerful: ICADV and ICASA

The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence was and still is a committed partner and collaborator with its sister organization, the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. Although both coalitions formed independently, their members worked collaboratively to change legislation to benefit survivors of gender violence and to facilitate trainings for their professionals. Legislative advocacy is an important component of their collaboration, as many laws that affect women's and children's lives also impact both domestic violence and sexual abuse survivors and the professionals who treat them. As both coalitions are located in Springfield, they have been able to meet with their lawmakers and facilitate rallies to demand laws that are fair to survivors of violence. As two large and diverse organizations, both ICADV and ICASA can easily rally their members to join in the lobbying and demonstrations and create a larger and more unified movement. However, the two organizations sometimes came into conflict over ways to work towards their shared mission of ending violence, and the interviews and newsletter reflected these contentions.

An important triumph that came from their working together was the passing of the Illinois Sexual Assault Act in 1985. This law overturned nine laws in the state and created a broader, gender-neutral definition of sexual assault, with steeper punishments for offenders.¹⁷ For the first time in Illinois history, male survivors were acknowledged and a blueprint for enforcing offender punishment was crafted. Both coalitions worked tirelessly to promote the passage of this law, and the staff at both saw the passage of the law as an enormous victory for survivors and their allies.

The victory came with an unfortunate compromise. Although the Act contained multiple provisions for the protection of and assistance for survivors, its protections for survivors of marital rape were scarce and inadequate. Marital rape is an under-reported crime and a difficult form of abuse to prosecute, as the survivor is married to her rapist. (*For Better Times* explained that there would be “protection *in certain circumstances* for victims who are sexually assaulted by their spouses”¹⁸, but overall, most marital rape survivors could not press charges against an attacker who was also their spouse. The emphasis is my own.) Although marital rape would later be covered as a felony in the state of Illinois, the advocates at ICADV were concerned that the glaring omission of marital rape would be detrimental to this vulnerable group of women. Executive director Kathleen Quinn took to the newsletter to publish an open letter to ICASA that she had also read to the members of ICASA at their governing body meeting. Citing discourses on equal rights, psychological studies, and her own experience in working with battered and abused women, Quinn passionately demanded that ICASA agitate for the protection of married women as well. She explained, “The fact that married women in Illinois cannot prosecute their husbands for any but the most heinous of criminal sexual assault is a fundamental denial of equal protection under the law”.¹⁹ Drawing from her own experiences in counseling battered wives, she boldly addressed individual leaders of ICASA and made the link between domestic violence and sexual assault by describing how “women trapped in abusive relationships are vulnerable and often subjected to repeated assaults.” Quinn concluded by demanding that ICASA agitate to add protections for victims of marital rape, asserting that “the married women of Illinois deserve no less than equal protection under the law.” Publishing her open letter in the newsletter not only rallied the support of the domestic violence advocates towards protections for marital rape victims but also raised awareness of the plight of abused wives among other social service agencies and for-profit sponsors of the coalition.

Because the two coalitions had many allies in common, Quinn's open letter put the pressure on her sister advocates by publicly writing where they had fallen short in their advocacy for women and demanding that they promote "equal protection under the law" for sexually abused wives. Her testimony also was in keeping with the campaigns of feminist anti-violence activists around the country, which demanded that bodily integrity was essential for women to truly be equal. Quinn's defense of battered wives is resonant with many campaigns that took place all over the country regarding the rights of victims of domestic abuse. Women's historian Christine Stansell explains, "Marital rape, which women's rights activists had long decried, came under pressure; and state laws for marital exemptions crumbled....While the idea was fodder for jokes ('If you can't rape your wife, who can you rape?') ran one old chestnut), the radical insight that a woman could deny sex to any man, including a husband or boyfriend, led to the new category of date rape, which became a mandatory topic for discussion in college freshman orientations across the country in the 1980s".²⁰ Quinn's open letter reflects an understanding that rape and domestic violence are interrelated issues and that in many cases, a case involving an attacker who was married to the victim kept the victim in a state of ongoing fear and intimidation. To stand against both would entail demanding freedom from violence for all women, regardless of their relationship to their abusers. Quinn's testimony highlighted her coalition's dedication to protecting and empowering abused women and challenged her sister advocates to make their struggle more inclusive and effective.

Perhaps the recent memory of fighting for the earlier, 1982 Illinois Domestic Violence Act also inspired ICADV to fight for an inclusive Illinois Sexual Assault Act. The Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA) provided greater protections for battered women and children, introduced for the first time an order of protection as a safety strategy, and promoted batterer accountability in the civil and criminal courts. Julie Hamos, an early founder of ICADV, explained that the key to the coalition's victory was working alongside the Illinois legislators as they crafted the law and

meeting directly with the opposition to consider their concerns and clarify the coalition's position. She continued, "It's really about looking people in the eye and talking very directly about this".²¹

The interview with Hamos also reiterates the importance of collaboration and bipartisanship. The IDVA came into the Illinois Congress around the same time the state failed to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. Although the ERA did not pass, promoting the empowerment of sexual assault and domestic violence survivors attracted bipartisan support. The passage of both bills may be related to the language used in these laws. As the IDVA increased protections for battered women, its focus was primarily on *protecting* the women and empowering them during a vulnerable time in their life. The ERA, by contrast, had an egalitarian (as evidenced by the title) approach to promoting women's concerns and preventing gender discrimination. The idea of addressing the *vulnerability* of battered women and promoting their safety would be palatable to both progressive and conservative individuals, something both could support. Hamos hinted at the difference when she explained in her interview, "We never did prevail in Illinois with the ERA, but I think that we believed, those of us who were leaders in [the fight against] sexual assault or domestic violence, that it sort of boosted our efforts in working on these two issues because they couldn't really reject us on everything".²² Additionally, the concept of promoting safety and protection posed no threat to any gender norms. Unlike the ERA or reproductive rights bills common at the time, which emphasized the need for women's autonomy, domestic violence legislation emphasized the need for safety and protection of battered women. It could address the problem of violence directly and in a way that did not threaten any deep-seated gender expectations. This is not to deny the feminist actions or beliefs of any of the members of ICADV but rather to point out that the passage of IDVA allowed legislators to pass a bill that would help women without being explicitly feminist.

Quinn's demand for equal protection for married women was reminiscent of other antiviolenace activism of the 1980s. As awareness about domestic and sexual abuse grew, so, too, did the demand for services and protections for the women whose lives had been torn apart by it. The activism in Illinois occurred contemporaneously with another larger, nationwide development, the early stages of the Violence Against Women Act. This Act, which would be eventually passed in 1994, was the product of thirteen years of research into the laws regarding gender-based violence. Legal scholars assisting Congress in the drafting of the law discovered that sexual abuse and domestic violence laws were based on outdated assumptions about relationships and called the conduct of the victim into question. Historian Fred Strebeich writes that "some state laws held that a man who sexually assaulted his wife had not committed rape—a legacy of the common-law doctrine that in marriage men and women become one or of the elaboration...that a married woman cannot be raped by her husband because by marrying, she had consented to all his demands for sex. Some local authorities as late as the 1970s did little to protect women from being beaten by their husbands."²³ In order to change these laws and establish meaningful justice for the battered women all over the country, survivors of violence and victim's advocates came together to demand change at both the state and national levels. In Illinois, this came through both coalitions teaming up to pass the Illinois Domestic Violence Act and later, to pass the Illinois Sexual Assault Act. While the state lawmakers' refusal to criminalize marital rape was unfortunately not very far removed from the national discourse on that crime, ICADV demanded justice for the battered wives and called upon their sisters in ICASA to ensure that their lobbying included all women concerned.

Conclusion: Voices of a Movement

The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence is an important component of Illinois' social service landscape and an integral part of the state's women's movement. By uniting the women's shelters and providing them with the support, resources, and expertise they needed to

succeed, ICADV was able to help several local organizations to join forces and amplify their mission of ending domestic violence. Together, the local agencies and the administrative office were able to send the unified, rather than regionalized message that this crime was not a matter within a family but rather a social problem that need to be eradicated. While there were certainly laws against battery an abuse on the books, the coalition pressed further to ensure quality services for survivors and legislation that would guarantee their rights as they sought justice. As their work ranged the gamut from changing systemic attitudes through trainings and outreach for local agencies to legislative advocacy to create fair laws for survivors of violence, the coalition had a powerful legacy in its work toward preventing and ending domestic violence.

In a state as large and diverse as Illinois, connecting the shelters and counseling agencies was an important success of the coalition and a vital contribution to the state's women's movement. By giving the agencies the chance to network with one another, publicize their events in the statewide newsletter, and share best practices for the treatment of survivors and prevention of future violence, the coalition amplified and unified their efforts. As agencies were newly forming in the 1970s and 1980s, they benefited from joining a large coalition. Being a part of a state organization linked member agencies with allied professionals who could support their work and provide them with an avenue to publicly discuss the problem of domestic abuse without falling prey to sexist assumptions or victim-blaming rhetoric. Garnering the support of allies in the faith and charity communities helped legitimize and validate the struggle against violence.

Additionally, as any social movement progresses, its members learn to work through the setbacks and growing pains that come their way. Some of these setbacks in ICADV were shared in interviews. Issues such as restrictions on federal funding forced individual shelter directors to re-examine their agencies' priorities and commitment to inclusivity. The shelter and coalition directors' refusal to let an outside agency define their work or force them to exclude battered lesbians was not only an important stand for inclusivity in the movement but also a

statement against discrimination against the gay and lesbian community. All people would be served, regardless of their sexual orientation. Other contentions were shared and addressed through the power of the written word in *For Better Times*. This was truly a democratic process, where any center could participate in contributing an article or letter to be shared with professionals all over the state. An open letter to a sister coalition, urging them to be more inclusive in their advocacy, may seem like a quiet way to push for change. However, when this message will be read by individuals all over the state, no doubt by individuals who support the sister coalition, it agitates for change in a very public and pointed way. Likewise, the newsletter could serve as a tool for promoting accountability. When ICADV fell short in its coverage of a center or resorted to stereotypes to describe its service area, rather than ignore or privately deal with the issue, ICADV would once again return to *For Better Times* to acknowledge they had made a mistake and to publicly apologize. The process of evolving and expanding to become more inclusive, effective, and accountable, is an important part of any feminist struggle.

Together, the anecdotal interviews and public newsletters provided a comprehensive picture of a diverse, dynamic, and multifaceted state organization and its role in the movement to end domestic violence. *For Better Times*, in particular during the coalition's early years, was important in keeping its members up to date on the programs all across the state, legislative updates, and opportunities for activist involvements. It highlighted the advances made at established agencies and gave needed publicity to smaller ones. An article highlighting the value of cultural competency at an urban shelter or a passage about the response of the faith community at a rural program would reach members of an allied audience equally. As a publication disseminated to women's shelters, social agencies, and corporate sponsors, it also served as a tool to affect change by publicly agitating for the rights of all survivors before its readership. As the "public face" of the organization, the articles would be seen by individuals all across the state. As such, they were generally positive affirmations of the shelters' work (like

the highlighting of conferences and collaborations or stirring calls to action (such as Quinn's impassioned plea to ICASA to improve the Sexual Assault Act for married survivors). This would not only keep the member agencies up to date and accountable but also rally support for various initiatives from all over the state. The interviews provided the personal insights into the growth and development of the coalition, and these personal anecdotes from anti-violence activists provided an inside look into the making of a statewide organization, as seen through the eyes of a community-based activist or professional. The movement to end domestic abuse is far from over, but it is clear that the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence played an important role in raising consciousness about the problem of violence, linking related agencies and facilitating collaboration, and fostering partnerships and alliances along the way.

Notes

1. *For Better Times*. July 17, 1981. (Hereafter credited as *FBT*.) Scott Umbreit worked at the Illinois Department of Health and Human Services and is featured in this cartoon, humorously detailing the bureaucratic requirements and sexist attitudes faced by domestic violence organizers.
2. ICADV: The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence. <http://www.ilcadv.org>. Accessed 1 August 2012
3. Rosalyn Baxendall, *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 201.
4. Engel, Barbara. Interview with Beth Catlett. Chicago, IL. Transcribed May 2008.
5. Landis, Leslie. Interview with Beth Catlett. Chicago, IL. Transcribed April 2008: 2.
6. Landis. Interview by Beth Catlett: 2.
7. "Rural Strength," *FBT*, Winter 1981-2: 3.
8. Woods, Jeannine. Interview with Beth Catlett. Chicago, IL Transcribed April 2008: 9.
9. Landis. Interview by Beth Catlett: 3.
10. Sandra Martin, "Change is Slow in Southern Illinois," *FBT*, Spring 1984, 7.
11. Martin, "Change is Slow," 12.
12. *FBT*, Summer 1984: 2.
13. "Multiracial Committee is on the Move," *FBT*, Spring 1985, 2.
14. Suzanne Pharr, *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism* (Berkeley: Chardon Press, 1992), 5. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence links victims with the services closest to them and facilitates nationwide training events for all domestic service providers. Pharr herself is a lesbian, and she recounted how the Department of Justice's condition for the National Coalition prompted countless homophobic attacks on the coalition and movement. "There were endless statements and innuendos from the Department of Justice and some members of NCADV's membership about NCADV's lesbian leadership and its alleged concern for only lesbian issues." While NCADV served all survivors of domestic violence, the Department of Justice's labeling their work as "pro-lesbian" and "anti-family" damaged their work by setting up a restrictive condition for funding and delegitimizing them in a homophobic society.
15. Baxendall, *Dear Sisters*, 213. Baxendall asserts that the assumption that feminists were anti-family stemmed from the belief that only one kind of family is "proper or natural."

However, feminist activism to end domestic violence indeed promoted family values by emphasizing the right of all members of a family to live in a safe and equal household.

16. Engel. Interview by Beth Catlett: 2.
17. Hamos, Julie and Barbara Shaw. Interview with Beth Catlett. Chicago, IL Transcribed May 2007: 18. Julie Hamos and Barbara Shaw were two of the original founders of ICADV.
18. *FBT*, Summer 1984: 2.
19. Kathleen Quinn, "Testimony: Rape in Marriage," *FBT*, Winter 1987, 3.
20. Christine Stansell, *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to the Present* (New York: Modern Library, 2010): 344.
21. Hamos. Interview by Beth Catlett: 12.
22. Hamos. Interview by Beth Catlett: 8.
23. Fred Strebeich, *Equal: Women Reshape American Law* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009): 314. Marital rape would be criminalized in Illinois, along with the rest of the country, following the passage of 1994's Violence Against Women Act. Although laws against rape and domestic violence existed on the books, service providers at the state and national levels demanded laws that would protect and facilitate the empowerment of battered and abused women and children. They demanded laws that would go beyond punishing a perpetrator or relying on outdated assumptions about gender relations. Quinn's demand for "equal protection under the law" for the battered wives is reminiscent of the nationwide dialogue about violence against women. In fact, three years before she wrote her letter, advocates called upon Congress to protect the rights of abused women, demanding the protections of the Constitution and the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection (329). This rhetoric depicted the right to safety as a Constitutional right and a human rights issue, rather than solely a women's rights issue.

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