First, thanks very much to Dr. Sabina Deitrick for the kind introduction. It's great to see so many familiar faces in the audience from GSPIA and CLAS—Dr. Nelson among others. It's especially an honor to be with all of you here tonight, gathered in the name of Iris Marion Young, a truly exemplary figure in the movements of feminism and social justice. It's very humbling, and so thank you very much for sharing tonight with me.

I'd like to mention two projects that I'm working on currently in what I call my activist life. The first is very near and dear to me, and I've been working on it for nearly five years now. It's called Awamaki, and as Dr. Deitrick mentioned, its a small NGO based in the Cusco region of Peru that works on sustainable development. We work with cooperatives of indigenous women who produce traditional, organic textiles. Over the years, the project has grown from a small group of women to a network of several communities. And this commentary is for Dr. Hartmann—today those women are the primary breadwinners in their families, and their female children are going to school in unprecedented numbers. It's a project I feel close to, and I'm very proud of the results we've seen thusfar.

The second project is with the Big Idea Bookstore, an independently owned bookstore in Bloomfield that specializes in social justice materials. We're in the process of transitioning to a worker-owned cooperative bookstore/cafe, thus creating jobs and a space for those interested in alternative economic and social ways of organizing our lives.

But I didn't just sit up one day in bed and decide to start organizing these things. I don't believe in “ah-ha” moments where activism is concerned, and my level of activity today is directly attributable to past influences in my life. It's also no coincidence that both of my current projects are centered on cooperatives and the idea of collectivity.

I don't believe that individuals should be singled out for their efforts, but that's what we're doing here tonight. All activism is the result of collectivism—many people working together, often thankless jobs and long hours—for a common goal. Nonetheless, there are individuals within the larger struggle—often women, in my case—that stand out that have shaped my vision and work today. I'd like to say just a few words about some of them, and dedicate this award to their efforts.

**Suzan Erem.** A former SEIU organizer, she was my managing editor at a small, rabble-rousing independent newspaper called Voices of Central Pennsylvania. A newspaper is a classic example of a project that requires cooperation and mutual aid, and Suzan cultivates that in her staff. She taught me to ask hard questions, read between the lines, and speak up when I had something to say. Suzan is a leader who assumes the critical role of developing other leaders. She was tough and intimidating, but endlessly patient and encouraging with me, and I consider her my mentor.

**Carmen Chazulle Rivera.** At 22 years old, I arrived in Puerto Rico, terrified, completely out of my element, covered in mosquito bites and literally crying for home. I got off the plane and was greeted by Chazulle, as she is a known, a well-known activist and professor of women's studies. She was my supervisor at a nonprofit that linked college students with inner-city projects. She's been jailed for her actions of civil disobedience and is a vocal opponent of Puerto Rico's colonial status. I wish I could say that Chazulle coddled me, but she didn't. She was hard on me, and together we built an impressive project that made real impacts in San Juan. I became tougher and wiser while working with her. It makes me smile to think of her down there now, fighting the fight.

**Anna Brewer.** In this line of work, we need more than professional support—we need friends. We need someone who opens us up and keeps us moving forward. We need emotional connections. A sophisticated visual artist, relentlessly fierce feminist, and effective organizer, Anna is one of my closest friends. She continually gives me nuggets of wisdom and truth that I'm embarrased I hadn't thought of myself. The conversations we share are times of those “yes, yes, exactly!” moments, and being with her is one place I always feel understood.
These are just a few names of individuals. I could name more from other parts of my life—Hannah, Kennedy, Aggy, Benjamin, and others—because these collected influences are what makes us who we are. The point is that although I am up here receiving an award for my actions in the realm of activism, this award is really for all of us—all of the women and men like Iris Marion Young and Dr. Hartmann who work everyday towards a vision of a more just, equitable future. It's about none of us in particular, but the results of our collective visions and efforts. Thank you all for your hard work.