



## Geraldine Hobgood, '48

### Loyal Alumna and Steward of the Earth

By Sr. Carol Sellman, SNJM '69

Ecofeminism, or ecological feminism, is a term coined in 1974 by Françoise d'Eaubonne. It is a philosophy and movement born from the union of feminist and ecological thinking. Geraldine (Jerry) Hobgood, a loyal friend and alumna of Holy Names University, exemplified ecofeminism before Françoise d'Eaubonne thought of the word!

Jerry came to College of the Holy Names as a freshman at the recommendation of Sr. Joan, OP, one of her teachers at St. Vincent's High School in Vallejo. Jerry and her mother visited the College and she remembers meeting Sr. M. Rose Emmanuella Brennan that day. She always wanted to go to college and actually had her heart set on attending the University of California at Berkeley (where she was, indeed, accepted). Her wise mother insisted that she attend Holy Names for her first year only. That, of course, was all it took for Jerry to get "hooked." Looking back, she acknowledges that she was able to attend Holy Names because of the generous financial aid that the College afforded her and for this she is most grateful.

Jerry received her Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Psychology. Because she loved to write, Jerry thought she wanted to become a journalist for a newspaper. Sr. M. Claire Madeleine Carlin advised her that taking literature, sociology, and humanities would give her a well-

rounded education and serve her well in this field. She remembers her beloved institution for its academic excellence, for developing a social conscience among its graduates, and for deepening each person's awareness of economic and moral responsibilities. Jerry recognizes that she could not have accomplished all that she has throughout her life without this valuable educational experience.

After graduating, Jerry spent six years in Austria and Italy serving in the special services. Returning to the U.S., she worked as a counselor for several years in Los Angeles for Catholic Social Services. In the late 1950s Jerry moved to Aspen, Colorado and opened the "Opera House Espresso" with a tool kit containing a hammer, a saw, and a spatula. This was her first natural interior...made of tree stumps, animal hides and the ends of cable telephone spools. After a wide variety of ventures and adventures, she then relocated to Grand Junction and joined VISTA where she was attached to legal services as a community organizer serving the poor, elderly and minority population. Ever alert to social injustices, Jerry (as a VISTA volunteer) was instrumental in stopping a highway, which was planned to plow through the poorest section of Rifle, Colorado, and would have eliminated the low-cost housing there. In another instance her comprehensive investigation of jail conditions in Grand Junction led to the construction of a new Mesa County Jail. In addition, Jerry's research of domestic violence brought about the establishment of a women's safe house.

Jerry's inspiration for sustainable building started when she heard Buckminster Fuller lecturing on solar energy at the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. His commentary on solar energy was inspirational to Jerry. This began a lengthy period of extensive research on this topic as well as attending conferences on alternative building and constructing four homes from sustainable products. Her philosophy ("what I learned at CHN") is summed up with these words:



I am committed to the principle that we do not "own" the land, but that we are merely temporary stewards and are held accountable for how we use or abuse it. What we do and how we live has a profound effect on the common good not only in our own community, but also in the world.

Cognizant of preparing for the future, Jerry wrote her Charitable Remainder Unitrust in 1993. Grateful for the education and financial assistance she received at Holy Names, she named her *alma mater* as the beneficiary of the trust so that future students can benefit from an education at Holy Names University. When the HNU Legacy Society was established in 1995, Sr. Marguerite Kirk met with Jerry and she agreed to become one of the first members of the Legacy Society.

It is because of gifts like Jerry's that the University will continue to make a difference in students' lives well into the future. We are truly blessed to count our friend, Jerry Hobgood, among the HNU alumnae!