

The warmth of women's voices by Erin Ottosen

First fundraiser for Alberta Women's Memory Project a success

Joy and elation filled the TELUS Centre in Edmonton on November 15, when the Alberta Women's Memory Project (AWMP) held its inaugural fundraiser, *A Celebration of Women's Voices from the Past to the Future*.

After noshing in the gallery for an hour or so, the audience of almost 200 listened attentively as the Hon. Heather Klimchuk, Alberta minister of culture and community services, brought greetings from Premier Alison Redford and the guest speakers, *Edmonton Journal* columnist Paula Simons and breast cancer surgeon Dr. Kelly Dabbs, shared stories from their lives about working and living in Alberta.

"The energy at the event was wonderful," says Jim McLeod, AU manager of community relations and events. "You could tell people were truly excited about the project and what it's accomplishing in terms of documenting the history of Alberta women. It's an honour for AU to be involved in this work."

The AWMP preserves the voices of Alberta women and makes them accessible to researchers, students and the general public by digitizing items such as memoirs, photos, letters and other artifacts on the [project website](#).

The event resulted in generous donations of services, products and cash from individuals, corporations, AU and the University of Alberta, all of which will be used to create an initial AWMP operating fund, says Jean Crozier, a member of the project committee.

"Regardless of how much money we brought in through the fundraiser, I really think the big plus is that now a lot more people know about us," she continues. "Women's memories — captured through their artifacts — have not always been regarded with much respect. Too often, these materials were destroyed when a woman died. As a result, we've had few sources of materials to study and from which to understand the viewpoints of Alberta women, the contributions they've made to this province and their influence on our society and our history."

"We are very grateful to Athabasca University, the University of Alberta, our corporate and individual donors and our outstanding volunteers for making this fundraiser a success."

AU hosts the AWMP website and provides other support for the project.

The Alberta Women's Memory Project celebrated women's voices, both from the past and the present. Photo credit: Lauren Wheeler.

