

# **The Story of Women of Vision & Action (WOVA)**

By Carol Hansen Grey

## **“CALL THE WOMEN TOGETHER!”**

These words were voiced in 1993 by a Middle Eastern woman who had given up all hope of peace in the Middle East. In the midst of the woman's soulful story of having lost family and friends in the civil wars of her country, Rama Vernon held her hand, listened compassionately and shared her pain. After a few minutes of silence, Rama asked the woman if there was anything that could be done to create peace. The woman said, her voice trembling with hope, *“Call the women together. Perhaps it is through the women that we will find peace. Let us gather together for a day. Let us break bread, share our stories, our hearts and our visions for peace. Let us hold the vision until it becomes a reality.”*

A Conference was initiated by Rama Vernon in Washington D.C. Attending were over 600 women including Eleanor LeCain, a speaker at the conference, who invited women to come together to find ways to bring the energy and ideas from the conference into the world. Several women stepped forward and were instrumental in giving birth to the network known as Women of Vision and Action (WOVA). These women included: Alison VanDyk, Elisabet Sahtouris, Riane Eisler, Mary Morrissey, Marilyn Ferguson, Lynn Andrews, Louise Hay, Jean Shinoda Bolen, Hazel Henderson, Cathy Lee Crosby, Avon Madison, Carina Courtright, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Patricia Elleberg, Mary Serfaty and others.

The mission of WOVA: to provide a network that supports and connects women who believe vision combined with spirit-based action are the ingredients for creating positive change in the world and who are actively demonstrating that belief by co-creating the vision, taking the action and being the change they wish to see in the world. We honor women who are the spiritual sculptors from the inner to the outer plane, the “Vision Keepers” in all societies.

Carol Hansen Grey joined the WOVA Board in 1999 and was appointed as Executive Director in 2000. She served in that position until 2004. Under her leadership she designed and developed the WOVA and Gather the Women websites and implemented the WOVA Online Directory. She also built a new Board of Directors who included: Mina Stewart, Lynn Bieber, Kathlyn Schaaf, Shakira Abdul-Ali, Connie Allen, Donna Collins, Patrice Edwards, Ronita Johnson, and Marilyn Nyborg. She and the new board initiated the Gather the Women Movement (2001) as a project of WOVA, designed and published a Member to Member monthly newsletter (2002), initiated the Feminine Face of Leadership Conference (2002), initiated the Athena Wisdom Exchange Mentoring Project (2003) and initiated the first Gather the Women International Conference (2004).

Carol resigned her position in 2004 to pursue her other business endeavors. After her resignation, the WOVA Board voted to disband WOVA and rename it Gather the Women. WOVA as an international organization no longer existed although several local chapters continue to use the name. This story was written in order to preserve the history of Women of Vision and Action.