



the  
Lesbian,  
Gay,  
Bisexual and  
Transgender

*Religious Archives Network*

*A resource center and information clearinghouse  
for the history of LGBT religious movements.*

## **Dr. Michelle M. Sauer to Receive First LGBT Religious History Award**

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Religious Archives Network (LGBT-RAN) is honoring Dr. Michelle Sauer as the recipient of its LGBT Religious History Award. Dr. Sauer's paper, entitled "Representing the Negative: Positing the Lesbian Void in Medieval English Anchoritism," was among sixteen submitted in this first year of the award.

"LGBT-RAN is pleased to be able to recognize outstanding scholarship in this emerging field of LGBT religious history," noted LGBT-RAN coordinator Mark Bowman. "The jury members chose Dr. Sauer's work—from among the many fine papers they reviewed—for its radical interpretation, analysis and solid presentation. Overall we were very impressed by the caliber and breadth of scholars submitting papers in this inaugural year of the award."

Dr. Michelle M. Sauer is associate professor of English at Minot State University and coordinator of its Gender Studies Program which she initiated two years ago. Daughter of a Pakistani father and a French-American mother, Sauer grew up in a Roman Catholic family in Fargo, North Dakota, and attended Catholic schools most of her life. After graduating as valedictorian from Shanley High School, she entered Purdue University to study physics but soon switched to an English major. She received an M.A. degree in English with an emphasis on medieval literature from Loyola University in Chicago. She earned a Ph.D. from Washington State University focusing on medieval women's devotional literature and gender/queer theory.

Dr. Sauer's award-winning paper was published in the March 2004 issue of *thirdspace*, a journal for emerging feminist scholars ([www.thirdspace.ca](http://www.thirdspace.ca)). Sauer notes that the paper was inspired by reading an article by colleague Dr. Theodora Jankowski, which developed the concept of the "lesbian void" in the early modern area. Sauer felt the idea important enough to be explored in the Middle Ages as well. Sauer added that "the majority of Queer Studies research and writing is done from a male perspective and so I've chosen to focus on the portrayal of woman-woman eroticism." Sauer's ongoing research analyzes the intermingling of sexuality, spirituality and eroticism. She is currently writing on the queer Virgin Mary and perspectives on lesbian-like identities in anchorite and other enclosed women's communities in the Middle Ages.

Dr. Sauer will be honored at LGBT-RAN's annual dinner on Saturday, April 8, 2006, at the Riverside Church in New York City. For more information on this event, go to [www.lgbtran.org/dinner.htm](http://www.lgbtran.org/dinner.htm) or call 773-322-0290.

Submissions for next year's LGBT Religious History Award must be postmarked by October 13, 2006. Jury members are: Dr. Rebecca Alpert, associate professor of Religion and Women's Studies at Temple; Dr. Joanne Carlson Brown, pastor in the Pacific Northwest; Dr. Mark Jordan, Asa Griggs Professor of Religion at Emory; and Dr. Melissa Wilcox who teaches religious studies at Whitman College. Complete information on the award can be found at: [www.lgbtran.org/historyaward.htm](http://www.lgbtran.org/historyaward.htm).

The LGBT Religious Archives Network is a project of Chicago Theological Seminary, [www.ctschicago.edu](http://www.ctschicago.edu).

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