

# Steinem speaks to packed house

By REBECCA CANN  
and SHARON ANDRES

"We have to look at each others lives and realize they're better than any textbook," said Gloria Steinem in a lecture at Osgoode Hall Law School on February 13.

A leader in the feminist movement in North America over the past two decades, Steinem underlined specific political and cultural goals with a simple yet powerful moral humanism in her lecture, as she discussed cross-cultural issues of international scope.

Nearly 2,000 people were turned away at the doors of Osgoode while close to a 1,000 others crammed their way to Moot Court and three additional classrooms provided with video monitors for the event.

An active lecturer and organizer of the feminist movement, Steinem began her career as a journalist and is co-founder, editor and a writer for Ms. magazine. Her lecture, titled "Women of the Eighties: The Second Wave" was the first in a series of lectures sponsored by the Barbara Betcherman Memorial Fund.

Betcherman graduated from Osgoode in 1974 after winning the silver medal for outstanding academic achievement along with several other awards. Once a federal prosecutor who later served on a Royal Commission investigating alleged police brutality, and co-founder of the Toronto Rape Crisis

of a fatal car accident on June 13, 1983. In 1985, said Dean John McCamus, a memorial fund was established at Osgoode to allow for "public forums, conferences and lectures on subjects relating to women and the law, and feminist legal theory."

Dean McCamus opened the event by welcoming all present. Following a short speech by President Harry Arthurs, Judge Rosalie Abella paid tribute to Betcherman, describing

## Steinem insisted that society "get the politics out of culture"

her as "a wonderful series of oxymorons." She went on to call Betcherman a "funny feminist" with an "exuberant commitment to justice."

Steinem began her lecture by admitting she was not interested in giving a lecture. Indicating the set-up of the Moot Court she pointed out the hierarchical structure of the room which, she said, "is based on patriarchy—which doesn't work anymore." Steinem declared her interest in "turning this lecture into an organizing meeting," stating "I've come to believe in the collective wisdom of audiences."

Steinem did not forego the lecture entirely. After identifying the first feminist wave as having achieved

legal identity, she went on to describe the second wave of the feminist and civil rights movements as a struggle for legal equality.

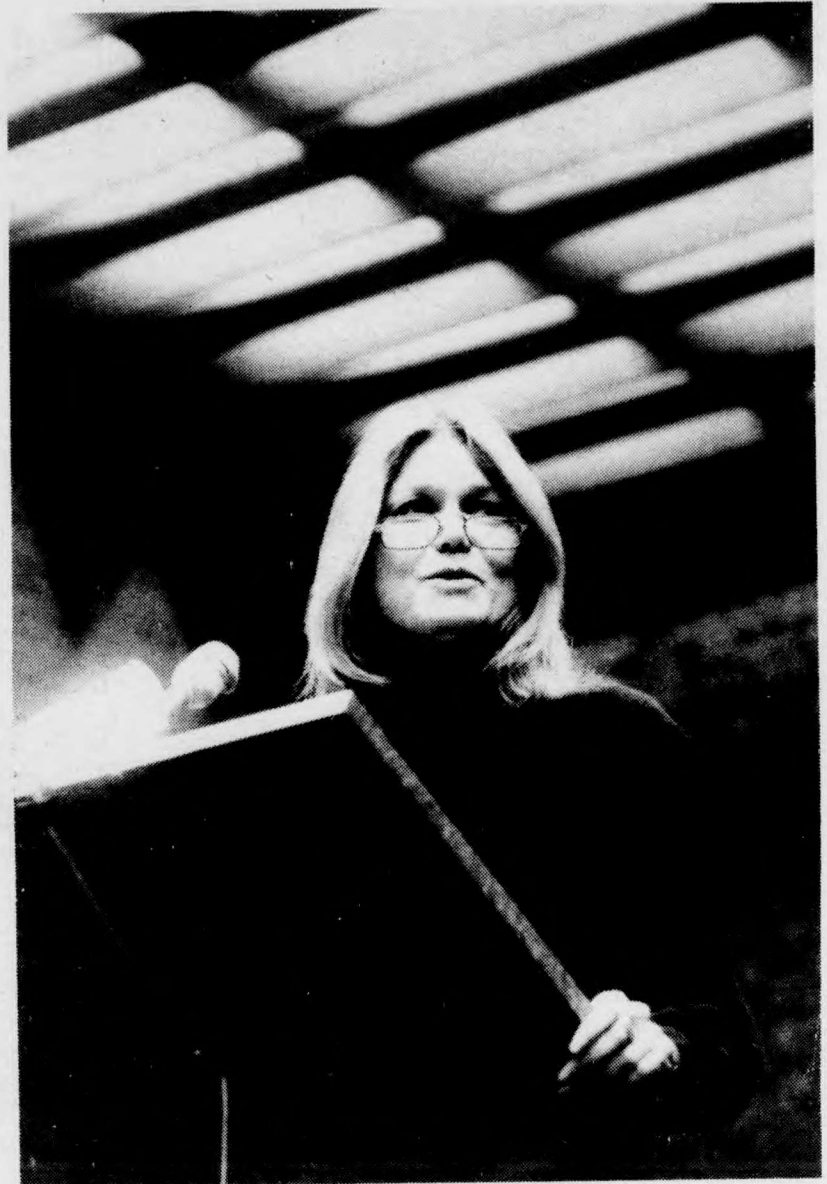
Steinem said "there is now support for issues in majority polls which weren't even issues 10 years ago" and that "we now have terms like battered women and sexual harassment. A decade ago it was just called wife." The result of this awareness, however, has been a backlash on the feminist movement. "We have moved from ridicule to serious opposition," stated Steinem and "nowhere is it written that the majority will win."

The focus of Steinem's lecture was four international cross-cultural themes integral to the movement of women's liberation. These issues included that of reproductive freedom, the need to redefine and revalue work and the necessity in developing a democratic family structure, specifically within the eyes of the law.

## "We put our best interests aside to have a better life after death"

Steinem emphasized politicization in all these areas, stating that "politics is in any power relationship in our daily lives" and only by recognizing this and dealing with the politics can change be implemented.

The last issue of the lecture was culture itself. Steinem insisted that society "get the politics out of culture," particularly in the areas of language (Steinem wondered who there is working towards their "Spinster of Science Degree?"), television (in discussing shows about black families Steinem asked the audience "What's the message? It's a gas to live in the ghettos?") and religion ("we put our best interests aside to have a better life after death"




JOSEPH COLLINS

Gloria Steinem's Osgoode lecture on February 13 attracted over 1,000 listeners. Nearly 2,000 were turned away.

stated Steinem).

In the question/answer session after Steinem's lecture a woman from York's Women's Centre described their office; "It's a cubbyhole behind the elevator, it's windowless, it's bare and please leave 25 cents for coffee because the university won't give us any money." Steinem, whose \$5,000 earned from this lecture is

going to various feminist causes, responded to this frustration by stating "we will send some of the money to the women's centre here." Throughout the evening's session Steinem repeatedly responded to individual queries with "I can't dictate someone else's tactics" and the evening proved that while she does not preach, Steinem does practice.



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