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At the time of the ICTLEP Conferences, the author of the following article was correctly afraid that people might use her material without giving her the proper credit. Therefore, she gave ICTLEP a one-time copyright. See the lower margin of the article.

Over thirteen years have passed.

Following this page is her email discussion with me extending her copyright so that I can place this part of the ICTLEP Proceedings onto my law firm website for free of charge, transgender research.

Phyllis Randolph Frye

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Thanks, Phyllis

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APPENDIX I
WRITING OURSELVES

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Writing Ourselves

by Dallas Denny

Last February I had an epiphany, one of those little revelations that somehow make the world seem a more sensible and orderly place. It came the morning after a wonderful speech by Phyllis Frye, in which she spoke about our need as transgendered persons to claim our place in the world. I was lying in bed, musing on what she had said, when it suddenly dawned on me that I had done something very extraordinary, something that had never been done before, and that I had never even realized that I was doing it! What had I done? I had written a book. I was the first person with an acknowledged gender issue to ever produce a major scientific work about gender issues. Not an autobiography or a memoir, not a how-to book for the community only, not a novel, but a mainstream press book which collects and digests the world's literature about our condition. Think for a moment about the significance of that: not that I had managed to produce a major scientific book, but that it has taken so long for there to be such a book authored by a transgendered person.

The work I am talking about is Gender Dysphoria: A Guide to Research, and extensive annotated bibliography which lists thousands of book and articles about transgender issues. It is published by Garland, a respected publisher of scientific books. Being a reference work, it's not inexpensive, and you're not likely to find it on the shelves of your neighborhood Waldenbooks, but it will certainly find its way to the shelves of university libraries and gender clinics throughout the world. It is without doubt (if I do say so myself) at 650 pages the definitive listing of transgender materials in the world.

I worked on A Guide to Research for four years, painstakingly collecting titles from every conceivable source. I spent many evenings and weekends in libraries, photocopying journal articles, and in used bookstores, scouring the shelves for anything which belonged in the bibliography. I spent many hundreds of hours reading those books and articles so that I could intelligently annotate them, stayed awake late many nights entering titles into the computer, and spent more than a year in eager anticipation of the publication of the book, and yet I did not realize until the very eve of publication that I was the first transgendered person ever to have produced such a work!

But this really isn't an article about my book, and how great it is. It is an article about self-depreciation. My most recent epiphany is this: Had I been sufficiently proud of being transgendered, I would have realized far earlier what an important thing I was doing. And were there others in our community sufficiently proud of themselves, I would not have been the first to do such a thing.

I can't imagine an America in the 1990s in which straight people would exclusively define homosexuality, while gay men and lesbians were silent. I can't imagine an America in the 1990s in which white Americans would even attempt to describe the black experience. And yet it is not only commonplace for nontransgendered persons to write about us—it is almost unheard of for us to write about ourselves in the scientific literature or the popular press. We read error-ridden and even

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exploitative articles, and we not only keep silent about it, we are proud to be mentioned!

It has been more that 40 years since Christine Jorgensen's sex reassignment in Denmark and Virginia Prince's efforts to organize crossdressers made the world aware of who we are, and it is high time that we speak for ourselves. No one is going to invite us to do so; we must initiate it. We must no longer be passive, no longer grateful that national magazines occasionally deign to devote two or more pages to us. We must no longer pretend that transgender credentials are less valuable than academic credentials when it comes to defining and describing us. We must learn to write ourselves, to claim our expertise, to tell the world that by damn, we are the experts because we have lived and continue to live it. We're a long way from that now. We don't even believe it ourselves. Just think, for example, about how quickly we lionize nontransgendered persons who write books about us, inviting them as special guests to our conferences while we ignore our own people.

Our community has some immensely talented writers, yet for the most part we are the only ones who read them. People like Leslie Feinberg, Kate Bornstein, Riki Ann Wilson, Jason Cromwell, Sandy Stone, and James Green have produced some very powerful works. Some, like Leslie and Kate, are reaching out to the world via fiction and memoirs, telling the world in forceful and poignant ways what we are all about. An earlier generation of writers like Christine Jorgensen, Canary Cohn, Renee Richards, and Jan Morris reached out by telling their personal stories. But the best is yet to come, as we begin to write the textbooks and novels, we author the magazine and newspaper articles, and we, rather than nontransgendered persons, come to be recognized by both ourselves and others as the experts. And we are the experts. Many of us have professional credentials, but we are all transgendered, and those are the credentials which are the most important.

So rejoice with me now, not so much that I have had a book published, but that my book is a milestone in our evolution, the first time that one of us is the acknowledged expert. Tell your friends and families about the book, and mention it in your newsletters. Don't do it for me; do it for yourself and for your transgendered brothers and sisters. And for goodness sake, buy the book and donate it to a library, or at least ask you librarian to purchase a copy, for I made sure is was a book which would give a positive message and contact information to transgendered persons who might chance across it in their search for wholeness.

It's not my book—it's our book, and just the first of many authoritative books to come written by transgendered authors.

Gender Dysphoria: A Guide to Research by Dallas Denny is published by Garland Publishers and is available for $99 plus $3 shipping and handling from AEGIS, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033 [Phone (404) 939-0244].

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