

## **Houston Philosophical Society Dinner and Lecture**

Cohen House, Rice University

18 April 2019

6:00pm cocktails - 9:10pm close

At 7:10 pm President Furlow called the meeting to order and welcomed all to the 700<sup>th</sup> meeting of the HPS. He explained that ballots would be collected on the slate of officers and that each section would meet and elect a section leader to serve on the Executive Committee for the following year. There was to be a photomontage of the year's programs playing during dinner.

At 7:40 ballots were collected and counted. The section members reported that the following had been elected Section Leaders:

Section A      Robert Esenwein

Section B      Michael Epstein, M.D.

Section C      Judge Evelyn Keyes

Section D      Mary Hankey

Section E      Chip Place

Section F      Ann MacNaughton

The following slate of officers was approved for the 2019-2020 year:

President: Logan Browning

Vice-President: Sonja Brusauskas

Treasurer: Jonathan Brush

Membership Secretary: Ann MacNaughton

Corresponding/Recording Secretary: Linda Marshall

Custodian: John Boles, per the HPS Constitution

The following new members were approved:

Janet F. Clark

Richard G. Gordon  
Naomi Hall  
Dr. Douglas Koch  
Dr. Stephen J. Kramer  
Lucas L. Lavoy  
Dr. Clarence Miller  
Dr. Lois Zamora

At 8:00 pm, President Furlow introduced the speakers, Linda Brooks, Partner with Kean Miller, LLP, Linda Geffen, former Chief of the Harris County Attorney's Special Prosecution Unit and Catherine French, Anti-Trafficking Alliance of Houston Texas. They presented a panel discussion on "Transforming the Tragedy of Trafficking in Houston: Confronting It with Strategies for Success". Please see the attached Abstract for the Speakers' biographies and program contents.

***In HPS's 700th Meeting, an expert panel addresses issues as old as the Iliad, Euripides' Trojan Women, and Solomon Northup's Twelve Years a Slave, in "Transforming the Tragedy of Trafficking in Houston: Confronting It with Strategies for Success," with Linda Brooks, Linda Geffen, and Cat French***

In July 2017, a human-smuggling operation came to an end when emergency responders found eight people dead and others dying in an unventilated 18-wheeler truck on I-10. Law enforcement officers in Houston have shut down cantinas and bars that have enslaved and exploited dozens of women and girls, many from abroad, many in their teens.

What can we, as Houstonians, do about the human trafficking that occurs in larger numbers in Houston than any other city in America? This Thursday night, on April 18, in HPS's 700th Meeting, we'll learn some simple, practical ideas that HPS members, as leaders of Houston's medical, legal, business, scientific, arts and educational communities, can do to end or mitigate this tragedy that affects Houston and our own lives every day.

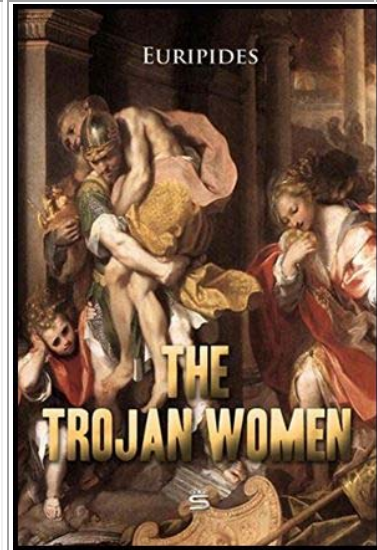
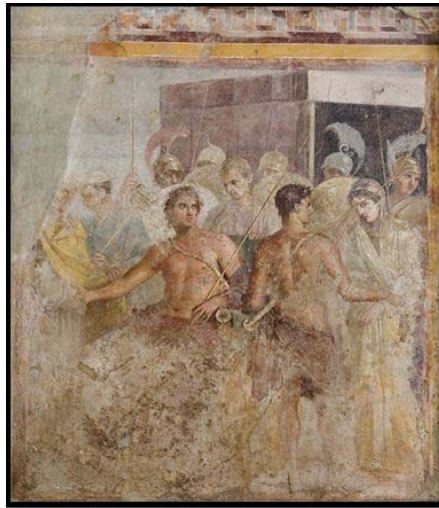
Linda Brooks, the Rice alum whose documentary Mother's Day played at Rice Media Center last week and a Founder of the U.T. Law School Center for Women in the Law, moderates and leads a panel that includes Linda Geffen, the former Chief of Special Prosecutions Unit, Harris County Attorney's Office; and Catherine French, founder of the Elijah Rising anti-trafficking group present, "Transforming the Tragedy of Trafficking in Houston: Confronting It with Strategies for Success." These panelists will talk about ways we can raise awareness of trafficking issues in our emergency rooms

and hospitals, our hotels and restaurants, our law enforcement agencies and, most importantly, in our schools.



Issues of enslavement and human trafficking are matters that we, as members of the Houston Philosophical Society, should recognize and try to solve. Western literature began with tales of enslavement and trafficking. Last September, we began with the Bible. The Book of Exodus begins with the enslavement of the Hebrews and their trafficking as slaves to work in the fields and mines of Egypt. We heard Dr. Matthias Henze mine the gap between the end of the Jews' Babylonian Captivity and the ministry of Jesus that culminated in the Destruction of Jerusalem and Jesus's ministry—a period began with the enslavement and trafficking of the ancient Hebrews and ended with the enslavement and diaspora of the Jews.

Dr. Michael Cosmopoulos described how he traced Homeric poetry to the Mycenaean Linear B tablets he was excavating at Pylos. The Kingdom of Pylos's tablets paint a portrait of a rich society where a king or noble might buy "one chair of a spring type, inlaid with [blue glass paste] and silver and gold on the back, inlaid with men's figures in gold, with a pair of gold finials, with golden griffins..." Yet those tablets refer to lists of women and children enslaved in war and trafficked to toil in the kingdom's fields: "Twenty-one Cnidian women [women captured on the Aegean island of Cnidos], twelve girls, ten boys...At Eudeiweilos, eight women, two girls, three boys...[receiving a ration of] 336 litres of wheat, 336 litres of figs..."

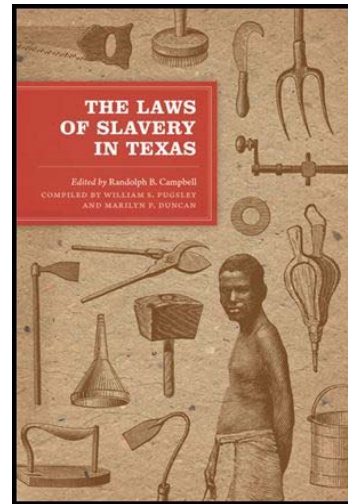
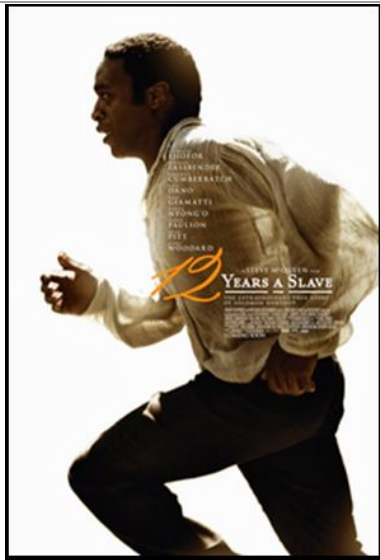


When Achilles led the assault on Lyrnessus during the Trojan War, according to the Iliad, he captured Briseis and slew her parents and brothers. Agamemnon later gave her to Achilles as a war prize to be his concubine. In Mycenaean Greece, captive women like Briseis were slaves and could be traded amongst the warriors. According to Book 1 of the Iliad, Agamemnon demanded that Achilles give him Briseis when Apollo ordered him to surrender his own slave girl, Chryseis. Achilles' quarrel with Agamemnon over this enslaved and trafficked girl had disastrous consequences for the Greeks. After Achilles' death, Odysseus' success at concealing Mycenaean warriors within the Trojan Horse toppled the topless towers of Ilium, leading to the enslavement of Troy's women and their trafficking throughout the Greek world by Mycenaean world.



PRAYER-MEETING IN UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

" Nothing could exceed the touching simplicity, the childlike earnestness of his prayer, enriched with the language of Scri



## SPEAKER BIO



## LINDA BROOCKS

Our moderator, Linda Brooks is now working on her second documentary, Just Let Us Be Little Girls, which will focus on commercial sexual exploitation of girls. The Rice Media Center just showed her award-winning first documentary Mother's Day: The Forgotten Victims of Death Row. A partner in the Houston office of Kean Miller LLP, she is an active trial and appellate attorney. Brooks is a Founder and President of the Executive Committee of the Center for Women in Law at the University of Texas. Ms. Brooks earned her B.A. degree from Rice University and her law degree with honors from the U.T. School of Law, where she was the Note and Comment Editor of the Texas Law Review. Ms. Brooks served as a Clerk to Judge John R. Brown, Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.



## LINDA GEFFIN

Linda Geffin, an attorney, is the former Chief of the Harris County Attorney's

Special Prosecution Unit that filed lawsuits to close businesses that fronted for human trafficking. Ms. Geffin has drawn national attention to human trafficking through NBC's Today Show, MSNBC's documentary Sex Slaves in Texas, radio programs and newspaper interviews as well as contributing to Texas Monthly's article, "The Lost Girls." Ms. Geffin testified before the Legislature about human trafficking. A 25-year veteran of the Harris and County Attorney's office, she pioneered Harris County's use of nuisance suits to shut down places where trafficking occurred. She tried more than 150 jury trials. She was a keynote speaker at Rice University's 13th Annual Women in Leadership Conference.



## CATHERINE FRENCH

Catherine French is an anti-trafficking activist and is an activist, advocate, mobilizer, and founder of a major anti-trafficking nonprofit and restoration center. Her Master's degree is in Sociology. She has a background in research in the field of adolescent mental health and out of treatment drug users. For ten years she taught sociology at Houston Community College, using her platform as an instructor to advocate for sex trafficking survivors. In 2011 she moved into full time anti-trafficking advocacy. She currently serves as a volunteer with ATA-HTX (Anti Trafficking Alliance of Houston Texas). Ms. French has organized 90-minute tours of Houston neighborhoods and businesses to show concerned citizens where trafficking occurs—often in their own neighborhoods and some not too far from Rice University.

The speakers answered questions from the members.

President Furlow thanked everyone for his or her contributions to an outstanding year. Vice-President Logan also thanked President Furlow for being an outstanding President for the current year. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.