

Thank you Evan Handler, who came from LA just to do that. Thank you to the Lillys, to Stacey Mindich for her generosity, and to Julia Jordan. For *everything*. I am speechless. But I will speak.

I loved my early career. Yes, being a playwright was a lopsided romance, the theater didn't always love me back, but it liked me enough to keep me going. I loved working off and off off Broadway. But when I passed my mid-forties, headed towards 50, theater became that awful boyfriend who dumped me because I was old and not famous.

Luckily, playwrights who admired my work hired me in TV. I was grateful, but I missed what I loved. I assumed, it was just me. Then, in 2018 Brooke Berman ranted on facebook about "female playwrights sandwiched between the Baby Boomers and the Pussy Grabs generation. I fear we will be forgotten." Within hours there were 40 pages of comments, and many many women playwrights were named, who were being forgotten. Including me.

Honor Roll came out of that collective rage. Followed by the hard work of organizing and taking action. Honor Roll is an advocacy group of women+ playwrights over 40 whose goal is our inclusion in theater.

Our Mission Statement says:

"We are the generation excluded at the outset of our careers because of sexism, now overlooked because of agesim. We celebrate diversity in theater and work to eliminate age discrimination as it intersects with sexism and other biases including racism and homophobia."

To read the rest, please go to [HonorRollPlaywrights.Org](http://HonorRollPlaywrights.Org).

The combination of sexism and ageism, especially as it intersects with other biases, is often unacknowledged. People don't know they have that bias. Yet some think we're failures because we're not famous. Or they assume our plays are frumpy, so they don't read them. Or they assume we're not hot since we didn't go to elite MFA programs. Some confuse the word "emerging" with the word "young." But all of that is structural bias. Which Honor Roll is changing.

A few of our accomplishments. We published these SHE PERSISTED books of short plays. Buy them! We give out our own Awards. Thanks to Marjorie Bicknell. Theaters have created programming specifically for us. We've been in publications, on podcasts, on YouTube. And when an Honor Roll member notices a season, a reading series, an award, or development program that doesn't fully include us, we mobilize large loud email campaigns.

Honor Roll! is not me. It's 2000 members. And it's our 6 member, Volunteer, Executive Committee. They work passionately and generously to realize our mission. Four of them are here tonight. These women are standing up to sexism/ageism until **it** disappears, so that all of **us** can be seen. And produced, on stages like this one. Across the country.

Honor Roll! Executive Committee, please stand up when I say your name. Cynthia Cooper, Cheryl Davis, Olga Humphrey, Diana Yanez. Bayla Travis who couldn't be here. They are fierce. Plus former members Yvette Heyliger, Sarah Tuft, Lucy Wang. Please honor them. Thank you.