

## **The 21<sup>st</sup> Heroine: Past, Present and Future**

**Moderator:** Michelle Monkou

**Panelists:** Authors Caridad Ferrer, Tracy Montoya, Francis Ray, Candice Poarch  
Editors Kate Duffy, Kensington Publishing, Monique Patterson, St. Martin's Press

### **I. History of the Romance Heroine**

First historical romances had historically accurate heroines from a social perspective: women in jeopardy, powerless women who were pawns in medieval intrigues, women who were forcibly seduced.

Forced Seduction

Single racial perspective

### **II. Growth of Romance Heroine**

Equally capable of rescuing hero (read L.A. Banks & Nora Roberts In Death Series)

She makes love on her terms

She doesn't need the hero to complete her.

For better or worse, even the historical heroines often have something of the 21<sup>st</sup> century feminist about them.

### **III. Growth of Woman (During Same Time Period)**

Enactment of Title IX

Increased number of women in workforce

Career women (Working mothers, Single mothers)

Significance of Bobby Riggs competition with Billy Jean King

### **IV. Does Targeting Core Audience Have To Battle Universal Appeal**

Core Audience: selected marketing venues, crafting titles/blurbs, creating covers, shelving.

Universal Themes: Don't think you have to be Latina/African-American/Asian/etc. to write a multicultural character? Do make your books reflect real life. Don't rely on stereotypes. Do think about who might be reading your books. Don't treat ethnic characters as "exotic." Do give your characters a firm, well-thought-out goal.

Don't put your characters on a soapbox. Do remember that we all love the same. Do read books by a diverse segment of the population. Don't forget the little details.

### **V. Commercial Successes That Woke Up NY Publishers**

African American author: Terri McMillan – Waiting To Exhale

Latina author: Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez - Dirty Social Girls Club

Asian author: Amy Tan – Joy Luck Club

### **VI. The Future: What does it hold for the romance heroine?**