



## *Nancy Topping Bazin*

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Dr. Nancy Topping Bazin, Ph.D., is a Professional Artist and an Eminent Scholar and Professor Emerita of Literature and Women's Studies in Norfolk, Virginia. Encouraged by her parents to pursue higher education, she earned her Bachelor of Arts in English and French with a high school teaching certificate from Ohio Wesleyan University. Then, in 1958, Dr. Bazin attained her Master of Arts in French from Middlebury Graduate School in Paris. Subsequently, she received her Doctor of Philosophy degree in English from Stanford University in 1969. She commenced her career in academia as an Assistant Professor at Rutgers College (Rutgers) in 1970. Then an all-male college, Rutgers was encouraged to become a co-ed school with pressure from WEAL (the Women's Equity Action League) and Ruth Bader Ginsberg, then a law professor at Rutgers Newark. Dr. Bazin was placed on a committee to decide *what to do when the girls came*. She led efforts to set up a feminist series of thirty-three programs for 1972-73. She also helped to create childcare centers on campus and an active women's caucus. Most important of all, she set up one of the earliest Women's Studies Programs in the nation at Rutgers College, and she helped set up one of the earliest Women's Research Institutes in the nation for Rutgers University as a whole. She served as the first director of both. Anyone teaching the first women's studies courses in the early seventies was not likely to have ever taken one; they were creating new courses with new reading lists and new perspectives.

In 1977, Dr. Bazin attended the Summer Institute for Women in Higher Education Administration held at Bryn Mawr College. In the Fall of 1977, she became the Director of Women's Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. Subsequently, Dr. Bazin became an Associate Professor of English and Director of the first women's studies program in the Commonwealth of Virginia at Old Dominion University. In addition to helping other faculty develop courses and organizing two faculty development workshops per year open to all teachers, Dr. Bazin created several interdisciplinary courses: *Women in a Changing World* for undergraduates; *Women and Power*, *Women's Spiritual Quest*, and *Mothers and Daughters* for undergraduates and graduate students; and *Women Studies and the Search for Truth* for graduate students. Whereas in graduate school at Stanford, she had been told she could not have a minor in American Literature because it was not "great enough," soon after, it was even fine to major in it. But Dr. Bazin was still more innovative when she taught "World Literature Written in English" and was one of the first Americans to write articles about the novels of black African women writers. She added to her courses not only works from English-speaking countries in Africa and the Caribbean but works from India, Canada, and Australia. She went on to teach a course called "Literature in the Developing World" not only for students at Old Dominion University but also for classes of high school teachers in two nearby cities. In addition, she created the concept of Affirmative Action in the Curriculum, which resulted in the Mission Statement of the university making a *commitment to the principle of equality*. During this time, from 1978 to 1985, Dr. Bazin served as Women's Studies Director at Old Dominion University. In 1985, she became Chair of the English Department and began working on a book called *Conversations with Nadine Gordimer* (1990), which she co-edited with Marilyn Seymour. Dr. Bazin had also published *Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision* in 1973 and, in the years after that, forty scholarly articles and various reviews and reports. The academic honors she valued the most were being one of eleven faculty statewide to receive an outstanding teaching award in 1994 and being selected at Old Dominion University to receive the title of Eminent Scholar in 1996.

In addition to her illustrious career as an educator and a change-maker, Dr. Bazin is a gifted artist. Passionate about art since her formative age, she attended special art classes at the Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Despite her desire to earn an art degree, she settled for a degree in English and French. However, Dr. Bazin re-pursued art several months after retiring in 2000. From 2007 to 2011, she served as one of five Managing Artists and Continuous Exhibitors at the Pembroke 4 Art Gallery. In 2002, she began taking five-day workshops, including the famed Springmaid Watermedia Workshops (six per year) in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, where professional artists from all over the United States came to teach. Since 2006, Dr. Bazin has shown her work at The Artists Gallery in Virginia Beach and at The Gallery Shop in Portsmouth, Virginia. In 2017, she was juried into the D'Art Center in Norfolk. In 2012, she painted the first of her *Whimsical Bird Series*, for which she is known. Although she did many other works, her 43 whimsical bird paintings (most 40" x 32") became her signature subject matter, done (with aluminum foil, black gesso, and watercolor) in her signature style. Revered for her inimitable talent, Dr. Bazin has received numerous awards and accolades for her work. Over the years, jurors have given her paintings seventy-seven awards. Many of her whimsical birds have appeared in eleven art volumes distributed nationally and some internationally. In addition, Dr. Bazin has had twelve solo exhibitions, written her own little book *Why I Love to Paint Birds* (1915), and been accepted into regional, statewide, and national exhibits. By getting into three very competitive exhibits of the Virginia Watercolor Society, she was awarded "signature status" in that organization, which means she can sign her name on her paintings followed by VWS. What pleased her most was the comment, made in 2018, by a juror and the Curator Emeritus of the Chrysler Museum, Dr Jeff Harrison. He said of her birds: She creates "a whimsical realm of fantastic, feathered creatures, a world of brilliant color and bold, semi-abstract patterns. It's a charmed place of pure imagination that offers hours of joyful contemplation."

Elected for inclusion in the *International Directory of Distinguished Leadership, 2000 Outstanding Scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Dictionary of International Biography, 2000 Notable American Women, and Directory of American Scholars*, Dr. Bazin is a pioneer in her field. For her notable contribution to art and academia, she was also honored by *Who's Who*. In addition to her love of literature, women's studies, and art, Dr. Bazin enjoys travelling; she has visited sixty-two countries. She also loves good movies and performances of dance, theater, and opera.

<b>Website</b> address to see more of her paintings:	<b><a href="http://www.nancytoppingbazin.com">www.nancytoppingbazin.com</a></b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Norfolk, Virginia</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Professional Artist and an Eminent Scholar and Professor Emerita of Literature and Women's Studies</b>
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