

Margaret
Cunningim
Women's Center

How do women fare in the profession of law?

*Margaret Howard, associate professor,
Law School*

A bit of in-house criticism surfaced when attorneys at the Atlanta firm of King & Spaulding wanted to hold a wet t-shirt contest featuring the female law students working there for the summer. So the firm held a swimsuit competition instead. It was won by a third-year Harvard student, who was offered a job at the firm. One partner was heard to say, "She has the body we'd like to see more of."

This cannot have happened recently, right? Wrong. It happened in 1983, at the very moment that former associate Elizabeth Hishon's suit against the firm for sex discrimination in partnership decisions was pending before the United States Supreme Court.

Admittedly, this particular tale is extreme. But the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession, which recently completed its final report, found a repeated pattern of sexual harassment in law firms, beginning with the job interview itself. Questions about birth control and their husbands' attitudes towards their law practices are still being asked of women job applicants. Today, however, the questions are prefaced with "I shouldn't be asking you this, but..." (Barbara Black, former Dean of Columbia Law School, called this endearingly honest" discrimination.)

The discrimination continues once

a woman is hired. The Commission found that it often takes the following form — a male partner and female associate go out of town on a case. After a few drinks, he makes a pass at her. Whether she is receptive or not, he is mortified the next morning and finds it hard to face her. The next time she is assigned to help with one of his cases, he says he doesn't want her. He can't give the real reasons, so he says her work wasn't up to the quality he expects. Doubt about her legal abilities is planted and the overscrutiny, so common in the case of women lawyers, begins.

This is one of the reasons why

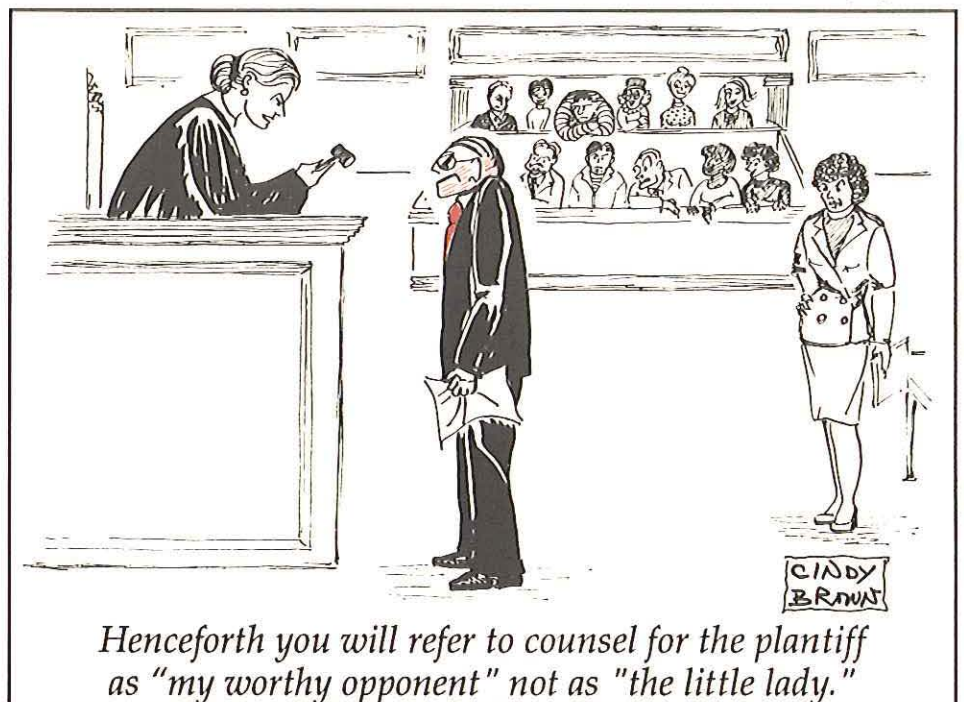
women lawyers are not making partner in the same proportions as their male classmates. One recent study found that women who had graduated from law school between 1969 and 1973 were half as likely as

... "glass ceiling" sums it up — women can see the top, but cannot reach it.

men to achieve partnership in major firms, despite the lack of significant differences in academic distinction, quality of the law school from which they had graduated, or productivity within the firm. Even more surprising is that exactly the same results were found for women who had graduated a decade later. The phrase "glass ceiling" sums it up — women can see the top, but cannot reach it.

Part of the differential rate in achieving partnership results from the fact that women are not staying

(continued page two)



Henceforth you will refer to counsel for the plaintiff as "my worthy opponent" not as "the little lady."

Women and the law (continued)

with major firms long enough to make partner. They are experiencing greater dissatisfaction in the practice of law than are men, often because of the stresses of child care. Major firms have not been quick to provide alternatives, such as parental leave policies, part-time options, and flexible hours, that would help women attorneys cope with family pressures.



Even the alternatives occasionally offered are somewhat illusory. The "part-time" policy at one D.C. law firm is 9 to 6:30, five days a week, and comes complete with a substantial reduction in pay. And most firms will not make a part-time lawyer a partner. As one male partner at an old line New York firm put it: "We haven't invented the 12-year, two-kid partnership track yet, although it may be in our best interest to do so."

No wonder female lawyers aged thirty-five to forty-four are more than twice as likely as male lawyers to be childless.

Is the news all bad, then? No, of course not. Forty percent of the students in law school are women and women comprise twenty percent of the legal profession. Sheer numbers have created a great deal of change. Women were the first to ask for flexible options, but men, too, often realize that the price for success at the top of the legal profession has been too high.

If women can help law firms become more humane places to work, then our contribution will reach far beyond the power of intellect. We cannot afford to lose confidence that change has begun and will continue. As Judith Kaye, Associate Judge of the New York Court of Appeals, said when asked by a high school student whether gender bias would be eliminated in our lifetimes, "Unequivocally yes; the only problem is figuring out how to live that long." ■

Page 2, *Women's VU*, January 1991

Supermom?

Parker Brothers Inc. recently reintroduced the "Careers for Girls" board game with options like supermom, school teacher, rock star, and fashion designer for young players to choose from.

The head of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Susan Engeleiter, chided the company for "sending the wrong message to young girls." She believes that instructions for the game, which include "Describe your dream husband," and "Tell us the names of your eight children," show an "insensitivity to modern realities in a society where women are making breakthroughs in almost every profession."

Company spokeswoman Patricia McGovern states that the game is intended purely for entertainment and "is certainly not to communicate that only certain careers are open to women." McGovern says "We're really disappointed to hear the objections."

from *The Nashville Banner*,
November 28, 1990

It's your health

Judith T. Helfer

Women and AIDS

AIDS cases are rising faster among women than men in the United States, scientists say. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) projected that this year AIDS will be the nation's fifth leading cause of death among American women of childbearing age.

Another study, released last November in Geneva by the World Health Organization, said the incidence of AIDS among women will increase dramatically worldwide, mostly because women don't suspect they can contract the disease from heterosexual contact.

Findings from WHO Study. Women still constitute the fastest growing group of persons with AIDS. Women account for eleven

percent of all reported cases. More than 9,000 have died from the disease in the U.S.

Intravenous drug use was the mode of transmission of infection in fifty-two percent of the women, while thirty-one percent of the women were infected through sexual contact with an HIV infected partner.

Regardless of transmission category, over seventy percent of infected women are women of color.

As disturbing as these figures are, it is likely that they represent a substantial undercount of women's AIDS cases because low-income women often do not survive long enough to be diagnosed. Symptoms may go undiagnosed if health care is not easily available. The realistic fear that care will be denied to the HIV-positive woman also restricts low income women's access to treatment and trust in the health care system.

When is a woman most at risk for AIDS? A woman is most at risk for AIDS if she has shared I.V. needles or had sex without a condom, with someone who was infected with the AIDS virus. In addition, a woman is at risk if *her sex partner* has had sex without a condom with someone at high risk. The more sex partners a woman has had, the greater the risk.

A woman using donor insemination to become pregnant is at risk only if the donor is infected. Licensed sperm banks screen donors to prevent this from happening.

Women at lowest risk for AIDS are those in a monogamous relationship, where neither partner has used I.V. drugs, had sex with someone else, or received a blood transfusion during the risk years 1979 to 1985. (Since 1985, when blood banks adopted screening guidelines for the AIDS virus, this has not been a problem. People who received blood during those years still have a slight risk because AIDS can take five years or longer to develop.)

What can women do to protect themselves? Know your sex partners. Ask questions about past sexual history and drug use. Be honest about your own past. Never share I.V. needles. ■

Speaking of women . . .

Beth Matter, staff writer for *Alumni Publications*, interviews Marlene Hall, a detective with the Vanderbilt University Police Department.

Despite media reports to the contrary, Vanderbilt has an average crime rate for a university of its size and location in an urban area. Those who do report a crime can be assured they will be treated in an honest and sensitive manner by Detective Marlene Hall and others in the Vanderbilt University Police Department.

Hall, from Dickson, Tennessee, entered Vanderbilt in 1975 and majored in psychology with the idea of conducting animal behavior research, specifically on marine mammals. But a job she took as a student officer at Vanderbilt in 1979 drastically changed her career plans.

"It was just a job when I first started. I mainly did dispatching. My dad was an attorney and a judge, so I had some interest in the court system anyway. But law enforcement was an avenue that had never been discussed with me before; when I was growing up, it wasn't considered a woman's role. But I have always enjoyed putting things together, using induction and deduction, and law enforcement is exactly the place

to do that. And I found that law enforcement has a lot to do with psychology."

She went on to become a full-time commissioned patrol officer, later rising to corporal, and became a detective in 1983. Her days vary — she mainly does follow-up investigations on crimes, piecing together information on computers, but she may also take initial crime reports, give crime prevention talks, or engage in executive protection for some visiting VIP. She enjoys working the evening shift, but frequently pulls additional hours when necessary.

Despite her hectic schedule, Hall still finds time to enjoy water sports, theater, and jazz. "You have to learn to balance your life. You want to be in a good emotional state to deal with some of these things — if you are burned out, you are not going to be in the best possible shape to help other people."

In the course of her job, Hall still meets people who are resistant to working with a female officer. In such cases she doesn't argue, but, on the premise that actions speak louder than words, quietly assesses the situation and proceeds to help as

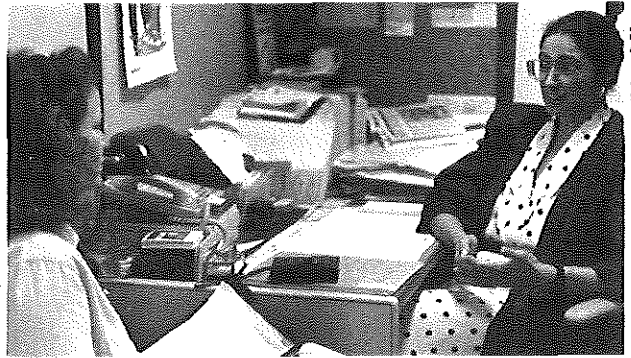


photo by Lisa Nipp

Marlene Hall interviewed by Beth Matter.

much as she can. "Then they can actually see me accomplish something," she says.

"As women join law enforcement, we are going to find more approaches to things. I think people have a stereotype of officers as being big macho John Wayne types. Throughout the '80s, we started seeing a more modern officer coming out — one that is going to have to deal effectively with both genders, with all ages. It's not a condition of just enforcing laws anymore, but of actually having to be a mobile social services agency."

Hall is past chair of the Women's Center Advisory Board and she is coauthor of several brochures, including *Rape and Sexual Abuse* and *Crime Prevention: How You Can Help* which can be obtained at the Women's Center and VUPD. ■

Governmental Maternity and Parental Leave Policies

	Maternity Leave	Parental Leave
United States	None.*	None.*
Germany	6 weeks before birth, 8 weeks after. 100% of earnings.	18 months. Low flat-rate payment for 6 months; payment then depends on family income.
France	6 weeks before birth, 10 weeks after. 84% of earnings.	Until child is 3. No payment unless 3 or more children; then low, flat-rate payment
Italy	2 months before birth, 3 months after. 80% of earnings.	6 months. 30% of earnings.
United Kingdom	11 weeks before birth, 29 weeks after. 90% of earnings for 6 weeks, low flat-rate payment for 12 weeks.	None.
Denmark	4 weeks before birth, 14 weeks after. 90% of earnings (up to maximum level).	10 weeks. 90% of earnings (up to a maximum level).

Table adapted from: *Women of Europe*, Supplement No. 31, August 1990

* In July 1990 Congress failed to override the President's veto of the Family and Medical Leave Act, a measure that would have required employers to provide up to three months of unpaid leave to new parents or workers who needed to care for a sick family member. Sponsors of the bill vowed to keep reintroducing the legislation. States will also be asked to consider legislation.

January calendar

Call 322-4843 for further information on the programs listed below.

14 (Monday)

Book Group will discuss *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan. Debra Corbin, facilitator, 5:15 to 6:15 p.m., Godchaux living room.

16 (Wednesday)

Women In The Civil Rights Movement, a panel discussion as part of the Martin Luther King Series, noon to 1:00 p.m., Divinity School G-23.

16 (Wednesday)

Dissertation Writers Group will reorganize for second semester. Women at the proposal stage and beyond are invited to join. 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Women's Center library.

16 (Wednesday)

Women's Center Writers Workshop will meet together to share information and form additional groups. New members welcome. 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., Kennedy Center, MRL 241.

28 (Monday)

Women's Health Series: Breast Cancer Awareness. Lois Green, R.N., B.S.S.W. will discuss prevention, treatment options, and community resources. 12:15 to 1:15 p.m., Sarratt 118.

29 (Tuesday)

Lunchtime Book Review. Betty Nixon reviews *Composing A Life* by Mary Catherine Bateson, 12:15 to 1:15 p.m., Sarratt 118. ■

News quotes

Closing the gender gap. "There's no problem in the U.S. Congress today that doesn't require the attention of women as well as men," says George A. Dean '52, founder of 50/50 by 2000, a new public-action, bi-partisan group whose aim is to spark awareness of the low numbers of women at all levels of American government.

Page 4, *Women's VU*, January 1991

The group is using "advocacy advertising" to increase the public's awareness of an issue. For example, one of Dean's ads reads: "Some Say A Woman's Place Is In The Home. We Say It's In The House." Ads like this have appeared in *The Washington Post*, news magazines, and a variety of women's magazines.

Currently there are only two women in the U.S. Senate and twenty-nine in the House of Representatives; in Congress, says Dean, there is only one black woman, one Hispanic woman, and one Asian woman. Whether there will be a natural evolution toward more equal representation remains to be seen. Reforms in election rules that reduce incumbents' advantages will certainly help 50/50 by 2000, but significant changes in perception are needed as well.

"It's not in the best interests of the country," says Dean, "to ignore the creativity and imaginative leadership of half the population."

from *Princeton Alumni Weekly*,
December 3, 1990

Alleged rapists get names on wall.

Brown University women are scrawling the names of alleged rapists on the bathroom wall in a guerilla attempt to get the school to do more about sexual assault among students.

Brown spokesman Robert Reichley called the women "Magic Marker terrorists" and said they face expulsion if caught.

Students said the graffiti is aimed at getting the Ivy League school to take stronger action against date and acquaintance rape.

"It's not an easy thing for a woman to take this action, and I don't think anyone was taking this lightly or doing this vindictively or maliciously," said Lisa Billowitz of Brown Against Sexual Assault and Harassment, or BASH.

"It was an act of desperation in an attempt to get Brown to act responsibly and provide us with a system to air these grievances publicly as opposed to bathroom walls."

from *The Nashville Banner*,
November 28, 1990

Child-care bill included in budget package.

Ending months of stalemate, congressional Democrats and the White House this fall agreed to a \$22 billion, five-year child-care package. Congress approved it as part of the \$492 billion deficit-reduction bill.

The legislation directs most of the child-care funds to low-income working families via tax credits. But for child-care advocates, its centerpiece is a three-year, \$2.5 billion block grant for states to improve the availability and quality of child care.

States must use seventy-five percent of the grant funds to improve the availability of child care, and can accomplish this two ways: by awarding grants to child-care providers, or by offering certificates to parents for services that best suit their families' needs.

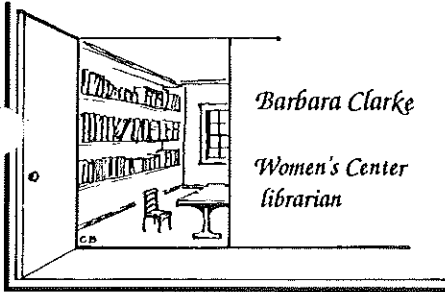
The program divides the remaining funds between early childhood education and before or after-school "latchkey" services for older children, and "quality improvement" activities, such as training, enforcement of standards, and improved salaries for child-care workers. The block grant requires states to establish and enforce standards for all providers that receive federal child-care funds.

The budget block bill earmarked \$750 million for the new block grant in 1991; \$825 million in 1992; and \$925 million in 1993.

Tax credits make up the largest funding provision in the child-care package. The bill earmarks \$12.3 billion in child-care tax credits over the next five years for families earning about \$20,000 annually. It also provides a \$5.2 billion child health-care credit to help families meet the costs of health insurance.

In a final compromise to gain House support for the package, negotiators added a \$1.5 billion child-care program under Title IV of the Social Security Act. This new entitlement will provide additional assistance to poor working families at risk of going on welfare because of unmet child-care needs.

from *Report From The Hill*,
Nov./Dec. 1990



In the library

The library currently receives many journals of special interest to women and students of women's studies.

woman of power is "a magazine of feminism, spirituality, and politics," and the editors aim to include articles on women from all parts of the world and of all ages and classes. The most recent issue is entitled "Women's Bodies," and the articles are on such diverse topics as body image, hysterectomy, disabled women, prostitution, female genital mutilation in various areas of the world, fatness, and the health effects of radiation from nuclear testing in the Pacific Islands.

Other notable recent issues have treated the following subjects: "Humor," "ReVisioning History," "Intimacy," "Science and Technology," "Life Cycles: Conscious Birthing, Living, and Dying," and "Women's Experience and the Sacred."

Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society is a quarterly scholarly journal which has a world-wide focus and which includes a wide variety of topics of interest to women. Each issue includes a selection of interesting articles and a long section of book reviews. Some issues contain a broad range of subjects, while others focus on a particular topic, such as "The Ideology of Mothering: Disruption and Reproduction of Patriarchy" and "From Hard Drive to Software: Gender, Computers, and Difference."

Media Report to Women calls itself "The Nation's Oldest Newspaper Covering Women In The Media." It is a bimonthly newsletter which pub-

lishes articles, news, and statistics about women and their activities and achievements in all aspects of the media. While the emphasis is on the U.S. and Canada, there are some articles about women in the media in other countries.

On the Issues is subtitled "The Journal of Substance for Progressive Women" and is a very readable quarterly magazine that may not be familiar to many women. The publication is concerned with matters affecting women's lives throughout the world. Recent issues include informative articles on poverty, drug abuse, abortion in the U.S. and in Guam, sexism, homelessness, women in Nazi Germany, abandoned babies in Romania, foster care, and women and minorities in the sciences.

Women's Studies International Forum is a scholarly publication with a broad international focus, as many of the editors, writers, and book reviewers live outside the U.S. While many issues contain articles on a wide variety of topics, some are "Special Issues" on a particular subject. These include: "Feminism in Ireland," "The Gendering of Sport, Leisure, and Physical Education," "Women and the Law," "British Feminist Histories," and "Women and Folklore."

Gender and Society is published quarterly by Sociologists for Women in Society, and is another journal containing articles and book reviews about women throughout the world. Some issues concentrate on one topic, and recent ones have focused on women and violence and women in third world countries.

Among the many other periodicals currently being received by the library are: the "new" *Ms.*, *Minerva: Quarterly Report on Women and the Military*, *Sage*, *Feminist Issues*, *Savvy*, *Women of Europe*, *Feminist Studies*, *Genders*, *Dare*, *Women's Review of Books*, *Response to the Victimization of Women and Children*, and *Women's Studies Quarterly*. ■

National Council for Research on Women has just published a list of 192 research centers in the U.S. and other countries. Available in the Women's Center library.

Thanks to an anonymous donor the Women's Center library now has the following books:

- *Woman's Experience of Sex* by Sheila Kitzinger
- *Psychology of Sex* by Havelock Ellis
- *Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence* edited by Rosemary Curb and Nancy Manahan

A new addition to our vertical files is Judy B. Rosener's article "Ways Women Lead" from the Nov./Dec. *Harvard Business Review*. Models other than the command-and-control style are discussed.



New resource for Nashville women

Early in December the premier issue of *Citizenne*, a bi-weekly publication for women, was published. The editor, Martha Bickley, states that the purpose is to provide news and information which interest and benefit women in their personal or professional lives, and promote self-empowerment. *Citizenne* welcomes editorial submissions.

Free copies are available at the Women's Center.

Announcements et cetera

Southeastern Women's Studies Association Holds Annual Conference April 11-14, 1991. All undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to attend the 15th Annual SEWSA Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. Ten travel grants of \$100 each will be awarded with preference given to students presenting papers at the conference. Applications for the travel grants are due by February 15, 1991 and copies are available at the Women's Center.

Nashville YWCA presents seminar on "Relationship Addiction." A program for those who can't leave destructive relationships and for those who are emotionally abused. Dr. Gloria Calhoun will present self-help strategies that build healthy and intimate relationships without fear. The \$65 fee covers three Wednesday sessions, Jan. 23, 30 and Feb. 6 from 6:30 to 9:30pm. Call the YWCA at 269-9922 for more information.

Women Helping Women Through Decisions. Women volunteers (faculty, staff, and students) are needed for a course in positive decision-making and life-planning skills at the Tennessee Women's Prison. Volunteers will work one-on-one with a prisoner/partner for an hour weekly

during the 8 week course, February 5 to April 1. Training is scheduled for January 26-27. For information, call Candy Markman at 383-6393.

International Conference on Pragmatics and Language Learning. The parasession devoted to the study of gender and language is being held April 4-6, 1991 at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. Position papers are due February 20 on a topic relating to: construction of gender through language, gender marking in speech, gender and language in professions, and on the treatment of gender-based differences in language teaching materials. Complete information at the Women's Center.

Women's Studies Program and The Women's Faculty Organization present The Susan Ford Wiltshire Essay Prize. Awards will be given for the best undergraduate and the best graduate papers by Vanderbilt students on topics concerning women. The deadline is March 1. Contact the Women's Studies Office at 343-7808 for more information.

1991 National Young Feminist Conference in Akron, Ohio. The National Organization for Women, Inc. is sponsoring this conference February 1 to 3. It will help young activists organize to fight further loss of their reproductive rights, and to help understand and fight against all forms of prejudice and discrimination. Registration can be made at the conference.

For an application and more information on available scholarships, hotels, and child care, contact the Women's Center.

"What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open."

Muriel Rukeyser (1913-80)
American poet



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