
Introduction

Jean Weldon, Guest Editor

As we approach the twenty-first century, the social issues concerning us are the same as those of a century ago: breakdown of the family and the changing roles of women. Changes in women's roles have brought about a different perception of women in the labor force.¹ Whether they are single, divorced, widowed or a single parent, women are becoming an increasingly large portion of the work force, and paid employment is a major concern. For men as well as for women, earnings are crucial for financial support. Despite the similarities between men's work and women's work, significant differences exist, particularly in earnings.²

In this issue of *North Carolina Libraries*, Nancy B. Parrish examines pay equity for librarians and concludes with a bibliographical essay. Martha Barefoot presents a history of legislative effort for women and minorities in North Carolina and discusses what our state legislators are doing to further the rights of women and minorities in this state. Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin and Myra Worrell report the results of a survey of fourteen public library systems in North Carolina to identify the number of ethnic minorities in professional positions. The authors based their selection of the fourteen systems on the ethnic population in the respective counties. Ruth Katz assesses librarianship and indicates issues that need immediate attention. As director of a public library, Dale Gaddis comments on strategies she uses with her governing board.

One might find it interesting to look at the status of women in librarianship from a historical perspective. Contemporary feminists point to the family-wage ideology and the numerous problems it has caused in the struggle for equality. The family-wage ideology emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century when women's wages were considered a supplement (pin money) to family income and women presumably did not have to earn an income to support a family. This powerful ideology had an enormous impact on defining the relationship between men, women and work.³

Gender roles are learned early and affect the way we behave, make decisions, and view ourselves as well as the way we view others. The prevalence of sex roles is well established in the literature.⁴ Historically, certain occupations have been identified with one sex to the extent that all members are commonly associated with the characteristics of that sex. Teachers, nurses and librarians work in professions which have been sex-typed as female. Within these professions, however, are certain functions not commonly associated with the sex role that dominates the profession. Generally, management is not perceived as a female work role; consequently, even though female librarians outnumber male, women are not usually identified with the membership of library executive suites.⁵

Prior to Melvil Dewey's 1886 lecture entitled "Librarianship As a Profession for College-Bred Women,"⁶ librarianship was primarily a male profession. By 1920, the situation had changed significantly in that ninety per cent of all librarians were women.⁷ By 1960, women represented eighty-six per cent of elementary school teachers and librarians and ninety-eight per cent of nurses. Among librarians, male participation has been increasing more rapidly than female.⁸ The King Research study of *Library Human Resources* acknowledges women's increasing participation in the labor force. As librarians remain in the labor force longer than previously, fewer openings will become available; however, as women move into other professions such as law and medicine, their proportion of the profession may become smaller.⁹ In her interview with Allen Veaner, Marianne Scott, newly appointed director of the National Library of Canada, says "Women are doing better everywhere, not just in librarianship. This combination of a changing environment and changing attitudes is part of a larger trend What it really means is that *better* administrators will evolve because appointees will, in effect, be drawn from a larger pool, a double pool, because it will include top males and top females."¹⁰

Nevertheless, women must contend with sex stereotypes. Although librarianship is sex-typed as a female profession, management is stereotyped as male. Much of the research that has been

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done on women managers suggests that there is very little difference between male managers and female managers in terms of attitude, motivation and behavior.¹¹ Interviews with recently appointed library administrators indicate, however, that managerial styles of men and women do differ. Sharon Rogers states, "I think more women in high-level administrative posts will change the character of organizational relationships and patterns, and the change will require a revolution in the administration of the organization."¹²

References

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