The Status of Women in Academic Libraries

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There are two problems that are basic to the status of women in librarianship:

(1) that the predominance of women in the profession tends to lower the prestige and salary level of the entire profession — as is the case with other 'female occupations', such as school teaching, nursing, social work, and secretarial work; and

(2) that women in the profession are treated less fairly than men. Both problems stem from a society that has historically treated its female membership as less than equal, and even when equality is proved on certain counts, traditionally insists that it is yet only proper that men should dominate! When the public views librarianship as being comprised of such "inferior individuals," the profession cannot but suffer. However, it is impossible to expect society to end its discriminatory attitude toward librarianship as "female work" until the profession itself raises the status of its women to a situation of equality with its male minority! So, in this paper, I am going to concentrate on problem (2).

The status of women in *academic* libraries is, perhaps, even more precarious than in other sectors of the profession. About 33% of academic librarians are men, while men make up only 20% of the profession generally. But more than this, academic librarianship exists within the milieu of the college and university, which has always been male-dominated and which is now being proved to be discriminatory against women. A study conducted by Astin and Bayer and reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 15, 1972) surveyed 60,000 faculty members at a representative sample of 300 colleges and universities and found that "when matched with male faculty members in terms of degrees held, years of employment, publications, research interests, and fields of specialization, women were likely to hold lower academic ranks, lack tenure, and earn less." The authors discovered that *sex* was a better independent predictor of *rank* than such factors as the number of years since completion of education, the number of years employed at the present institution, or the number of books published. The situation is compounded by the following statistics:

—46% of male faculty members, but only 22% of female teachers, held doctorates.

—48% of the men but 69% of the women taught undergraduates only.

—While 63% of the female faculty members taught 9 or more hours each week, only 49% of men did so.

—Only 11% of the women said they were chiefly interested in research, while 27% of the men said they were.

—About ⅔, or 63% of the women had never published an article in a professional journal, but only 39% of the men had not.

—25% of the men surveyed were full professors, but only 9% of the women were.

—49% of the men had tenure compared to 39% of the women.

Many of these discrepancies can be associated with discrimination that women encounter during their pre-career formation as well as *in* their careers. In the past, many graduate and undergraduate admissions guidelines required higher scores and better records from their female applicants than from their male applicants. But more basic than that, women were told that "they shouldn't take up some *man's* place in higher education" just to find a husband. And because college teaching has been dominated by men, especially in the most prestigious positions, women have lacked good models to encourage their choice of a career in academia. In addition, the fact of discrimination once she has entered the profession is necessarily stifling to a woman's career ambitions.

To see how the academic environment has exaggerated the plight of women in libraries, Wanda Auerbach, of the University of Wisconsin, took a random sample, from the 1970-71 *A.L.A. Directory*, of 100 public and 100 academic libraries of over 50,000 volumes. By identifying the sex of the directors, she came up with these results[1]:

SIZE OF LIBRARY	PUBLIC				ACADEMIC			
(in # of volumes)	% Female	(#)	% Male	(#)	% Female	(#)	% Male	(#)
50,000 - 100,000	44%	(20)	56%	(25)	39%	(18)	61%	(28)
100,000 - 150,000	53%	(8)	47%	(7)	22%	(4)	78%	(14)
150,000 - 250,000	35%	(6)	65%	(11)	20%	(3)	80%	(12)
250,000 - 500,000	30%	(3)	70%	(7)	8%	(1)	92%	(12)
Over 500,000	8%	(1)	92%	(12)	0%	(0)	100%	(8)
		(38)		(62)		(26)		(74)

It is obvious, from a quick glance at these figures, that both in public and in academic libraries, as the size of the library increases, the chance that its director will be female steadily decreases. And this tendency is even more impressive (and depressing) among academic libraries than among public libraries.

It is a known fact that the Association of Research Libraries, the group of directors of the 89 largest and most prestigious research libraries in the country, has traditionally been a male clique. (It *has* been opening up a little in recent years; more than once in the past decade there have been a total of three women listed in its membership roster.) And the 30-year-old publication, *College and Research Libraries*, has never had a female editor; in addition, for the three years between November, 1969, and July, 1972, there was not even one woman on the nine-member editorial board of *CRL*!

Unlike other parts of the campus community academic libraries cannot be called negligent about hiring women in general (although one article by Helen Lowenthal suggested that the abundance of women in the field might be explained by the practice of recruiting women for the numerous subordinate positions while recruiting men for the few select positions at

the top![2]). A paper written by sociologists Carol Kronus and James Grimm cites librarianship as a perfect example of what they call the "queue theory of promotion." The concept of a promotion queue is derived from an earlier "queue theory of labor market imbalance," which ranks various subgroups by order of their attractiveness as employees to potential employers on the basis of two criteria:

1) objective group traits, such as average level of education and work skills.

2) subjective criteria, such as employers' *beliefs* about the group as desirable or compatible as well as capable employees.[3]

The employment queue refers to which group will be hired and in what proportion. The lower the group's position on the employment queue, the more likely the group is to be an excess source of labor, employed only in times when the demand for less preferred labor increases ("last hired, first fired").

Kronus and Grimm believe this concept can be adapted to describe promotional practices in occupations — like librarianship — where such sub-groups are well represented. Thus, the promotion queue is a continuum of employed groups ranked according to their chances of being advanced to positions of power and influence within an occupation on the basis of the same two criteria described above. On the promotion queue, groups at the bottom are excess *power* groups, characterized by the phrase "last promoted, first demoted." Kronus and Grimm focus in on librarianship to apply their theory and conclude, unsurprisingly, that women in librarianship clearly rank lower than men on the continuum of desirability for administrative and decision-making positions. Later I will discuss how this low ranking is based primarily on *subjective* rather than objective criteria; but first, a look at the statistics.

The Facts

Searching through library literature, I discovered that there was no large-scale study of librarianship which differentiated data by sex factor until Anita Schiller published her *Characteristics of Professional Personnel in College and University Libraries* in 1968. Before this, the only monograph that dealt with the topic was Patricia Layzell Ward's 1966 pamphlet, *Women and Librarianship,* which described the situation in British libraries and which was not limited to academic libraries. Since Ms. Schiller's original publication, she has written a number of articles for library literature applying various analyses to her data (collected in 1966-67) and arguing for an equalization of opportunities for female academic librarians. Although her data is steadily aging, hers is still the most extensive national study available.

By constructing a comparative salary breakdown for male and female academic librarians, Schiller discovered that men occupy positions in the higher-paying classifications disproportionate to their actual number either in the profession as a whole or in any given institution[4]:

Annual Salary (1966-67), By Sex

Percent Distribution

Salary Interval	Total	Men	Women
Under $6000	7.3%	3.1%	9.7%
6000 - 6,999	21.9	14.5	26.2
7000 - 7,999	22.1	17.3	24.9
8000 - 8,999	16.2	15.2	16.8
9000 - 9,999	11.2	12.6	10.4
10,000 - 10,999	8.4	11.5	6.6
11,000 - 11,999	4.1	6.9	2.5
12,000 - 12,999	3.2	6.2	1.5
13,000 - 13,999	1.5	2.9	.7
14,000 and over	4.0	9.8	.7
TOTAL	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%
BASE	2,181	802	1,379
Median	$7,925	$8,990	$7,455
Mean	8,425	9,598	7,746

In fact, 37% of the men are in the $10,000-and-above bracket while only 12% of the women earn that much. (Similar findings were reported in a 1971 survey of the personal members of the American Library Association.[5] Although that data is more recent than Schiller's, I will not use it in this paper because it is limited by its restriction to A.L.A. members, and because it doesn't distinguish between types of libraries — e.g., public, academic, special, etc. — in reporting its findings.)

There are three major objections one might raise to the above comparison of annual salaries as reported by Schiller. First, it is difficult to determine if women are actually being 'held back' in the lower salary categories, or if they simply lack the level of education attained by the men who work in academic libraries. Secondly, this sort of breakdown does not indicate years of experience; perhaps men remain in the field longer than women, or perhaps women temporarily 'drop out' to raise families, and thus lose tenure. Finally, there is still the problem of the age of the data; maybe 1970 has brought better things for women in academic libraries.

On the first point, Schiller has compiled data on what library degrees were held by her respondents[4]:

Highest Library Degree	Total	Men	Women
No library degree	13.5%	12.4%	14.2%
Bachelor's Degree in Lib. Sci.	2.9%	.8%	4.1%
5th Year Bachelor's in Lib. Sci.	17.9%	11.0%	21.8%
5th Year Master's in Lib. Sci.	59.3%	69.3%	53.6%
6th Year Master's in Lib. Sci.	5.5%	4.7%	6.0%
Doctorate in Lib. Sci.	.8%	1.7%	.3%
BASE	2,265	825	1,440

Though men seem to dominate the 5th year Master's Degree category, it seems reasonable to group the two older degrees — the 5th year Bachelor's and the 6th year Master's — along with the 5th year Master's, as similar educational levels. If such a move is acceptable, the proportion of men and women at that level is relatively equivalent (85% of the men and 81.4% of the women). Where women fall quite a bit short of men is in the number of doctorates held. To see if this degree difference accounts for men holding the highest level salary positions, I will turn to a study of Library Science doctorates published by Carpenter and Carpenter in the *Journal of Education for Librarianship*[6]:

Median Salaries of Doctorates, By Age

Age	Female (n=24)	Male (n=83)	Total (107)
21 - 30	(only 1 case)	------ (0)	------
31 - 40	$13,700 (7)	$16,300 (18)	$15,000
41 - 50	11,200 (4)	19,100 (18)	18,000
51 - 60	15,200 (5)	19,200 (35)	18,000
Over 60	14,200 (7)	19,800 (12)	18,000
All ages	$13,800	$18,300	$17,000

In Carpenter's breakdown by age, it becomes apparent that women doctorates at their peak (51-60 years old) earn less than men doctorates at their career lows (31-40 years)! Some might counter that this large discrepancy may in part be explained by women who have left the field for child-rearing, therefore accumulating fewer years of experience. However, this argument is not likely valid since only 20% of these women doctorates are married.

Carpenter's further breakdown by positions held shows that women doctorates tend to go into the teaching field while the largest number of men eventually get positions as major executives:

Median Salaries of Doctorates and Deans, By Position

Position	Female		Male		Total	
Major Executives	$13,400	(9)	$21,700	(46)	$19,700	(55)
Faculty	14,000	(14)	16,800	(27)	15,300	(41)
Other Position	------	(1)	13,000	(10)	13,000	(11)
Deans	15,800	(5)	22,300	(17)	21,600	(22)
ALL GROUPS	$14,100	(29)	$19,600	(100)	$19,500	(129)
Lowest 1/3	$9,500 - 13,000		$3,000 - 16,800			
Highest 1/3	$15,000 - 21,500		$21,000 - 30,000			

It is evident that there is little monetary incentive for women to buck tradition and compete for library executive positions. Although women faculty members are paid less than their male counterparts, the salary variation between female and male executives is almost three times as large.

Speaking to the question of experience, Schiller has analyzed her data along these lines:

Nationwide Median Annual Salary

No. of years of Professional Experience	Total		Men		Women	
	Percent	Median Salary	Percent	Median Salary	Percent	Median Salary
Under 5	33.0	$6,940	35.5	$7,330	31.6	$6,750
5 - 9	20.2	7,965	23.0	8,950	18.6	7,465
10 - 14	14.3	8,930	17.2	10,235	12.6	8,080
15 - 19	11.6	8,955	11.7	10,750	11.6	8,275
20 and over	20.8	9,205	12.6	12,570	25.6	8,745
TOTAL	99.9	$7,920	100.0	$8,975	100.0	$7,455
BASE	2,155		795		1,360	

Once again, when *experience* is held constant, there are still large discrepancies between men's and women's salary levels.

Finally, as to the age of Schiller's data, recent figures seem to indicate that things are getting worse for women, not better:

—In 1930, 19 of the chief librarians at 74 large colleges and universities (chosen at random) were women.

—In 1969, of those same 74 libraries, only 3 of the chief librarians are women.

—In 1930, 30% of State Library Associations were headed by men.

—In 1970, 50% of State Library Associations were headed by men.

—In 1930, 64% of deans of library schools were men.

—In 1960, 50% of deans of library schools were men.

—In 1970, 79% of deans of library schools were men.

—In 1971, 4 new schools were accredited, *all* with men deans.

—The proportion of men as heads of state libraries has almost doubled between 1960 and 1970.

Specific Cases

Granting that the Library of Congress is not an academic library, it is still the country's major research library. For this reason, I felt it might be a good place to start when studying the situation of women in specific libraries. I was told by the Information Office at L.C. that the only figures available were those in a breakdown by Government Service level.

Pay System	Full-Time Employees	Male		Female	
G.S. 5-8	1445	602	(41.7%)	843	(58.3%)
G.S. 9-11	899	448	(49.8%)	451	(50.2%)
G.S. 12-13	578	331	(57.3%)	247	(42.7%)
G.S. 14-15	212	171	(80.7%)	41	(19.3%)
G.S. 16-18	60	58	(96.7%)	2	(3.3%)
TOTAL	3,194	1,610	(49.6%)	1,584	(50.4%)

Like Schiller's national survey, this L.C. chart indicates that women tend to gravitate to the lower paying levels, while men rise to the top. However, the [woman] officer I interviewed claimed that women at the Library of Congress generally do not feel discriminated against. This claim is countered by the March 1972 issue of the *LCPA Newsletter* subtitled "Women at the Library," in which a number of women express their dissatisfaction with promotional practices at L.C. Nevertheless, it is very possible that *most* women may not feel that men are particularly favored at the library.

In a study reported in the March 1973 issue of *Psychology Today*, a sample of full-time workers in various occupations across the country were each given an achievement score based on objective criteria, such as education, length of service, number of hours worked per week, amount of responsibility and occupational prestige. When women were compared with men of equal achievement scores, in 95% of the cases, women got lower salaries and bene-

fits. And yet, when these same women were asked if they felt they were being discriminated against, only 8% answered in the affirmative! The authors suggested a few reasons why women might not feel what seems to be obvious discrimination:

(1) Women do not know what their male peers earn.

(2) They may attribute the disparity to factors they consider legitimate.

(3) They may believe that men and women should receive unequal pay and benefits.

(4) They may define discrimination as something consciously planned and executed.

(5) They may connect discrimination only with age, race and religion — not sex.

(6) They may compare their status with other women rather than men.[7]

I believe that all of these factors may work to keep female academic librarians unduly satisfied.

The University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) Library also has only gone as far as a salary breakdown of its professional staff:

Percent Distribution of Salaries According to Sex (1972)

Salary Interval	Total	Men	Women
8000 - 8999	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
9000 - 9999	21.9	8.4	30.0
10000 - 10999	14.0	4.1	20.0
11000 - 11999	15.7	20.9	12.5
12000 - 12999	6.2	4.1	7.5
13000 - 13999	6.2	12.5	2.5
14000 - 14999	4.6	8.4	2.5
15000 - 15999	0%	0%	0%
16000 - 16999	3.2	8.4	0%
17000 - 22999	1.6	4.1	0%
23000 - 27999	1.6	4.1	0%
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
BASE	64	24	40
Median	$10,250	$11,425	$ 9,850
Mean	$10,882	$12,527	$10,132

A close study of these figures will reveal that the salaries of 72.5% of the female professionals fall below the mean of the entire group of professionals, i.e., $10,882.

The most thorough study conducted on the status of women at an academic library is that done by the Affirmative Action Committee of the University of California, Berkeley, in 1971.[8] I have chosen two charts on professional promotion from their published report; I believe the data speaks for itself:

Years to Present Rank from Date of Hire
(L-I being the lowest and L-V being the highest rank)

Present Rank	Women median	Women mean	Women no.	Men median	Men mean	Men no.
L-II	2	1.9	(32)	1	1.5	(14)
L-III	10	11.8	(34)	6	5.7	(12)
L-IV	14	15.1	(11)	12	12.5	(8)
L-V	24	22.6	(3)	0	9.5	(9)

Number of Years for Promotion from One Rank to the Next

Promotion level	Women median	Women mean	Women no.	Men median	Men mean	Men no.
L-I to L-II	3	3.3	(64)	2	2.3	(33)
L-II to L-III	6	8.1	(46)	4	5.2	(23)
L-III to L-IV	7	8.5	(13)	4.5	6.1	(11)
L-IV to L-V	4	3	(3)	5	5.7	(4)

Looking at the "no." columns, it is apparent that Berkeley — in accordance with the national averages — has a disproportionate number of men in the top positions. And women who have made it through the grades have had to work a lot longer at the various levels before promotion was accorded them.

Not only is this sort of discrimination unfair (and stifling to a womans career ambitions!); it is also *illegal.*

Legal Recourse

First in the consideration of legislation affecting academic libraries is the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which demands "equal pay for equal work." However, as originally stated, this law exempted executive, administrative and professional employees; thus, it covered library assistant categories but not professional librarians. In 1972, the law was amended by the Higher Education Act which removed the professional exemptions.

Next, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 made it illegal for an employer, labor union or employment agency to discriminate against employees or applicants because of their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; it further prohibits discrimination not only in hiring, but in "compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment." Again, when the law was passed in 1964, it exempted activities of educational institutions. But the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 served to remove this exemption and extended coverage of the law to employees of state and local governments.

Finally, Executive Order 11375 (issued in 1967, effective in 1968 bars sex discrimination in employment by government contractors. According to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare — whose responsibility it is to investigate claims of discrimination under the terms of this executive order — more than 80% of the nation's higher education institutions have contracts with the government and thus are subject to the terms of this order. The most significant section of the order reads as follows:

> The contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion sex, or national origin. The contractor will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Such action

shall include, but not be limited to the following: employment, upgrading, demotion, or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship. The contractor agrees to post in conspicuous places, available to employees and applicants for employment, notices to be provided by the contracting officer setting forth the provisions of this non-discrimination clause.

The government holds the threat of revoking its contracts if the terms of this order are not adhered to.

Summary: The Arguments

Regardless of the laws and government guidelines, and especially regardless of a small group of irate women librarians, many employers feel they have adequate justification for paying women less and retarding their advancement in favor of their male colleagues. Among these "justifications" are usually some of the following:

(1) Women tend to work just for pin money otherwise expressed:

(a) Married women do not need as much income because they are primarily supported by their husbands.

(b) Unmarried women do not need as much income because they have no families to support.

(2) Women would not work if economic reasons did not force them into the labor market.

(3) Women are primarily concerned with socioemotional aspects of their jobs — to the demise of efficiency.

(4) Women are less concerned than men that their work be self-actualizing.

(5) Women are more content than men with intellectually undemanding jobs.

(6) Women are less concerned than men with getting ahead on the job.

(7) Women are less dependable about attendance at work because of conflicting home responsibilities.

All of these justifications fall into Kronus and Grimm's second criterion for placement on the promotion queue: "subjective predisposition of the employer." The first six of these assumptions were tested in the *Psychology Today* survey I mentioned earlier:

(1) About women working for pin money only, the survey discovered 2/5 of U.S. working women are economically independent of men. And 1/3 of the women in the study were the *sole* wage earners in their households. An additional 8% reported that they earned the bulk of their family's income.

(2) About the assumption that women would not work unless they were forced to for economic reasons: While 74% of the men indicated they would work regardless of their economic situation, 57% of the women said they would. Most of the difference resulted from the responses of married women; single women did not differ from men significantly.

(3) Concerning women being more concerned with socializing on the job than accomplishing their work tasks, the authors asked their respondents to rate the importance to them of four facets of their jobs:

"My coworkers are friendly and helpful."

"I am given a lot of chances to make friends."

"My supervisor is very concerned about the welfare of those under him."

"My supervisor is competent in doing his job."

There was only one significant sex difference: More women (68%) than men (61%) indicated that it was very important to them that their coworkers be friendly and helpful. Both groups attached more importance to the competence of their supervisor than to his congeniality.

(4) About self-actualization being more important for men, both men and women

in the sample indicated approximately equal concern about meaningful work.

(5) About women being more content with less intellectual work, the authors asked all the respondents to rate their jobs according to such criteria as "requires that you keep having to learn new things," "requires you to do a lot of planning" and "allows you a lot of freedom and creativity." When the respondents then indicated their degree of satisfaction with their jobs, there was no sex difference: Those who rated their jobs low in intellectual challenge also rated them low in satisfaction.

(6) To test if women are less concerned than men with getting ahead on the job, the authors simply asked the respondents if they ever wanted to be promoted. 60% of the men vs. 48% of the women said they did. (Remember, the respondents in this survey are a random sample of *all* workers, the majority being non-professional.) But the *desire* for promotion turned out to be largely a result of *expectation* of promotion. 2/3 of all women expected never to be promoted!!

Another study, done by Abbott L. Ferris, and published as a monograph under the title *Indicators of Trends in the Status of American Women,* demonstrates that women *do not* miss more work than men, whether for family duties or other reasons. Prior to 1964, females slightly exceeded males in days lost from work, while in 1964 and thereafter, males slightly exceeded females in days absent.

Now, getting back to the promotion queue, Kronus and Grimm *also* conclude that subjective criteria assume more importance in promotion than in the employment continuum, for two reasons:

(1) Consideration for promotion not only evaluates skills necessary for leadership but acceptance capability by subordinates. Thus, one weighs prejudices and emotional reactions to groups, in relation to objective capabilities. "These subjective factors center around those status attributes (usually race and sex) which conflict with the typical image other employees have of the ideal leader."

(2) Many occupations are concerned with the "image" which their leadership presents to the public — occupations with which they deal, their clients, or the general public. "Any traits of an employee group that may conflict with the public definition of 'appropriate' leadership relegates the group to a lower position on the promotion queue, quite apart from both the skills of the group or its desire to move into powerful and prestigious positions in the occupation."

Both of these subjective evaluations are easy to recognize in the promotional practices of academic libraries. Almost as much as men, women tend to prefer male to female leadership, because of a conditioning to accept men as the 'appropriate' embodiment of domination and superiority. So, women in libraries allow men to tell them what to do. Because the academic environment obviously favors the male image, and because people who fill the highest positions in academic libraries must be able to influence and be respected by the faculty, the 'appropriate' leadership suggested by the academic library's *public* is naturally male.

Solutions to problems arising from general attitudes are difficult, but I think women can look at the current Black movement to help set directions. First, attitudes about women are not going to change until women change their attitudes about themselves. Women must develop a 'manly' confidence in their own intelligence, talents and competences. But then, men are going to have to learn how to *accept* such confidence (and competition!) on the part of women. Secondly, regardless of initial 'public' reaction, women must be given a chance to respond to the challenge of large supervisory responsibilities. Kronus and Grimm ask the question (as do many women librarians):

> Is is possible that one finds less administrative talent and ambition among 75,000 women than among 13,000 men?

(These figures reflect the proportion of women to men in the field of librarianship taken as a whole; i.e., not just academic libraries.)

On the more practical side, there are some reasonable solutions to the temporary-dropout problem of women librarians with young families. Libraries and universities should look in to the establishment of responsible part-time or 'shared' positions, so women *and* men can divide the child-rearing duties while keeping in constant touch with their fields, and not forfeiting tenure. Also, many reports by women in universities and university libraries recommend the provision of child care facilities by the university for all children of university staff members. Not only would these centers allow mothers (and fathers) to retain their jobs during child-rearing years, but child-care centers tend to decrease absenteeism in women. (A firm in Massachusetts which has operated a child care center since 1962 claims that its establishment has cut female absenteeism by 80%.[9])

At a time in our national economy when library jobs are at a shortage and moneys for increased compensation are nil, why embark on a crusade that is bound to cost money and is not likely to help the library's public image? I think the answer has to involve the library's and the campus's traditional support of fair-minded policies and just causes. How can we throw our energies and funds into the acquisition of Black literature, and fervently demand equal rights for Blacks, Mexican-Americans, Indians and other minority peoples, while allowing, *within* our libraries, some of the same attitudes that oppress these people to stifle the ambitions of women librarians? In practical terms, this probably means to men that their advancement may be retarded a little, while women are encouraged to catch up. But that is simply a necessary part of the equalization process.

As Helen Tuttle says in her article, "Women in Academic Libraries,"

> In academic libraries, we do *not* want to eliminate men from librarianship. We simply want to teach them to take minutes, to type and to make coffee.[10]

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