A STUDY OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS WORKING ON DAILY NEWSPAPERS IN NEBRASKA

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by

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I. INTRODUCTION

The author worked as a city editor for the Kearney Daily Hub in Kearney, Nebraska, from 1969-1971. During those years, she met other women working on Nebraska newspapers at meetings of Nebraska Press Women, Sigma Delta Chi and various workshops.

And during those years, she watched as talented writers left the newspaper field for teaching, public relations or careers totally unrelated to journalism. Those women who stayed in newspaper journalism, like those who left, were concerned about salaries, advancement opportunities and chances for more challenging assignments. Their concerns and ambitions prompted this study.

About women today, one well-known cigarette commercial proclaims: "You've come a long way, baby." Have they really? Where are women today? How far have they come?

Like the commercial, many statements about women in the work force are a matter of conjecture rather than concrete facts. Basically, most information on women journalists in the past is based on "I remember when..." rather than on objective studies. How far women journalists have come can only be a matter of speculation. Establishing where women journalists are today will provide baseline data making it possible to determine how far they have advanced in five or 10 years.

The one governmental agency responsible for recording, collecting and disseminating information on women in the work force is the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor. The Women's Bureau was established under President Woodrow Wilson's administration in 1920 "To formulate standards and policies

which shall promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment."[1] However, the agency was given the authority to do only two things--investigate conditions and publish the results of their investigation.

Often statistics published by agencies such as the Women's Bureau include the clerical worker with the medical doctor simply because both are working women. Few statistics are grouped according to profession. Those statistics which are grouped according to profession are rarely separated into specialities or ranks. Thus, it is difficult to determine whether women are assuming new roles in their chosen professions. Questions such as: Are more women in the medical profession becoming doctors rather than nurses? Are more journalists becoming editors rather than reporters? Are women assuming new roles in their professions? cannot be determined by generalizations or all-inclusive statistics.

Nationwide, very little research has been done on women in journalism, and no studies could be found about women journalists in Nebraska. In fact, very little could be found on the state of the journalism profession in Nebraska for either men or women. Statistics on the number of journalists employed in the newsrooms of Nebraska dailies, income levels or the ratio of men to women are not currently compiled by any agency or organization. This study was designed to fill that gap in information on women journalists.

I. INTRODUCTION

[1]Marcia Hovey, "A Doughty Lady Turns 50," Manpower Magazine, VII, No. 3, March, 1970, p. 1.

II. SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

> Where writing is accepted as a profession that may be pursued by either sex with perfect suitability, individuals who have the ability to write need not be debarred from it by their sex, nor need they, if they do write, doubt their essential masculinity or femininity...It is here that we can find a ground plan for building a society that would substitute real differences for arbitrary ones. We must recogznize that beneath the superficial classifications of sex and race, the same potentialities exist, recurring generation after generation, only to perish because society has no place for them.[1]

A review of the literature demonstrated that the above observations by Margaret Mead in her book From the South Seas are not necessarily accurate. Although women may write with no reflection being made on their femininity, what they write about may be determined by their sex. And in some cases in the journalism profession, whether they write or not is determined by their sex. As Betty Freidan wrote in The Feminine Mystique:

> A woman researcher on Time magazine, for instance, cannot, no matter what her ability, aspire to be a writer; the unwritten law makes the men writers and editors, the women researchers. She doesn't get mad; she likes her job, she likes her boss. She is not a crusader for women's rights; it isn't a case for the Newspaper Guild. But it is discouraging nevertheless.[2]

While Friedan's comment was about women in magazine journalism, how do women in newspaper journalism fare? Relatively few studies of women journalists could be found. Using newswomen in a state or city as the study population, a few studies of women journalists have been done. Those states in which studies have been done include Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Kansas.

Of the five studies, the earliest study was done of the Pennsylvania Women's Association members in 1966.[3] A Pennsylvania State University faculty member conducted the study.

A similar study was done in Ohio by the Ohio Newspaper Women's Association three years later.[4] Both studies asked newswomen about job achievement, opportunities for advancement and equal pay for equal work. And in both studies, women reported that they did not have equal opportunities for achievement, advancement or salary.

A year after the Ohio study, Jean Jarvis Sneed did a study of The Florida Newspaper Woman of 1970. Based on her findings, Sneed concluded, "Findings of the survey indicate the newswoman of Florida is happy in her work and can earn a sizable salary, even though opportunities for advancement are not as favorable as those for men."

For the above studies, only women were surveyed. A 1973 Chicago survey, "What we think about everythingz," was made of 150 men and women journalists working for Chicago media. The survey covered a number of topics of which equal pay was one. According to the survey:

> Uncertainty emerged over whether women journalists receive pay equivalent to male colleagzues. Only 35 percent expressed a strong opinion either way, and 15 percent gave a "not sure" response. Nearly half (47.5 percent) agreed or tended to agree that women were paid fairly. (All but two of the newsrooms surveyed are union shops where equal pay for women is guaranteed.) The 36 percent who see discrimination may be saying that fewer women advance to higher job categories, even though pay within a category is equal.[6]

On some questions, the answers made by men were reported separately and contrasted to the answers made by the women respondents. On the subject of equal pay, the study found, "Many men felt that women's complaints about unequal pay are unjustified. Fifty-three percent of the male respondents agreed that women's pay is comparable to men's. Only 27 percent of the responding women agreed."[7]

Equal pay was also covered in a study of "Discrimination Against Women in Newsrooms: Fact or Fantasy?". Joann S. Lublin surveyed 264 newspaper

affiliated Women in Communications, Inc., founded as Theta Sigma Phi, members who worked for newspapers with a circulation of at least 10,000. In her study, newswomen and news-executives were surveyed, and in some instances, the responses were compared.

> More than half of the news-executives agreed with the female journalists that women with comparable qualifications would neither advance as quickly nor earn as many top newspaper positions as men. Both groups of respondents also concurred that substantial pay differences because of sex don't generally exist. For instance, just one-third of the women journalists said their salaries were less than a comparable qualified man.[8]

Although respondents in Lublin's study "concurred that substantial pay differences because of sex don't generally exist," they did note that "Numerous jobs and beats in the newsroom are still linked to traditional sex roles while equal opportunities for women to advance to news-executive positions are limited by news-executives' conventional beliefs about the performance capability of women."[9]

The Kansas study, done by Wichita Press Women, surveyed the members of Kansas Press Women. The questions covered three main categories: general biographical information, description of the member's work week and job title. From the study, the average Kansas Press Woman earns $7,900 a year, has an average of 13.2 years experience in communications and has worked at her present job 5.8 years.[10]

Of all the studies of women journalists, the Kansas survey comes the closest to this study of Nebraska journalists. For a number of reasons, the other populations are not readily comparable; however, parts of each of the studies enhance this thesis in some way. Also, each study is important simply as a point of reference for comparisons in future years.

Women Under the Law

A minority group is defined in Webster's Third New International Dictionary as, "a group characterized by a sense of separate identity and awareness

of status apart from an usually larger group of which it forms or is held to form a part: as a group differing from the predominant section of a larger group in one or more characteristics and as a result of often subjected to differential treatment and especially discrimination."[11]

Women as well as Negroes, Indians, Mormons and Irish Catholics easily fit this description of a minority. And as is true with other minority groups, differential treatment in employment is often best coped with via the law.

The Commission

On a national level, the legal framework with which to cope with minority group discrimination was established with the organization of the Federal Equal Opportunities Commission under the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In 1965, the Nebraska Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was created to investigate "charges of alleged discrimination in employment due to race, color, religion, national origin and sex."[12]

The commission was created by Legislative Bill 656. Passage of LB718 during the same session changed the commission name to the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission.

Nebraska Governor Frank B. Morrison appointed the first Commission September 25, 1965, and it became operational October 8, 1965. As established by Section 48-1116 of LB656, the commission consists of seven members, of which each commissioner serves a three-year term.

In addition to state funds, the commission has been supported by the federal government via a $13,500 grant to continue the Affirmative Action Program which concentrates on identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices in employment.[13]

> Affirmative action means, in essence, the application of management techniques that are appropriate to insure truly non-discriminatory employment practices. It involves, first and foremost, a critical evaluation of present techniques of recruitment, training, and promotion, and then

> actual results in terms of the racial and ethnic composition of a firm's overall work force, as well as within specific job classifications, such as production, clerical, technical, supervisory, etc.[14]

Complaint processing steps differ within the various areas under the commission's jurisdiction--employment, housing and public accommodations. Also, the extent of legal leverage varies. In public accommodations, for example, it is within the commission's power to investigate complaints of alleged discrimination, subpoena witnesses and records, and attempt conciliation. But when attempts at conciliation fail, the commission cannot take further action. The commission is currently seeking enforcement provisions from the legislature. However, the commission is more powerful in employment concerns.

Under the provisions of the Nebraska Fair Employment Practices Act, the commission has the following power:

> ...to receive, investigate and pass upon complaints alleging discrimination in employment, apprentice programs, vocational schools, and existence of unfair employment practices by a person, an employer, an employment agency, labor organization, or representatives thereof, and a joint labor management committee, or other training or retraining programs.[15]

Following is the employment complaint procedure:

1. The formal signing of the complaint and recording of the details of the allegation within 90 days of the alleged discrimination.
2. The investigation of the allegation by the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission including questioning of the respondent and inspecting or obtaining of the necessary records.
3. The determination of reasonable cause or lack of reasonable cause related to discriminatory employment practices.
4. Attempt to settle the case by persuasion, conference or conciliation.
5. If all the above attempts to resolve the case are unsuccessful, a complaint is issued and a notice of public hearing is sent to all parties. At times, these notices will facilitate settlement and conciliation, and a hearing will be unnecessary.
6. A public hearing is held by the commission if all the preceding approaches have failed. The commission may dismiss a case, or may issue cease and desist orders which are enforceable by the District Court in the counties in which the alleged unlawful employment practice was committed.[16]

A look at commission case loads shows that employment remains one of the most critical areas in which the commission functions. Statistics of the commission's case load to November 30, 1971, show 150 employment cases, 11

housing cases and one public accommodations case. Of the 150 employment cases, 48 (32 percent) were related to sex discrimination. For 1970, 40 percent of the cases dealt with sex discrimination in employment.

When the persons who have filed cases with the commission were categorized into 20 occupational divisions, the largest number of cases dealt with city, county and state offices and schools. In that division, 90 cases were filed. In comparison, only six cases have been filed by persons employed in newspapers, magazines, radio or television. There could be any number of explanations.

First, there are fewer persons employed in the media than in governmental jobs. Another reason may be that there is less discrimination within the communications industry. And then again, perhaps discrimination is more difficult to identify in communications. Unlike many governmental agencies which use civil service tests to measure ability, ability in communications fields is less easily measured. How can an editor determine via a written exam which of two job applicants would best be able to cultivate good news sources, produce under pressure and write a good story at the same time? From the other point of view, if a female applicant suspects that she did not get a job based on sex discrimination, how difficult will it be for her to demonstrate equal ability? In this instance, legislation is limited in its power to identify and eliminate discrimination.

However, legislation has the power to increase the commission's effectiveness in identifying and eliminating discrimination in other ways. For example, the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has initiatory powers and thus may investigate a firm without having had a complaint, but the state commission cannot investigate a firm unless a complaint has been filed.

Although Nebraska law prohibits firing an employee on the grounds that he or she has filed a complaint with the commission, most employees realize

that they are jeopardizing their job. There are too many subtle ways for an employer to make an employee so uncomfortable that the employee would quit. Also, recommendations from an employer who felt that he had been wronged could make getting another job difficult.

Thus, a woman journalist living in a one-newspaper town is not likely to file a complaint if she likes her career but does not like the pay. That is especially true if she is a married woman with a family, because her mobility is limited. However, if she would discuss the problem with the commission without having to file a complaint, the commission could function on her behalf without jeopardizing her career.

Numbers are another weakness of the commission. The commission is restricted to investigating only those firms with 25 or more employees. This restriction eliminates nearly all of the weekly newspapers in Nebraska and some of the daily newspapers. The commission is currently seeking legislation which would include firms employing as few as eight persons.

Numbers influence the effectiveness of the commission in yet another way. After an alleged act of discrimination has occurred, an individual has only 90 days in which to file a complaint. The commission is currently seeking a 180-day limitation rather than the present 90-day period.

Distances have also caused the commission problems. The two commission offices are located in Omaha and Lincoln, the two largest cities in the state. Both cities are in the eastern portion of the state making it difficult to provide services to all Nebraskans. One of the rules of the commission requires conferences and hearings (steps four and six in the complaint procedure) to be held "within 35 miles of the place where the alleged unfair employment practice was committed."[17]

The effectiveness of the commission could be increased in two ways if there were an office in the western portion of the state. First, it could

better service complaints made by persons living away from the state's population centers. Also, by having a western office, the commission could increase awareness of the commission's services.

And finally, the commission has subpoena powers only after the complaint procedure has arrived at the point of a public hearing, step six in the procedure. A public hearing is held only after an unsuccessful attempt is made to resolve the differences between employer and employee via persuasion, conference or conciliation. Having subpoena powers while the case is under investigation could make the commission better equipped to deal with the complaint.

The Law

> The practice of discriminating on the basis of sex by paying wages to employees of one sex at a lesser rate than the rate paid to employees of the opposite sex for comparable work on jobs which have comparable requirements:
>
> (a) Unjustly discriminates against the persons receiving the lesser rate;
> (b) Leads to low worker morale, high turnover, and frequent labor unrest;
> (c) Discourages workers paid at the lesser wage rates from training for higher level jobs;
> (d) Curtails employment opportunities, decreases workers' mobility, and increases labor costs;
> (e) Impairs purchasing power and threatens the maintenance of an adequate standard of living by such workers and their families;
> (f) Prevents optimum utilization of the state's available labor resources; and
> (g) Threatens the well-being of citizens of this state, and adversely affects the general welfare.
>
> It is therefore declared to be the policy of this state through exercise of its police power to correct and, as rapidly as possible to eliminate discriminatory wage practices based on sex.[18]

Above is the State of Nebraska's policy statement regarding discriminatory wage practices based on sex. Although this policy statement looks good on paper, it is difficult to assess any policy statement without looking at supportive legislation.

To survey the laws, a computer print-out completed by Joe Smith at the Lincoln Computer Center of the University of Nebraska was made available by

the Nebraska Governor's Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission on the Status of Women sponsored the computer search which was completed in January of 1972.

Via the computer search, a print-out of all statutes containing the following words or their word-stems was produced: woman, female, girl, sex, man, male, boy, man-made, husband, wife and widow. From the print-out, only those statutes which directly applied to employment were then considered.

The main emphasis of this study is the Nebraska woman as a journalist, not the journalist as a woman. On that basis, those statutes dealing with widowhood, various pension benefits for policewomen, schools, estates, wills, descent of property, abortion, birth control and various other subjects were deleted. Those laws directly concerned with employment were then reviewed.

Basically, two bodies of legislation emerged--the Equal Pay Act and the Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act. Both acts were passed in 1969.

Fair Employment Practice Act

> It is the policy of this state to foster employment of all employable persons in the state on the basis of merit regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and to safeguard their right to obtain and hold employment without discrimination because of their race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
>
> Denying equal opportunity for employment because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin is contrary to the principles of freedom and is a burden on the objectives of the public policy of this state.
>
> The policy of this state does not require any person to employ an applicant for employment because of his race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; and the policy of this state does not require any employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee to grant preferential treatment to any individual or any group because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.[19]

The purpose statement of the Fair Employment Practice Act basically defines the philosophy and limits of the laws included under this act. Included under this act are the enforcement laws for the Nebraska Equal Opportunity

Commission. In most instances, the laws are spelled out in black and white, but occassionally some wordings cast a shadow of grey.

In two instances, the use of "bona fide" could create problems for women journalists. First, under Section 48-1111 which deals with standards of compensation, the law states:

> Not withstanding any other provision of this act, it shall not be unlawful employment practice for an employer to apply different standards of compensation, or different terms, conditions, or privileges or employment pursuant to a bona fide seniority or merit system, or a system which measures earnings by quantity or quality of production of to employees who work in different locations, if such differences are not the result of an intention to discriminate because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.[20]

Who is to judge whether a merit system is "bona fide"? The merit system could impose standards of merit which could not be met by women on a newspaper staff for reasons other than lack of ability. For example, an editor might feel that a woman should not cover the courts and that the man covering the courts merited a greater salary because of the responsibilities involved. Thus, although an editor was not intentionally discriminating because of sex, he would be discriminating on what he would consider to be a "bona fide" reason; the result of his attitude would in fact be discrimination based on sex.

"Bona fide" becomes a possible problem again under Section 48-1115 which deals with notice of employment and preference or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

> It shall be unlawful employment practice for an employer, labor organization, or employment agency to print or publish or cause to be printed or published any notice or advertisement relating to employment by such an employer or membership in or any classification or referral for employment by such a labor organization, or relating to any classification or referral for employment by such an employment agency, indicating any preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin, except that such a notice or advertisement may indicate a preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on religion, sex, or national origin is a bona fide occupational qualification for employment.[21]

Again, who is to determine what a bona fide occupational qualification

is? Some editors may feel that it would be "unladylike" for a woman to handle a police beat or report on the courts. On that basis, some women may be denied employment in reporting jobs which they could easily handle. That possible loophole is re-emphasized in Section 48-1108 of the same statute:

> It shall not be unlawful employment practice for an employer to hire and employ employees, for an employment agency to classify, or refer for employment any individual, for a labor organization to classify its membership or to classify or refer for employment any individual, for an employer, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining programs to admit or employ any individual in any such programs, on the basis of his religion, sex, or national origin in those certain instances where religion, sex, or national origin in those certain instances where religion, sex, or national origin is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of that particular business or enterprise...[22]

Equal Pay Act

As is the case with Section 48-1115 of the Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act, the Equal Pay Act includes a statute prohibiting an employer to discriminate between employees in the same establishment in the following manner: "...on the basis of sex, by paying wages to any employee in such establishment for equal work on jobs which require equal skill, effort and responsibility under similar working conditions."[23]

For many professions the above may be sufficient. However, for the woman journalist there are two basic problem areas. Assuming that the bulk of women journalists in Nebraska are employed in the women's news departments rather than in general news reporting, how does one determine whether persons working in the two departments are doing, "equal work on jobs which require equal skill, effort and responsibility under similar working conditions"?[24]

One interpretation was recently published. That interpretation was made by Morag Simchak, special assistant to the assistant secretary of labor of employment standards who initiated and coordinated all Department of Labor

activities in support of the Federal Equal Pay Bill and served as the department's liasion with the Congress to achieve passage of the act in 1963. On the problem of comparing journalistic jobs, she wrote in the April, 1974, issue of Press Woman:

> Many of the equal pay comparisons between women and men journalists are difficult to resolve because so often women have been denied the opportunity to work in the kind of assignments given to men at higher rates of apy. Our responsibility under the law is to equate work that is "substantially equal" in nature, although we are in no sense restricted to making comparisons within the same departments of the newspaper.
>
> This raises the question, for example, as to whether we are in a position to compare a male sports editor or writer with a woman assigned to cover the "society" beat. In some instances this may be possible; in others not.
>
> We have to take each situation on a case by case basis. Perhaps the only way these difficult areas will ultimately be resolved is in the courts.[25]

Perhaps the key areas here are equality of responsibility and similar working conditions. There can be little question that a person working a court system carries a greater responsibility--potential libel suits, etc.--than does the individual doing social news. Also, the reporter covering courts must cover the beat whether there is a blizzard or the temperature is 102 degrees in the shade. In addition, the person covering the courts must often furnish transportation.

Thus, if women are restricted to the women's news desk, then these laws will do little to support her request for a higher salary. However, as women's news desks change their concept of women's news to include more than "Mr and Mrs. So-And-So announce" or "So-And-So visited at the home of So-And-So," perhaps the salaries in these positions will improve.

If an employer violates either the Equal Pay Act or the Nebraska Fair Employment Act, he may be punished by a fine of not more than $100 or imprisonment for not more than 30 days, or by both a fine and imprisonment. Also, an employer can be liable to the employee in question in the amount of unpaid

wages. In addition to giving the employee unpaid wages, an employer found to be in willful violation may have to pay an additional amount equal to the unpaid wages as liquidated damages.

Any employee who has lost a job, or would-be employee who was refused a job, as the result of discrimination, must be paid the amount of wages that person would have earned if the individual would have been employed.

An employee who lost a job as the result of taking a case to the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission may be reinstated. Job protection is provided in Section 48-1227 of the Equal Pay Act which states:

> Any person who discharges or in any other manner discriminates against any employee because such employee has made any complaint to his employer, the commission, or any other person, or has instituted, or caused to be instituted any proceedings under or related to Sections 48-1219 to 48-1227, or has testified or is about to testify in any such proceedings, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall, upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars, or by imprisonment for not more than thirty days, or by both such fine and imprisonment.[26]

After a review of Nebraska law, it would appear that Nebraska has taken the necessary steps to make the elimination of discrimination possible regardless of whether that discrimination is based on race, color, religion, national origin, or sex.

As Ann Trombley, a volunteer worker for the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, said, "One of the most notable things about Nebraska is the extent to which it has already gone to equalize its laws regarding the sexes."[27]

Law, however, does not solve problems; it only opens the door to the solutions. Even with these laws, there are still many barriers for women--not only barriers that prevent women from advancement but also barriers which may prevent them from being considered for the job in the first place. Oddly enough, one of those barriers is found closest to the journalist...in the newspaper.

Ten years ago, the Civil Rights Act was passed. That act specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in all aspects of employment, including help-wanted advertising.

As syndicated columnist Sylvia Porter noted in a recent column:

> Despite federal and state laws, despite such voluntary job-equality plans as that recently adopted in the steel industry, despite undeniable progress, sex discrimination remains rampant throughout the U.S.
>
> These openly discriminatory ads reinforce sex stereotypes disproved long ago--that women are best suited to retail store and factory jobs, that men are the ones to be trained for managerial positions, etc. They perpetuate not only discrimination against female job seekers but also the utterly unequal pay that goest to women who are channeled from the start into lower-status, less responsible jobs at the bottom of the ladder...
>
> Surely after 10 years, state's attorneys and other enforcement agencies in states which prohibit sex discrimination should begin to take these laws seriously and start to crack down on open violations.[28]

Thus, if newspapers openly violate provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, how closely can they be expected to follow provisions of the Nebraska Fair Employment Act and the Equal Opportunity Act as they apply to newspaper employees. A questionnaire the author sent to newswomen on Nebraska dailies included questions concerning the acts and the newswomen's awareness of them.

II. SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

[1]Margaret Mead, From the South Seas (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1939), p. 321.

[2]Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique (New York: Wm. Norton & Co., Inc., 1963), p. 185.

[3]"Women's Complaints: Unequal Status, Pay," Editor & Publisher, November 29, 1969, p. 18.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Jean Jarvis Sneed, "The Florida Newspaper Woman of 1970" (unpublished M.S. thesis, University of Florida, 1970), p. 47.

[6]John MaCarron and John Stark, "What we think about everything," Chicago Journalism Review, September, 1973, p. 23.

[7]Ibid., p. 25.

[8]Joann S. Lublin, "Discrimination Against Women in Newsrooms: Fact or Fantasy," Journalism Quarterly, XLXVI (Summer, 1972), 359.

[9]Ibid., p. 361.

[10]"Kansas Press Women gather statistics; membership polled on jobs, income, etc.," Press Woman, February, 1974, p. 8.

[11]Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1968.

[12]Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission, Sixth Annual Report, (1971), p. 2.

[13]Ibid., p. 4.

[14]Ibid., p. 4.

[15]Ibid., p. 9.

[16]Ibid., p. 5.

[17]Rules and Regulations of the Equal Opportunity Commission, State of Nebraska, (March 27, 1970), p. 5.

[18]Equal Pay Act of Nebraska, Statutes (1969), Section 48-1219.

[19]Fair Employment Practice Act of Nebraska, Statutes (1969), Section 48-1101.

[20]Ibid., Section 48-1111.

[21]Fair Employment Practice Act of Nebraska, Statutes (1969), Section 48-1115.

[22]Ibid., Section 48-1108.

[23]Equal Pay Act of Nebraska, Statutes (1969), Section 48-1115.

[24]Ibid., Section 48-1115.

[25]Morag MacLeod Simchak, "The Equal Pay Question," Press Woman, April, 1974, p. 9.

[26]Equal Pay Act of Nebraska, Statutes (1969), Section 48-1827.

[27]Ann Trombley, interview, Lincoln, Nebraska, June, 1973.

[28]Sylvia Porter, "Your Moneys Worth: Rundown of Anti-Discrimination Laws," Kearney Daily Hub, May 9, 1974, p. 4.

III. METHOD

The purpose of this study was to determine the current status of women journalists in Nebraska. For this study, "woman journalist" was operationally defined as any woman working full or part-time editing or writing in the news department of a Nebraska daily newspaper.

Women working on weekly newspapers were excluded for two reasons. First, Nebraska laws pertaining to equal opportunity and fair employment practices apply only to those firms which employ 25 persons or more. Thus, most Nebraska weeklies would not come under the laws included in this study. Secondly, because the staffs of most Nebraska weeklies are so small, the author felt that the return on the investment of time and money would not merit including weeklies.

Women journalists were identified via a letter to each daily newspaper requesting names of women on the news staffs. In those cases where the author knew staff members, she sent the letter directly to a staff member. Otherwise, the request was sent to the editor. All requests were accompanied by a self-addressed postcard for their replies.

The questionnaire was in many ways a refinement of a questionnaire written by Jean Jarvis Sneed for her master's thesis from the University of Florida at Gainesville. Her study, "The Florida Newspaper Woman of 1970,"[1] made it possible to eliminate several questions which proved to be problems or were otherwise not useful. The problem questions were eliminated and questions which dealt with aspects of Nebraska law were added. Thus, the author's final questionnaire was comparable to Sneed's in length. Because the questionnaire

was similar to Sneed's, the author deemed it unnecessary to do a pilot study.

The questionnaire included 62 questions: 14, fill-in-the-blanks; 48, forced response; and a half-page at the end for any comments the respondent would like to make. Of the 48 forced response questions, 15 had space provided for additional comments.

Questions were grouped in the following divisions:

1) The respondent as an individual and/or in relation to her family--marital status, residence, education, children, age and husband's occupation.

2) The job itself--title, responsibilities, length of employment and salary.

3) The respondent's professional background and activities--number of years as a journalist, number of jobs, journalistic organizations, and awards or honors.

4) Respondent in relation to her employer and others on the job--acceptance by male co-workers, attitudes towards self and job, and opportunity for advancement.

5) Fringe benefits--vacation time, company health and life insurance program, retirement and chance for continuing education.

6) Other--knowledge of the Equal Pay Act and Nebraska Fair Employment Practices Act, number of persons on news staff and number of news staff persons who are women.

7) Summary--attitude questions about job satisfaction.

The questionnaires, accompanied by letters explaining the use of the questionnaire and assuring the respondent of anonymity, were sent in June. Each woman was given a number and questionnaires were numbered to correspond so that the author knew which respondents returned questionnaires. Three weeks after the first mailing, a follow-up letter and questionnaire were sent to those women who did not return questionnaires. To those women who did not respond

to either mailing, the author sent a letter requesting that they comment on the questionnaire and their reasons for not responding. A pre-addressed postcard with their number on it was enclosed.

III. METHOD

[1]Jean Jarvis Sneed, "The Florida Newspaper Woman of 1970" (unpublished thesis, University of Florida, 1970).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For a study of the woman journalist in Nebraska, there were some kinds of information that could easily be gathered from the usual informational resources in the library, but for perhaps the most important information of all, there was only one resource--the journalist herself.

Women journalists were identified by writing letters to the daily newspapers asking that the names of those women employed on the news-editorial staffs be listed on an enclosed pre-addressed postcard and returned. On those newspapers where the author had an acquaintance, the letter was sent to the acquaintance. Otherwise the letter was sent to the editor. Through this method 89 women journalists were identified. The list was reduced by five, because they did not fit into the framework of the study--only freelanced an occasional article, were vacation help, etc.

Questionnaires with cover letters explaining the study were then sent to the 85 journalists. The questionnaire was designed so that when a journalist had filled it out, she simply folded it back together, stapled it shut, and dropped it in the mail. The back of the questionnaire was addressed to the author and stamped. Those journalists who did not return the first questionnaire were sent followup questionnaires and letters. After the second followup letter and questionnaire, 54 journalists (64.3 percent) responded.

For those journalists who did not respond after the successive contacts, a letter asking them why they did not respond was sent. A self-addressed, stamped postcard was enclosed for their return remarks. Twelve postcards were returned. Respondents did not return their questionnaires for a number of reasons.

Seven said that they did not receive the questionnaire. Two had misplaced both copies of the questionnaire. One said that she did not return the questionnaire because she did not know the answers to many of the questions. No one said that they had any objections to the questions or to the general tone of the study. One journalist wrote: "I had no objections to your questionnaire. The questions were important and well chosen. However, at the time I received your questionnaire, I was just leaving the newspaper to go to law school, and therefore, I did not think I was still in the group you were studying."

The only negative reply, written in bright red ink, said, "Please! No more letters--NOT interested!"

In a couple of cases, journalists had gone on to another job. In those cases, often the questionnaire was passed to her replacement if that replacement were a woman. However, one journalist wrote, "In response to your letter, I would like to say that I would have been happy to cooperate with your questionnaire. I'm about the second or third social editor since Mary Beth Meyers time."

One journalist who said that she did not receive a questionnaire explained,"I received no such questionnaire. If it was sent to my home, it'll probably show up around Xmas time in the form of a homemade coloring book gift from my daughter."

If the response from the followup postcards were included in the total response, there would be a 77 percent return. Without the postcard responses, the study would have a 64.3 percent return.

In the Sneed study, 270 questionnaires were sent, and 172 questionnaires, or 63.7 percent, were returned. Thus, in both studies, a proportionate number of journalists responded.

The Nebraska journalists' questionnaire included 62 questions of which 33 called for forced responses, 14 were fill-in-the-blanks, and 15 were combined forced response and fill-in-the-blanks. The results are given in the order that the sections and questions appeared on the questionnaire.

Questions were divided into the following subject areas: the respondent as an individual and/or in relation to her family, the respondent in relation to her job, the respondent's professional background and activities, respondent in relation to her employers and others on the job, fringe benefits, respondent's familiarity with relevant law and a set of summary questions. Also, a half-page was left at the end of the questionnaire so that the respondent could add any comments she felt were relevant.

Respondent as an Individual and/or in Relation to Her Family

Of the 62 questions, the first 13 were designed to give the author a profile of the respondent as an individual and in relation to her family. The questions concern the respondent's marital status, age, education and other basic data. In other words, the questions were designed to discover such information as whether the journalist in Nebraska was just beginning a career or whether she was answering the questions based on many years of experience.

In reporting responses to each question, the figures and percentages were based on the total number of persons responding to the given question. Throughout the questionnaire, there are questions which some respondents did not answer. Thus, on many questions the responses totaled fewer than 54.

All respondents answered the first question which asked their marital status. Of the 54, 24 were married, 21 were single, four were widowed, four were divorced, and one was separated. Fifty percent of those journalists who were married had husbands whose occupations were journalism related. Table I gives the numbers and percent of the total number of respondents in each of the

four possible marital status levels.

TABLE 1

MARITAL STATUS OF 54 NEBRASKA WOMEN JOURNALISTS

Marital Status	Number	Percent
Married	24	44
Single	21	39
Divorced	4	7.5
Widowed	4	7.5
Separated	1	2
TOTAL	54	100

More than one-half of the respondents (55 percent) rent their residence in comparison to the 34 percent who own their own homes. Respondents were asked to mark one of the following categories: own residence alone, own with others, rent alone, rent with others or other arrangement. Ten (19 percent) own alone; eight (15 percent) own with others; 12 (23 percent) rent alone; 17 (32 percent) rent with others; and six (11 percent) have other arrangements.

Home ownership is often considered a measure of permanence within the community. Roughly one-third own their homes either alone or with someone which would indicate some degree of permanence among the journalists. However, 39 percent of the respondents were single which may have made a difference in the number of persons who owned their residence.

Question Four surveyed financial support. In all, 29 (55 percent) of the respondents were self-supporting, and four (7.5 percent) supported them-

selves and others. Thirteen (24.5 percent) were responsible for partial support of themselves and others; seven (13 percent) provided only partial support of themselves.

Question Five asked what was the highest educational level the journalists had attained. The possible choices ranged from attending but not finishing high school to graduate work beyond a master's degree. A second part of Question Five asked that the respondent state her major for college or vocational education.

The lowest level of education marked was a high school graduate. Ten (18 percent) had only a high school education. None of the journalists had taken vocational training. Seven respondents (14 percent) had attended college and had either an associate degree or more than three years of college. The largest percent (60 percent) had a bachelor's degree. In all, 32 respondents had at least a bachelor's degree. Five (eight percent) had done work beyond the bachelor's, including two who had a master's degree and one who had done work beyond the master's.

In response to the second part of Question Five, which asked that respondents note their majors, 33 (75 percent) stated that they had majored in journalism. Other fields noted included: English, three; combination of English and music, one; general science, one; secondary education, one; home economics, two; history, one; and Russian civilization, one. One respondent did not reply. Table 2 shows the number and percent at each educational level.

For the most part, the journalists were young. Nineteen (36 percent) were 25 years-of-age or younger; 17 (32 percent) were between 26 and 35 years-of-age. There were five (nine percent) who were in categories "C" and "E" which included journalists 36 to 45 years-of-age and 56 to 65 years-of-age, respectively. Seven (14 percent) were 46 to 55 years-of-age. None was 65 years-of-age or older. Table 3 shows number and percentage of total number of

journalists at each age range.

TABLE 2

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF 54 NEBRASKA WOMEN JOURNALISTS

Highest Level of Education	Number	Percent
Attended but did not finish high school	0	0
High school graduate	10	18
Vocational education training	0	0
Received associate degree	4	8
Attended three or more years of college	3	6
Received a bachelor's degree	32	60
Graduate work but no advanced degree	2	3
Master's degree	2	3
Graduate work beyond master's degree	1	2
TOTAL	54	100

Twenty of the 54 respondents had children. Those without children continued with Question 13. Only respondents who had children were asked to answer Questions Seven through 12.

The seventh question asked the ages of the respondent's child or children. Ages ranged from five weeks to 35 years, and the largest number of children anyone had was four. Twelve of the respondents still had children at home; three had children who were in some way dependent. Of the 20 who had children, only five no longer had children who were dependent in some way.

TABLE 3

AGE RANGES OF 53 NEBRASKA WOMEN JOURNALISTS

Age	Number	Percent
Under 25 years	19	36
26-35 years	17	32
36-45 years	5	9
46-55 years	7	14
56-69 years	5	9
More than 65 years	0	0
TOTAL	53	100

Questions 9, 10 and 11 dealt with the relationship between pregnancy and work: Had pregnancy ever interrupted work? Did the newspaper grant maternity leave? Were there any employment difficulties related to pregnancy? After a child was born, did the journalist return to the same job? What was the newspaper policy regarding length of time a pregnant woman could work?

There was no standard policy regarding the length of time a pregnant woman could continue working. Of 14 journalists who responded to the question, 10 said their papers had no policy, two said that they could work until their ninth month, and two said they did not know what their newspaper's policy was. One journalist wrote in the margin beside the question: "No policy. They offered to take me to the hospital if necessary."

Basically, no pattern or trend was apparent. Of those surveyed, five had been pregnant while working for a newspaper. Of the five, three took leave, one quit working, and one took no leave. One journalist who quit for eight years

noted that when she returned to work, she returned to the same job.

Question 12 asked who cared for an ill child on a working day. In 46 percent of the cases, someone other than either parent cared for the child, and 26 percent reported that they took care of the child. The husband took care of the child in 1.4 percent of the cases. And in 1.4 percent of the cases, no one stayed home to care for the child. Those who said that no one cared for the child had teenage children. In those cases where the husband stayed home with the children, the children were not yet teenagers.

As a partial measure of job satisfaction, Question 13 asked: If you have (or had) a daughter, would you like her to become a journalist too? Sixty-six percent said "Yes," and 20 percent said it would be a matter of her own choice. Fourteen percent said, "No." For the most part, journalists were supportive or at least not against their children becoming journalists, which would seem to indicate a rather high degree of job satisfaction.

Question 14 was a fill-in-the-blank question which asked the respondent to list her job title. Job titles were then divided into two categories: women's news, 39 (72 percent), and all other, 15 (28 percent). Many of the titles in both categories designated the individual as an editor: entertainment editor, regional editor, people's news editor, family living editor, society editor, women's news editor, wire editor, etc.

There were also a number of respondents who noted that they did not have a title. Instead of listing a title, they often noted what kind of stories they covered; thus, they were recorded in a category according to the stories they covered.

Although a change in title from women's news to "people's news" has reflected a real change in philosophy and content in many newspapers throughout the nation, those title changes reported in this study for the most part did not.

At the other end of the scale, some respondents who had moved out of the women's news area and into fields previously dominated by men often did not have any title. For example, a number of journalists are doing agriculture and agri-business reporting, but they do not have a title which reflects their responsibilities.

As one respondent put it: "I am responsible for all of the ag. If I were a man, I would have farm editor title. The title isn't important to me, but I do believe discrimination is the reason--even farmers, ranchers and agribusinessmen call me the 'woman farm editor.' So do other staff members."

However, the majority of the titles were an accurate reflection of responsibilities according to the responses to Question 15 which listed 12 specific beats and left a space for the respondent to write in any beat which she covered but was not listed among the choices. Specific choices included: city council, school board, county government, health and medicine, agriculture, police, courts, house and home, foods, finance and business, and social events. The number of persons who listed each beat and the percent of the total number of respondents who covered each beat are shown in Table 4.

Although the author felt that a wide variety of possibilities was listed, a large number of respondents had another beat to add. In reading over those beats added, there did not seem to be any overall pattern to the additions. Instead, the extra beats respondents recorded varied with the demands of the community that the newspaper covered.

For example, several journalists were working on centennial issues. In another community known for rodeos, one journalist is "unofficially" the newspaper's rodeo reporter. In some of the larger cities, reporters are getting into consumer affairs, poverty and welfare reporting on a regular basis now unlike coverage some time ago when those areas received attention only after something catastrophic had happened. Thus, in each case, the additional beat

reflected the geographic area rather than a statewide trend.

TABLE 4

BEATS COVERED BY 54 NEBRASKA WOMEN JOURNALISTS

Beats covered	Number who cover	Percent of respondents
City Council	8	15
School Board	5	9
County Government	8	15
Health and Medicine	8	15
Agriculture	12	23
Police	11	20
Courts	9	17
House and Home	17	32
Foods	16	30
Fashion	16	30
Finance and Business	6	11
Social Events	18	34
Other	42	79

Whatever their title or job, in Question 16 the journalists were asked how long they had held their current position. Sixty-four percent had held the same job from one to three years; 19 percent, more than 10 years; nine percent, four to six years; and eight percent, 7-10 years.

Many explanations could be given for the larger percentages at the extreme ends of the scale. However, no single explanation seem evident. A second part to this question would have made it much more meaningful. A second part could have asked when the journalist began working for the newspaper and when she was last promoted.

Of course, one possible explanation could be that the results reflect the current population of journalists and that there simply are few journalists in the middle range. Another possible explanation is that the younger, more liberal journalists answered the questionnaire while the older, more conservative

journalists did not. Those older journalists who did respond may have held their positions long enough to feel secure. A confident, secure journalist of many years, or a youthful journalist with mobility would probably have felt that the questionnaire posed no threat and had fewer reservations about answering the questionnaire.

Most of those answering the questionnaire, 48 (91 percent), were full-time employees, and only five (nine percent) were part-time employees. Because 40 hour work-weeks have usually been established as the standard work week for Americans, Question 18 asked how many hours a week the journalists worked. Six (40 percent) worked fewer than 40 hours a week; 47 (87 percent) worked 40 to 50 hours a week; and only one (two percent) worked more than 50 hours a week.

One respondent wrote in the margin beside the question: "Actually there are no 'average' weeks. We say we work a 40-hour week, but often work 44 to 48."

When asked in Question 19: "In which division does your annual newspaper salary fall?", all 54 respondents (100 percent) answered. The question was one of only 13 questions which every respondent answered. The salary ranges and the number and percent of respondents at each of the levels are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

SALARY RANGES OF 54 NEBRASKA WOMEN JOURNALISTS

Salary	Number	Percent
$5,000 or less	12	22
$5,001-$7,500	14	26
$7,501-$10,000	19	35
$10,001-$12,500	7	13
$12,501-$15,000	1	2
More than $15,000	1	2
TOTAL	54	100

Looking at the preceeding table, alone, it would appear that journalists were not, for the most part, badly paid. However, 37 of the journalists had a bachelor's degree or better. In comparison, a person teaching journalism in a high school, having no previous teaching experience, could expect to earn $6,850. That figure was the base salary for the 1973-74 school year in Kearney. Also, high school journalism instructors have an extra three months to work at another job or go back for more schooling, and teachers had more vacation time during the nine months they taught than most journalists had during the entire year.

The number of journalists with a bachelor's degree or better in each of the salary levels is shown on Table 6.

TABLE 6

SALARY LEVELS FOR 54 *DEGREED WOMEN JOURNALISTS*

Salary	Degreed journalists	Percent of total in each range
$5,000 or less	5	42
$5,001-$7,500	10	71
$7,501-$10,000	17	89
$10,001-$12,500	3	43
$12,501-$15,000	1	100
More than $15,000	1	100

As is shown on Table 6, although the top two salary earners were degreed journalists, five of the 12 journalists earning $5,000 or less a year were also degreed journalists. Thus, college degrees did not appear to make that much difference in salaries earned.

The five journalists with college work beyond the bachelor's degree were at the following salary levels: graduate work beyond the bachelor's but no degree, one journalist, $12,501-$15,000; master's degree, two journalists,

$7,501-$10,000; and graduate work beyond the master's degree, one journalist, $7,501-$10,000. The top-salaried journalist, making more than $15,000, had a bachelor's degree and worked from 45 to 50 hours a week as a women's news editor.

According to the findings in Question 20, 24 (45 percent) of the journalists worked for newspapers where there was a policy, either written or understood, discouraging discussion of salaries. Thus, it is unlikely that many of the journalists realized what the salaries of their co-workers were. Three journalists, six percent, did not know whether there was any policy concerning discussion of salaries, and only 26 (49 percent) worked for newspapers where discussion was not discouraged by the newspaper policy.

The newspaper's policy regarding discussion of salaries among the staff brought out the following comments:

"I know of no policy, but people don't discuss it much."

"Understood--strictly watched too."

"No one knows what anyone else makes."

"I believe most of my co-workers consider salary a personal subject."

"At least not to my knowledge, but it's common sense to avoid salary talk."

"Salaries are a personal matter with me and are not discussed. However, I do not feel there is any discrimination salarywise, because I am a woman. Paychecks are commensurate with ability, production and length of service."

"They (the management) discourage comparison of salaries. Say it is to our advantage. B.S."

Whatever the newspaper policy was concerning discussion of salaries, most newspapers had recently given the respondents a raise. In all, 42

(79 percent) of the respondents had received a raise within the six months prior to filling out the questionnaire; five (10 percent) had not had a raise in one to three years. Six (11 percent) had received no raise, but had worked at the newspaper less than a year.

The basis for those raises, or the lack of them, varied among the respondents. Raises were given as follows: built-in schedule, 11 (21 percent); combination of schedule and merit system, 25 (41 percent); merit system alone, six (12 percent); and other, six (12 percent). Of the 52 responses to Question 22, only four (eight percent) said that they did not know what raises were based on.

Some of the remarks jotted down after Question 13 were:

"I doubt if there is any particular method."

"Who knows?"

"Beats me."

"Whenever pushed."

"Unknown factors."

"No one knows for sure. There's a schedule, but it can be fanagled by the management."

Respondents were then asked if their work week included overtime. For 17 (32 percent), the work week usually included overtime; for 17 (32 percent) other respondents, the work week sometimes included overtime. Twelve (22 percent) said that they seldom worked overtime, and only four (seven percent) said that they never worked overtime. Another four (seven percent) always worked overtime.

Although only four (seven percent) noted that they always worked overtime, on Question 18, which asked how many hours the respondent worked in an average week, 47 (87 percent) said that they worked from 40 to 50 hours a

week. For most persons not on the management side of a business, a 40-hour work week is considered the norm and any time beyond that would be considered overtime. If respondents had counted any time beyond the 40-hour work week as overtime, then 87 percent rather than seven percent of the respondents could be said to work overtime every week.

Question 24 then asked how overtime hours were compensated for. Twenty-one (40 percent) are paid time-and-one-half; 10 (19 percent) are paid a straight salary with no overtime payment; one (two percent) was paid at the same rate as the regular hourly wage; one (two percent) did not know how overtime hours were compensated for; and 19 (37 percent) were compensated for overtime hours in other ways.

Those respondents who marked the "other" category when asked how they were compensated for overtime hours, said they were compensated in a variety of ways. One respondent noted: "Same weekly wage up to 48 hours then after 48 hours received time-and-one-half." For every hour of overtime, another respondent received,"20¢ per hour for premium hours' split shifts get extra pay." And yet another was paid one-half of the regular hourly wage for each hour of overtime.

Many of those who worked overtime, and noted that they were compensated in the "other" category, commented that they received "comp time." That is, for every hour of overtime, they were to receive one hour off during the regular working day, but several said, "Comp time is given, but you seldom wind up taking it."

Respondent's Professional Background and Activities

Many of the journalists drew on years of experience when they filled out the questionnaire. Question 25 asked respondents how many years they had

been employed as journalists. In all, nearly 50 percent of the journalists said they had been employed as journalists for more than six years. Thirteen (24 percent) had worked from six to 10 years; two (three percent), from 11 to 19 years; and 10 (19 percent), for more than 20 years. Fifteen (28 percent) have been journalists for three to five years. There were seven respondents (13 percent) in each of the two lowest categories -- those who had been employed as a journalist for one year and those who had been employed as a journalist for two years.

While the journalists had, for the most part, many years of experience, Question 26 asked how varied that experience had been. Question 26 asked how many full- or part-time jobs that they had held. Twenty (39 percent) had held only one. Fifteen (29 percent) had held two. Twelve (24 percent) had held three, and only four (eight percent) had held four jobs. The number of jobs was based on the number of firms that the journalists had worked for. There was no attempt to determine how many positions each journalist had held while employed with each firm. However, in retrospect, it would have been good to know whether most journalists tended to remain in the same position they had when they were hired, or whether there was much upward mobility within each newspaper.

Question 27 asked which journalistic organizations the journalist belonged to. Nineteen (35 percent) did not belong to any journalistic organization. An equal number, 19, belonged to two; eight (15 percent) belonged to three; and only one individual listed four.

Journalistic organizations listed include: National Federation of Press Women; Nebraska Press Women; Women in Communications, Inc., founded as Theta Sigma Phi; Omaha Press Club; Sigma Delta Chi; Pi Delta

Epilson and American Women in Radio and Television. Some are high school or college-related. Those listed include, Quill and Scroll and Kappa Tau Alpha.

The relatively low membership in journalistic organizations may have some impact on the number of awards journalists said they had won when asked in Question 28: "Please list the honors or awards you have won in or related to journalism." Twenty-six (49 percent) said that they had received no awards or honors. The highest number of awards won was 11, and that person belonged to only one journalistic organization, Nebraska Press Women. Thirteen (25 percent) had won one award. Eight (16 percent) had won two or three awards. Six (10 percent) had won four or more awards.

Awards and honors listed included state and national achievements as well as local recognition. Awards had been won for layout, editing, writing and photography. Among the awards and honors listed were: Theta Sigma Phi Woman Journalist of the Year and Honorary Chapter Farmer Award -- Scottsbluff Future Farmers of America, as well as AP Newswriting, Nebraska Press Women and National Federation of Press Women contest awards. The journalists also noted a number of awards won for high school and college achievements. Several of those who attended college listed journalism-related scholarships and grants that they had received.

Respondent in Relation to her Employers, Others on the Job

The questions in this section basically asked how it was to be a woman working in the news media.

Question 29 asked whether there had been any problems with other women at the newspaper, including secretaries, because of the journalist's sex. Fifty-one (94 percent) said that they had not had any problems; three (six percent) said that they had had some problems. Of the three, one said that

she had had problems with, "Those who think my feminist tendencies should overrule my professional ones."

Those who said that they had not had any problems commented:

"They (the secretaries) do gossip, though."

"There are so few of us, we tend to stick together."

"They do get boring discussing family problems which I think should be left at home."

"We have one woman who won't speak to the other women."

"We sometimes disagree on the extent of our feminist leanings but wouldn't dream of interfering professionally."

Question 30 asked whether the respondents felt that they needed to be protected in their work by not being assigned to cover stories which would require them to be out at night unescorted or perhaps, would take them into a harsh area of town. Forty-nine of the respondents (92 percent) replied, "No"; four (eight percent) said, "Yes."

One of the four who said "Yes" commented, "I wouldn't take an assignment that needed protection."

Comments by those who said that they did not feel the need to be protected included:

"Generally, no. Yes, in regard to riots."

"New York City and others excluded."

"Nonsense!!"

The next two questions asked about advancement. Question 31 asked whether the respondent believed that she had good, average, poor or no chance for advancement. Responses fell in the following categories: 19 (37 percent), good; 15 (29 percent), average; 7 (13 percent), poor; and 11 (21 percent), no chance. Thus, 66 percent of the respondents felt that they

had an average or better chance for advancement. Advancement, according to some of the comments, could be seen in terms of a salary increase or a higher position. As one respondent put it, "The office is too small to allow job advancement, only salary advancement."

The tone and type of comment differed somewhat from category to category. The following are some of the comments made by those respondents who felt that they had a good chance for advancement:

"I was offered the city editor job four years ago. I refused."

"This was difficult to answer. I created both the youth editor position and then my current job."

"I want to stay in writing rather than editing, however."

"Good chance somewhere else. No chance where I am."

Those who said that they had an average chance noted:

"The newspaper has only a limited number of management positions."

"Because of my age and position, I probably won't be considered for advancement. However, I am an editor."

There were several comments made by those who said that they had a poor chance for advancement. One comment was, "I am nearing retirement age and have less than a year's employment on the daily." Age may have accounted for several of the 18 respondents (34 percent) who said that they had either a poor or no chance for advancement. Twelve of the respondents were 45 years old or older when they completed the questionnaire. At that point, many are no longer likely to be considered for further advancement. Also, women in that age bracket may be less agressive and competitive, and thus not seek advancement.

Some of the comments by others who felt that they had a poor chance for advancement included:

"It's a job which is open for imagination, but the senior editors are young, and the staff is stable--not mobile."

"As an editor, I see no additional advancement."

"I doubt many men with M.A.'s are sentenced to church news for three years."

"I have had excellent advancement. There may be nothing more I want from this paper."

"Financially, yes; position-wise, no."

Likewise, the reasons and comments varied among those who said that they had no chance for advancement.

"I'll always stay here."

"I would only want to work in women's news in my hometown. No other position is available."

"The only other positions are city or managing editor. Men have always held these positions."

"Do not care to advance--I loathe editing."

When asked whether they were interested in advancement, if that advancement required working late hours, 30 (56 percent) said "Yes," and 18 (33 percent) said "No." Of those who said "Yes," one respondent said, "Late, yes; long, no." Another said, "I work long, often late, hours now." One editor who replied "No" to this question explained, "There's no other position I'd want to hold." Another journalist said, "Not at my age. Had I been young, I would have answered 'Yes!'"

Question 33 asked how many women held management positions (supervise the work of others). Twenty-two of the journalists worked where there was no woman in a management position, 14 worked where only one woman was in management, and five worked where four women were in management. Thus, it would appear that

if women are going to move into management on Nebraska dailies, they are going to have to take the initiative.

"The only person with anyone working under him is the editor. He is a man," one respondent wrote. Those positions women most often occupied were: women's editor, library director and classified advertising manager. There were a few state, regional and wire editors reported. Another respondent wrote: "Regional and women's news editors are women, but they don't get equal pay!" Of those surveyed, 45 (83 percent) had a male supervisor, and only nine (17 percent) had a female supervisor.

When asked whether they preferred a male or female supervisor, if both were equally qualified, 22 (42 percent) said that they would prefer a male, six (12 percent) would prefer a female, and 24 (46 percent) said they had no preference.

Question 36 asked the respondents if they supervised the work of others. In all, 14 (25 percent) of the respondents said that they supervised the work of others. The largest number of persons supervised was from seven to 10. Of those that the journalists supervised, roughly 50 percent were females. One-third of those journalists in supervisory positions said that they felt they had problems as a supervisor because of their sex. Some of the journalists wrote:

"Very slight, but I think I'm probably kidded more than the men."

"A few men don't like taking orders from women."

"I did previously supervise a young man (26-27), and he (with a college degree) resented taking instructions from a woman."

However, when asked whether they felt accepted by "male fellow workers," 46 (92 percent) said that they did. One who felt that she was accepted said, "I feel accepted by my colleagues, but I know management has

trouble seeing women in some roles."

Perhaps one of the roles that management often has a hard time seeing a woman in is that of a career woman with a profession of her own separate and distinct from her husband's career. Thus, Question 39 asked whether the respondent believed that a person who was the sole support of his or her family should receive a higher salary for doing the same job that a person who is not the sole support of his or her family receives.

In response, 48 (96 percent) did not believe that a person who is the sole support of his or her family should receive a higher salary; two respondents (four percent) did believe that the person who is the sole support of his or her family should receive more money. Only one respondent made a comment. That respondent, who was not in favor of a higher salary, said, "No, not if the work is the same."

Question 40 asked whether the respondents believed that most news-editorial jobs were equally suitable for women and men. Forty-six (85 percent) said "Yes," and eight (15 percent) said "No." One respondent wrote: "Yes, having worked every beat on the paper and doing it successfully." Another respondent who said "No" explained, "Not most jobs, but many." And yet another respondent crossed out the "most" in the question and wrote the word "all" above it.

Absenteeism, a reason sometimes given for not hiring women, proved not to be perceived as a problem among the respondents. When asked whether they had observed a difference in absenteeism between men and women staff members, 50 (92 percent) said that they had not and only four (eight percent) said that they had. As one respondent put it, "We always show up."

Those journalists who had covered police or governmental beats were asked whether being a woman, helped, hindered or made no difference. Of the

54 respondents, 25 (46 percent) had not covered police or governmental beats. The 29 (54 percent) who had covered these beats had varying experiences. Eight felt that being a woman helped, six felt that it hindered and 15 felt that being a woman had made no difference.

Those who felt that being a woman had been a hindrance found the most difficulty in running the police beat:

"Police have a tendency to be over-protective when calling woman for an accident in the middle of the night. Usually, they will only call if fatalities (are) involved. We have missed good photos of crashes where no severe injuries were involved," one respondent reported.

Another journalist wrote: "At first being new on the beat hindered getting the news--especially on police beat. However, I think that as a reporter proves his/her ability to do the job, the prejudice lets up and generally is not a factor except that being a woman working with men does affect the relationship involved and how a reporter gets the news.

"For instance, a male reporter can joke, drink and generally jack around with other men, i.e., be one of the guys; whereas, a woman reporter can't ever be considered 'one of the guys.' But that situation does not mean a male reporter per se will get the news because of that situation."

"When I first took over the beat, being a woman was a definite hindrance--men didn't trust me. Now it's probably a help," another journalist said.

Another said, "....I never had any problem getting people to talk to me."

The next question was a two-part question: one part for women's page writers and editors only, and a second part for reporters, writers, editors in general news or any other department except the women's department. Each

part of the question was then divided into three main sections which asked questions relating to job significance, salary level and advancement. The results are shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7

WOMEN'S NEWS AND OTHER: JOB SIGNIFICANCE, SALARY AND ADVANCEMENT

Questions and Responses	Nature of Work: Women's News Number	Women's News Percent	All Other Number Present	All Other
Compared to general news, believe job is:				
as significant	15	83		
more significant	0	0		
less significant	3	17		
Compared to women's news, believe job is:				
as significant			14	38
more significant			23	62
less significant			0	0
Compared to general news, believe earn:				
as much	13	76		
more than	0	0		
less than	4	24		
Compared to women's news, believe earn:				
as much			15	44
more than			19	56
less than			0	0
Do you believe that you have a good chance for advancement?				
yes	5	33	16	52
no	10	67	15	48

One women's news journalist who said that she felt she had a good chance for advancement wrote: "If I wanted it." Of those who said they felt that they did not have a good chance for advancement, many often noted that the newspaper staff was too small to permit advancement.

Overall, women's news writers and editors consistently held their work in low esteem. They felt that their news was less significant; that they were paid as much as, or less than, but never more than other journalists were paid; and that they had no or very little chance for advancement.

In comparison, general and other news writers and editors outside of the women's news area held themselves above the women's news writers and editors. General news staff members felt that their news was always at least as significant as and usually more significant than that of the women's news staff; that general news staff was always paid as much as and generally paid more than was the women's news staff; and that general news staff members had a better than 50-50 chance for advancement. As one governmental reporter put it, "Sorry, I just don't appreciate women's news, with only a few exceptions."

Many of those who work with general news commented on the question of whether being a woman would make a difference in their being eligible for a supervisory position. Some of the comments were:

"My editor still believes in protecting women, although I've probably seen more of life than he had."

"I think that they might hire a woman thinking she would come cheaper than a man."

"I can't imagine any set of circumstances short of a court order that would move a woman into a supervisory position."

"Perhaps unconsciously, but I feel men are still seen as more able, by

their sex, to supervise."

"I think my employer still tends to view men as the support of wife, home and family."

"I've seen it (women promoted) happen at least a dozen times in 10 years."

"(the management) Tend to hedge and have relatively few women for the size of staff."

One comment made by a journalist who felt that sex might make a difference in advancement may help explain why women have not always been considered when supervisory positions were open. She said: "Possibly (sex might make a difference) in that he knows I have no career objectives. If I did, I think I'd get the same consideration any men or other women would have."

Those journalists who are ambitious, however, have had their problems. One journalist wrote:

> I have few complaints about pay. In that respect, I think my paper has been fair and probably really does treat women as equals. But I know darn well that advancement--not even to executive ranks--merely to desirable, challenging and prestigious beats, particularly of a political nature--at least as present are more or less marked 'Men Only'--at least unofficially. I have trouble believing that a male of the ability of our groundbreaking cityside woman reporter would have had to spend eight years writing weddings and engagements and club notices.

Fringe Benefits

Question 45 asked whether the respondent had a paid vacation, and if she did, how long it was and how the length of time was determined. All of the respondents said they received a paid vacation, the length of which was determined by the number of years they had worked for the newspaper. The length of time the respondents had for vacations was: one week, one (two

percent); two weeks, 35 (72 percent); three weeks, six (13 percent); and four or more weeks, six (13 percent).

The following is one example of the ratio between number of years at a newspaper and the vacation time: one to five years on the job, two weeks; more than five years, three weeks; and more than 16 years, four weeks.

Question 46 dealt with the newspaper provided insurance programs the journalist participated in. The largest number, 20 (38 percent), participated in health and life insurance program or programs. Sixteen (30 percent) participated in a health insurance program only; two (four percent) participated in a life insurance program only. Fourteen (26 percent) of the respondents worked at newspapers where such insurance programs were provided, but they did not participate. Only one respondent said that her newspaper did not provide insurance benefits.

Forty (78 percent) were employed at newspapers where the newspaper paid a portion of the health or life insurance costs. Nine (18 percent) of the respondents worked for newspapers which did not pay a portion of the costs; and two (four percent) respondents did not know whether or not the newspaper did or would pay part of such costs.

Questions 48 and 49 asked whether retirement were mandatory at a certain age, and if so, at what age. Twenty-nine (61 percent) would have a mandatory retirement age if they remained at their present place of employment; 17 (35 percent) would not; and two (four percent) did not know. For those who had a mandatory retirement age, 25 would have to retire by the age of 65; three would retire between 62 and 65 years.

When they reach retirement, 20 (39 percent) will have a retirement program other than Social Security to depend on; 31 (61 percent) will have only Social Security. A journalist at one newspaper reported that until the

age of 30, she would not be eligible to participate in the newspaper's retirement program. Until that time, her only investment would be in Social Security.

The newspaper paid a part of the retirement program costs for 19 (43 percent) of those who participate in a newspaper-sponsored program. Three (eight percent) did not receive any financial assistance from their newspaper. for the retirement program. Fifteen (41 percent) worked for a newspaper which paid part of the costs, but the respondent did not participate in the program.

The relatively large number of respondents who had a retirement program provided on a cost-sharing basis but did not choose to participate may have chosen not to for any number of reasons. The large number may or may not reflect a lack of planning for the future on the part of the respondent. Instead, the law participation level may reflect the quality of the retirement program provided.

Question 52 asked what provisions there were at the newspaper for continuing education. Seventeen (37 percent) reported that there were provisions for continuing education; 23 (50 percent) said that there were no provisions; and six (13 percent) did not know.

Among the benefits that respondents noted were: seminars, workshops, short courses, portion of tuition for journalism-related college courses and library books. One respondent said that continuing education, as such, was not provided for; however, the newspaper did pay dues and all expenses for attending Nebraska Press Women meetings twice a year. Basically, there was no organized program or plan for continuing education at any of the newspapers. One journalist summed up the feelings of several when she wrote: "Don't know if this is considered a fringe benefit, but I'd like our paper to have sessions to teach us better editing techniques--refresher courses, I guess. It's too

easy to become outdated, sloppy and satisfied, especially after 10-15 years."

Question 53 asked whether the newspaper offered fringe benefits other than those included on the questionnaire. Thirty-two respondents (67 percent) said that their newspaper did. One newspaper's fringe benefits included company contributions to the payroll savings plan, an investment plan which the company matched to a maximum amount of four percent of the individual's salary, a 10-year investment plan and a Christmas bonus. Another newspaper has a loan plan for employees, and travel insurance was provided for trips taken as part of the journalist's job. Some of the other benefits included: full pay on all sick leave, regardless of how long the journalist has worked or how long he or she is absent; an opportunity to purchase stocks in the company; gas mileage; and accident insurance.

One respondent wrote: "Perhaps not a benefit, but [the newspaper] does pay dues and luncheon expenses in women's division of the Chamber of Commerce." Perhaps two of the least significant fringe benefits mentioned were a free newspaper and "the editor buys us a cake once in a while."

Question 54 asked if there were other fringe benefits which were not available, but which the respondent felt that the newspaper should provide. Eighteen (38 percent) said there were, and 28 (60 percent) said there were not. One respondent replied, "Don't know."

Of the 18 who did know what additional fringe benefits they would like, those benefits included: company vehicle for on-the-job travel; maternity benefit for single people (excluded in present health insurance plan); more adequate retirement plan; sick leave; better insurance with the company sharing the costs; and newspaper clinics and conferences.

Travel arrangements prompted many comments. Several respondents wished that the company would provide a vehicle rather than pay mileage, and others

asked that the company offer an accident insurance plan for cars.

One wrote this of the fringe benefits she felt should be provided: "Parking facilities! It gets pretty expensive to rent a stall and time consuming to continually plug the meter. The paper bought a lot adjacent to the paper and charges 75¢ to enter and once you leave, it costs 75¢ to re-enter the lot."

Other

Questions asked under the "other" heading related primarily to the Equal Pay Act and the Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act. Question 55 asked whether the total number of persons employed at the journalist's newspaper was fewer than 25 or more than 25. Fifty-one of the respondents (95 percent) worked at a newspaper which employed 25 or more persons, and only three (five percent) worked where fewer than 25 persons were employed.

The 25 person figure was important because the Equal Opportunity Commission is limited to hearing complaints from persons working where there are 25 or more persons employed. It was for this reason that the sample size was limited to women working on daily newspapers in Nebraska. Most of the daily newspapers in Nebraska were a large enough operation to employ 25 or more persons, but even limiting the sample population to daily newspapers did not entirely narrow the study to those women who came under the jurisdiction of the Equal Opportunity Commission.

Question 56 asked respondents what the total number of persons working in the newsroom was; Question 57 asked how many were women. The newsroom staff ranged from four to 140 with, on the average, one-third to one-half of the staff being women. The lowest proportion of women to men was on one newspaper where only 20 percent of the news staff was made up of women.

The last two questions in the "other" category asked about the Equal Pay Act and the Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act. Question 58 asked where copies of the two acts were posted, and Question 59 asked the respondents if they were familiar with the provisions of the two acts.

The number of respondents who found the acts posted and where they were posted included: two (four percent) in the newsroom; nine (18 percent) in the entryway of the building; 14 (27 percent) in the hallway; and 10 (20 percent) in various other places. Nine (18 percent) said that the acts were not posted. It is against the law not to have to acts posted; thus, either respondents were not very perceptive or their newspaper is breaking the law.

Three of the 10 respondents who said that the acts were not posted did not know the provisions of the acts. In all, 33 (63 percent) of the respondents said that they were familiar with the two acts; 19 (37 percent) were not.

Responses on Summary Section of Questionnaire

In the summary, questions were designed to give the author some measure of job satisfaction among the respondents. Question 60 asked the respondent what her choice would be if she were going to prepare for a career again. Thirty-six (68 percent) said they would choose newspaper journalism; 17 (32 percent) would not. Among those who said that they would not choose newspaper journalism said that they would prefer the following; nursing, teaching, interior decorating and medicine. Several said that they would not choose newspaper journalism again but would have stayed in a journalism-related field.

Shortly after this study was made, two of the respondents became journalism teachers. And as happens to persons in nearly all professions, some were there by chance rather than choice. As one journalist noted:

"Prefer being a housewife. Only a journalist by chance. Enjoy it, but would have prepared for work as a florist."

Another journalist in response to the question of whether she would choose newspaper journalism wrote: "Probably not. I married the newspaper profession. My late husband was one of the outstanding newspaper people in the area for over 50 years. We started with the late William Allen White at Emporia, Kansas."

Whether the journalists chose the profession or entered it by chance, 46 (71 percent) said that they were happy with their present work; four said that they were happy with their work, but had reservations about it; and five (17 percent) said that they were not happy with their work.

One journalist wrote: "It's hard to finish this up objectively after one of those 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. days, but Question 59 makes me think. Don't know what else I'd be in. It's amazing!"

The final question, Question 62, asked what, if anything, would make the respondent happier with newspaper journalism: more money, better hours, different assignments, nothing or other. Highest on their list was more money. Thirty-five (65 percent) of the respondents listed money as a high priority item. One respondent wrote: "Although pay for journalists is improving, there's no great incentive when you get your once-a-year raise (now limited to not more than 5.5 percent by the government). It's very confining, in my opinion, and the system surely discourages innovation or special effort on the part of reporters."

Another journalist wrote: "I have achieved what I have today, because of ability and determination. But I'm worth more than what I'm getting--expecially since my male counterpart is making quite a bit more a weak."

Second highest on the list was a desire for better assignments. Fifteen

(28 percent) wanted better assignments. Relating her personal experiences, one journalist wrote:

> I think our biggest problem is in the area of assignments. I have an MA in political science from one of the 10 best graduate departments in the field in the country. I'm just now finally getting near something approaching government coverage and forget the politics altogether.
>
> This spring I began to feel like an adjunct of the sox dept. when I got stuck with the candidates wives, but no real candidates. Numerous young males who have come since me and another young woman reporter consistently are given more chances for responsibility. I finally decided that the only way in which I could begin to draw very good assignments was to invent my own. That has worked very well. In the past year, since making this decision, I've had quite a number of good stories--at least 90 percent of them of my own initiation. By now my superiors don't even normally assign me major features, because they just assume I'm keeping myself busy.
>
> It has its advantages, and I've gotten to examine many things I'm really interested in, but I can't help but wonder if I would get assignments of the caliber I can dream up if I had to rely on the desk for anything but approval of my own suggestions....I really shouldn't complain, because I've found a system that works quite well--but it angers me a bit that apparently the only way a woman can get ahead is to show more enterprise than about 90 percent of the staff.

From another Nebraska newspaper, a journalist wrote: "On our newspaper the assignments are getting better for women. But our city editor is anti-feminist, so we fight a constant battle. But if we all get together, I think we'll lick the problem in the near future."

In addition, a number of journalists, 14 (26 percent), felt the need for better hours. As one said, "Money and hours on most newspapers could stand to be better."

Under the "other" category, a variety of responses were given. Equal pay for equal work as well as overtime pay were common suggestions. Another journalist wrote: "I'd like to see an attitudinal change at my paper--higher goals and standards." And yet another journalist wanted, "....more freedom to print true, but perhaps distasteful, facts about the problems of our community."

A women's news writer wanted to see "...more cooperation and communication between the news and women's department and in the women's department--

not a complaint, because things aren't bad, just irritating sometimes."

At the end of the questionnaire, the author left one-half of a page open for any additional comments the journalists might like to make. In all, 24 of the respondents added remarks at the end of the questionnaire. A couple of the respondents filled in the half-page and then added another sheet so that they could continue their remarks. Many of the problems they discussed were shared by both men and women working on newspapers, and the journalists were quick to point out that fact. Others, such as the following, dealt with being a female working on a daily newspaper in Nebraska:

> As I have indicated throughout, I think at this paper, advancement is available for the competent, aggressive woman--probably at the same rate as any mediocre, modestly ambitious man. Money is not. Many and varied are the means of screwing around the pay scales and titles. They all amount to lower pay for women--women who perform far more of the routine and mundane tasks of journalism.
>
> My greatest problem as a professional woman is that I don't have a wife. If pay, advancement, fringe benefits, et. al., were equal, I would still not be on equal footing with my male colleagues who have charming, dutiful wives to care for their clothes, cook their meals, raise their children and supplement their income.

Several used the half-page to laud their newspaper and their profession.

At one newspaper, a journalist wrote: "Many women on our staff earn more than $200 a week--and in a college town, where part-timers can be hired cheaply, this is a good record." Another journalist noted: "I look forward to Monday morning regardless of how busy it will be rather than looking forward to Friday nights as so many do."

Suming up the feelings of many of the respondents, one journalist wrote:

> At least the editors now recognize that some of the serious problems that women face are serious news and deserve to be treated as such. That wasn't the case three years ago when I started here. Now a woman staffer who will treat a hearing on the status of women as she would any piece of serious news is usually assigned to cover such matters. Previously, it would in all likelihood, go to a man. He might even be instructed, as one

was one day before covering a demonstration, to 'get those dikes.' So we are making progress. But I think we still have a long way to go.

V. SUMMARY

Who is the woman journalist in Nebraska? What is her job? What are her fringe benefits? How does she feel, in general, about her job? Does she know her legal status as a professional? These were some of the questions that this study attempted to answer based on a 1973 survey.

A profile of the woman journalist based on 54 respondents would show a married woman 35 years old or younger who has a bachelor's degree in journalism. She is more likely to rent her home than own it, and she is probably married to a man who is in a journalism-related profession. She and her husband very likely do not have any children. If they do, neither stays home to care for the child when he is ill. Instead, they make other arrangements for the child's care.

The woman journalist has a title which designates that she writes women's news, and she spends from 40 to 50 hours a week doing her job. She has not been in her current position for more than three years. For her 40 to 50 hours a week job, she earns $5,000 to $7,500 a year, and she will make more next year, because she has had a raise in the last six months. The raise was based on a combination of merit system and a set schedule. It is doubtful that any of her co-workers would have known that she received a raise, however, because 45 percent of the journalists worked for newspapers where there was a policy, either written or understood, discouraging salary discussion.

She is optimistic about the future of her work in that she feels that she has a good chance for advancement and would be willing to work late hours to earn that advancement if necessary. For her, advancement often meant an

increase in salary rather than a promotion, because many news staffs were too small to allow for promotion. However small or large the newspaper staff may have been, the journalist belonged to at least one journalistic organization and has won an award for journalistic achievement. When her assignments require her to be out at night unescorted, she does not feel the need to be protected.

The supervisor who may have assigned her the night work is male. When asked whether she would prefer to work for a male or female, her choice was difficult. Forty-six had no preference, but 42 percent said that they would prefer a male. The respondent did not say what the basis of her preference was.

Although she may prefer a male supervisor, she believes that most news-editorial jobs are equally suitable for women and men, and that a person who is the sole support of his or her family should not receive a higher salary for doing the same job that a person who is not the sole support of his or her family does. While working with and for men, she feels accepted by the men who work at the newspaper.

When asked to judge the significance of her job, she said that her job as a women's page writer or editor was less significant than that of general news writing and reporting. She also feels that she receives a lower salary than do those who work in other roles in the news department. She is not alone in that opinion. Those newswomen who were on the general news staff felt that general news was more significant and paid more than women's news work.

While the journalist writing or editing women's news feels that she is paid less than those in other department, her fringe benefits are the same. Benefits range from a cake on her birthday to an opportunity to purchase stocks in the company. The newspaper offers company health and life insurance plans,

and she participates in both plans. However, she does not participate in any retirement plan other than Social Security, and she does not feel that the newspaper should provide any more fringe benefits than she currently receives.

The news staff on her newspaper may have as few as four employees or as many as 140 with roughly one-third to one-half of those employed being female. Whatever the size of the newspaper, there is an Equal Pay Act and Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act posted in the building in 82 percent of the newspapers. She knows where the acts are posted, and for the most part, she knows the provisions. (Two-thirds of the respondents said that they knew the provisions.)

According to her response, she entered the journalism profession by chance, but if she had it to do over again, she would choose newspaper journalism. She is happy with her work.

When asked what would make her happier, more money was the high priority item. She not only wanted more money for the standard hours she worked, but she also wanted compensation for overtime hours she worked. Many of those who worked overtime were given "comp time." That is, for every hour of overtime, they were to receive one hour off during the regular working day, but several said, "Comp time is given, but you seldom wind up taking it."

Only 40 percent of the respondents said that they received any overtime pay; 10 (19 percent) were paid a straight salary with no overtime payment; and 19 (37 percent) were compensated for overtime hours in other ways.

The journalists did not feel that money was everything, though. The next two highest items on the priority list were better assignments and better working hours. Basically what the woman journalist wanted was a job, money and recognition without the stereotyped image of the female sex tied to it.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Of all the findings of this study, perhaps the most significant finding of all is that women working in a profession that has the responsibility of being a watchdog over the rights of society do not do much about protecting their own rights. Those rights, as I see it, include the right to equal pay for equal work, the right to varied assignments and the right to be promoted to those positions of responsibility and authority that they are qualified to hold.

Although there are many women journalists who are concerned about salary, assignements and advancement, it is highly unlikely that there will be any great movement to remove the inequities that currently exist. There are a number of reasons why.

First, for any major change to come about there has to be mass action, and mass action requires group leadership and support. The number of women working on most Nebraska dailies is too small to be considered a group. It is not uncommon to have a news staff of five or six on Nebraska dailies. Of those five or six staff members, there may be two or three women. The other opportunity for group action is through one of the professional press organizations, but even then most organizations meet only a couple of times a year. Meetings twice a year are simply not enough to provide group leadership and support necessary for mass action on any scale.

Secondly, even if women were to become more activist in their leanings, there are other spinoffs that they would have to be aware of. If women journalists were to be agressive and cause any conflict to come to a head in

in the news room where they worked, they would in all probability jeopardize their jobs.

Unlike a journalist in Miami, Chicago or any other metropolitan area, she cannot simply quit the newspaper where she is employed and go to another newspaper. Seldom is a woman's earning power such that her husband would relocate so she could work at another newspaper. Instead, her mobility is limited to those newspapers within driving distance. In Nebraska, the distance she would have to commute would, in most cases, make such a change improbable if not impossible. Thus, the distance between the cities and towns that have newspapers in Nebraska is another problem for the ambitious journalist.

More populus areas offer more than just an expanded offering of job opportunities. There is also more freedom for individual thought and expression. In the midwest, those women who are aggressive or competitive often are branded as "radicals" and are shunned in their communities. Those women are "different." Thus, not only are they set apart from the society in which they live, but their husbands and children often feel some of the repercussions.

In my own experience with those women working on newspapers in Nebraska, I have found that most of the women were born in Nebraska, educated in Nebraska schools and plan to spend the rest of their lives here. New ideas are viewed with a wait and see attitude. There is no eagerness to embrace new ideas or ideologies, and in general, there is no great competitiveness. To be competitive or to differ with one's neighbor is considered bad manners.

There is an overriding desire on the part of most Nebraskans to get along. That desire to get along is commendable in most instances, but it is also translated as "don't make waves." In most instances, for women to be

competitive in their careers would be "to make waves."

When the total impact of lack of job mobility, lack of support for new ideas and the overall provincialism of Nebraska is combined, it is easy to see why few complaints are filed with the Equal Opportunity Commission.

The unique characteristics of the midwest in general and Nebraska in particular make it difficult if not impossible to compare the Nebraska journalist with the Florida journalist, for example. There are too many variables for the comparison to be a valid one.

Salaries and overtime compensation were the two areas in which journalists expressed the most concern. When asked what would make them happier in their work, the majority said, "More money."

Working 40 to 50 hour weeks, she earns $5,000 to $7,500 a year. In comparison, printers working the day shift for the Omaha-World Herald were offered $207.10 for a 37½-hour week in June of 1973, and they turned it down. It was not enough money, they said.[1] Thus, a printer would have earned $10,769 a year. The top-salaried journalist in the study made $15,000 a year working 45 to 50 hours a week, and she has a bachelor's degree and more than 20 years of experience. Only eight other journalists in the study reported a salary of $10,000 or better. And while union printers can demand time and one-half for hours over their 37½-hour week, only 40 percent of the women journalists working overtime receive any overtime pay.

Based on the response to this study, I would say that concern over salaries will be the key to progress for women journalists. As the study showed, the majority of women journalists in Nebraska are young college graduates. Many times an inexperienced worker will take a job at a lower salary simply for the experience, but if these women gain experience without the accompanying salary increases, they will become restless. Those who are single

will probably move on to other jobs in other towns, but those who are married and tied to a particular community may in time demand better salaries. Along with the demand for better salaries will come a demand for better positions and better assignments, because in most businesses the better salaries are tied to higher positions and greater responsibility.

There are two main accomplishments a study such as this should achieve. Those who received and responded to the questionnaire will begin to evaluate their standing within the journalism profession, and secondly, the study will provide data for comparative studies in the years to come.

In future studies, however, I feel that the information should be prepared for computerized tallying. Too much valuable time is spent hand tallying a questionnaire as long as the one used in this study. A more rapid return would be helpful to the researcher and would possibly have more impact on the respondent in that they could compare their status with others in similar positions immediately.

There are two questions which could be included to give more meaning to the study. When asking the various levels of education that the respondents have attained, it would be helpful to know where the individual journalists were educated. It would be interesting to compare the responses of journalists educated in the western portion of the state with those of journalists educated in Omaha or Lincoln, for example.

The questionnaire also asked how long the journalist had been in her current position on the newspaper. A second part to that question should have asked what other positions she had held on that newspaper. To know whether the journalist had had a promotion would have been valuable data.

Perhaps the weakest point in this study is that it did not include men employed in news-editorial positions on daily newspapers in Nebraska.

If the results of the questionnaire could be tallyed by computer it would make such an expanded study feasible. An expanded study, to have the credibility necessary for a good return, should perhaps be done either by a journalistic organization to which both men and women belong or in connection with research at a college or university.

Although it appears unlikely that there will be any major change in the status of Nebraska journalists in the near future, there are energetic, ambitious journalists who want to see changes made. Who want to get ahead. Who view their work as a career and not just another job. It is probably this group of journalists who will break the ice and beat down the barriers for others who are too timid or are not convinced that the ice needs broken or that the barriers exist. Any change will come to the newspaper profession as it does in other segments of our American society...slowly.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

[1]Louis G. Gerdes, "Your Newspaper: Because You Asked," Omaha World Herald, June 3, 1973, sec. 2-A, p. 2. /_ Reference to article in a Sunday edition made up of several sections separately paged._/

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

On those questions where none of the answers provided fit your circumstances, feel free to jot in your own comments. Otherwise, place the letter which corresponds to your answer in the blank before the question number or fill in the blank at the end of the question. THANKS for your help. It is greatly appreciated!

I. RESPONDENT AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND/OR IN RELATION TO HER FAMILY

_____ 1. Marital status: a. married b. divorced c. widowed d. single e. separated

2. If you are married, what is your husband's occupation?_____

_____ 3. Do you a. own your own residence alone b. own residence with others c. rent residence alone d. rent residence with others e. other

_____ 4. Are you a. self-supporting b. support self and others c. partial support of self d. partial support of self and others

_____ 5. What is the highest educational level you have reached:

a. attended but did not finish high school
b. high school graduate
c. took vocational education training
d. received an Associate (two-year) degree
e. attended more than 3 years of college but have no degree
f. received a bachelor's degree
g. have done graduate work but have no degree
h. master's degree
i. graduate work beyond a master's degree

Please state major for college or vocational education_____

_____ 6. What is your age? a. under 25 b. 26-35 c. 36-45 d. 46-55 e. 56-65 f. 65 and older

IF YOU HAVE NO CHILDREN, SKIP TO QUESTION 13

7. What ages are your children?_____

_____ 8. How many of your children are a. still at home_____ b. not at home but in some ways dependent_____ c. have left home_____. (Please put the letters which apply in the blank in front of the question and the number of children in each category in the blank after the category)

_____ 9. Has pregnancy ever interrupted your work on the job? a. yes b. no.

_____10. If so, did you receive leave?_____ For how long?_____
Did you return to the same job?_____
Any employment difficulties?_____

_____11. What is your newspaper policy regarding length of time a pregnant is allowed to continue working? a. 5 mo. b. 6 mo. c. 7 mo. d. 8 mo. e. 9 mo. f. no policy

_____12. Who cares for your child if he is ill on a working day? a. you b. your husband c. no one d. other arrangements

_____13. If you have (or had) a daughter, would you like her to become a journalist too? a. yes b. no

II. RESPONDENT IN RELATION TO HER JOB

A. THE JOB ITSELF

_____14. What is your job title? _____

_____15. What responsibilities does this include? a. city council b. school board c. county government d. health and medicine e. agriculture f. police g. courts h. house and home i. foods j. fashion k. finance & business l. social events m. others_____

_____16. How long have you held this position? a. 1-3 years b. 4-6 years c. 7-10 years d. more than 10 years

_____17. Are you a. full-time b. part-time employee?

_____18. How many hours do you work in an average week?

_____19. In which division does your annual newspaper salary fall? a. $5,000 or less a year b. $7,501-$10,000 c. $5,001-7,500 d. $10,001-$12,500 e. $12,501-$15,000 f. more than $15,000.

_____20. Does your newspaper have a policy, either written or understood, discouraging discussion of salaries? a. yes b. no
Comments:_____

_____21. When was the last time you received a raise? a. no raise b. 6 mo. ago c. 1-3 yrs. ago d. more than 3 yrs. ago e. more than 5 yrs. ago

_____22. Are salary increases provided based on a. built-in schedule b. schedule & merit system combined c. merit system d. other____
_____

_____23. Does your work week include overtime a. usually b. sometimes c. seldom d. never e. always

_____24. If you work overtime, how are overtime hours compensated for? a. paid on same rate as regular hourly wage received b. time-and-one-half c. paid on straight salary with no overtime payment d. other_____

B. RESPONDENT'S PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND & ACTIVITIES

_____25. How many years have you been employed as a journalist? a. 1 yr. b. 2 yrs. c. 3-5 yrs. d. 6-10 yrs. e. more than 20 yrs. f. 11-19 yrs.

_____26. How many full or part-time jobs have you held in this field?

FIRM	WHAT YEARS THERE	POSITION

27. To which journalistic organizations do you belong? _____

_____

_____28. Please list honors or awards you have won in or related to journalism.

_____

_____

_____

C. RESPONDENT IN RELATION TO HER EMPLOYERS, OTHERS ON THE JOB

_____29. Have you ever had any problems with other women at the newspaper (including secretaries) because of your sex? a. yes b. no Comments:_____

_____

_____30. Do you feel the need to be protected in your work by not being assigned to cover stories which would require you to be out at night unescorted or perhaps would take you into a harsh area of town? a. yes b. no

_____31. Do you believe you have a. good b. average c. poor d. no chance for advancement? Comment:_____

_____32. If advancement requires late hours, are you interested in advancement? a. yes b. no.

_____33. How many women hold management (supervise the work of others) positions where you work? If so, what positions?_____

_____

_____34. If either were equally qualified, would you prefer to have a. male b. female as your immediate supervisor?

_____35. Your immediate superior is a a. male b. female?

_____36. Do you supervise the work of others? a. yes b. no (IF NOT, GO TO #38) If so, how many? _____ How many are women? _____

_____37. Have you had any problems as a supervisor because you are a woman? a. yes b. no. Comments:_____

_____38. If you work with men, do you feel accepted by your male fellow-workers? a. yes b. no

_____39. Do you believe that a person who is the sole support of his (or her) family should receive a higher salary for doing the same job that a person who is not the sole support of his (or her) family does? a. yes b. no

_____40. Do you believe that most news-editorial jobs are equally suitable for women and men? a. yes b. no

_____41. Have you observed a difference in absenteeism between men and women staff members? a. yes b. no

_____42. If you have covered either the police or a governmental beat, did (or does) being a woman a. help b. hinder c. make no difference when it comes to getting the news or d. have not covered these areas.

43. FOR WOMEN'S PAGE WRITERS, EDITORS ONLY:
_____Do you believe your job is a. significant as b. more significant c. less significant than general news work?
_____Do you believe you earn a. as much b. more than c. less than you would for comparable work in the city room or sports department?
_____Do you believe you have a good chance for advancement? a. yes b. no

44. ONLY FOR REPORTERS, WRITERS, EDITORS IN GENERAL NEWS OR OTHER THAN WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT:
_____Do you believe your job is a. as significant as b. more significant c. less significant than that of women's department writers, editors?
_____Do you believe you earn a. as much b. more than c. less than you would in the women's department?
_____If a supervisory position were open, do you believe that being a woman would make a difference in your eligibility for the job as far as your employer is concerned? a. yes b. no Comments:___
_____

D. FRINGE BENEFITS

45. If you receive a paid vacation, how long is it?_____
What determines length of vacation time?_____

_____46. Which newspaper provided insurance programs do you participate in? a. health b. life c. health & life d. none provided e. provided but don't participate.

_____47. Does the newspaper pay a portion of either health or life insurance? a. yes b. no

_____48. Is retirement mandatory at a certain age? a. yes b. no

_____49. If so, what age?

_____50. Do you participate in a retirement program other than Social Security? a. yes b. no

_____51. If you do participate in a retirement program other than Social Security, does your employer pay a part of the costs? a. yes b. no d. do not participate

_____52. What provision is there on your newspaper for continuing education?

_____

_____53. Does the paper offer fringe benefits not mentioned above? a. yes b. no What benefits?_____

_____

_____54. Are there other fringe benefits which are not available which you feel your newspaper should provide? a. yes b. no Comment:_____

_____

E. OTHER

_____55. Is the total number of persons employed at your newspaper, including secretaries, back-shop workers, ad dept., etc., a. fewer than 25 b. 25 or more?

_____56. What is the total number of persons working in the newsroom?

_____57. Of the total number of persons working in the newsroom, how many are women?

_____58. Where does your newspaper have copies of the Equal Pay Act and the Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act posted? a. in the newsroom b. in the entryway of the building c. in the hallway d. other e. not posted.

_____59. Are you familiar with the provisions of the Equal Pay Act and the Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act? a. yes b. no

F. SUMMARY

_____60. If you were going to prepare for a career again, what would your choice be? a. newspaper journalism b. other (Please note what choice would be if you would not pick journalism)_____

_____61. Are you happy with your present work? a. yes b. no

_____62. What, if anything, would make you happier with newspaper journalism?
a. more money b. better hours c. different assignments d. nothing
e. other _____

- -

THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!!!

If there are any comments you would like to add, please use the rest of this page to jot them down.

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter

June 8, 1973

Dear Nebraska Journalist:

I am doing a study of "The Woman Journalist in Nebraska" for thesis research for a Master's Degree from Kansas State University. In my study, I plan to survey all women working in newsrooms of daily newspapers in Nebraska.

In a pilot study, respondents reported that it took them from 10-25 minutes to answer the questions.

You will note that a number, not your name, has been put at the top of the questionnaire. As questionnaires are returned, your number will be checked off the list. Under no circumstances will your individual questionnaire or name be made available to any other person, persons or groups. The results of the questionnaires will be compiled via computer and the collective results will be used in my thesis. The number on the questionnaire was necessary to help me "get out the vote."

Please notice that the questionnaire has been addressed and stamped for return to me. Simply fold the questionnaire, staple or tape it shut and drop it in the mailbox.

Because there is such a limited number of women working on daily newspapers in Nebraska, each questionnaire is very important. I appreciate your cooperation.

Again, MANY, MANY THANKS!

Sincerely,

Glennis Nagel
414 West 25th Street
Kearney, Nebr. 68847

A STUDY OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS WORKING ON DAILY NEWSPAPERS IN NEBRASKA

by

GLENNIS L. NAGEL

A. B., Ft. Hays Kansas State College, 1968

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1974

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the status of women working on daily newspapers in Nebraska. Included in the study was a survey of applicable Nebraska laws, a review of similar studies done in other states and a seven-part questionnaire which was sent to women working in the news rooms of Nebraska dailies.

The questionnaire covered the following areas: the respondent as an individual and/or in relation to her family; the job itself; respondent's professional background and activities; respondent in relation to her employer and others on the job; fringe benefits; knowledge of the Equal Pay Act and Nebraska Fair Employment Practices Act; and a summary section asking attitude questions about job satisfaction.

Based on the questionnaire, the following could be said of the woman journalist in Nebraska: (1) She has a bachelor's degree in journalism, is married and is 35-years-old or younger. (2) She is more likely to be in the women's news department than any other. In that capacity, she works 40 to 50 hours a week for an annual salary of $5,000 to $7,500. (3) She belongs to at least one journalistic organization and has won an award for journalistic achievement. (4) Although she has no overwhelming preference for either a male or female supervisor, of those surveyed, 46 percent said that they had no preference, and 42 percent said that they would prefer a male supervisor.

Basically, the woman journalist in Nebraska is happy with her work; however, when asked what, if anything, would make her happier, she listed her priorities in the following order: more money, better assignments and better working hours.