WHERE WOMEN ARE

How far have women come since the birth of the women's movement 20 years ago? Have we only just begun? Can we really have it all? Do we want it all? Is it okay to *not* want it all? Will we ever obliterate the glass ceiling? What steps should we take to ensure the female voice will be an important and respected guide into the next century? For the answers to those questions and more, we turned to four prominent area women. They talk about where women are—and offer their hopes for the future.

By Sigrid Bathen

REV. JEAN SHAW-CONNELLY

Presbyterian minister, mother

The Rev. Jean Shaw-Connelly recalls that "one of the unquestioned highlights" of her ministry occurred when the mother of a 5-year-old girl came up to her after church "and told me that at the dinner table when [the child] was asked what she wanted to be, she said she wanted to be a minister. The mother said I was her role model."

Born in Schenectady, New York, the daughter of a General Electric engineer, Shaw-Connelly, 37, was ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church in 1983. Formerly with the Westminster Presbyterian Church in downtown Sacramento from 1983–'88, she is now a pastor associate with Bethany Presbyterian Church in South Sacramento. "I think we're in the second generation of women clergy," she says. "When I was first ordained in 1983, I was always the first woman pastor that people met, but it's changing. It's certainly changing in Sacramento."

Like other women who have pioneered in previously all-male professions, Shaw-Connelly has experienced her share of rejection and discrimination. "Every single woman minister I know has shared somewhat this same story," she says. "When they began to minister, some people had difficulty or problems or discomfort, and after they got to know them and experienced their ministry, they were some of their biggest supporters.

"One of the most profound experiences, I had in my very first church, which had 39 members. It was a 'yoked' parish—two churches, one minister. The larger church hired me, and the smaller church was stuck with me. One of the elders of the smaller church told the minister of the larger church that he would stage a walkout if I preached. Eleven sermons later, he came up to me and said he still didn't support women in the ministry, but he said I should be a minister."

I know that I am a deeper, more mature and wiser pastor because I am a mother. But I am not confident that I will have a chance to use those gifts. I have sensed that many of my colleagues view staying home to raise children as leaving the ministry.—Jean Shaw-Connelly

A graduate of the Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey, where she was student body president, Shaw-Connelly will pursue her doctorate in theology this fall at San Francisco Theological Seminary. She has no immediate plans to run for political office again—she ran unsuccessfully for the Sacramento City Council in March—but does not discount the possibility in the future. Her husband is former Sacramento Assemblyman Lloyd Connelly, a former Sacramento City Councilman who is now a Superior Court Judge, and the couple has a 3-year-old daughter.

In order to spend more time with her daughter, Shaw-Connelly has cut back on her work schedule—and is troubled by the difficulties women face maintaining their professions while raising children.

"This is one of the most difficult issues for women," she says. "There is no norm for women. Men are working up this so-called career ladder, while some women are choosing to get married after college and have children, some are choosing to not have children, to work for a while and

Photography by Roy Wilcox

JEAN SHAW-CONNELLY

then have children . . . What strengthens women is that the understanding of what is right for women has to come from within. It cannot come from society.

"I believe women are getting stronger as they face this. What was right for me when my child was born was to stay home until she went to school, to work part time or volunteer. My fear is that once you leave, there is no entrée back in. In the Presbyterian Church, because of our understanding of the calling, it is very, very difficult to get back in. I have sensed that many of my colleagues view staying home to raise children as leaving the ministry.

"I know that having a child for me has been one of the best choices of my life, and I know that I am a deeper and more mature and wiser pastor because I am a mother. But I am not confident that I will have a chance to use those gifts, because as a woman in the ministry, we have not reached that place yet where women and men pastors are treated equally."

As an associate pastor at Bethany, Shaw-Connelly works with "an ethnically and generational-

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ly diverse church, a rare community," with many three-generation families. She is especially involved in working with junior and senior high school youth at the church.

"I always tell them, virtually every Sunday, that if anyone ever tells them that they know what it's like in high school, it's not true," she says. "No generation of youth has had such stress and pressure and violence, such hopelessness, as the youth of today. I look at it as my greatest calling, to give our youth, our children, a sense of hope. And to me I find that in God."

Shaw-Connelly sees the "demeaning of children" as the most pressing contemporary issue, "and I think oftentimes that the demeaning of women in the workplace occurs because women have been for the most part in the role of nurturer and child care." She notes that professionals providing service to children are often paid less than their counterparts: "Pediatrics doctors are among the lowest paid of medical personnel. Youth pastors are looked at as second-class. I think all of society is making a mistake in the way we treat our children, and we certainly see it in the church."

Her ministry has taken her on several foreign missions, including a memorable period with Mother Teresa in India three years ago. Accompanied by her husband, Shaw-Connelly said the visit was "an incredible source of strength for me. I have never had the experience of feeling someone's presence in a room as I did with Mother Teresa. There was a strong and viable energy that you feel when she walks in, a holiness about her."

In numerous articles about Shaw-Connelly published by area media over the years, none has failed to mention—or focus on—one of her favorite avocations: Rock climbing.

Rock climbing?

She started climbing in high school, and has continued through the seminary and into her ministries, even being featured in a lengthy article in *Smithsonian* magazine. In an interview with Sacramento's *Suttertown News*, Shaw said she climbs for many reasons: "What it's all about is that you can't fight the rock. The rock isn't going to move. If you get stuck, you have to turn aggressive energy into a creative force."

She told the *News* that her climbing has influenced her ministry. "I think what I've learned climbing goes back to peacemaking. If you try to fight the world, you're going to get a violent reaction . . . If you try to fight the rock, you will become exhausted; the rock will fight you back. If you climb the rock by using its face—however solid or forbidding it might seem—it becomes a creative force and helps you."

She says the influence of women will continue to grow in the religious community—and she sees a strong connection between the environmental movement, religion and the role of women in both.

Sadly, she says, the history of women in theology has in many respects been lost, or skewed to fit the notions of a patriarchal system. "In the Gospel, women have an unequivocal place among Jesus' scholars," she says. "They were the first to witness the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They were included in conversation . . . Yet it was only recently in church history that women were ordained as deacons and only in the last 20 years that women were ordained as pastors."

As institutions like the church include more women in positions of authority, she says, the actual structure of power will change in other arenas as well. "I think the ecological and feminist movements are inextricably tied because the hope for each is defining and living a new matrix where the structure of power is not a power of dominion but community.

"Men view power as hierarchical. Women have a style that is inclusive and networking, where there is synergy, and your giftedness is enhanced by someone else's gifts and not in competition. Until that difference is resolved and we leave this dominion-oriented patriarchal structure, I don't believe our environment and women and children have a chance."

She plans to write her doctoral thesis on women in the church—"not women who are ministers, not feminist theologians, but women who bear this myth that somehow they need to be superwomen, that they need to be corporate successes, run marathons, be able to make the best chocolate cake in the city, assist in school and read at least 12 books a week, while going back to school to get their graduate degree."

In Sacramento, I don't think the business climate for women has changed very much. I was one of two women in a list of the top 100 in retail. The criteria were that it be a business with multiple locations and outside the home. In the business world, it's real lonely out there.—Sally Edwards

SALLY EDWARDS

founder and president of Fleet Feet, Inc.

Sally Edwards, 46, opened her first retail sports store on J Street in 1976. She now heads a $22 million business with 38 stores and three more scheduled to open soon. "We start in the West in Guam," says Edwards, "and go east to Montclair, New Jersey."

An unemployed college athletic instructor with an idea and no money when she and a friend started Fleet Feet, Edwards is often touted as a Sacramento success story for women in business—a reputation the sometimes acerbic businesswoman and professional athlete finds troubling.

"In Sacramento, I don't think the business climate for women has changed very much," she says with characteristic bluntness. "Last year, I was listed as one of two women—two women—out of 100 in a *Business Journal* list of the top 100 in retail. The other was Joyce Raley Teel [of the

Raley's grocery chain]. The criteria for inclusion on the list were that it be a business with multiple locations and outside the home.

"I don't know very many women who satisfy those criteria. I know a lot of women who own a muffin shop or a construction company, and I don't mean that in a negative way. Sacramento keeps using me as their token businesswoman, and that's okay, but . . . the barriers are still there.

"Quite frankly, conditions that exist today are not acceptable. My dream is that we have a 50-50 deal in the home, in the workplace and in relationships. We are a long way from having power and wellbeing . . . In the business world, it's real lonely out there."

She says the retail industry—and especially sporting goods—is "classically more male . . . There are very, very few executive women in the sporting goods industry. It's a bastion that is very white and very male."

She also believes women in business still have a more difficult time obtaining financing than men: "I really believe the problem is access to capital," she says. As an example, Edwards cited her own recent experience when she attempted to obtain financing for a new company, Yuba Shoes, which sells a sports snowshoe. The one-of-a-kind snowshoe is lightweight, made of aircraft-quality aluminum, and features an easy step-in binding for "exercise walking to enjoy the playfields of the world and not be on little skinny skis and fall."

Edwards said she and a partner planned to invest $75,000 each, and went to several banks to establish a line of credit—for which Edwards did not want to use either her Fleet Feet business or her home as collateral.

"We got turned down by five Sacramento banks," she recalls. "I told them I run a $22 million company, and you have my personal guarantee or my business partner's, but you may not collateralize it with my home or my other company."

She is proceeding with the snowshoe project, she says, because she has more options for obtaining capital than other women just starting out in business. The bottom line, she believes, is that "if you're one of the guys and you've known these people forever, your handshake is your signature."

As women move slowly into the ranks of successful businesses and the professions, Edwards says, they form their own networks—but the process takes time. "On the bottom of the business tree, women's networks are being formed," she says. "At the top they're not. I think women like myself who are running medium to large companies are so used to the way we got here, which was not with networking or building relationships but being so much better than anyone else or smarter.

I have a positive attitude about the opportunities for women, but I think they stop themselves a lot because they don't think they can do it. They don't think they can function as head of a company. They don't think it's feminine. Some of these old things hang on.

—Jean Runyon

"Now I know people will hear that and say, 'Well, isn't she cocky,' but literally success has to do with being real smart and working real hard, making the right decisions and going for it. You learn a lot of that in sports."

Edwards believes her background in athletics has given her an edge in business. She has a master's degree in exercise physiology from the University of California, Berkeley, and is a professional athlete of prodigious range and talent—a former Master's Ironman Triathlon world record holder, competitor in the 1984 Olympic Trials Marathon, 13-time Ironman finisher, winner of the 1980 Western States 100-Mile Endurance Run, and author of seven books on fitness and training.

An outspoken advocate of equal funding for women's athletics, Edwards says she lost her job as a teacher and coach at Monterey Peninsula College because she pressed for equal funding for her women's athletic program. "I was fired because I asked questions about equal funding for women's sports," she recalls. "The football coach was the athletic director and he said 'no' in a real big way.

"In retrospect, I wouldn't be where I am. My dream then was to become an athletic director and president of a university. Then I learned the round peg-square hole lesson."

Growing up in Loomis (she graduated from Del Oro High School), Edwards says her business acumen was honed by her three older brothers and her athletic ability. "Young girls who have

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had sports experience have a much greater opportunity," she says. "You learn how the boys' game is played. I know how boys work, and they don't intimidate me. I was faster and stronger than most of them."

Edwards says much of the future for women in business will be "consumer-driven." Her 30 Fleet Feet franchisees are 47 percent female and 17 percent minority, and they are trained to serve the needs of the customer—"not so much to sell shoes as to motivate the customers." Business is often generated by word of mouth. And female athletes like to do business with other women, Edwards says.

"The power, at least in my business, is the consumer," she says. "I think they will spend their money in companies that put something back into the community. We have a very diversified clientele, and our employees are taught to respect the consumer. Age is another issue that we are conscious of—not just trying to sell our franchises to young kids.

"In the retail business, ultimately your customer is going to force change. Women won't

continue to do business with the boys' club and they have a lot of economic power. When they go out to buy a car, they want to see women selling those cars."

JEAN RUNYON

founder and president of Runyon, Saltzman, & Einhorn

Jean Runyon is accustomed to being the "first" woman: the first woman to be named "PR Man of the Year" by the Sacramento Public Relations Round Table, the first woman asked to sit on the Sutter Hospital Board of Trustees, the first woman member of the Sacramento Rotary Club. There are even more honors and accolades: Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce "Sacramentan of the Year," YWCA "Woman of the Decade," United Cerebral Palsy "Humanitarian of the Year," American Advertising Federation Silver Medalist.

The list is endless—testimony to the 66-year-old Runyon's tireless civic commitment and monumental fundraising skills (a 1987 *Sacramento Bee* story placed her fundraising prowess at $1 million a year for various worthy causes), as well as a measure of her considerable clout.

"When two powerful people in Sacramento put their heads together," Sacramento political consultant David Townsend once told an interviewer, "more often than not both go back and call Jeanie Runyon for her opinion . . . her friends are everybody and anybody who gets involved in any kind of civic and political endeavor. Nearly every important person in town, she's had as a client."

Runyon is often portrayed as slightly wacky and eccentric (think Carol Channing cast as Auntie Mame), but the characterization belies a smart, tough, perceptive businesswoman who started out in business four decades ago as a young mother with an uncanny knack for public relations and a willingness to work very hard.

Hard work is a common thread linking these four prominent Sacramento women. They work long hours, and believe fiercely in their abilities to succeed. They also use their accomplishments and their power to help other women coming along behind them. And they support, with time and money, a plethora of civic causes, often having to do with women and children.

"And that leads us back to education, which is the heart of everything," Runyon says. "We have to pay attention to the education of our young people, and do something, do everything. We're all volunteering, and we're getting involved in partnerships with businesses and schools, and it's just not enough. Without education, there aren't the opportunities.

"Women are now able to achieve and to become CEOs if they want to, because they have the education and the economic resources. They have the business background and the perspective and the understanding of the financial end of business that they never used to have the opportunity to even consider."

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JUDGE LYTLE

I am the only black woman judge in this county, and that has been true throughout the history of this county. I think that is scandalous.

—Alice Lytle

Although Runyon no longer manages political campaigns, she is *there* for candidates, often women, whose beliefs she shares. She is a longtime friend of former Sacramento Mayor Anne Rudin, whose first long-shot mayoral campaign was successfully directed by Runyon. And Runyon now quietly mentions the name of Democratic Assemblywoman Delaine Eastin. "I like her very much, she is a marvelous orator when it comes to education and educational reform, and I hope that voices like hers would be heard and that they will be effective."

And with typical Runyonesque understatement, she mentions another prominent female candidate—state Treasurer and Democratic gubernatorial hopeful Kathleen Brown—noting once again that she doesn't *do* campaigns, but *does* raise money.

"I get involved because I can't help but be interested," Runyon says. "I'm involved in helping people I like. I love Kathleen Brown, and I'm helping her. I help raise money."

Runyon, who grew up in Berkeley, is the daughter of Brutus Hamilton, a University of California, Berkeley, athletic director and track and field coach, who won a silver medal at the 1920 Olympics. She studied acting at U.C. Berkeley, although she didn't graduate. She and her first husband—Runyon has been widowed three times—the late Mercer Runyon, an actor and rancher, "acted together, but we didn't make any money at that," she says. "We did puppet shows together and we did make money at that."

Runyon's entry into public relations was handling publicity for the Music Circus.

"The Music Circus was really the start for me," she says. "They lost their public relations person, and they said, 'You do it, Jean,' and I didn't know how to do it. And so I had to learn. It was really on-the-job training."

Her son and daughter, now 44 and 38 and living on ranches in Courtland and Hood, were small at the time. She faced, early on, the pressures of a working mother, without many of the institutional supports women have today.

"Mercer was writing a book, so I thought I would go to work," she recalls. "After a while, it was pretty successful. Mercer did a lot of helping with the kids, and then we'd go down to the ranch when it was pear season. It was good for me that way."

Despite increased opportunities for women—and increased support systems including organizations for women in various professions—Runyon believes women often limit themselves.

"I have a positive attitude about the opportunities for women now, and I think women stop themselves a lot because they don't think they can do it. They don't think they can function in a board room, can't function as head of a company. They're too unsure, they don't think it's feminine. Some of these old things hang on.

"I think they're limited by their attitudes, really, because I think women truly can have it all. I think if you're

married or with somebody that is truly a partner, you can work it out. You can accommodate—that's what relationships are anyway, accommodation."

Despite the economic hard times, Runyon says the "climate for women" has improved dramatically: "I think the law has helped us, and women fighting for other women, which is great. They didn't used to do that. Now there are wonderful groups, like the California Elected Women's Association. They're sharing their knowledge with each other. Networking—I hate that word—but they're sharing information, experiences . . . Of course, we're in a depression right now, and everybody is having such a tough time and there aren't any jobs. But I'm delighted to see women on construction jobs—I just saw a construction job, a state building, and a couple of the ironworkers were women . . . So I'm very positive about the opportunities."

And for young women just starting out, Runyon advises being prepared to deal with rejection. "I think you probably have to have a lot more energy than you did before. You have to have the energy to keep going and, like actors do or anybody who is in a competitive field, you have to learn to accept rejection to a certain extent, and to not be defeated when people tell you no, to just keep going, finding out about jobs, investigating and investigating your field, then setting your sights on it, and keep attacking, keep strategizing."

ALICE LYTLE

Sacramento Municipal Court Judge, Juvenile Court Judge

Girls mired in the juvenile justice system have a formidable ally in Sacramento Municipal Court Judge Alice Lytle, who was assigned to juvenile court more than a year ago—a special appointment, since traditionally, only Superior Court judges receive the assignment.

Lytle has approached the difficult, increasingly scary, often heartbreaking world of juvenile court with a penchant for changing it. She brooks no nonsense. The preponderance of young people in the juvenile system are boys, and many of their crimes are directed at girls. "Notwithstanding all the attention being paid to spousal abuse, I don't think enough is paid to the abuse of teenage girls by boys," Lytle says. "I see boys on rape charges, and they'll say, 'Well, she kept calling me, she wanted me to date her.' I ask them what does that have to do with rape?"

The only African-American female judge in the history of Sacramento County—Lytle, now 54, was appointed to the post 10 years ago by former Gov. Jerry Brown, in whose administration she served as deputy legal affairs secretary, chief of the Division of Fair Employment Practices, and director of the state Consumer Services Agency.

"I am the only black woman judge in this county, and that has been true throughout the history of this county," says Lytle. "There has never been one until I came along, and there hasn't been another one. I think that is scandalous."

Despite those dismal statistics, she avoids cynicism. "You're no good if you're cynical," she says. "Some things have changed, and it would be foolish not to acknowledge the change. But it still is not enough."

She has little patience with arguments that "qualified" minority and female candidates are not "available" for important jobs in government and industry: "When people get serious about representation, minority or female, they don't wait for a minority saint or Thurgood Marshall to walk through the door. If you're serious about representation, you make the effort. I no longer accept the response that no one's there. Moreover, I know of African-American women who have submitted applications for judicial apointments."

The eighth of ten children, Lytle was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, and raised in New York City. "I was raised under conditions of extreme poverty," she writes in her biography, "and attribute any success I have achieved to the firm but loving care of two remarkable parents and the love and support of [my] brothers and sisters." Her parents encouraged her education, and in 1961 she received a bachelor's degree in psychology and public health from Hunter College in New York City. She worked as a medical research technician at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where she worked with Dr. Abraham Rudolph, a pediatric cardiologist who encouraged her to go to medical school.

"I was 26 or 27, and I thought I was too old for medical school," Lytle recalls. "I turned to law during the civil rights movement."

She received her juris doctorate from Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco. During law school, she worked as a clerk for the Legal Defense Fund of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and after graduation, worked for the Alameda County Public Defender's office and the National Housing and Economic Development Law Project, which provides research and consultation to legal services lawyers across the country.

As a judge, she has presided over a wide variety of civil and criminal cases and was instrumental in establishing the Municipal Court Children's Room, which provides a place to play and "be free from stress" for children forced to be in court either as witnesses or accompanying their parents. As a Juvenile Court judge assigned specifically to deal with delinquency, Lytle strives to put young people in touch with programs and government services that offer positive alternatives—which can help extricate them from the juvenile justice system. She is acutely sensitive to the increasing violence of teenagers.

"Violence is a terrible problem, there are no two ways about it," she says. "But we can't let our concern about violence blind us to the kids who are more *self*-destructive than anything else."

She is optimistic about the potential effects of a recent $2.3 million grant to Sacramento County from the Annie E. Casey Foundation—one of five awarded by the foundation nationally—to develop alternatives to juvenile incarceration in a county where it costs $11 million to house juvenile offenders in overcrowded facilities.

"The goal is to reduce our reliance on secure detention while still providing for public safety," says Lytle. "We're locking up too many kids. California locks up more people than any other state in the union, than many other countries."

She is especially concerned about the lack of specific services for girls in the system: "In the juvenile justice system, and to a large extent in the criminal justice system, women and girls are treated differently than men or boys. There is more attention paid to the problems of the boys, and clearly a lot more attention *has* to be paid to the boys, but not enough is being paid to the girls. There are not as many girls in the [system] and they are far more victimized by adults and by boys . . . Here in our juvenile justice system, we don't have the same quantity and quality of resources for girls as we do for boys."

As an example, she points to the Sacramento County Boys' Ranch, an alternative facility to incarceration in juvenile hall or the California Youth Authority. "But it's a boys' ranch," says Lytle. "A girl whose background and troubles might warrant a boys' ranch type of program won't get it. I suspect a number of the girls are going to the CYA when they should be going to a less secure setting."

In addition, Lytle says, boys in juve-

nile hall "are subject to a classification system—you don't put hardened boys in with the lighter offenders. That's not the case with the girls. You can have a girl who shoplifted in with a prostitute."

She believes sexual abuse of young girls and women is a far greater problem than acknowledged. "So many of these girls come through the system after having been abused sexually," she says. "Many, many are victimized by young men, 25 and 30, who prey on young girls. It is a serious problem, and we are not spending anywhere near the time and energy we need to be spending on it.

"We keep crying the blues about the high rates of teenage pregnancy, but what are we doing about it? Sacramento has an intolerably high level of infant mortality, even worse for black youngsters. One agency doesn't talk to another. The juvenile justice system doesn't talk to Health and Human Services, and so forth. It's maddening trying to find services for these kids."

Lytle has established "a protocol in very preliminary stages" which targets minors for referral to the Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services, which does a "needs assessment" and refers the young person to services ranging from prenatal care for pregnant teenagers to food programs.

"I'm not a cultural anthropologist or a sociologist," Lytle says, the anger rising in her voice, "but I have come to wonder just how much America cares about our children. We talk a good line, but I look at our child abuse rates, our infant mortality rates, and I really wonder . . . So-called underdeveloped countries on this planet save more babies than we do. And when we do give people, or the family, some help, we make them work so hard to get it. If you want one service, you go to one office. If you need another, you go to another."

And she believes children's issues are women's issues. "Children are raised by women for the most part . . . If you want to deal with women's issues, a good place to start is the child. The most sensitive predictor of poverty for a woman is to have a baby as a teenger."

She blames media imagery and a societal preoccupation with sex for the "mixed messages" girls receive about female sexuality. "We need to teach girls and a lot of women about sex," Lytle says. "That whole 'Just say no to drugs' campaign makes some sense in the sexual arena. Too many of them grow up thinking that they're just a body, that to be popular with boys you have to give it up. I see 12-year-olds, they hardly have any breasts, and they're little sexpots. The only way they can relate to men is as a vamp.

"This nation is preoccupied with sex, and it is to the detriment of girls." ▼

politics

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Ginger Rutland, longtime Capitol Bureau reporter for San Francisco's KRON-TV who became an editorial writer for *The Bee* when KRON closed its Sacramento bureau in 1988, recalls a gubernatorial news conference when George Deukmejian was first elected in 1982. Reporters were asking a lot of questions about the governor's all-white male cabinet appointments, says Rutland, who for many years was the only black reporter covering the Capitol.

"He [Deukmejian] looked around the governor's press conference room and said, 'All you people asking me questions are pretty male and pretty white.' There were titters around the room. But all of these people who were asking sanctimonious questions about lack of color and lack of diversity in his administration were left with this reality that there was a lack of diversity in their own ranks."

Women reporters covering the state Capitol in the 1970s reported widespread incidents of what today would be regarded as especially egregious sexual harassment—largely tolerated as a fact of life in that milieu.

In a 1985 *California Journal* article, former UPI Capitol Bureau Chief LaVally detailed sexually harassing behavior by prominent male legislators—and named them. Among other incidents, she recounted how the late Assemblyman Walter Ingalls once sent a male reporter "into gales of laughter by saying, in front of me, that another woman reporter looked like she had visited 'a gynecologist with cold fingers.' "

"Some legislators were sexist, some were egalitarian, some were flirtatious," LaVally recalled in a 1990 interview. "Jim Mills [who was Senate President Pro Tempore when LaVally went to the Capitol in 1977] called me the poor man's Brenda Starr. On the other hand, today, [David] Roberti would never do that. I think today there are more Robertis than Jim Millses. A lot more women lobbyists and legislators have showed up and changed the chemistry. And I've gotten older. The interaction is different. I'm more respected for what I do."

Although women reporters say their treatment at the Capitol has improved substantially over the years, problems remain. There is "definitely some sexism" remaining among Capitol habitues, says Kathleen Z. McKenna, former *Oakland Tribune* Capitol reporter, who left a temporary position with *The Bee* in August to become a public affairs representative for Kaiser-Permanente.

"I don't think it's always overt, but there is an undercurrent that is always there," says McKenna, who also teaches journalism at Cosumnes River College. "Is it a problem, or do you work around it? No, it's not usually a problem. Yes, I work around it."

KXTV's Deborah Pacyna, who last year became the first woman president of the Sacramento Press Club, says the Capitol remains in many ways "a good-old-boys' network. I go into press conferences, and there is a sea of male faces. Still. There is something about politics. It's like sports. There's kind of a club thing."

Rutland says the Capitol camaraderie among largely male reporters and the officials they cover often prevents investigative reporting and coverage of the serious issues. "I don't think there is a lot of good coverage of the Capitol by anybody," she says. "There is a lack of real work. The agencies are largely ignored by the Capitol press corps, which thinks it has to wait and watch those people [legislators] go through their file on the floor when really little or nothing of substance is going on. They do their ritual coverage—a lot of inside stuff."

Bob Forsyth, who started at the Capitol with AP in 1969, then went to *The Sacramento Union* and *The Bee*, says, "Basically, it's pack journalism—and that would be the case even if it were 50 percent or 80 percent women."

Perhaps because they are historic outsiders who distrust—or are distrusted by—so-called Capitol insiders, women reporters in Sacramento have often been responsible for pioneering coverage of issues previously ignored by their male peers.

"Sometimes men get caught up in the politics of something," says the AP's Kerr, "without stopping to think about the people affected—often women and children."

Claire Cooper, who now covers legal affairs for *The Bee*, says abortion issues were not adequately covered when she was assigned to the Capitol because male reporters "did not see it as a significant issue."

"Women tend to have different sources," Cooper says. "There's overlap, but I have a helluva lot of women sources, people who are comfortable with me, female legislators. I didn't deal with the same old-boys' club, and I had less willingness to buy into the established pecking order." ▼

Sigrid Bathen is a former Sacramento Bee *reporter who teaches journalism at California State University, Sacramento. A founder of the Women's Caucus of the Sacramento Newspaper Guild and president of Sacramento Women in the Media in the 1970s, she has done extensive research on women in the media. This story is part of her CSUS master's thesis. A version of this article was published in the* California Republic *magazine in 1992.*