

#### 4. THE BUREAU CHIEFS

The Capitol Press Corps is characterized by a low rate of turnover among reporters who finally "make it" to this pinnacle of journalistic achievement, and even less among the heads of those bureaus. Many bureaus are one- or two-person operations, so the title "bureau chief" may prompt the question: chief of whom? Few are women, although several women reporters have been elevated to run the Capitol bureaus of major news media -- most often in the smaller bureaus, with one notable exception at United Press International, which has had two female bureau chiefs in the past decade.<sup>1</sup>

In order to gain some sense of perspective on the history and progress of women in the Capitol press corps -- from the vantage point of the boss -- I interviewed the chiefs of the three largest bureaus: William Endicott of the Sacramento Bee, George Skelton of the Los Angeles Times and Doug Willis of Associated Press. The interviews were lengthy and in-depth, and all three men were generous with their time. All are veteran reporters and editors, and all continue to be prolific writers while at the same time managing major news bureaus. Their collective institutional memory is an invaluable part of this study. Their own careers offer useful insights into the paths taken to their current positions -- and a lesson for young journalists, male and female, who aspire to become top political

reporters and editors in California's statehouse.

William Endicott <sup>2</sup>

Former Capitol bureau chief of the Los Angeles Times, 55-year-old William Endicott has been Capitol bureau chief for the Sacramento Bee for six years. He was a reporter and editor for the Times for nearly two decades, serving as bureau chief for its San Francisco and Sacramento bureaus. He is known in the business as a tough, principled manager, who once personally upbraided the head of the state Assembly after a female reporter under his supervision was sexually harassed by a legislator.

Endicott came to head the two largest Capitol bureaus (the Times and the Bee each maintain a staff of about a dozen reporters and editors in their Capitol bureaus) by the traditional path -- covering state and national politics, including several Presidential campaigns. A political science graduate of Transylvania University in his native Lexington, Kentucky, Endicott worked for several newspapers before joining the Times, including the Louisville Courier-Journal in Kentucky, and the Tulare Advance-Register, the Modesto Bee and the Sacramento Union, serving as city editor at the latter two California papers.

Until recently, only one reporter in the twelve-person Bee Capitol bureau was a woman, Amy Chance, who covers the governor's office and has covered two gubernatorial

campaigns. Another woman reporter, Kathie Smith of the Modesto Bee, was recently added to the bureau to cover political and state government issues of interest to Modesto readers.

Endicott recalls that the current number of women reporters in the bureau is the same as when he took over as bureau chief six years ago. That record, he admits, "is not good -- we're not the greatest in the world, but we're better than others." In fact, the Bee bureau is more ethnically and sexually diverse than any other bureau in the Capitol press corps, with the only black reporter (Herbert Sample) in the entire press corps and one of only two Hispanic reporters (Deputy Capitol Bureau Chief Rick Rodriguez). Endicott is troubled by the dearth of women and minorities in the Capitol press corps:

In this bureau, I'm the guy who does the hiring. At the Times, it was done out of L.A., and I didn't have a whole lot of say. I don't know whether minorities don't have an interest, but I personally don't get many applicants from outside who are minorities. I have several applications from women, but I know of none who are black or Hispanic.

Endicott was bureau chief at the Bee when Capitol reporter Claudia Buck, a new mother, worked in the one and only parttime reporting job ever permitted in the Capitol bureau. Eventually, when her second child was born, Buck resigned to stay home with her two young children.<sup>3</sup> Endicott recalls their last conversation before she resigned:

When she left, we had a long talk. I told her to go with her heart. I think she felt out of it (in the parttime position), and we couldn't utilize her to her best advantage. There was no continuity. What it wound up being was a feature writing job because she couldn't get involved in ongoing daily stories, and we were limited in how we could utilize her. Claudia decided she wanted to stay home with her kids. In Amy's case, she wants to work.

He is not optimistic about increasing parttime options for women who want to be Capitol reporters and spend more time with their families: "I guess my view of covering the Capitol is that it would be very, very difficult to do." In the end, Endicott says, the question of motherhood vs. career comes down to "choices," and he supported each woman in her personal decision -- a view which has earned him the gratitude and admiration of Buck and Chance. <sup>4</sup>

Endicott says the "first and foremost quality" he looks for in a Capitol reporter is "sheer writing ability -- the ability to write a simple declarative sentence."

Secondarily, he looks for people "who have some background or interest in politics and government. . . There are a lot of reporters on the metro staff who would like to come over here, and others who would be bored silly."

Although many Capitol reporters insist there are no "prestige" beats in the press corps, the reality is that there are. "In all candor," Endicott says, "although we certainly don't like to admit it, there are a couple of prestige beats. No matter what we say, whether we say one

beat is the same as another. . .the governor's office, and the gubernatorial campaigns are the prestige beats."

Until recently the lone woman in the Bee Capitol bureau, Chance has covered the governor's office, and the gubernatorial campaigns, for several years. "In this bureau the female reporter covers the governor's office and gubernatorial politics," says Endicott, "and it don't get better than that."

Chance is the mother of a young daughter, and a diabetic who continued campaign travel while pregnant. <sup>5</sup> She is insistent that she wants no special favors, and Endicott says she doesn't get any -- but he is also sensitive to her dual role. "I make allowances," he says. "When the nursery school calls and Sarah has an earache and Amy has to go get her and go home -- I'm pretty lenient about that sort of thing, perhaps more than I should be." His principal interest is whether she gets the job done. And he has only the highest praise for Chance's performance as a reporter.

Generally, Endicott says, the work schedule at the Capitol is "relatively predictable." He does not believe the hours are "any more ridiculous or more pressured" than other professional positions. "You work when you have to and take off when you can."

Interviewed a month before the 1990 elections, he says,

"it gets less predictable" at such times. Chance was scheduled to be in Los Angeles for a week: "I didn't even ask her how she deals with it at home. If she had a problem, she would tell me."

He notes the number of women covering the recent gubernatorial campaigns for major news media: "That's a helluva big jump. When I went to work at the Times in 1968, there were two women in the entire newsroom and one black reporter, and I think he was hired after the Watts riots."

And, Endicott believes the days are long past when "Neanderthals" in the Legislature made sexually demeaning remarks to women -- and got away with it. Unlike some male editors who turned a blind or at least jaundiced eye to such conduct in the 60s and 70s, Endicott once registered a vocal and tersely worded protest when a young woman reporter was sexually harassed by a male legislator:

The only incident I have direct knowledge of involved an intern we had when I was with the Times. She was sent over to cover the Assembly, and one of the members came on to her rather strongly. She came back to the bureau, and I went right over to Willie's (Assembly Speaker Willie Brown's) office and told him to keep those fuckers away from my people. That sort of thing just cannot be tolerated. I was outraged. She was 21, 22 years old. She was intimidated by being in the Assembly chambers anyway, and here this creep comes on to her.

It didn't happen again.

George Skelton <sup>6</sup>

Capitol bureau chief for the Los Angeles Times since 1985, George Skelton, 53, has been a political reporter and editor with the Times since 1974. Formerly a longtime reporter and Capitol bureau chief for United Press International, he has covered Presidential politics for nearly three decades, playing a major role in covering or managing Presidential campaign coverage in virtually every Presidential election since 1964. He ran 1980 campaign coverage for the Times, and covered the campaigns of Robert Kennedy, George McGovern, Eugene McCarthy, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. In 1988, he wrote all of the Page-One stories describing and analyzing results of the prestigious Los Angeles Times Poll. A Times political editor in Los Angeles for several years, he also covered the White House for five years, from 1981 to 1985. In California, he has covered virtually every governor since Pat Brown.

While attending Ventura Junior College in southern California, Skelton worked summers for the Ventura Star-Free Press. After earning a B.A. in journalism from San Jose State College in 1959, he worked for the Sunnyvale Standard for seven months, then joined United Press International, spending two years in the San Francisco bureau before transferring to the Capitol bureau in Sacramento. He left

UPI in 1966 to cover politics and government for the Sacramento Union, then returned to UPI as Capitol bureau chief in 1969.

Skelton was bureau chief of a major California news medium in the Capitol at a critical juncture in the progress of women reporters. Up until the late 1960s, women reporters were largely relegated to the so-called "women's" pages, covering engagements and weddings and food and other matters presumably of sole concern to the "girls." A few women had managed to make the transition to covering "real" news, either on the metro/cityside staffs of newspapers or, in a miniscule number of cases, covering politics and government at the Capitol.

Skelton recalls that UPI employed one woman reporter, Pat Keeble (who left to cover politics for the Leshner newspaper group), when he joined the wire service in 1961. In the mid- to late-60s, he recalls, several women joined the staffs of Capitol bureaus, including Edie Lederer with the AP,<sup>7</sup> and Tracy Wood at UPI. In the early 70s, the number of women reporters covering politics and government at the Capitol continued to increase, albeit at a glacial rate. The two wire services were the first to hire women at the Capitol, with Wood at UPI and Susan Sward at AP by the early 1970s.<sup>8</sup>

Although women were enrolled in journalism schools in

appreciable numbers in the 1960s, few managed the move to a major news medium after graduation. Some never worked in journalism at all. Skelton, whose B.A. is from one of the most prestigious journalism schools in the state, has several theories to explain that phenomenon, for male as well as female reporters:

What happened to the women at San Jose State? They're around. I see them, women I went to school with. I see them at the San Jose Mercury and the San Diego Union. A lot of men dropped out too. People drop out of journalism after a while. It's fun for a while, then they go into something else. They get tired of bumping their heads against a wall.

There are various forms of bumping your head against a wall. You can only go so far in this business. No matter what you do, you're not going to make a lot of money. Reporters get tired of fighting editors, and it's not as much fun being an editor as being a reporter.

Journalism is a combination of creative writing and mechanical work, producing something daily or regularly enough to fit into a daily newspaper, and there is a lot of stress in it. The rewards tend to be more in the area of personal satisfaction and gratification and glory, having bylines and having people say that was a great story.

And after a while you don't get that, so you tend to get out of it.

After being in this business as long as I have, I no longer get the same kick out of a page one story as I used to. If I never had a page one story the rest of my life, I guess it wouldn't worry me that much. Opportunities are really limited in this business. There aren't that many newspapers or TV stations, and one of the major wire services (UPI) has virtually gone out of business. There is only so long that a reporter can thrash around in small to medium-sized newspapers, and a lot of them never get a chance to go to a large newspaper and do major-league stories. It gets frustrating.

A lot of it is breaks, and a lot of it is

talent. And there are only so many talented people. So a lot of people bump their heads against the wall.

Added to the stresses of the job of journalism are the stresses of raising a family -- a demanding dual role which often wreaks havoc with the careers of ambitious and talented professional women journalists, and increasingly of their male counterparts as well. Recognizing the stresses the profession places on families and most particularly on moms, Skelton said, "I've become a little cynical over the years."

Skelton supervises a staff of eleven, including a news editor and ten reporters. Only one is a woman, Virginia Ellis, who Skelton says he recruited in part because the bureau had not had a woman reporter in several years. "

"The fact is we didn't have any women," he says, "and she started quite a campaign from Texas (where she was Capitol bureau chief for the Dallas Times-Herald). I went back to the Times and told them she was pretty good and we should put our money where our mouth is. So we created a new job for her."

Like other bureau chiefs and media managers, Skelton is well aware of the paltry percentage of women and minorities working in the Capitol press corps. He cites several reasons, and offers specific examples, to explain this chronic underrepresentation of women and minorities.

Mainly, he and other Capitol bureau managers say, the Capitol press corps is characterized by very little turnover, with decidedly limited opportunities for new hires. And, when new hires are made, they are usually from within the organization.

Skelton recalls one talented woman journalist, who still works for the Times in southern California, and "didn't like Sacramento because it's a lousy place to have romances. For a single woman working in the Capitol bureau, the bright men that you might want to have relationships with work in the Capitol, and that tends to be a conflict." He said one woman with the Times in southern California -- who would like to move to Sacramento because she prefers the community to Los Angeles as a place to raise her children -- "has a standing invitation to come here," but her husband's job in the entertainment industry requires that they stay in L.A.

An oft-heard complaint of married women in the news business is that they frequently must follow their husbands' careers. Journalism is not noted for big salaries, and very often the non-journalist husband's salary is larger, thus in some measure dictating where the family will live and where the wife can work. "Generally that's what happens," says Skelton. There are some notable exceptions, but the economic reality is that families who move generally do so

to accommodate the job of the spouse who makes the most money. "Traditionally, that is the man," Skelton observes, "but not always."

In Washington, D.C., among the big media money-makers, Skelton says many prominent women reporters do well, both financially and in their personal lives. He cites Sara Fritz, who covers the U.S. Senate for the Times: "She's a really great reporter who didn't get married until her late 30s or early 40s and now has a couple of kids. She and other women I know back there make \$70,000, and her husband is a lawyer, so they can afford to have nannies." In the television world of the nation's capital, Skelton says, several women enjoy high salaries -- and the lifestyles that go with those salaries. "If you really make it in this business," he observes, "you can do okay."

Recruitment of more women to work in the California capital, Skelton said, is affected by many factors, some of them peculiar to a huge paper like the Times:

With our paper, a lot of people are afraid if they leave the mother ship, they'll lose out (on promotional opportunities). I've been with the mother ship and away from it, and I don't think it makes a difference. If I wanted to be a big editor, I'd have to be in L.A. And women have a lot of opportunities to advance.

He said "serious efforts" have been made to recruit more minority reporters (the Times bureau has none), and one former Times intern, Herbert Sample, who is black, left the

Times to join the Bee. Skelton and others say the "pool" of minority reporters interested in working in the Capitol is small, and many choose other, perhaps more lucrative, professional opportunities.

Although he believes women reporters with children often have more family responsibilities than their male counterparts, he said the travel associated with campaign and political coverage is liked or disliked equally by male and female reporters:

If you're a political reporter, you're going to travel. Carl Ingram doesn't like to travel, and neither does Jerry Gillam. Virginia Ellis doesn't like to travel. I've always found travel kind of interesting. Ironically, I think it's probably easier on your family life and certainly you have a better, more comfortable feeling about your job if both spouses are in the same business. I see that with couples who are journalists. They can understand why you're working late at night on a story. They understand deadlines.

Like other political reporters and editors of long standing, Skelton says the sexual harassment experienced by women reporters in the 60s and early 70s is largely past. In his experience, Skelton said some of the worst such behavior was exhibited by former White House Press Secretary Larry Speakes, who Skelton and others flatly describe as "sexist" in his dealings with women reporters covering President Ronald Reagan.

"He would pick on people he thought were weak, like small newspapers," Skelton recalls. "With women, he seemed

to be patronizing. He'd pick on them, snap at them, when he wouldn't at a man. I've heard women reporters complain about it."

Skelton believes each reporter, male or female, brings a certain "perspective" to covering the Capitol:

Sure, there are certain issues I can cover with more perspective because I was more involved. But does that mean a woman who never played football can't cover sports? No. . . The most important thing is to be a good, solid reporter and an interesting writer. And, of course, to be accurate, which goes with being a reporter.

Different reporters bring different perspectives regardless of whether they are men or women. I have reporters who have particular perspectives on the environment or politics, or who can handle numbers very well, who can handle economic things, some who are very good writers or good reporters.

Their backgrounds and their interests have more influence on their reporting than whether they are men or women. There are women who are good political writers, and that doesn't have much to do with gender.

Having said that, I suppose women would bring a special perspective to, say, abortion, that men don't have, but I don't know quite frankly how valuable that perspective is in reporting for a daily newspaper anyway. You can get into this stuff only so deeply.

The most important asset is their ability to write and to report. From the standpoint of political writing, the important thing is to be able to measure the effect on the populace, men and women, and the advantages that politicians are trying to take of the abortion issue.

Because there are more two-income families, so-called women's issues such as child care and abortion become of more interest to the populace, and reporters and editors tend to want to cover (those issues) more.

Skelton recalls specific female reporters more for

their reporting ability than for the "female" perspective they may have brought to the news: "Tracy Wood was one tremendous reporter," he says. "She could go get information in the Capitol that nobody else could. You could say, go get out there and find out what happened, and it didn't matter what the issue was. She could out-report any man I knew."

One of the first women to cover the Capitol for a major news medium in the early 1970s was George Skelton's then-wife, Nancy Skelton. The two were married while still in journalism school at San Jose State, and Nancy initially stayed home or worked parttime while their three daughters were young. An exceptional writer and reporter who won numerous top journalism awards in her career with the Sacramento Bee and the Los Angeles Times, Nancy Skelton, who died in 1985, was the first woman to cover the Capitol for the Sacramento Bee, where she had toiled for many years in the old "Women's Activities" section of the Bee, as George Skelton ruefully put it, "covering parties." She was also active in the Women's Caucus of the Sacramento Newspaper Guild and a founder of Sacramento Women in the Media -- organizations which agitated, often noisily, but largely successfully, for better promotional opportunities for women in the Sacramento news business. Nancy, who left the Bee in 1978 to join the Times and covered several Presidential

campaigns as a political writer, brought a rare perspective to her reporting. Although she and George were divorced before she joined the Times, the two remained on good terms and he encouraged Times editors to hire her. He said the basis of her special talent for covering politics was the same perspective she brought to any story, including the "party coverage" favored by the old women's section of the Bee:

"Nancy had a special, sensitive feel for people and knew just how to push the right button in her personal dealings and in her writing," he recalls. "She knew exactly what was of interest to people and she could write it."

George Skelton was bureau chief at UPI in the early 1970s when the elite all-male Sutter Club near the Capitol refused to allow women reporters to cover an important government conference held at the club. Tracy Wood, who worked for Skelton, was not permitted inside, nor was the author of this study, who was then a reporter for the Sacramento Bee. The incident prompted state legislation which prohibited government officials from holding public meetings in private clubs, and generated a successful discrimination complaint by reporters at the Bee (where the then-managing editor responded by refusing to allow women reporters to cover any events in men's clubs). It also prompted George Skelton to dash off a letter to the Sutter

Club, advising its management that he would no longer assign reporters to cover events of any kind at the club:

I can't remember a heck of a lot about that, except that Tracy wood was not allowed to cover the meeting, which irritated me. So I wrote a letter saying I wouldn't send anyone to cover events in the Sutter Club, or in any club that discriminates against women. . .

I come from a real strong mother who worked all her life and who held her own in a man's world. She didn't regard herself as a feminist, but I was just brought up with the notion that women worked, plus I was married to a woman who was a journalist.

I didn't want the Sutter Club telling me who I was going to assign to cover a story.

Doug Willis <sup>10</sup>

Doug Willis, 53, has been a correspondent for Associated Press for more than two decades, and its Capitol bureau chief since 1974. A senior reporter for the wire service, he prefers the title "correspondent" to the loftier one of "bureau chief," and in reality he is both a writer and a manager, covering the governor's office and running the seven-person bureau. In terms of percentages, AP's Capitol bureau has one of the higher ratios of women reporters in the Capitol press corps, including veteran AP reporter Jennifer Kerr and Kathleen Grubb, who has been with the bureau more than three years.

The size of the bureau has changed little over the years, and turnover is limited. "The work load grows," says Willis ruefully, "but the news hole stays the same."

Quiet, entirely unpretentious and self-effacing, Willis laughs when asked to name the "prestige" beats covered by reporters at the Capitol. He covers the beat most widely regarded as prestigious -- the governor's office -- "but in reality it's covering a lot of ribbon-cuttings." Although in a wire service bureau, all reporters must be generalists, the two women in the bureau cover important, difficult beat assignments: Kerr is one of the few living reporters who actually likes to cover the annual state budget battles, to which Willis has gratefully assigned her for several years running. "She is our principal fiscal writer," he says. "She likes it, and with a bureau as small as ours, everyone carves out their own area." Kerr also regularly covers the state Assembly.

A former court reporter for the Vacaville Reporter, Grubb is generally assigned to complex legal cases for the bureau, including the recent federal political corruption trials of two prominent state officials, former Senator Joseph Montoya and state Board of Equalization member Paul Carpenter, in the so-called Capitol "sting" investigations. "Because Kathleen has background covering courts, she has filled the role of principal court reporter," Willis says.

When hiring a new reporter, Willis says he looks first for "versatility -- being able to do everything in a professional manner." Versatility is important to a

reporter in any news organization, but especially in a wire service, which covers a wide area for numerous media clients:

Every news organization puts a premium on versatility, but we especially do. Although 75 to 80 per cent of our work is covering the Capitol, legislation and politics, if the Kings make a trade we have to be able to do that one too. I remember Kathleen interviewing Bill Russell -- she comes to his belt buckle.

There is a level of professional competence that is obviously a must. That is sort of a given. And we're only looking at people with a certain level of experience. So, versatility, attitude, enthusiasm for the job, a can-do attitude, whatever it takes we can and will do it. Because we have such a small staff and cover wide areas, a person has to be flexible and ready to go at a moment's notice. Geographically, for spot news, if we need staffing, it's whoever can get there quickest, and we go north to the Oregon border, east to the Nevada border, south to Stockton.

I don't specifically look for knowledge or experience in government. I'm more interested in a broad background, someone who is alert and will learn the details of the job.

Like most news organizations at the Capitol, AP looks first to its own for transfers to Capitol reporting. Grubb is the last reporter to have been hired from outside at the bureau, and Steve Geissinger before her. "They were the first two in a long, long time," says Willis. "There is very little turnover."

Before Susan Sward became one of the first women to cover the Capitol in the early 1970s, <sup>11</sup> Willis says the total, cumulative number of women in the AP's Capitol bureau could easily be counted on a few fingers of one hand. Edie

Lederer, still with AP in London, worked briefly at the Capitol for AP in the late 1960s, then there were no women until Sward and then Kerr in the early 1970s.

Willis recalls that Anne Perry succeeded Sward as AP news editor in 1979 when Sward left AP to join the San Francisco Chronicle, but Perry left when she got married and her husband was transferred. Several women reporters were hired to fill temporary positions at the AP's Capitol bureau, Willis says. Jeannie Esajian transferred to the Capitol bureau from AP's Fresno bureau during Kerr's maternity leave. When the temporary assignment was over, Willis recalls, she went to work for the Sacramento Union so she could remain in Sacramento. Another woman, Jennifer McNulty, was hired in a temporary position when AP reporter Rod Angove was on leave in 1988, and she transferred to AP's San Francisco bureau, where she is now the day news desk supervisor. Summer relief and sabbatical fill-in do not appear to be fully dependable avenues for permanent AP positions in the Capitol bureau, since the number of reporters has remained constant at seven for many years.

Often, Willis observes, women reporters have moved on because of "relationships -- the man moves." That was "definitely" the case with Anne Perry, he recalls: "Tom (her husband) wanted to return to Tennessee. She went without a job, and did work for a while, then quit to start

having babies, which does interrupt a career path."

Willis says the Capitol bureau position is a "sought-after" one for wire service reporters wanting a change:

There is more original reporting (than in other bureaus), and more professional satisfaction -- really being a reporter, not just doing rewrite. Also, we tend to work the same hours as legislators and politicians, so mostly these are Monday-Friday daytime jobs. The hub bureaus are staffed 24 hours a day, a lot of weekends and nights."

Periodically, he adds, there are times when the hours get longer and less predictable:

There are predictable times when you know you're going to work long hours. You can be pretty sure that the last week of the (legislative) session, that you're going to have overtime every day of the week. And you can pretty much count on going to midnight the last night of the session, or later. And you can usually expect in late June to hit some overtime in the annual budget crisis. And, because we do election and campaign things, you can mark down election nights to be working late into the night and into the next morning.

So there are times that there are long hours, but I could sit down and mark when they will be many years into the future. It is something predictable which for the most part can be planned. In our large bureaus, a very substantial number have changing schedules. Here, we know when our busy periods are and people can plan their personal lives much easier.

Divorced with three grown children (one of whom is a newspaper reporter), Willis says reporters with children do deal with added stress on the job. "Any professional career and childbearing are in conflict," he says simply. But perhaps more than any other bureau chief at the Capitol, Willis is known for accommodating the stress of combining

the job with parenthood -- and in a civil, caring way:

In the time I've been here, five women have worked for me, and only one of the five had children, Jennifer Kerr. If needed, she is available to take an out-of-town assignment or to rush off on a moment's notice, but she doesn't want to. Those assignments go to the people, when possible, who are most flexible. She does have a 10-year-old, and there have been occasions when she has to go home and stay with a sick kid.

The same is true of two of our male reporters, because they have working wives. Steve Lawrence's daughter just came in here. His wife works, and she comes in here after school and does her homework. She's 13. Sometimes John Howard, whose wife is a school teacher, will have to leave to pick up the kids. One of the desirable things about the Capitol bureau is that we can be more flexible.

When you're in the L.A. bureau doing rewrites, you have a flow of rewriting 20 stories from the L.A. Times. It's more of an assembly-line operation, and there is an assembly line position to be filled. . . . At a smaller bureau, we have more flexibility. And, it's trite, but a happy staff is a productive staff.

Willis says he is aware of only a few instances of harassment of women reporters in the Capitol -- the most notable being the widely publicized experiences of former United Press International Bureau Chief Rebecca LaVally, who has written several articles on discriminatory treatment of women reporters in the Capitol.<sup>12</sup> "Except for her, I am not aware of incidents of overt discrimination," Willis said. "There have been occasions of more subtle things, but not in recent years. I think Susan (Sward) felt there was discrimination at times, but I don't think it hampered her in her work."<sup>13</sup>

Willis said a prominent legislator whose sexual comments to LaVally were chronicled in a 1985 article <sup>14</sup> was also targeted by another woman reporter who said the legislator complained that she was "distracting." Willis said that legislator "is sort of an aberration."

Now that women are more common in the Capitol press corps, Willis says, their experience and general toughness preclude their tolerance for the sexual innuendoes directed at women reporters in the late 60s and early 70s: "The great majority of the jobs in the Capitol press corps are held by people who are experienced. They're not breaking in. By the time a woman gets to be a member of the Capitol press corps, she's not going to take that."

Noting that "there still aren't that many women in the Capitol," Willis says women reporters may bring a special perspective to their reporting in specific instances -- although he does not believe that perspective is particularly pronounced: "I truly think you need diversity in a reporting staff -- sexually, racially, culturally -- to be sensitive to the things you're covering."

## Notes

1. Chris Chrystal, interview, 5 Oct. 1990, and Rebecca LaVally, interview, 25 and 26 Sept. 1990.

2. William Endicott, interview, 10 Oct. 1990. Unless otherwise indicated, material in this account was taken from this interview.

3. Claudia Buck, interview, 20 Sept. 1990.

4. Buck, interview, and Amy Chance, interview, 18 Oct. 1990.

5. Chance, interview.

6. George Skelton, interview, 10, 11 and 12 Oct. 1990.

7. Doug Willis, interview, 17 and 18 Sept. 1990.

8. Susan Sward, interview, 16 Jan. 1991.

9. Virginia Ellis, interview, 2 Nov. 1990.

10. Willis, interview. Unless otherwise indicated, all material contained in this account was taken from this interview.

11. Sward, interview.

12. LaVally, interview, and "Women Reporters. . .," California Journal, June 1985, 234-36, and Jan. 1991, 33-36.

13. Sward, interview.

14. LaVally, "Women Reporters. . ." June 1985.

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