

A Historical Perspective on Work/Life Balance

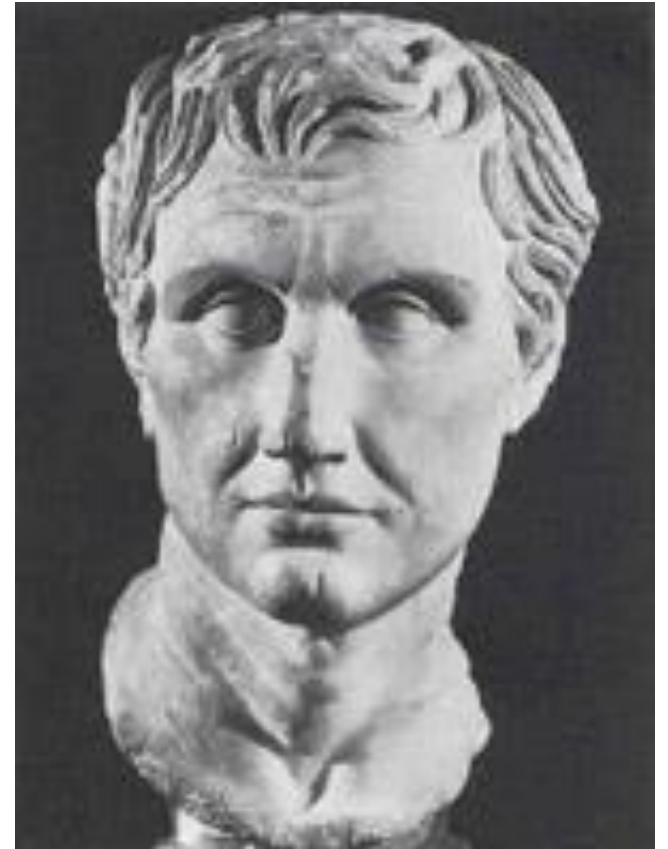


Amy Ensley, Director
Hankey Center for the Education and
Advancement of Women

A Brief History of Women's Education

“He who teaches a woman letters feeds more poison to the frightful asp.”

- Menander, Greek dramatist



A Brief History of Women's Education

“I do not know the reason, but just as a saddle is not suitable for an ox, so learning is unsuitable for women.”

- Erasmus

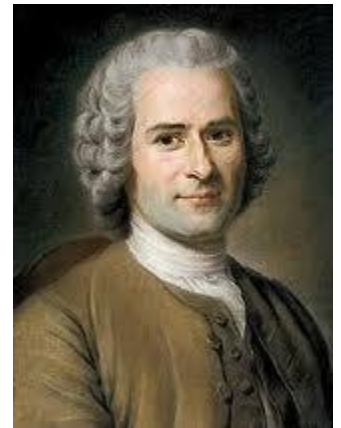


A Brief History of Women's Education

“A brilliant wife is a plague to her husband, her children, her friends, her valets, everyone.

Outside her home she is always ridiculous and very justly criticized.”

-Jean Jacques Rousseau



A Brief History of Women's Education

“In the special case of science and engineering, there are issues of intrinsic aptitude, and particularly of the variability of aptitude.”

- Lawrence Summers
former president of Harvard



Arguments Against Educating Women

Women are mentally inferior and would not be able to meet the standards set for men

- Because women had smaller brains than men, they were too far behind in human evolution to ever catch up.
- How much education is required to diaper a baby and cook a meal?

Arguments Against Educating Women

Women cannot stand the physical strain of higher education

- If women used up their limited energy for studying, they would endanger their female apparatus.
- Even if they did “survive the strain, their children would be sickly, if they were able to have any children at all.”
- Education would reduce the number of marriages and the size of families.

More Arguments Against Educating Women

Other objections specific to coeducation:

- Having women in classes would distract men
- Men would not like to have women in classes
- The founders of the men's colleges would not like to have women in classes
- There is not enough money to educate both
- The mental inferiority of the women would lower the esteem of the college

Even More Arguments Against Educating Women

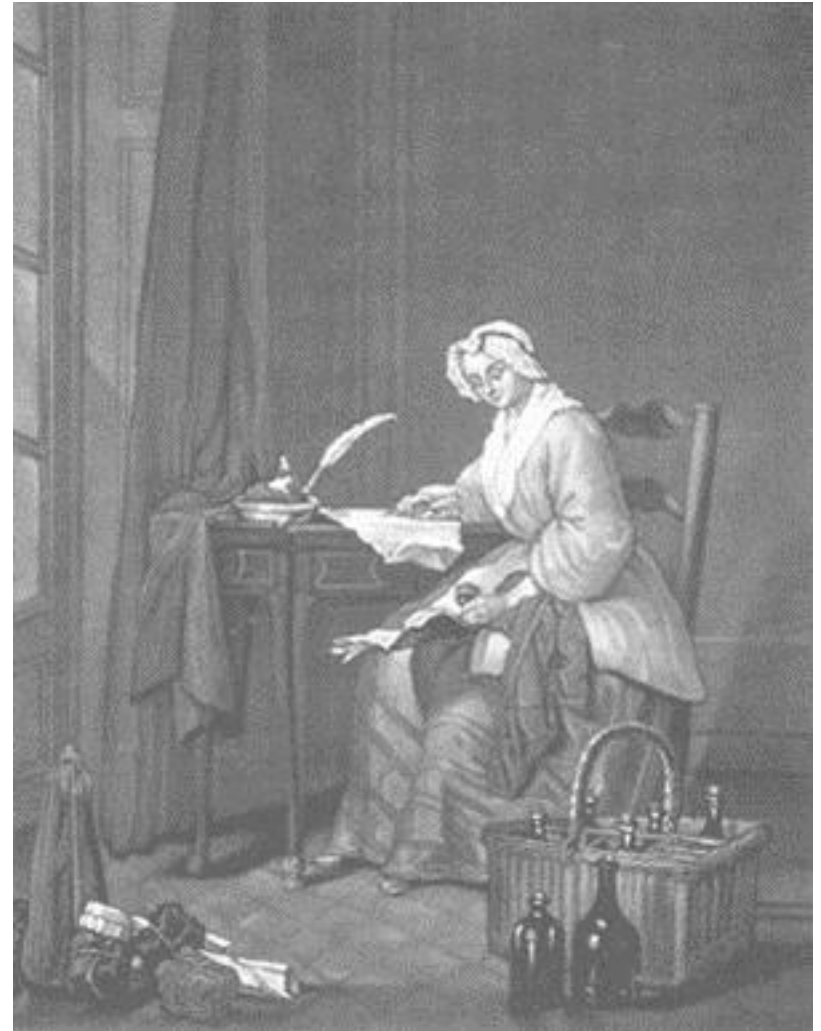
Other objections specific to coeducation:

- Education might destroy religious beliefs
- College women would make inferior housekeepers

Most of the concerns were not about whether college would be beneficial to women, but rather, whether it would be acceptable to men

Arguments FOR Educating Women

- So as to be good conversationalists for husbands
- To be good mothers to sons
- To gain religious instruction to be good Christian mothers
- The new Republic needs an educated citizenry



1860-1900

- The Morrill Act of 1862 created large land-grant universities with tax-payer money.
- Tax-payers insisted that their daughters be educated along with the sons.



1860-1900

- State universities were quick to open their doors to women, but were ambivalent about what the women studied.
- They were much more likely to have coursework in traditionally female programs than women's colleges.
- They did not prohibit women from studying traditionally male fields, but did not encourage it.



1860-1900

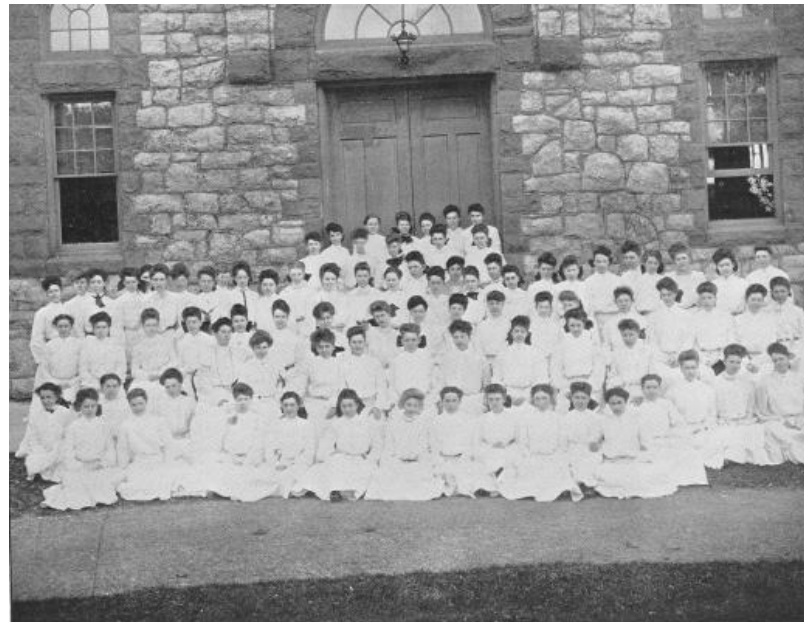
- Women's colleges openly discouraged coursework in the "women's professions" with the exception of teaching.
- Women's college presidents were adamant about not adding programs in nursing, library work and home economics to the curriculum.
- They were insistent that their colleges be equivalent to men's colleges.



THOMPSON HALL, WILSON COLLEGE, CHAMBERSBURG, PA.

1900 - 1920

- First generation to receive a higher education in any significant numbers.
- These women chose a family or a career but usually not both.
- Thirty percent did not marry and 50% did not have children.



1900 - 1920

- Black women trying to get an education had the added burden of fighting racism and class as well as gender.
- The battle over whether they should receive a classical education or a technical or practical education was intense.



1900 - 1920

Black Women's Clubs were established to improve the "dignity" of black women and improve opportunities and conditions for black families.

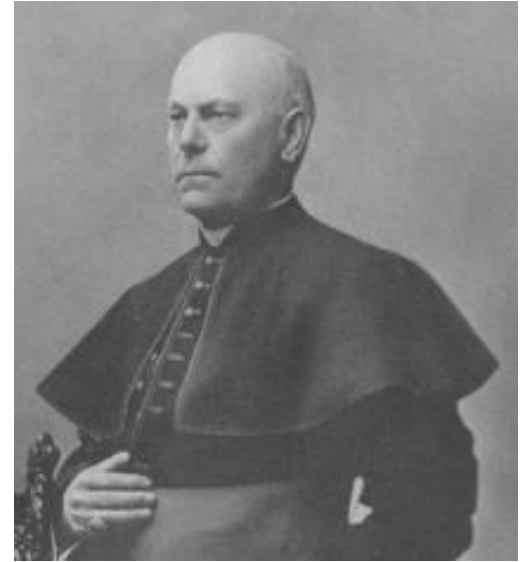


1900 - 1920

John Spalding, a progressive, Catholic Archbishop said in 1903:

The primary aim of education is not to make a good wife and mother, anymore than it is to make a good husband and father.

Woman's sphere lies wherever she can live nobly and do useful work. The career open to ability applies to her not less than to men. It is good to have a strong and enlightened mind: therefore it is good for a woman to have such a mind.



1920 - 1945

- This group chose a job first, then a family.
- These jobs were meant to last for a few years. They were not to become lifetime careers.
- Only 20% never married and 35% did not have children.



1920 - 1945

- Several studies were done in the 1920s on numbers of women working while married.
- Of those with children, most had between one and three.
- Many had jobs with no set hours.
- Of those in the sciences, most were working with their husbands.



1920 - 1945

The respondents noted the elements affecting an individual's success in combining career and family:

- Presence, age and number of children
- Type and flexibility of the job (part-time or full-time, in the home, or out of the home, etc.)
- The attitude, cooperation and understanding of the husband
- The effectiveness of the household help
- The individual woman's health, energy, efficiency, talent and "ability to carry on her work and family responsibilities without detriment to either."



HALF-HOUR MEALS FOR THE BUSINESS WOMAN

Paper dishes and doilies help out—so does electrical equipment. The breakfast menu was fruit, fried tomatoes and bacon, toast, coffee



LEARNING TO COOK

It's never too soon to begin to train the little home partner.

Cultural Expectations

- Women were often viewed as a cheap, temporary labor source to be used when needed, and sent back home, when not.



1945 - 1965

- The proportion of women in higher education had reached its peak in the 1930s at 55%.
- As with all wars, WWII provided new opportunities for women.
- Women were recruited into mathematics and science programs to help with the war effort.



The first black WAVES -
Lt. Harriet Ida Pickens
and Ens. Frances Wills.



Wars provided working opportunities for all women



1945 - 1965

- The end of World War II brought back the rhetoric that women should be educated for domesticity and the average age of marriage for women dropped to 20 yrs. old (22 for college educated women).
- The flood of GIs attending college, half of whom were married, influenced young female college students to “catch a husband” as well.
- Increasing numbers of female students dropped out of college to marry.

1945 - 1965

- This was a period of extremely early marriages and high birthrates.
- Only 8% never married and only 17% did not have children.
- These women sometimes found part-time jobs after the children were grown, but seldom had careers.





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does everything
but cook
- that's what
wives are for!



I'm giving my wife a

Kenwood Chef

SO THE HARDER A WIFE WORKS, THE CUTER SHE LOOKS!

I. GOSH, HONEY, YOU SEEM TO THRIVE ON COOKING, CLEANING AND DUSTING- AND I'M ALL TUCKERED OUT BY CLOSING TIME. WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

VITAMINS, DARLING! I ALWAYS GET MY VITAMINS

Kellogg's PEP
VITAMIN-ENRICHED
36% RYE FLAVOR

Vitamins for pep! PEP for vitamins!*

Keep up with the house while you keep down your weight.

Don't lose weight while watching your weight. Use right Total cereal. Total cereal is a delicious, nutritious cereal. It's also a great source of vitamins and minerals. A delicious, nutritious cereal. It's also a great source of vitamins and minerals. A delicious, nutritious cereal. It's also a great source of vitamins and minerals.

TOTAL watches your vitamins while you watch your weight.

total

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BOSCH

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He made it in the kitchen and ate it in the dining room. With Swiffer® WetJet®, both floors were clean before he was.



1945 - 1965

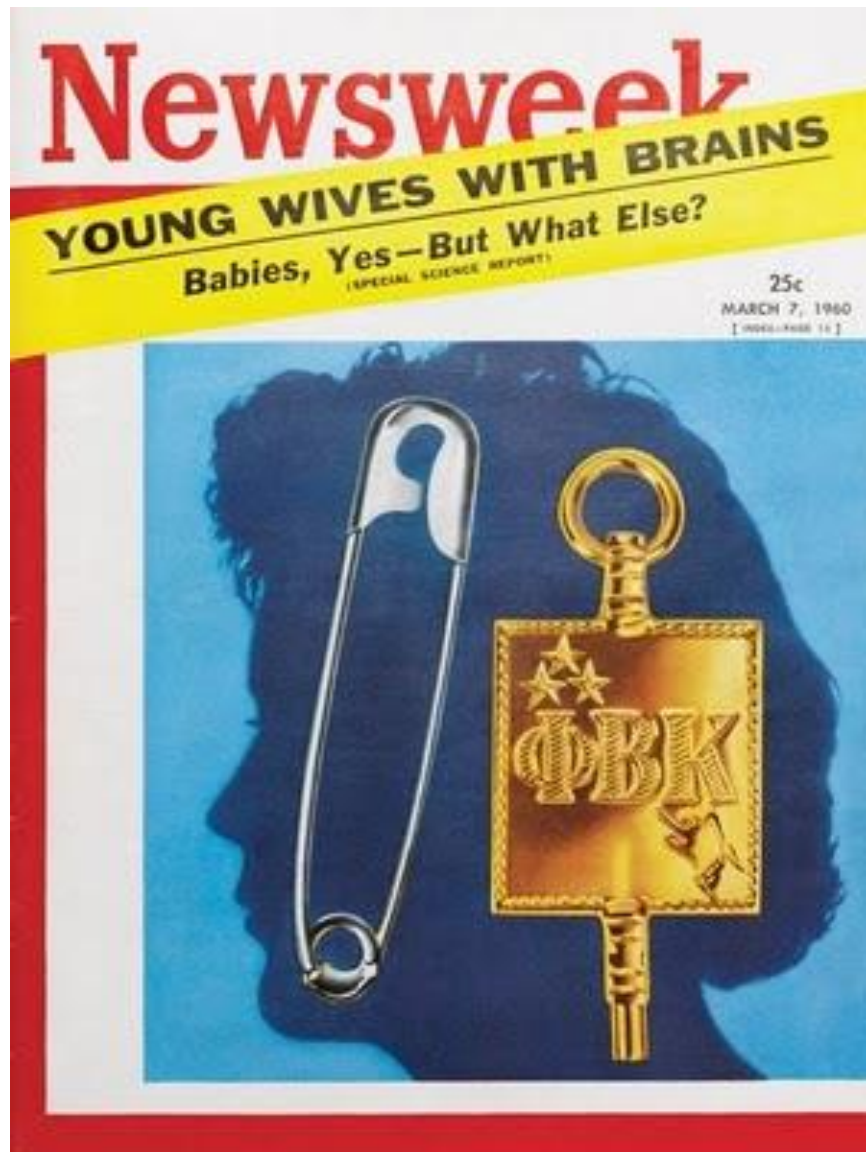
- 1955: The US Department of Labor sponsored the White House Conference on the Effective Use of Womanpower to explore expanding women's opportunities in the labor market including greater participation in nontraditional fields.
- The conclusion was that women were basically well-suited for housekeeping and childrearing.

1945 - 1965

- The launch of Sputnik caused a review of education in America and the National Defense Act of 1958 sought to recruit a wider spectrum of students, including women, for science and technology fields.
- Studies showed that America was not utilizing the potential of its trained men and women.
- New studies sought to determine why female college undergraduates in particular were “wasting” their privileged education.

1945 - 1965

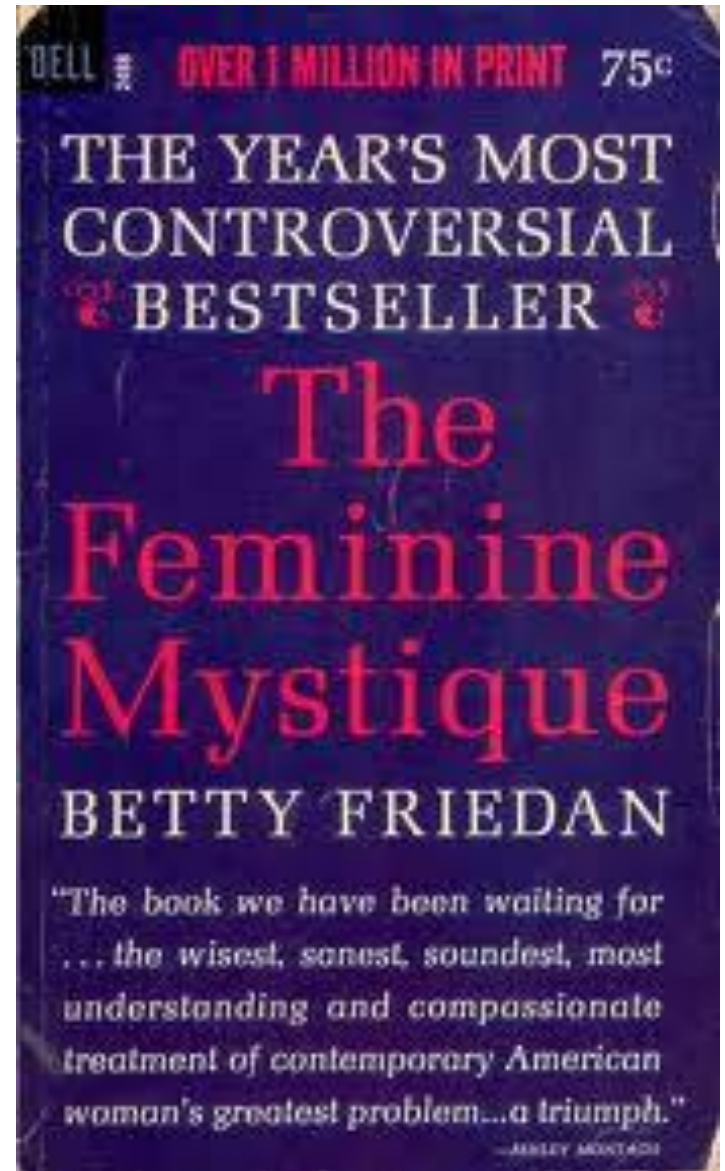
- These women most wanted to be mothers of “highly accomplished children” and wives of “prominent” men.
- They served as a “sympathetic, admiring audience for the small female minority” who were entering the masculine fields and winning acclaim for their accomplishments.
- But all through the late 1940s and 1950s, popular culture, in novels, magazine articles, and films, were portraying the “happy ending” as the high-powered career woman giving up her job to ensure a happy marriage.



1960

1945 - 1965

- Betty Friedan, *The Feminist Mystique*, 1963.
- Came about from a reunion of Smith alumnae from the 1940s.
- The problem that has no name...



1965 - 1985

- These were the pioneers who opened the door to careers that few of their mothers had.
- They married late and 28% did not have children.
- Equal Rights.



1965 - 1985

- By the late 1970s and early 1980s, women were learning that to compete with men, you had to act like men.
- We even started dressing like them.



1965 - 1985

Superwoman and “Having it all”



1985 - 2000

- This is the group that realized that the idea of “having it all” might be a little unrealistic.
- 64% of recent college educated women will not have their first baby, if they have children at all, before age 30.
- The pathway to a successful career in the professions (medicine, law, business and academia) conflicts at each level with childbearing and childrearing. Graduate school can run through the 20s, and residencies, the tenure-process, and the probationary term for reaching partner, can easily run through the 30s.

1985 - 2000

- “Men can have children and pursue their careers with full attention because they are not the primary caregivers.”
- This is generally true, but many men have traditionally spent little time with their families as a consequence. This is not what women are trying to achieve.
- Is it realistic to believe that any high-powered career is compatible with raising – and being involved with children?

Today

Important Factors to Achieving Work/Life Balance Reported by Successful Women:

- Time Management Skills
- Supportive Partner
- Household help including housekeeping, child care and other conveniences
- Finding employment in a work culture more supportive of families, perhaps at lower pay

This list is remarkably similar to the list from the 1920s.

Today

- Many professions now have a second-tier which require fewer hours, but also have lower status, lower security and lower pay. Mommy-track?
- In academia it is adjuncts. In medicine it is salaried physicians who work fewer days per week. In law it is “contract” or “of counsel” attorneys. In business it is through “staff” rather than “line” positions.
- For some women (and men) this is an ideal way to stay professionally active, but without the high-pressure commitment.
- Others feel permanently marginalized.

The Current Workplace is Still Dominated by Masculine Traits

- In the Colonial Era men expected obedience from wives and children. Women were viewed as intellectually, physically and morally inferior.
- During the Enlightenment, women came to be valued more equally but only in their own sphere – which was the home.
- These views persist today. Men are seen as ambitious, independent, logical and competitive. Women are seen as nurturing, collaborative and expressive.
- These stereotypes lead to powerful social expectations that link our sense of what one needs to be successful in historically male professions to masculine personality traits.

The Current Workplace is Still Dominated by Masculine Traits

- Social scientists have documented that men are viewed as being more assertive and single-minded, while women are viewed as being more communal, with concern for others.
- In the workplace, single-mindedness is highly valued as showing dedication to the job.
- An extremely high proportion of successful men in medicine, business, law, government and academia (75%) have children and a stay-at-home wife.
- Breadwinners married to homemakers earn 30% more than those in two-job families.

The Current Workplace is Still Dominated by Masculine Traits

- Men who leave work to see to family responsibilities get fewer promotions and lower raises.
- So working moms who try to get husbands to “pitch in” are fighting against a work culture that will punish the husbands.
- The conventional wisdom – that the stalled revolution is best addressed by insisting that women negotiate more effectively with their husbands is unrealistic.
- It assumes that family is the “gender factory.” In many situations, the gender factory is the workplace which set the non-negotiable terms within which men and women bargain in family life.

The Current Workplace is Still Dominated by Masculine Traits

- The Maternal Wall: When researchers gave subjects identical resumes except for one respect – membership in the PTO – the “mothers” were 79% less likely to be hired and 100% less likely to be promoted.
- Ideal-Worker Mothers: Working mothers who accepted the convention that the only way to be a serious contender in their field was to work like a man, tend to have a lot invested in proving that the sacrifices they made were absolutely necessary. They tend to not be very sympathetic to working mothers who try to have a better balance.

The View of Motherhood Has Changed

- 1700s: Women had many roles and responsibilities in addition to raising children.
- 1800s: Industrial revolution and the rise of capitalism contributed to the “absent father”. The mother filled the void and was now responsible for the moral growth of children.
- Individualism was highly prized in America. Mothers raised children to be independent.
- Increased mobility and westward expansion led to a rise in nuclear families with less influence and help from extended family.

The View of Motherhood Has Changed

- 1900s: Move away from “gentle nurturing” of the Victorian Age to the Scientific Management of childrearing – stern discipline.
- In 1928, John Watson published *Psychological Care of Infants*. Where mothers used to be concerned about the health and survival of their children, now they had to be concerned about “smothering” and “emotionally coddling” their children.
- Fads in childrearing moved back and forth between the “child-centered” approach vs. a colder, “scientific” approach.

The View of Motherhood Has Changed

- “Wives haven’t enough to do today. Scientific mass production has made their tasks so easy that they are overwhelmed with time. They utilize the time in destroying the happiness of their children.”
- Watson believed that too much affection and not enough time spent in hard work spoiled the youth of his time. He believed that children should be treated as little adults as soon as possible.

The View of Motherhood Has Changed

- Late 1990s: The new “Momism” or “Intensive Mothering” the self-sacrificing mother who is completely responsible for how the children turn out.
- Over eight hundred books on motherhood were published between 1970 and 2000.
- Only 27 of them came out between 1970 and 1980.

Attempts at Enacting Maternity Leave

- **1919: The US government came close to signing on to an International Labor Organization agreement supported by 33 countries:**
- “Women workers should receive cash benefits in addition to job-protected leave for 12 weeks in the period surrounding childbirth.”
- Julia Lathrop, chief of the Labor Department’s Children’s Bureau, issued a report on international maternity leave policy. “US was one of the few great countries which as yet have no system of assistance in maternity.”

Attempts at Enacting Maternity Leave

- Though many members of a key labor group wanted to include “maternity insurance” in its recommendations to Congress and Pres. Woodrow Wilson, it was omitted after an internal dispute over who would be covered.
- Other early proponents of maternity benefits insisted that protections and income for pregnant women be part of national health care instead (which they thought was soon to be enacted).

Attempts at Enacting Maternity Leave

- World War II: The Labor Department's Women's Bureau recommended that women get six weeks of prenatal leave, as well as two months following childbirth.
- Just as pressure for change was mounting, the war ended, men returned home to reclaim their jobs, and the drive ended.

Attempts at Enacting Maternity Leave

- **Until 1978: It was legal in most states to fire women for becoming pregnant.**
- The debate over maternity leave served as a proxy for tensions surrounding the presence of women in the workplace.
- This was defended as a way to encourage women to return to the home.

Attempts at Enacting Maternity Leave

- **1984: Rep. Howard Berman (D-Calif.) spearheaded a national proposal for maternity leave based on California's model.**
- The proposal was defeated by feminist groups who worried that drawing attention to maternity would jeopardize the gains being made in equal opportunity issues.

Attempts at Enacting Maternity Leave

- **Late 1980s – early 1990s: Congress debated what would become the Family and Medical Leave Act.**
- The definition of what “leave” should include shifted from only mothers to new parents, and finally to all workers who needed to care for family members.
- The prospect of so many workers being eligible for leave made business interests more aggressive in efforts to ensure that the leave would be unpaid.
- After years of debate, during which Sen. Bob Dole filibustered and Pres. George H.W. Bush twice vetoed legislation, Clinton finally signed a watered-down bill in 1993.

What About Child Care?

- 1925: Institute to Coordinate Women's Interests was founded.
- One of the first groups that attempted to assist women in balancing work and family.
- Attempted to arrange domestic chores around working women's needs.
- Tried to establish communal nurseries, laundries and kitchens



What About Child Care?

- 1930s: The Works Progress Administration (WPA) established government funded day nurseries as an emergency measure to create jobs for unemployed teachers, custodians and cooks.
- Report from the White House Conference on Children, however, stated “No one should get the idea that Uncle Sam is going to rock the baby to sleep” in response to the suggestion that the Federal Government become involved in supporting child care.



WHEN "MOTHER" STEPS ASIDE THE SCHOOL HAS TO STEP IN!
This illustrates what some schools have had to do to keep the pupils properly nourished

What About Child Care?

- 1933: Federal Economy Act required that one spouse resign if both husband and wife are working for the Federal Government.
- 75% of those resigning are women.
- 1939: US Tax Court ruled that a working mother cannot deduct the expense of hiring a nursemaid to care for her child from her income for tax purposes. Child care is ruled to be an inherently personal duty.

What About Child Care?

- 1940: The Lanham Act was passed to provide funds for building defense-related industries. Federal funds for child care facilities were included to support working mothers joining the war effort.
- The Children's Bureau called them "baby parking stations."
- 1942: The draft decimated the ranks of working men, so the government reversed the depression-era restrictions on employment of women
- Some employers offered day care, meals and transportation to make it easier for women with families to work.



What About Child Care?

- As the war came to an end, Franklin Roosevelt stated, “We do not believe further Federal funds should be provided for actual operation of child care programs. Child care is a war need only.”
- Hundreds of child care centers closed.

What About Child Care?

- 1950s: Hospitals faced a critical shortage of nurses. Nursing administrators at many hospitals set up successful on-site day care centers.
- This set the stage for employer-sponsored child care in other corporate settings.

What About Child Care?

- Middle and upper income families began to send their children to nursery schools, viewing it as an enriching experience.
- A report from a 1948 Children's Bureau survey showed only 4% of working mothers used child care centers.
- 94% of working mothers relied on relatives and friends for child care.

What About Child Care?

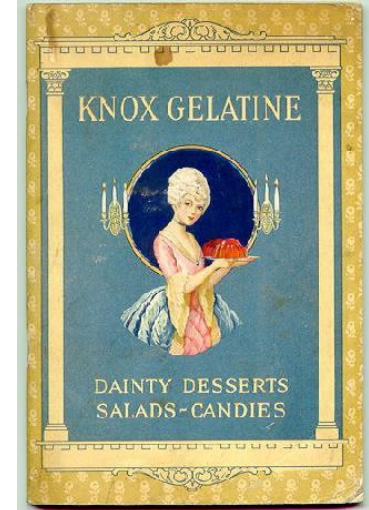
- 1960: Nearly 40% of women with children between the ages of 6 and 17 were working outside the home.
- Nearly 20% of women with children under the age of 6 were working outside the home.
- 1963: The US Office of Education published “Management Problems of Homemakers Employed Outside the Home: Resources for Teaching,” a curriculum guide for teaching high school and adult women how to deal with household responsibilities while working outside the home.

What About Child Care?

- **1971: Congress passed the Comprehensive Child Development Act.**
- Provided universal access to child care on a sliding scale ability to pay.
- President Nixon vetoed the bill out of fear that it would undermine strong families and be too similar to communist Soviet Union and China.

Rose Knox

- Took over the Knox Gelatine Co. after husband died in 1908.
- Decided to run the business from a woman's point of view.
- Fired a male VP after he said he couldn't work for a woman.
- Instituted a five-day work week. Unheard of at the time.
- Gave every employee two weeks of paid vacation.
- Did not lay off a single employee during the Depression.



Sandra Day O'Connor



- Graduated from Stanford with a degree in Economics and a law degree by age 22.
- Married John O'Connor the same year.
- Only job offer was as a legal secretary.
- Went to Germany with John and became a civilian attorney with the Quartermasters Corps.
- Returned to US, opened her own firm, had her first child.
- After the second child, withdrew from the firm.
- Five years as a stay-at-home mom, doing non-legal volunteer work.
- Went back to work as an assistant state attorney general.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

- Graduated from Cornell in 1954. Married Martin Ginsburg the same year.
- Enrolled in law school after the birth of their first child. Husband diagnosed with cancer.
- Had great difficulty finding a job even though she graduated 1st in her class at Columbia.
- Taught at Rutgers, had second child during this time. Then taught at Columbia (1st tenured female law professor).
- Director of the Women's Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union.
- Argued landmark gender equality issues before the Supreme Court.



- Much of the information in this presentation was drawn from the work of Joan C. Williams at the University of California Hastings Center for Work Life Law and her book *Reshaping the Work Family Debate* Harvard University Press, 2012.
- For detailed source information and photo credits, please contact Amy Ensley at amy.ensley@wilson.edu.

