

Reagan fights for equality

by Kim Paap

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Ronald Reagan has selected more women for policy-making positions during his first two years in office than any of his predecessors. All told, women hold more than 1,600 positions in the White House and throughout the Executive Branch.

Soon after Reagan's election in 1980, the first woman ever to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, Sandra Day O'Connor, was appointed. He is also the first president to have three women serve in his cabinet at the same time.

Margaret Heckler, Secretary of Health and Human Services, heads an organization whose budget



HHS Secretary Margaret Heckler

is the third largest in the entire world. She remarks, "I have had several occasions to recommend alternative solutions to the president on key issues and have been able to convince him to reverse his prior positions.

He has always listened to me carefully and respected my opinion."

Elizabeth Dole, Secretary of Transportation, is the first woman to head a department which also contains a branch of the armed forces, the United States Coast Guard. Ms. Dole feels that President Reagan deserves much more credit

for his genuine support of competent women.

Jeane Kirkpatrick, United States Ambassador to the United Nations, plays a powerful role in the forming and carrying out of this country's foreign policy. Lest there be any doubt about her impression of the president, she has commented that: 'male

chauvinists are not willing to listen to what women have to say on foreign affairs... The president has been dealing with me seriously, and taking me seriously since I met him. And I think he does the same with other women as well.'

Perhaps the best understanding of the President's attitude towards

women in positions of great responsibility can be gleaned from his own words:

'The conservative party of Great Britain chose Margaret Thatcher as their



Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole

leader not because she was a woman, but because she was the best person for the job,' Reagan said. 'There was no tokenism or cynical 'symbolism'. She became a leader of her party, and prime minister of Great Britain because she was judged by her peers to be a superior leader. And that is how the first republican woman president will do it.'

'The women who have advanced in the Republican party, coming up through the ranks, and doing it by merit. These women are changing America, and they are changing it for the better. The American people recognize this and will support such a woman when she runs for President of the United States.

Equal rights: the real story

Since being elected, the Reagan administration has vigorously supported legal and economic equality for all women.

Reagan has stated that women should be protected against discrimination in forms, but that these protections should take the form of specific legislation. He believes that legal equity should be guaranteed, but the power to establish that equity should be left with the elected representatives of the people.

He has also called for and produced stronger enforcement of protections already written into the statutes. At his direction, Justice Department workers actively enforce possible violations of equal rights legislation passed in the past.

In 1981, Reagan created the Task Force on Legal Equity for Women to work with the Justice Department in finding and cataloging gender-biased laws and rules, so that they can be ef-

fectively changed or eliminated. As a result, more progress has been made to correct gender-biased federal statutes than in any previous administration. The Task Force also recommended internal reviews within the administration to determine possible bias in its own regulations, a recommendation all 42 federal departments have followed.

He has endorsed 122 changes in federal law recommended by his task force on legal equity to remove provisions that discriminate against women, and another project has sparked forty-two of the fifty states into examining their own laws to identify and eliminate gender-discriminatory language.

Individual Retirement Account (IRA) rules have been liberalized, in order to recognize the value of non-working spouses to provide greater retirement savings, the President has proposed raising the spousal IRA limit

from \$2,250 to \$4,000. The "marriage tax penalty" also has been greatly reduced—a great savings to lower-income families with two breadwinners.

In addition, since President Reagan took office, women have benefited, as have all Americans, from lower taxes, reduced inflation, lower interest rates, and, most importantly, more job opportunities. He has also reduced the marriage tax penalty, virtually eliminated the estate tax, expanded savings opportunities for spouses, put teeth into child support enforcement legislation, and worked for pension equity for women.

"We must work together to ensure women can participate in our national life in the manner they choose and that they are treated equally", he has said. "We, in this administration, are committed to eliminating, once and for all, all traces of unjust discrimination against women."

Today's students: Quieter, but still concerned

by Eric Nelsen

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In the spring of 1984, all eight candidates seeking the Democratic presidential nomination arrived in Hanover for the first debate of the campaign. Simultaneously, in an attempt to gain publicity for their causes, Pro Life and Pro Choice activists, along with a few other activist groups, took advantage of this attention by protesting before, during, and after the debate.

But these demonstrations were rather sparsely attended, and although all were held on the college grounds, very few students participated. What has happened to the student activism of the Sixties and early Seventies?

Critics will quickly relate to you that today's college students have lost interest in demonstrating and have become concerned about their potential salaries. They claim

that those members of our society between the ages of 18-24 have become narrow-minded and self-centered, stereotyping students into the Me Generation. These critics form an image of today's student as an uncaring and uninformed group that refuses to put forth the effort to acquaint itself with the issues.

While these critics may feel they have all the answers, the one thing they don't quite

possess is a perfect concept of reality. To those well acquainted with the Eighties Generation, its members come across as interested, informed, and concerned about the issues and the political scene that surrounds them.

While they may not be as vocal as their counterparts from earlier generation, they often seem more interested in acquiring knowledge about our political process. As a result,

they have learned how to get their issue into the limelight by using the system and by avoiding the use of violence and destruction.

For example, at the aforementioned debate, while the demonstrations continued without many supporters, the auditorium was packed with students eager to hear the candidates. Other areas containing closed-circuit television screens were filled with those unable to

gain entrance into the debate itself. Even in the tube rooms of the anti-intellectual fraternities, brothers watched the proceedings with fascination. After the debate, four receptions were held, and again, students made their presence felt by filling the halls and asking pertinent questions of the candidates.

At a more recent event, Reagan-Bush campaign director Edward Rollins spoke here about the intricacies of campaigning. Cramming a hall that seated fifty, over two hundred students listened intently to the strategies of national campaigning. These students, representing a wide range of political viewpoints, came to learn and listen.

Student activism still has a strong presence on our campuses. It is only the methods we employ that have changed. No longer do we march and burn, but try to change the system by working with it. Perhaps a less colorful strategy, but ultimately, we think, more successful.

