

Remarks to Associated Women Students at A.S.U.

May 7, 1970, by Senator Sandra D. O'Connor

President Newburn, Mrs. Gammage, Mrs. Beutler, Mrs. Valikai,
Miss Hutt, Miss Murphy, and Guests:

I am very honored to be here tonight as your guest speaker
for the conclusion of ASU's Women's Week.

It is very timely that you should concentrate on the role
that women play in this country today. It will have been fifty
years next August 26 since the suffragettes succeeded in obtaining
final ratification of the franchise for women. Women in this
country more or less settled back and relaxed after obtaining
the franchise. Now, the great granddaughters of the suffragettes
are unpacking the banners and going forth again to claim equality
with men--in law, in treatment, and in attitude.)

Women's organizations throughout the land have formed to
pursue these goals. There has been a President's Commission on
the Status of Women since December 1961. Most states, including
Arizona, have state Commissions on the Status of Women. Mrs.
Kathryn Gammage is Chairman of Arizona's Commission on the
Status of Women. In 1966, Betty Frieden formed the National
Organization for Women (NOW). In New York, a group called the
Feminists has been formed, the leaders of which advocate an
end to the family unit as it now exists.

Other groups of long standing, such as the YWCA, the BPW,
and the Association of University Women also are taking an

active interest in issues relating to equality of women.

What is the situation today which prompts the concern with equality for women? A woman's place is in the home, but it is in other places, too. It is in the professions, in government, in civic affairs, and in business, generally. When the good Lord handed out talent and ability, He didn't ask the parents whether they were to be given to a boy or a girl. I, as a woman, feel equal, but am I? How do my sisters feel? Who suffers more from economic discrimination: women or blacks?

The statistics are revealing. The U.S. Department of Labor has reported that approximately 30 million women are in the labor force in this country. This represents 37% of the nation's labor force and 42% of all women of working age.

In Ariz there are approx 180,500 women in nonfarm employment 35% of up states labor force
 For every dollar a man is paid, a woman gets only 58 cents. *fence*

Three-fifths of all working women are married. Approximately 10.6 million are mothers with children under 18.

A woman with four years of college earns typically \$6,694 a year, while her male counterpart earns \$11,795. The gap is widening, and the more education a woman has the greater the gap between her and her male counterpart.

With respect to discrimination against women as compared to discrimination against blacks, the median family income of blacks was 60% of the median family income of whites in 1968.

In the same year, the median income of a woman was only 58.2% of a man's.

The reason, according to the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor, is usually not that women are paid less than men for doing the same work. The problem is that women, through discrimination, as well as choice and custom, tend to have lower paying jobs. Women tend to have jobs as clerks, cosmetologists, typists, or low paid technicians. They seldom work as painters, carpenters, truck drivers, and engineers.

In Ariz only 600 out of 15,900 in mines. 6700 out of 38,300 in transport + utilities. However in finance, in + real estate are 14,800 out of 36,800. In educ 24,900 out of 49,000.

Women graduates from the universities this June will be offered lower median starting salaries than male graduates, even though their educational qualifications are the same. For example, female graduates in accounting are being offered \$746 per month, compared with \$832 per month for male graduates. In liberal arts, women are being offered \$631 per month, as compared with \$688 per month for the men.

Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act forbids discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, or national origin. Arizona has similar laws. Even so, many states have laws regulating the number of hours women can work or the types of jobs they can do. These laws were originally designed to protect women. Today, they tend to discriminate against them and to cause them economic harm, because they make

employers unwilling to hire women when the job might, on some occasions, require overtime. I am pleased to have successfully sponsored a bill this session in the Arizona Legislature, which bill has now been signed by the Governor, repealing Arizona's 8-hour law for women's work.

There are other indicators that women are still second class citizens. The percentage of women on college faculties has been declining. There are fewer women in Congress than there were ten years ago. If we doubled the number of women in the U. S. Senate, it would bring the total number of female senators to two! The number of women in state elective office in this state, other than judges, has declined from two to zero, and from a total of nine in the Legislature to eight since 1968.

Many states still excuse women from sitting on juries solely because they are women. Many states, including Arizona, do not give women equal rights with their husbands to manage and dispose of their community property.

Recently, interest has been rekindled in a proposed "equal rights" amendment to the U. S. Constitution. It was first proposed in 1923 and ^{hearings are now being held} is now scheduled ~~for the first time~~ ^{second} for a hearing before a Senate Judiciary Committee. The equal rights amendment declares, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

Frankly, I am not sure the equal rights amendment is necessary. I am inclined to believe that a few well chosen cases

brought before the federal courts would establish the equality of women under the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, and the Civil Rights Act, in a meaningful way.

We all tend to personalize our own experiences in looking at questions such as these and to fit ourselves into the statistics. When I attended Stanford University and then Stanford University Law School a good many years ago, at the University I experienced a feeling of equality of opportunity in terms of scholastic achievement. There were other benefits, too. In Law School, there were only ten women and 300 men.

Upon graduation from law school, I sought job opportunities with various law firms in California. Many firms declined to interview me, and those which did expressed no interest in putting a woman on their staff, even though my class standing was very high. My first employment was in government service as a deputy county attorney. Through the years (I have been out of law school 18 years), the situation has remained much the same. It has always been more difficult for me as a woman to obtain the employment I sought in the first instance, but once obtained, recognition for good performance has never been a problem. Discrimination against women is least in government service and is highest in the private sector. Fortunately, I like government service very much indeed, and it has been a very

happy solution for me. Once a woman has gained some experience and earned a reputation as a capable person, she is in greater demand, at least in public and civic service.

Recently, I have entered into a new occupation--that of holding a political office as a member of the State Legislature. Anthropologist Margaret Mead has stated, "I personally am surprised that more women are not going into politics. If women want real power and change, they must run for public office and use the vote more intelligently." I think Dr. Mead is absolutely right about this. One advantage to being a woman in politics is that while it is not too difficult to put your foot in your mouth in politics, it is a lot harder to do when you are wearing high heels. One of the unexpected little disadvantages of going into politics is that your age becomes a matter of public record, and you periodically gag as you see it there in black and white.

Do marriage, families, and careers for women mix? It depends, of course, on the personalities of the husband and the wife and the special needs of the children. For me, the answer has been emphatically "Yes!" American wives have the greatest opportunity in the world to enjoy the freedom of choice as to their avocation. The ultimate happiness to me

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is the feeling of fulfillment which comes from doing constructive work for the good of society and mankind. Joy is love and work--work of one's choice. Those women who are fortunate enough to have husbands or other means to support them can truly enjoy the freedom of choice to select that work which is most satisfying to them, and to select work of a part time or occasional nature. How lucky can one be to have both the pleasures of family life and children as well as a productive career! It is possible to achieve, and it makes the woman a more interesting and a more dynamic individual to her family, as well as to others.

It helps to marry someone with the understanding and expectation of both partners that the wife intends to pursue her separate career. If this is clear at the outset, there is less likelihood of subsequent disappointment by the husband who experiences a greater share of responsibility for child care as a result.

Husbands today don't necessarily think their wives should not work or become active in politics. In fact, my own husband said when I went to the Senate, "I think it is a tribute to American democracy when a cook, who moon-

lights as a janitor, can be elected to high public office." I also overheard him remark to someone who asked him what it is like to be married to a Senator, "I've been trying to get next to a political figure for years, and I finally made it."

There is still another advantage to my husband as a result of my career. When I ~~have~~ become too verbose at home, he can remind me to save my remarks for the floor of the Senate where they are paid to listen to me.

I would urge you to consider pursuit of your potential careers and to consider making yourselves available for public office. The cold, hard fact is that the overwhelming percentage of men who would be desirable public officers or members of the legislature are unable to do so because it would be disastrous for their family finances or their normal careers. This leaves a great opportunity for us as women to participate.

There are some specific goals which we (as women) should also strive to meet in the near future. First, we must provide adequate day care facilities throughout the nation for the children of women who want to or who must work. Far too little is presently being done in this state and elsewhere about this problem. Second, we must try to change our tax laws so as to allow as a deductible business expense the cost of child care incurred as a result of employment. Third, we must persuade employers to recognize the value to themselves of providing part time job opportunities for women at all levels of skill and responsibility. I was forced to work on a full time basis for an employer until I had become sufficiently indispensable

that my employer was then willing to hire me on a part time basis (which I preferred) in order to continue to have my services. For mothers of school age children, a work day of 9:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. is often the only day possible for their continued employment. My work on the Arizona State Personnel Commission convinced me that a woman can often be fully as productive on a part time basis as other employees are on a full time basis.

Fourth, we must insist on equal pay for equal work, as well as equal opportunity for positions for which we are qualified. The statistics I quoted earlier show that we have a considerable way to go in this area before reaching our goal. Equal recognition will come of its own accord if we do our work well, and with grace, and dignity.

(*Fifth, we should support an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to include employment of teachers, administrative personnel, and educational institutions.*)
 In working for equality, we would do well to heed the words of John Stuart Mill: "The position which gives the strongest stimulus to the growth of intelligence is that of rising into power, not that of having achieved it; and of all resting points, temporary or permanent, in the way to ascendancy, the one which develops the best and highest qualities is the position of those who are strong enough to make reason prevail, but not strong enough to prevail against reason."

I hope we, as women, can soon achieve that happy state.