

Sponsored by the Association of Collegiate Women

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## OPINION PAPER

The following was submitted by Feminists in State Territory, East Complex Women's Liberation rap group:

Who's Come a Long Way?

"Nature intended women to be our slaves...they are our property; we are not theirs. They belong to us, just as a tree that bears fruit belongs to a gardener. What a mad idea to demand equality for women! ...Women are nothing but machines for producing children."

Napoleon

"Women can't create. Women can only breed."

Anonymous male, 1970

"A case can be developed for preferential treatment and differential admissions standards on the basis of sex."

William Hicks, Chairman

MSU Subcommittee on Enrollment Mix, 1970

There is a popular myth in the American culture that the fight for women's equality has been won. We have women doctors, lawyers, politicians, etc.--what more could we want?

But there still appears to be a discrepancy between possibilities and realities of equal opportunities for women. The above-mentioned professional women often earn far less than men in comparable positions. Women lawyers, ten years after graduation, are earning on the average half the salary of their male classmates. Female chemists with Ph.D.'s earn less than men with B.A.'s. This is a ratio reflected throughout the job scale, from professionals to factory workers. For example, sales work offers women an average of \$5,000 a year less

than men, with chances for advancement reserved primarily for the men.

And the wage gap, instead of shrinking, has been widening for the past 15 years. Think about it.

These statistics are important not only because they affect your pocketbook but also because they affect your ability to fulfill your potential as a human being. Women are 51% of the population; we can't afford to waste the diverse talents of this majority. Women are needed, and not only as housewives; they must actively choose how to make their contribution in today's society.

The choice would be easier if psychological conditioning had not already reduced the options. The following riddle illustrates the mental block many people have :

A man and his son were involved in a car crash. The man died; the son, in critical condition, was rushed to the hospital. In the emergency operating room, the surgeon took one look at the boy and exclaimed, 'My God, that's my son ! '

Only 8 out of 200 in a Great Issues class could explain this. Can you? \*

\*The surgeon was the boy's mother.

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#### PROBLEMS BECAUSE YOU'RE A FEMALE STUDENT?

The University recognizes that because you are a woman you may have been discriminated against in some way while a student here. Mrs. Mary Sharp has been employed particularly to try to help remedy this situation.

Discrimination may be caused by lack of awareness on the part of others, but you may have been suffering from it through lack of awareness on your part. It may not have been a big thing. Has an adviser ever counseled you to take typing and shorthand since you will probably get married anyway, when you really were interested in studying medicine? Have you been discouraged by not finding prospective employers interested in your academic qualifications for a high paying job? Have you had difficulty learning about graduate fellowship application opportunities except after the male students have already received the money?

MSU is to be investigated by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare because of suspected discrimination against women. It wants to establish a good record, but must know where problems exist in order to eliminate them. You know about these things. Action must be taken quickly if it is to do any good. Telephone Mrs. Sharp at 353-3922, or go to her office at Equal Opportunity, 316 Administration Building.

There is also a plan to distribute at spring registration a form on which any woman student may write a brief description of any discrimination she may have felt. Watch for it and use it, if you have not reported incidents you know of before that time.

## REPORT ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE STATES

In the February, 1971 issue of McCall's, an article titled "Women's Legal Rights in All 50 States" was published. The article included some extremely interesting tables--the following is a summary of the data on Michigan.

### "Marriage: The Unequal Union"

A woman cannot be made to pay alimony in Michigan, nor can she freely use her maiden name. She may retain her original domicile for voting, but she may not retain her original domicile for paying taxes.

### "Laws That Work"

Employers are prohibited from discriminating against women in hiring, fringe benefits, promotion and classified ads, but not in firing, wages and job categories.

Labor unions are prohibited from discriminating against women in eligibility for membership and job categories, but not in training programs.

Employment agencies are prohibited from discriminating against women in job placement, job categories and classified ads.

(Editor: Why are labor unions and employment agencies prohibited from discriminating in job categories, but not employers?)

### "Laws That Don't Protect"

Michigan limits the maximum hours a woman can work daily/weekly--9/54.

However, the Attorney General has ruled that the state law is illegal.

Michigan does not limit the maximum weight women can lift, nor restrict the women from working at night, nor compel women to stop working before or after childbirth, nor rule that women may not have particular jobs--some of the other states do have sanctions on the above items.

### "Abortion is Available on These Grounds"

In Michigan, to save the mother's life.

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MSU WOMAN welcomes opinion papers which address themselves to the issues facing women today. We also encourage you to submit information concerning activities of interest to women. Please submit manuscripts and copy to 155 Student Services.