contends, spread lies about Ford's voting record, were more devastating than any sexual innuendo. "We couldn't get the press to point out that they were false. And because of resources, we weren't able to rebut these various outrageous accusations and do what we wanted to win. It was just a tough choice to make at the end."

And regardless of race, Ford had an uphill battle ahead of him, says the pollster, who has worked for Virginia Governor Tim Kaine and other prominent Democrats. Apart from the issue of "him possibly being the first African American senator from Tennessee, for most of the time, the conventional wisdom was that the bigger obstacle was that he was a Democrat, and that the Republicans were going to try to paint him as a doctrinaire liberal," Brodnitz says. "That's always their playbook."

While Tennessee currently has a Democratic-controlled state legislature, includes a number of Democrats in its Congressional delegation, and has a Democratic governor, it is nevertheless a very conservative state in terms of ideology and attitude–more so than Virginia, for example, says Brodnitz, despite the fact that there are more Democratic officeholders in Tennessee. "In Tennessee, more people approve of President Bush, and more people approve of the war in Iraq," he explains. "So the context was a little tougher in Tennessee across the board."

Rather than Ford's race, the campaign's biggest concern going in was money, Brodnitz says. "Ford felt very strongly about the need to be very clear about where he stood, which meant getting on the air relatively early with advertising, which meant raising a lot of money."

Attempting to gauge whether the "Call me" ad hurt Ford in terms of the race's final outcome is "an interpretive minefield," says Richard Johnston, research director for the National Annenberg Election Survey. "[Ford's] was the one Democratic race in which the Democrats gained ground and then lost it," he adds. "It wouldn't surprise me if part of the story was that it was an African American candidate, but maybe not so much. It could be a depressing race story, but it's not clear that the ad is a necessary component of it."

Brodnitz points out that the Tennessee exit polls only captured people who voted in the voting booths on Election Day–but 40 percent of Tennesseans, for varying reasons, cast their votes before Election Day. "So you have to take those polls with a little bit of skepticism," Brodnitz says.

**While becoming a senator would obviously have been the candidate's preference, the campaign's outcome was, in the aggregate, a positive one,** says Vanderbilt's Geer. "Harold Ford lost the race, but he came out of it as a rock star, basically," he says. "You usually don't lose *and* end up advancing your career. He did."

So, what next for Ford?

"He picked a tough state to be born in," Brodnitz says. "I think he's got a very bright future, and just has to see how things develop–who happens to be running in a particular race, what the political environment looks like–but he's very young.

"And he's one of the very rare people in the Democratic Party who, even in loss, really won the respect of people throughout the country," he adds. "The reality, in Tennessee, is that most people have to run twice before they win."

"When he walks into a room, he has a Clintonesque charisma–you just notice him," Geer says. "He's a very young man, and there's a lot of possibilities for him. He had to be very disappointed with the election outcome, but he'll be a force in national politics for quite a while."

Even Luntz, whose clients have run more to red than blue, looks forward to seeing Ford back in politics. "I desperately want him back in the political process, as a leader in that political process," Luntz says. "He is the very definition of a unifying force. He is the definition of a people person. He has all the attributes that we are so desperately looking for in politicians today, and just can't seem to find. He's a great human being, as well as a good leader."

Luntz even has a few words of advice for the Democrat on managing his political ascent. "I'd like to see him as governor," he says, but perhaps not so much with an eye towards the well-being of the good folks of Tennessee: "That would make him a viable presidential candidate in the not-too-distant future."

For now, though, Ford has to take a step back. As the chair of the DLC, he is not even permitted to endorse any particular candidate in the impending presidential race–a race which he will obviously observe with great interest from his front-row seat.

"The role I hope to play, and will play, is to create forums and opportunities for Democratic candidates to lay out their visions and plans on a variety of subjects: children's health care, tackling the seminal problem facing parents of how they afford college education, how America restores its standing in the world," Ford says. "I hope the campaign doesn't veer too much in the vein of personal attacks and personal destruction."

There is no bitterness or recrimination over his own recent experience in that statement; rather, it seems to come out of his belief that there is work to be done, and his hope that someday he will be the one to roll up his sleeves to do it.

"While I was in Congress, the economy expanded and capital markets grew tremendously as more market participants in the world economy emerged and matured," Ford says. "And then, obviously, 9/11 happened, and radically transformed every bit of policy, from domestic policies and civil liberties to our standing and stature in the world.

"The two biggest questions we face as a nation, going forward, in terms of solving huge challenges are: How serious are we, as a nation, in reducing our dependence on oil as an energy source? And how willing are we to engage the world, as we seek to mitigate poverty, mitigate the spread of AIDS, and mitigate the spread of disillusionment in countries around the world?"

These questions, for Ford, are clearly much more than rhetorical. But for the time being, he's working on behalf of shareholders rather than constituents.

"I didn't choose to be out now–I just wasn't elected to the Senate. I have a great passion for public service, but I'm excited about the opportunity I have now," he says. "I have every intention of running for public office again, and God willing and voters permitting, I hope at some point to be there.

"But it's not for me to forecast," Ford laughs. "For now, I'm just learning how to get to the eighth floor and switch elevators."

**Jordana Horn C'95 L'99 is a frequent contributor to the *Gazette*.**


ILLUSTRATION BY JAY BEVENOUR

are working women, many with noteworthy accomplishments, none of us feels as if she has it all; our lives are imperfect and often chaotic, we have fallen short on many of our goals, and we've made countless compromises in order to maintain our capacity to work without slighting our families in any irreparable ways.

**To professional women who derive an important part of their identity from their work,** the whole concept of "having it all" often seems ludicrous, because it is assumed to have relevance only to females. Nobody ever talks about men "having it all" just because they've managed to sire children and hold down a paying job. The phrase also seemed to imply that there was a formula for a successful life and that feminists had figured it out. But every woman's interests, ambitions, and personality are different, and any solution to the challenge of combining work and family is necessarily individual.

Marna Tucker, a senior partner at the Washington law firm of Feldesman Tucker Leifer Fidell, has enjoyed a long and distinguished career, raising two children while becoming the first woman president of the District of Columbia bar and the first woman president of the National Conference of Bar Presidents. "I went back to work because I didn't like the idea of making raisin faces in the oatmeal," Tucker says. "I loved practicing law."

Like most working mothers, she doesn't claim that the juggling act was always easy. "I came home early, and I tried to be home every night, and I had the best help you could have, but I felt guilty all the time," she says. "My daughter is 30 now, and I finally had the courage to ask her, 'Were you upset that your mother went to work all the time?' My daughter said, 'Well, when I was eight or nine and I went over to Kate's house, her mother would be there baking cookies, and I would think "Gee, I wish my mom were home baking cookies!" When we were 13 or 14, Kate's mother was still baking cookies, and we were thinking, "God, I wish she would get away from us!"'"

Tucker laughs. "So the answer is, things change, and there is no answer. I'm not a superwoman. If I do anything, I get a B-plus. I didn't set my goals to be the perfect mother or the perfect lawyer. I had a brain, and I wanted to use it."

Tucker's matter-of-fact acceptance of the idea that she's not perfect provides a striking contrast with the attitude of the Yale sophomore featured in the *New York Times* story about young women planning to give up their careers in favor of their families ["Many Women at Elite Colleges Set Career Path to Motherhood," September 20, 2005]. Cynthia Liu said she believes that she couldn't be "the best career woman and the best mother at the same time," and that she therefore has to choose between those goals.

Those of us who have maintained a long-term commitment to both work and family have resigned ourselves to the reality that we may not be the best, but most of the time we're good enough—and that's fine. "I'm good enough" isn't the kind of slogan you want to emblazon on a billboard, however; the payoff is more like a quiet pride that usually remains unspoken.

And maybe this is the real problem. As we watch younger women rejecting the quest for a fully rounded adult life in favor of a portion of the whole, many of us wonder whether we ourselves might be partly to blame. Perhaps younger women don't understand the appeal of combining work and family because we failed to tell them how great it can be.

Have I really communicated to my children how thrilling my professional life has been? How much of my identity and my self-esteem are derived from utilizing my talents and achieving success in my career? More likely, I downplayed the exhilaration of my independent life in order to reassure my daughter and son that they were always my first priority. And they are—but they aren't my whole life.

I've been a journalist far longer than I've been a mother, and the larger truth is that I have always loved what I do. Because of my work, I have met kings and queens and presidents, movie stars and Olympic gold-medal athletes, murderers and con artists, Nobel Prize-winners and supermodels, pedophile priests and transsexual former nuns—as well as thousands of ordinary people with amazing stories to tell. After 36 years as a journalist, I never know, when I get up in the morning, what the day will bring. At a moment's notice, I may be asked to fly to Paris or Prague, to Napa or Nairobi.

Most of the time, however, I'm at home. When the kids return from school, I'm working in my office next to the kitchen, eager to take a break and hear about their day as I start to prepare our evening meal. I have always cooked dinner for my family, and most nights the four of us sit down to eat together.

Certainly there have been moments when I felt overwhelmed, exhausted, or simply torn between competing demands. Once, when my children were small, I went to the airport to catch a flight to London, feeling very pleased with myself because I'd organized everything so meticulously on the home front. Every breakfast, lunch, and dinner the children would eat while I was away had been planned, cooked, and labeled. (Yes, I'm compulsive.) Every appointment was carefully charted on the family calendar. Every last detail had been taken care of, so my baby-sitter and husband could manage the children's lives without a hitch in my absence. As I stepped up to the ticket counter at the airport, I felt exceedingly smug about being such a superwoman.

"Your passport, please," said the clerk. Experienced world traveler that I was, I stared at her blankly. My passport? I had remembered to leave my husband detailed notes on every muffin to be defrosted while I was away—but I'd forgotten my passport.

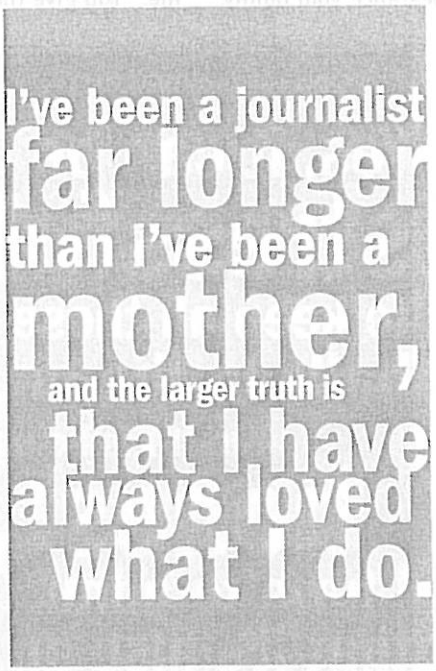
So much for superwoman. My heart pounding, I called my baby-sitter in a panic and counted the minutes until she and my children careened into the airport in a taxi, laughing and waving my passport at me.

In retrospect, however, those moments of stress make me smile rather than shudder. Quite apart from the loss of income, my life would be impoverished in innumerable ways were I to give up my career. How could I ever regret the amazing opportunities it's given me?

But that's not all. Long before I ever made it to Lahore or Amman or Dubai on assignment, my career had completely transformed my personality. As a child growing up in Manhattan and then in suburban Westchester County, I was shy and self-conscious, paralyzed with stage fright whenever I had to talk to more than one person at a time. As a teenager, I remember sitting on a train, utterly frozen, while the man next to me furtively rubbed his hand along the outside of my thigh.

After what seemed an eternity of shame, I finally managed to squeak out a quavering, apologetic, "Excuse me..."–hardly an adequate protest, but enough to make him jump up and flee into the next car of the train.

When I became a reporter, I seemed hopelessly unsuited to the tasks at hand. At the first press conference I ever attended, I was racked with self-doubt; whenever I thought of a question to ask, I tortured myself with imagined criticisms. Few people who know me today would recognize this self-description. After more than three decades as a journalist, I am generally seen as confident and assertive–not to mention tough and aggressive at times. The demands of my work have transformed me into someone else entirely–someone far better suited to cope with the rigors of life than the wimpy girl I used to be, I might add.




**Having an independent life has always given me the opportunity to disengage from my family,** even if only momentarily, and reconnect with my own most authentic self–the writer I was long before I had kids, the writer I will be after they are grown. My work–particularly the intermittent travel it requires–provides a crucial opportunity to listen to my own inner voice. Endlessly willing to sublimate their own egos and sacrifice their individual needs to those of their families, stay-at-home mothers often characterize working women as selfish for deriving any enjoyment from the parts of their lives that exist independently of husbands and children. A professional woman's admission that she enjoyed a hotel Jacuzzi or a foreign shopping spree is proof that she doesn't care about her children.

I don't find such criticisms especially surprising; many people have a need to justify their own choices with harsh indictments of alternative choices. Far more startling to me are the unforgiving attitudes of so many younger women. In my interviews for this book, one thirtyish executive spent an hour telling me that it would be impossible for her to manage her current job after she had children, so she would probably give up the career she loved. "But what about Sarah and Melanie?" I protested, mentioning two older working mothers in her corporation (whose names have been changed to protect the families' privacy).

"I don't consider them to be role models," this woman said with palpable disapproval.

"Why not?" I asked, astonished.

"Well, Sarah's husband left her–they were separated for a while, you know," she said.

"Yes, they went through a rough period–and then they got marriage counseling and got back together, and now they're very happy," I replied. "But I don't see what that has to do with Sarah's ability to do her job and be a good parent, which she is. And what about Melanie?"

"Well, her husband has problems," said the young woman. "He used to drink too much."

"Yes, but he stopped," I pointed out. "It's true that husbands sometimes have problems, but how does that nullify Melanie's success at maintaining a meaningful career while being a good mother?"

"I just wouldn't want my life to be like either of theirs," the young woman said primly. As far as she's concerned, there are no role models in her vicinity, despite the presence of some terrific senior executives with stellar professional credentials and families who are close and loving, despite their all-too-human failings.

**The women's movement never promised that it would be easy to combine meaningful work with raising a family**–only that it should be possible for women, like men, to do so, rather than being forced to make a draconian choice between the two major components of a fulfilling adult life.

But somehow the entire idea of "having it all" has been discredited, and the backlash against women's progress has been abetted by the personal complaints of certain women who blame the empowering ideology of feminism for the individual disappointments of their own lives.

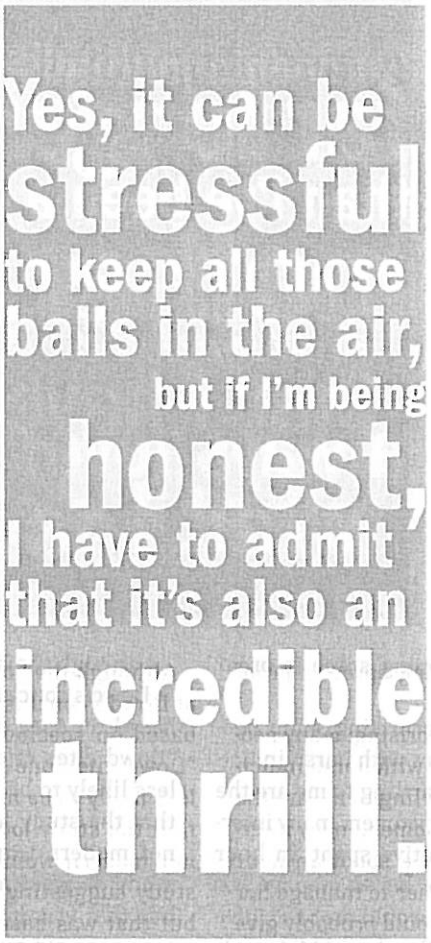
In her recent book *Are Men Necessary?* Maureen Dowd–a Pulitzer Prize-winning op-ed columnist for *The New York Times*–bemoaned her status as a single, childless, fifty-three-year-old professional woman and complained that "being a maid would have enhanced my chances with men."

Although the book was a bestseller, many analysts scoffed at Dowd's conclusions, noting that her assertions were often based on specious sourcing. The *New York Post* reported: "Dowd cites one study that found women with higher IQs less likely to be married, but does not reveal–if she knows–that the study looked at women who are now in their 80's, not modern women, the authors said. Dowd uses another study suggesting males shy away from ambitious women, but that was based on college students–seventeen-to-nineteen-year-old guys. Dowd also cites a study that found high-achieving women aged twenty-eight to thirty-five were less likely to be wives and mothers–but fails to explain the same study found that by the ages of thirty-six to forty, the high achievers were slightly *more* likely to be hitched with kids than other working women."

**For every woman I know who never married and claims the reason is that it's impossible to find a suitable mate,** I know dozens of successful women who are happily married to peers. So if some women, emboldened by the visionary idealists of the women's movement, ended up disappointed, was it really the fault of the feminist leaders who looked at the deprivations of women's lives and argued that things could be better?

When influential women attack the core ideas of the women's movement as some kind of hoax or failure, rather than taking responsibility for the consequences of their own individual choices, they lend credibility to the reactionaries who have always claimed that women shouldn't, or couldn't, enlarge their horizons. At the same time, those opposed to gender equity keep ratcheting up the pressure for women to conform to conventional feminine images and standards.

As a result, all too many American women are in thrall to increasingly deranged ideals of perfection. We live in a culture that constantly exhorts us to improve ourselves—and that assumes the perfectibility of virtually everything. If you don't work at perfecting every aspect of your appearance, your family, your home, and your life, you feel like a slacker. But in order to maintain their sanity, working mothers have to be practical; perfection is an ideal you can use to berate yourself forever, but this takes a lot of energy that would be better directed toward more productive ends.




For me, one of the defining moments of my dual career as journalist and mother came many years ago, when my son was almost two and my daughter was about to turn five. Ever since having kids, I had struggled with feelings of guilt that plagued me no matter what I was doing. When I was engrossed in my work, I always worried that I was slighting my children. When I focused on them, I felt guilty about neglecting my work.

I finally asked the writer Anna Quindlen, who has three children and one of the more successful careers in journalism, how she handled the guilt. "I don't do guilt," she said firmly. End of subject.

At the time, the contrast between her crisp, no-nonsense attitude and my own hand-wringing sense of inadequacy made me feel that this was just another way I didn't measure up—on a par with the fact that Anna roasted a Christmas goose while I struggled to get a turkey into the oven. It didn't occur to me back then that the refusal to feel guilt was a trait that could be cultivated, like patience or good manners or kindness.

Then I had an unusual stroke of professional luck. Early in the first term of the Clinton presidency, the so-called Whitewater scandal was raging around Hillary Clinton, who initially responded by refusing to talk to the press. But the day before my daughter's fifth birthday party, I landed an exclusive interview with the First Lady—a real professional coup. My time with her would be very limited, so I spent the flight down to Washington frantically preparing my questions to make the best possible use of our interview. When I arrived at the White House, I was escorted to the Map Room, where I was left to sit and wait for Mrs. Clinton to join me.

As the minutes dragged on, my mind wandered. After some time had passed, I suddenly realized with horror that my thoughts had drifted to the birthday party I'd been planning. Instead of rehearsing my interview questions, I'd been obsessively going over the party favors, children's games, and birthday snacks in my mind, absorbed in the eternal have-I-forgotten-anything drill of the ever-anxious mom. What kind of reporter was I?

Despite my self-flagellation, the interview went exactly as I'd planned, the story worked out fine, and the next day I threw a wonderful birthday party for my daughter. As they picked up their children, the other mothers congratulated me. "You give the best birthday parties," one said, "and you always have the best party favors!"

Planning ahead as usual, I had ordered the favors from a catalog months before the party, knowing that I might not have time for last-minute shopping, which of course I didn't. As a mom, I had delivered a successful party—and, as a reporter, I had delivered a successful story. Maybe neither one was as perfect as it might have been if I'd had an unlimited amount of time to focus on every last detail, but the greatest satisfaction ultimately came from having managed both sets of responsibilities competently.

Indeed, it's the combination of the two that has made my life so interesting. Yes, it can be stressful to keep all those balls in the air, but if I'm being really honest, I have to admit that it's also an incredible thrill. There are few experiences more exhilarating than living up to every bit of your potential.

Throughout their lives, my children have watched me manage a wide range of demands, both familial and professional. They've seen me confront obstacles, get frustrated, make mistakes, figure out compromises, and ultimately meet whatever challenges were thrown my way. No doubt they've learned many things from my struggles, not all of them flattering to my self-image. But whatever my flaws, I know they know I've tried my best. On my last birthday, my daughter, who was then 16, made me a beautiful card. Inside she wrote, "I could never ask for a better role model or more loving mother, and I want to thank you so much for always being here for me."

I've been a working mother for nearly 18 years now, and in all that time I've never once regretted the immeasurably rewarding life of a working mother. If combining work and family isn't worth the hassle, you sure can't prove it by me.

**Leslie Bennetts CW'70 is a contributing writer at *Vanity Fair*.** 

Interview

# Mom at Work

*Leslie Bennetts CW'70 has worked for her entire adult life. After graduation, she started as a reporter at the old* Philadelphia Bulletin *and went on to become the first woman to cover a presidential campaign for* The New York Times. *Since 1988, she has been a contributing writer at* Vanity Fair, *where she has written about everything from anti-terrorism policy to Hollywood—including, in the latter category, a 2005 cover story on Jennifer Aniston that had the highest newsstand sale in the magazine's history.*

*Bennetts has also raised two children, now teenagers, which is one reason, she admits, that she is coming relatively late to the book-writing world for a journalist of her achievement. Nevertheless, her first book,* The Feminine Mistake: Are We Giving Up Too Much?, *is both a celebration of the joys of working motherhood and a blistering counterattack against the prevailing cultural approval bestowed upon women who choose to leave the workforce to devote themselves wholly to child-rearing.*

*Drawing from her own experience and a broad range of interviews and other research, Bennetts argues that this arrangement doesn't appear to do the kids any extra good, may often be emotionally harmful to the women over the long haul, and is certainly a profound economic risk for the family. In the accompanying excerpt, Bennetts tells how she—and lots of other mothers—have managed to be "good enough" at both parenting and their careers. She also took the time to answer some questions about the book via e-mail.—J.P.*

**Why did you write *The Feminine Mistake*?**

[It] was inspired by my exasperation about the media coverage of the back-to-the-home trend that's been documented by recent census figures. Most of the stories about women quitting their jobs to become full-time mothers don't mention the longterm economic implications of that choice, but they're often catastrophic. Over time, the majority of women who choose to become financially dependent on a man are likely to end up on the wrong side of the odds. Some will get divorced; others will be widowed; and many will deal with challenges such as a husband's illness or unemployment. To compound the problem, the media have generally covered the opt-out trend without discussing the difficulties of opting back in.

**How did your own family situation play into how the book was conceived and written?**

Oddly enough, I didn't think about my own family until I was well into this project, which I initially approached simply as a reporter gathering information on an issue that needed to be covered more comprehensively. But then my husband, who is a very good editor, suggested that I include my mother and grandmother. My grandfather left my grandmother when my mom was nine years old, during the worst years of the Depression. Although my grandmother came from a well-to-do family, she did not have a profession or a job, and my grandfather's departure left her impoverished and dependent on the charity of her wealthy relatives.

I grew up understanding that it wasn't safe to depend on a husband to support you, but I never anticipated that I myself would become another cautionary tale for my book. When I started writing it, my husband was very happily employed as a magazine editor. But then the company's major financial backer suddenly shut the place down, and my husband found himself out of a job for six months. If I hadn't worked, we would have had a real crisis on our hands. As it was, our experience turned into a perfect example of the unexpected challenges that can arise in any life, and of how dangerous it is for a family to rely on a single breadwinner.

**Besides incorporating your own experience, the book includes many quotes from other women. Can you talk about the process you went through?**

I interviewed many different kinds of women all over the country—rich and poor, in red states and blue, women who were high school drop-outs and women who had graduate degrees from Ivy League universities, women who were single, married, divorced, and widowed, women who ranged in age from 17 to 80, women who had glamorous professional jobs and women who worked at McDonald's and Wal-Mart. I also interviewed legal authorities, doctors, sociologists, economists, psychiatrists, and other experts in reporting on a lot of the important research that is typically omitted from the public debate, from medical information to child development studies to changes in the divorce laws. With the experts, I often ended up talking about their own personal journeys as well, since many of them had built distinguished careers while raising children.

**You say you don't like the term "Mommy Wars," and you also dispute the notion that "opting out" of the workforce is simply another choice that women should be free to make. Can you elaborate?**

The so-called Mommy Wars typically feature women sniping at each other about why their choice is better than someone else's, but this tiresome debate leaves out the most important

facts. Most women who "opt out" do so assuming that they can always rejoin the work force later on, but re-entry is far more difficult than they have been led to believe; many never get back in and most pay a high financial price for their time-out. Shouldn't they know this before they base their most important decisions on unrealistic expectations? My goal in writing this book was to provide women with all the information they need to make responsible choices that protect both them and their children.

**At the same time, you're very eloquent on the personal value to be gained by paying work, and you don't seem to buy stay-at-home moms' claims that they are satisfied with their lives. Do you think they're kidding themselves?**

When their children are young, many stay-at-home mothers feel very much needed, and they often say that they're happy to be home taking care of their families. In contrast, working mothers tend to feel a lot of stress when their kids are young. [But] as their children grew older, the stay-at-home moms began to feel frightened and directionless; many were upset by their children's increasing independence, and had no idea what to do with themselves. By then they were learning that there are huge barriers to re-entering the work force, and they were very depressed about the ageism and sexism they encountered. The working moms got happier and happier as the years passed; the stresses at home had lessened dramatically as their children matured, the women's incomes and success had grown, and their lives were extremely satisfying.

So it's not that I think full-time mothers are kidding themselves; most of them haven't really considered the long-range costs of their choice, because they haven't been given the appropriate information to assess it accurately. They end up getting blindsided by the consequences, feeling angry and betrayed, and saying, "Why didn't anybody ever tell me this stuff?"

**What should women be thinking about as they make these decisions?**

When you first have children, the whole experience feels very overwhelming, and you don't really understand how fast kids grow up. So a lot of women end up making life choices that may suit the needs of the moment, but that leave them extremely vulnerable to financial hardship, depression, and other problems in the future. In my book, I talk about what I call "The Fifteen-Year Paradigm." I had two children, three years apart, who are now very independent teenagers; for me, the really intensive period of hands-on mothering lasted less than 15 years.

In my professional life, I started working when I graduated from college at the age of 20, and I certainly hope that my career as a writer will extend well into old age. So the period when my life was really consumed by my children's needs was less than 15 years out of the 50-plus I will spend at my career, which has sustained me intellectually, emotionally, and creatively as well as financially.

When you realize how finite the role of full-time mother really is, it doesn't make much sense to sacrifice an entire lifetime of well-being and financial security to that brief period, when that sacrifice is not necessary to your children's welfare. The social science research clearly shows that the children of working women fare just as well as the children of stay-at-home mothers over the long run.

**Besides the impact on individuals, you also worry that a trend toward mothers leaving the workforce to raise children will adversely affect attitudes about hiring and promoting women. Is that a realistic fear?**

I think it's an extremely realistic fear. Many people told me they had changed their views about hiring and promoting women because they had been burned so often by younger women who weren't committed to their careers; they had come to view these women as spoiled, materialistic dilettantes who were only working until they found a rich husband to support them. Needless to say, this does not bode well for social progress and expanding opportunities for women.

**And what about men? You write about the burden a one-income family places on the man. Can you talk about the value and challenges of household division-of-labor?**

When men share the domestic and child-rearing tasks, it frees their wives to manage job responsibilities with less stress, which makes it less likely that the women will give up and drop out of the work force just because they're overwhelmed by the dreaded "second shift." But the men benefit too; when fathers spend more time caring for their children, they develop a closer bond, and they have more balance in their own lives than men who work brutal hours because they're the sole breadwinners supporting their families. Children who see their fathers sharing the domestic responsibilities absorb powerful lessons in cooperation and democratic family values, and they are far less likely to grow up thinking of women as unpaid servants who perform the domestic scutwork. One sociologist I interviewed had studied children who did housework with their fathers; he found that they were more likely to get along with peers and to have more friends, and were less likely than other kids to disobey teachers or make trouble at school, were less depressed and less withdrawn. Those are some pretty impressive benefits.

**This issue will be coming out in May, the month of Mother's Day. Do you celebrate the holiday, and, if so, how?**

Every Mother's Day, my children make me beautiful cards and an elaborate special breakfast, and my husband does the clean-up. By dinner time, unfortunately, I'm usually back at the stove. Sound familiar? ◆

Reproductive Success for Working Scientists
Tuesday, April 26, 2005
http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/2005/04/2005042601c/careers.html

By Gail M. Simmons

Catalyst

Career advice for scientists

Long ago, I found myself pregnant while working as a postdoc at a federal institute. I was blessed with what seemed like the ideal situation for a mammal who wanted to increase her Darwinian fitness while enhancing her chances for tenure. I would be able to give birth and raise the baby past that difficult first year before I had to throw myself into the academic job market in search of a faculty position. Perfect, I thought.

My supervisor supported my decision, but neither of us had counted on his division being threatened with elimination. We both concluded that I needed to go on the job market immediately if I didn't want to risk being an unemployed new mother.

I began churning out CV's and cover letters that said nothing about my pregnancy. To my delight I soon received a phone call from the chairman of a search committee at a major university. He was someone I knew and respected, and shortly we were arranging for me to fly out for an interview.

It turned out, however, that while my friend was nominally the head of the search, the choice was really up to a newly hired director who got to handpick at least three new faculty members over the next three years. The director and his assistant gave me derisive looks the following week as I waddled down the rickety stairway from the tiny plane to the tarmac. They made it abundantly clear that they knew I had no brain.

The well-planned fantasy of my first pregnancy began to unravel during delivery. Up to then my pregnancy had been uncomplicated. Suddenly I was on an operating table being prepped for an emergency c-section. The baby was fine, but once home with my newborn, I confronted the reality of recovering

from abdominal surgery and dealing with the Thing That Would Not Sleep. By the time I returned to work, I was more drained (both emotionally and physically) than I had ever been in my life. My research project was woefully behind, and I had calls from two more search committees inviting me for interviews.

In the next four months I went on three job interviews with my husband and our infant son in tow. Those experiences made it clear that biologists may find studying mammals worthwhile, but they vastly prefer not to be confronted with the mammalian nature of a job candidate. At one university the faculty members and students were simply dismissive. At another, the powerful chairwoman of the graduate program told me, with venom in her voice, that women in science needed to make choices between family life and science. Apparently I had made the wrong choice.

I finished that interview season with no job in hand. From my perspective many years later, as a dean whose favorite part of her job is hiring new faculty members, I am not surprised. No one who read the recent Berkeley study on the effects of motherhood on academic careers should be surprised, either. It is abundantly clear that, as a society, we have far to go in rethinking how careers for gravid and postpartum academic mammals should proceed. Up to now, all we have really done is modify the protocol followed for decades by the sperm donors.

The Berkeley report calls for large institutional and societal changes. Not that it isn't worthwhile to push for radical reforms, but the real question is: What can you do -- as a female ready to contribute both your highly trained brain and your excellent genetic material to society -- to make it possible to succeed at both in the current academic environment?

I have some suggestions. Let me start with those who are forced by circumstance to interview for a tenure-track job while obviously pregnant or breastfeeding. What should you do, and not do?

**Present yourself as professionally as possible.** Don't skimp on your wardrobe.

You want to look your best even though you may feel your worst. Your object is to distract your interviewers from what you cannot hide outright. Don't wear anything that makes you look like the infant rather than the adult you really are.

**Keep your maternal role in the background.** Try to deflect illegal questions by turning the subject back to the matter at hand, which is your suitability for a position. Don't be rude, however, if interviewers persist in asking questions. Just politely point out that you never would have gone out of your way to interview in this condition if you weren't dead serious about a job at their institution.

**Look for cues of sympathetic interviewers.** Even while keeping as low a profile as possible about your gravid or lactational state, keep a sharp eye and ear out for those who may harbor secret or even open sympathy and support for your situation.

Are there other mothers or fathers among the department's faculty who are willing to discuss their situation? Do you see signs of infants or children in faculty offices (the random stuffed toy, diaper bag, or breast pump on the shelves next to last week's issue of *Nature*)? Those could be clues that your biological imperative will be respected if you are offered a chance to work there.

Once you have an offer in hand, don't relax.

**Be assertive in asking about campus resources for families.** Ask questions of faculty members who may have given clues earlier that they are family friendly. Inquire about day care, family leave, the tenure clock, etc.

If the department head (or any senior faculty member) blanches, sputters, or hesitates to offer information, you may want to think twice about the offer. Find out if any other women in the department, or elsewhere in the sciences, have been tenured while of childbearing age. Ask to speak to her if she exists.

**Once you are hired, look for allies.** One thing is certain: You will need help in your goal to get tenure while having or rearing small children. Find others with whom you can collaborate, commiserate, and network. Don't be afraid to cross

department lines to do that.

**Scope out the "enemy."** And then look for strategies to neutralize her. I say "her" because in my experience the "hims" are usually easy to spot. Yet the "hers" can be more insidiously dangerous, not only by badmouthing your maternity to others, or voting against you on a tenure committee, but also by saying things that undermine your self-confidence. Comments like, "I was in the lab all weekend but didn't see you; how is that paper of yours coming?" are not designed to be friendly.

You probably will never convert the naysayers, but you want to make sure that the voice advocating for your work is louder than the ones denigrating it.

**Be creative about sleep habits, work habits, household habits.** Your baby does not care if your laundry is not folded or your bed is unmade. Your object is to meet your basic needs, your family's basic needs, and your work goals. Be prepared to sacrifice a great deal of less-important things until the child is of school age or beyond.

**Be sure you are married to the right person.** And do that before you begin the process of trying to be a scientist and a mother simultaneously. I'm not being flip here. A passive-aggressive spouse can do more to destroy your career than an army of old-boy faculty members.

I would recommend some counseling on this matter even if your relationship seems ideal. Partners who are not in academe may not realize exactly what goes into academic science, tenure, and promotion. Is your partner truly ready to take on half or more of the work while you're trying for tenure?

If your husband is in academe but not the sciences, does he truly understand that you can't work from home most of the time and that you can't have an infant in a laboratory? If he's also in science, does he "get it" that the two of you must both be willing to juggle -- not just you? Whose career will come first if one of you has problems on the job?

If you are a dean or a department head, you can do a lot to make prospective female faculty members feel welcome. And whether you make the effort will tell

candidates a lot about the kind of workplace you run. Here are some of the things you should do both for potential hires and for current faculty members who either have or are about to have children:

**Introduce job seekers to faculty members with children.** Include those professors in a lunch or social hour with the candidate, and prep them to casually share information about their arrangements. That is presuming, of course, that your institution already makes an effort to be family friendly.

**Offer information about family policies to all job candidates.** Discuss child-care options, health insurance, leave policies, tenure-clock modifications, part-time possibilities, flexible teaching schedules. Don't wait to be asked, and don't ask whether the candidate intends to take advantage of those options. Just put the information out there.

**Share your own experience.** If you've "been there, done that," don't keep it a secret. I've seen the look of relief on a candidate's face when I mention my own child-rearing stories.

**Look for informal solutions to problems.** One of the simplest accommodations I ever received was from the scheduling officer in my department. She knew that two of us in the department had small children and lived near each another. So she arranged our teaching schedules so that we taught on different days of the week. That way I could baby-sit her kids if they were ill and could not go to day care, and she could babysit mine. It worked very well.

**Provide parenting space in your building.** Faculty offices are often rather too crowded for times when a faculty member must bring an infant or child along, and noises from crying babies may disturb others. Consider whether you can dedicate a small amount of space as a nursery.

The bottom line is that everyone from the silverback to the alpha female to the subadults benefits if conditions favor intellectual *and* reproductive success. So everyone from the president down to junior faculty members should find ways to make that success happen.

Gail M. Simmons is the dean of science at the College of New Jersey.

Berkeleyan

# Campus will grant paid maternity leave to women doctoral students

**Berkeley is again 'on the cutting edge' of family-friendly benefits with this new policy, of special interest to an aging grad-student cohort**

By Cathy Cockrell, Public Affairs | 07 March 2007

Women doctoral students at Berkeley who hold fellowships or academic appointments as graduate-student instructors or researchers will soon be eligible for six weeks' paid maternity leave under a childbirth-accommodation provision passed March 5 by the Graduate Council. The policy, which takes effect in fall 2007, builds on the campus's suite of family-accommodation measures for faculty — such as teaching-duty relief and tenure-clock stoppage for faculty parents of young children — by "pushing it down to the doctoral-student level," says Graduate Dean Mary Ann Mason.

**Women Scientists' Changing Career Goals**

The attrition of women from the academic pipeline, largely due to the competing demands of family and academic life, is well-documented by national and local studies. An 18-page Web survey of doctoral students (in their second year and beyond), conducted at Berkeley last fall by Mason and her longtime research collaborator, Marc Goulden, confirms these patterns. The survey looked at doctoral students' attitudes toward future careers and life issues and their satisfaction with their current degree program, with special attention to issues affecting doctoral-student parents. Of the 4,201 surveyed, 2,111 (50 percent) responded.

When entering their Ph.D. program, 46 percent of women reported wanting to pursue a career at a research university, and another 27 percent wanted positions at teaching universities. But after the first year of doctoral studies, many had changed their minds: Only 31 percent of women remained interested in a research career. "A main reason is a perceived inability to balance career and family," Mason explains. Asked to state the reasons they shifted their career goal away from "professor with research emphasis," 42 percent of women respondents (and 16 percent of men) cited issues related to children as a "very important" factor. A change of plans in light of the demands of academic life is especially pronounced in the physical sciences.

In response to another survey question, 58 percent of female and 47 percent of male doctoral students expressed dissatisfaction with their ability to balance the demands of career and life at Berkeley. This represents a general dissatisfaction among all students, not just those with children.

For student parents, achieving balance is particularly challenging. The survey found that about 12 percent of current Berkeley doctoral students, male and female, have had babies. The time they devote to studies, employment, housework, and caregiving each week — totaling more than 100 hours for women with children and more than 90 for men with children — closely mirrors the patterns reported by faculty members with children.

Family-accommodation policies for doctoral students become increasingly important, says Mason, as the graduate-student population ages. In 2005 the average age nationally for completing a Ph.D. was 33, up several years from where that benchmark stood in the mid-'80s. "The whole clock has been pushed forward," she says, "and graduate students ever more frequently are in their prime childbearing years — their late 20s, early 30s — while pursuing their degrees, so they start to really think about issues involved with forming a family."

Doctoral candidate Chrysanthi Leon is one such student. She credits Berkeley's family-related accommodations and services — student-family housing, university childcare, and a grant that rewards meeting time-to-degree norms — with making it possible for her to complete her program in jurisprudence and social policy (she graduates this spring).

**A one-stop resource for the campus community**

All UC affiliates are invited to subscribe to "UC Families," a free online resource for students,

"I wish I had also been able to benefit from paid maternity leave," she says. "This is a wonderful accomplishment. I will push for similar accommodations for grad students in my new position as an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Delaware."

Mason notes that only a handful of universities across the country offer paid pregnancy leave for doctoral students — "so we're still on the cutting edge."

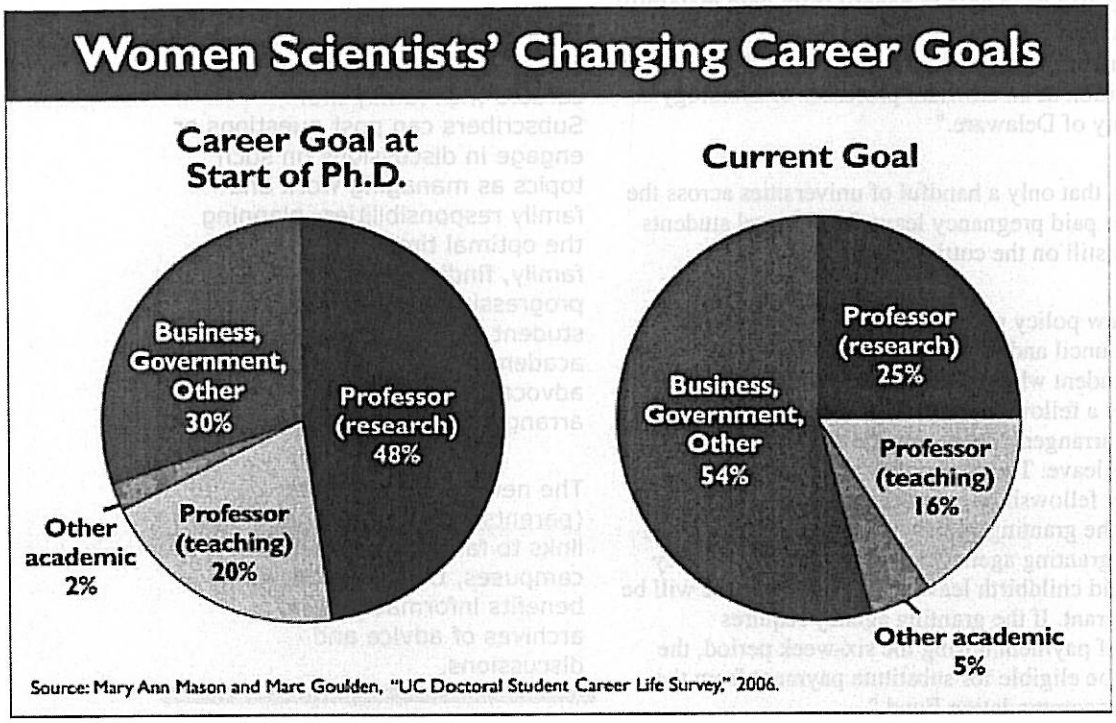
Under the new policy passed by the Academic Senate's Graduate Council and approved by Chancellor Birgeneau, a doctoral student who works as a GSI or GSR or who is supported by a fellowship will experience no change in her funding arrangements during the six-week childbearing leave. The new policy states that "those supported by fellowships external to UC must adhere to the rules of the granting agency in regard to leaves from work. If the granting agency defers to university policy regarding paid childbirth leave, the six-week leave will be paid by the grant. If the granting agency requires suspension of payment during the six-week period, the student will be eligible for substitute payment from the Childbirth Accommodation Fund."

faculty, and staff who are balancing academic goals or careers with family life. Subscribers can post questions or engage in discussions on such topics as managing work and family responsibilities, planning the optimal time to start a family, finding advice on progressing academically as a student parent, returning to academia after having a baby, or advocating for flexible work arrangements.

The newsletter's website (parents.berkeley.edu/ucfamilies) links to family resources on UC campuses, UC-wide policy and benefits information, and archives of advice and discussions.

The expectant mother may also opt to continue to work in a modified capacity during her leave, but is not required to do so. The six-week leave can be taken before or after a child's birth. Stipends for temporary hires to replace graduate-student instructors or researchers, when such funding is needed, may be charged to the campus's Childbirth Accommodation Fund upon Graduate Division approval.

A copy of the new policy — along with other policies applicable to doctoral-student parents — is online. A summary of Mason and Goulden's research on the academic pipeline and initiatives to make the academy more family- friendly is at ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu.




In a recent campus survey, 48 percent of female Ph.D.-student respondents in the physical sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics said they intended, at the start of their doctoral studies, to pursue a career at a research university (versus only 25 percent beyond their first year of doctoral work). For men, interest in a research-university career dropped from 44 percent initially to 32 percent by a year or more in.