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Marjorie Paxson:
From Women's Editor to Publisher

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After earning a journalism degree at the University of Missouri during World War II, Marjorie Paxson began her career covering hard news for a wire service. She went to the women's pages after the men returned from war, taking her news sense with her. She worked to include more hard news in her women's sections in Houston. She later moved from Texas to Florida in order to work for the women's section of the *Miami Herald*—one of the top women's sections in the country in the 1950s. Paxson became an assistant to Marie Anderson in 1960. During the next decade, Anderson won so many Penney-Missouri Awards, the top prize, that the section was briefly retired from the competition. Paxson won a Penney-Missouri Award of her own when she was women's page editor at the *St. Petersburg Times* in 1969. Paxson was national president of Theta Sigma Phi, now Women in Communications, from 1963 to 1967, pivotal years when the organization of women journalists focused more on professionalism. She went on to become the fourth female publisher in the Gannett newspaper chain. On September 11, 2007, the National Women and Media Collection, created by Paxson, was cited for its value on the twentieth anniversary of the Collection.

Marjorie Paxson: From Women's Editor to Publisher

Marjorie Paxson's fight to redefine women's page content and later her battle to redefine her career when the sections were eliminated are symbolic of the changing role for women journalists in the era from World War II through the women's liberation movement. Up until the late 1960s and early 1970s, the only place for most women journalists was the women's pages—exceptions included when women filled in for men during war time and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's women-only press conferences. Often, however, women journalists remained in women's sections. Overall, the content reinforced women's traditional roles as wives and mothers. *Louisville Courier-Journal* women's page editor Carol Sutton described the sections of having “a whiff of magnolia” about them.¹

It wasn't until the women's liberation movement in the 1960s that the barriers of discrimination in the media workplace were truly addressed—and even then change was largely made by filing lawsuits. One of the most visible changes seen in newspapers was the elimination of the women's pages. Some of the women journalists were able to move into other sections, while others were demoted or lost their jobs. Paxson's career demonstrates the struggles that women's page editors faced as society and the newspaper industry were changing. It also adds to the literature on the role women played in shaping the definition of “women's news.”

Paxson spent more than four decades in journalism, moving from hard news reporter to women's editor to publisher. Her career illustrated the impact of the women's liberation movement on a woman in journalism. Paxson

worked as a reporter or editor for the United Press, the Associated Press, the *Houston Post*, the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Miami Herald*, the *St. Petersburg Times*, the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, and the *Idaho Statesman*. She then became a publisher of two Gannett newspapers, the *Public Opinion*, in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and the *Muskogee Phoenix* in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Paxson said she always was a “closet boss” until the Gannett newspaper chain gave her the opportunity to “come out of the closet.”²

Paxson was also active in the industry. She was a national president of the Association for Women in Communications during its transformation from a sorority to a professional organization. She received its Headliner award in 1976 and the organization's lifetime achievement award in 2001. Paxson also won a national Penney-Missouri Award for outstanding women's section in 1970 while she was the women's page editor of the *St. Petersburg Times*.

Women journalists who gained hard news experience during World War II before being demoted back to the women's sections looked at news content in a different way. Colleen “Koky” Dishon, a women's page editor in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Illinois, said she and her contemporaries took “the yardstick we used for news and moved it over to the features section.”³ While they worked to improve content, many of these women lost their positions when the “women's sections” became “lifestyle sections.”⁴ As Paxson's career arc demonstrated, the elimination of the sections often hurt some women's careers. Fortunately for her, she was able to benefit from one of the

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more progressive newspaper chains seeking to promote women before she retired.

Childhood

Paxson was born in Houston, Texas in 1923 and spent her childhood in that area. Her parents were both from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They left Pennsylvania for Texas when her father became a petroleum geologist. Her mother went to secretarial school after high school and worked for the board of health in Lancaster until she got married and stopped working outside of the home. Paxson's mother was a strong influence; she took care of the family, which consisted of Paxson and her brother, and acted as disciplinarian when Paxson's father was away on business—a situation that occurred regularly.⁵

Paxson grew up reading history books and the newspapers—her family subscribed to both the *Houston Post* and the *Houston Chronicle*. As an adolescent, she was not sure what she wanted to be. She only knew what she did not want to be—the traditional female occupations of nurse or teacher. When Paxson began attending Lamar High School, she started writing for her school newspaper. It was then that she realized journalism was going to be her career, and she never regretted the decision.⁶

Based on a teacher's recommendation, Paxson wanted to attend the University of Missouri for its journalism program, but her parents encouraged her to attend Rice College for her first two years because it was close to home. She worried about being accepted there – at the time, Rice's freshman class was limited to ten percent women. While at Rice, she worked on the student newspaper and took her general education requirements.

In 1942, Paxson began her junior year at the University of Missouri in Columbia. Although the University of Missouri School of Journalism was full of students when she began, six weeks later there were many vacant seats because most male students had been

drafted for World War II.⁷ This situation was occurring in journalism programs across the country. At Southern Methodist University, Vivian Castleberry, who went on to become an award-winning women's page editor in Texas, recalled the increased opportunities for female students. For example, prior to male students leaving for World War II, there had never been a female editor-in-chief of the student newspaper at her school in many years. But when Castleberry decided to run for the position that she ultimately won, her competitor was a female student.⁸

The University of Missouri School of Journalism, then as now, puts out a daily community newspaper, the *Columbia Missourian*, which competed with a local newspaper, the *Columbia Tribune*. Paxson said the practical experience at the *Missourian* as well as her liberal arts classes at the University of Missouri helped her to land her first job with the United Press wire service.

Becoming a Journalist

Paxson graduated from college in 1944, in the middle of World War II. She considered joining the military when her college roommate joined the Marines but journalism ultimately was a bigger draw for her.⁹ Like other women in journalism programs at the time, Paxson found more opportunities. With so many men in the armed forces, women had a relatively easy time finding journalism jobs. For example, the United Press employed 100 women during wartime, or 20 percent of its staff.¹⁰

Paxson's first job was with the United Press in Nebraska. She and the bureau manager, Marguerite Davis, covered state news except for football games (women were not allowed in the press box at Nebraska Stadium) and executions at the state penitentiary (the Omaha bureau manager didn't think women belonged there).¹¹

Paxson's first experiences with sexual harassment occurred while covering the state



Marjorie Paxson with Robert M. White, then president-elect of Sigma Delta Chi, later renamed the Society of Professional Journalists, at the University of Missouri in 1966. (*National Women and Media Collection, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Penney-Missouri Award Papers, box 2, Marjorie Paxson folder*)

Supreme Court. The 70-year-old clerk used to “pat” the women. At one point he put his arm around Paxson. Most of the time she tried to avoid him. Paxson said, “You just had to put up with it, spend as little time as possible in his office, make a point of always keeping the desk in between you. If he started to come around the desk, you picked up those opinions and left.”¹² These experiences helped her to relate to the concept when it was raised years later by women’s liberation leaders.

While the war allowed women to break into the news sections of newspapers, it only provided a short-term opportunity. Paxson, like other women journalists, signed an agreement with United Press that allowed a man to take her position when he returned from duty. After

the war, it was rare for women to work in the newsroom.¹³ In her retirement, Paxson recalled: “Thousands of women all over the country signed those waivers. That would not happen today. But when you understand the mores and attitudes of this country in 1944, signing the waiver was the accepted thing to do. Journalists need that historical perspective. It is important to the story.”¹⁴ Other women’s page journalists who returned to women’s sections with wire news experience included Roberta Applegate in Michigan¹⁵ and Dishon¹⁶ in Ohio.

After working for the wire service for two years, Paxson was replaced at the end of the war by a man who had no previous journalism experience. Ironically, the new male hire was paid \$20 less than Paxson had earned per week because he had less experience – a switch in the usual gender-based pay inequity. According to Paxson, it may have been one of the few times in newspaper history that a woman was replaced by a man at a lower salary.¹⁷ At the time, men and women of the same experience level were supposed to earn equal pay under contracts negotiated by the union, the American Newspaper Guild. For much of her career, however, Paxson did not enjoy pay equity. It was not until she became an executive with Gannett that she again earned equal pay.¹⁸

The week she was told she was losing her job at the United Press, she took a job with the Associated Press in Omaha. Her job was to edit the radio wire copy, a task that helped her to write more concisely and directly. She stayed there for two years before tiring of the routine and the long hours. She headed back to Texas in 1948. She applied to several newspapers and was offered the position of society editor at the *Houston Post*, the more liberal paper in the city in comparison to its main competition, the *Houston Chronicle*.¹⁹ Paxson moved back home at age 24 because her parents believed a single woman should not be living in an apartment and she ended up living with her parents from 1948 through 1956.

Being the society editor in a city when the

oil economy was booming kept Paxson busy. She had a staff of five women. To keep up with society events, Paxson had 14 evening dresses—most were made by her mother. She had a hectic schedule. On Friday, she would put together the Sunday section during the day and then cover a party at night before going back to the office, writing a story about the social event she had attended and returning home at 3 a.m. On some days, Paxson would be in the composing room looking at the page proof upside down while in her evening dress. At that time linotype machines set the type and the pages were made up by hand. The tricky process sometimes resulted in mistakes. In one story about a cocktail party, the second half of the word was left off. Paxson was lectured about proofreading.

Paxson said one of her greatest accomplishments was to get pictures of brides off the front-page of the Sunday women's section so she could put more issue-oriented features there. It was a push that progressive women's page editors were making in many parts of the country. While Ben Bradlee is often given credit for transforming the women's pages,²⁰ changes were already being made by women's page editors across the country.²¹ Paxson recalled, "It was really something at the time. I was educating, arguing, fighting—and I wasn't brought up to argue. But change had to happen."²²

While her editors were all males and not very supportive, the female publisher of the *Houston Post* did back Paxson up on her policy change on wedding pictures. When the daughter of a friend of the newspaper's owner, former Governor William Hobby, was married, the governor called and asked for an exception, but Paxson stuck to her policy. The next call came from his wife, Oveta Culp Hobby, who had been the director of the Women's Army Corps during World War II and was in President Eisenhower's cabinet at the time. (Although officially the former governor was the publisher of the paper, it was his wife who

actually ran it.) She asked Paxson about the policy and after hearing the answer, backed Paxson up.²³

After Paxson was promoted from society editor to women's editor, she had a difficult time getting hard news in her section. For example, when she came across a wire story about a state Parent Teacher Association convention in a nearby city, she asked the news editor if her staff could cover the story. Paxson recalled, "He looked me straight in the eye and he said, 'I'll never give a news story to the women's section.'"²⁴

While there were limitations as described above, Paxson experienced some advantages to heading the women's section—freedom from some traditional news restraints. For example, Paxson was able to run a syndicated advice column that focused on sexual issues. The managing editor told her, "You can run that kind of thing in your section where we couldn't run it in the rest of the paper."²⁵ She was not alone in this view. In Dallas, Castleberry described times when she redefined what was considered women's page content. She said, "I looked at society with a small 's' instead of a capital 'S,' which didn't always please my bosses."²⁶ She changed the definition of "society" to include "all humanity—the social structure of the community."²⁷

In 1952 the women's editor of the *Houston Chronicle* retired. The managing editor of the newspaper offered Paxson the job, which included a pay raise and a chance to oversee a staff of seven people. When she started, there was still a focus on soft feature stories, but a new era was on its way. In the early 1950s, Paxson started receiving photos of black brides—prior to that time none had been sent in. When she decided to begin publishing them, the *Chronicle's* women's section became the first newspaper in the city to feature photos of black brides, according to Paxson. She attributed many of the changes that occurred in her section to changes in the community: "It was more a matter of let's keep up with the

times and stay current. It was clear that our coverage would need to change.”²⁸

It was in the mid-1950s that Paxson began covering more serious issues in her section, focusing on working women and how they could best balance their work and home lives. Paxson remembered that she often copied the “revolutionary” approach used by the *Miami Herald’s* women’s section, her future employer. She said: “All of my life I have preached the theory that you should plagiarize and localize, steal an idea wherever you can and make it work for yourself. And we stole a lot from the *Miami Herald*.”²⁹

Paxson stayed at the *Chronicle* until 1956 when she felt she was getting too comfortable and needed a fresh challenge. She had accomplished everything she had planned to update the women’s section at the *Chronicle*. She wrote to several newspapers to inquire about jobs and was happy to get a favorable response from Dorothy Journey at the *Miami Herald*, a woman whose career Paxson had followed. There was an opening for a copy editor in the *Herald’s* 14-person women’s section.

At the *Herald*, with a circulation of about 300,000 at the time, Paxson worked directly under assistant women’s editor Marie Anderson, the woman who won so many Penney-Missouri Awards that her section was briefly retired from the competition. Paxson said she learned management skills from both editors: “Where Dorothy could be very strong and forceful, Marie was very low-key. But she got things done just the same.”³⁰ When Journey left for the *Detroit Free Press*, Anderson was promoted to women’s page editor and Paxson became assistant editor. Under their leadership, the section continued to be an advocate for women, publishing the entire report of the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, and printing excerpts from Betty Friedan’s *Feminine Mystique*.

When Anderson and Paxson wanted to experiment even more with content, Paxson

said her managing editor went along with their ideas.³¹ The section included stories about birth control pills, the sexual revolution, unmarried couples living together, and women’s medical concerns. The section was large—running as many as twenty-four pages on Sundays during heavy advertising seasons. Stories in the sections moved far beyond food and fashion and explored serious social issues including those important to black and Jewish communities.

Paxson said the key to transforming the women’s section was the activism of the women’s editor and the support of the male managing editors and publisher—especially because women editors did not have the authority to make the final decisions. One of those supportive managing editors at the *Miami Herald* was Al Neuharth, who years later hired her as a Gannett publisher. He became known for being open to the women’s movement. For example, in 1970, when Neuharth was president of the New York State Publishers Association, he invited feminist leader Gloria Steinem to be the keynote speaker and urged her to lay out the movement’s agenda. It was clear that not all editors supported the movement in the way that Neuharth did. During Steinem’s address, she was challenged by a publisher: “Why should white male publishers like myself support your feminist movement?”³²

Paxson encountered similar challenges from male editors in Florida. In hopes of educating the editors, Paxson and Edee Greene, women’s editor of the *Ft. Lauderdale News*, gave a presentation to a Florida state meeting of managing editors called “What’s Wrong with Women’s Pages.” (This was not their title—Paxson said they did not think there was anything wrong—only that more consideration of their content was needed.) The first issue they focused on was the emphasis on women’s roles as wives and mothers:

We thought they made a mistake when they allowed reporters to write something to the effect that ‘although Edee Greene is a champion stock car driver, president of the

Florida women's press club and women's editor of the *Ft. Lauderdale News*, she still finds time to be a wife and mother.³³

They turned the story around, asking whether male journalists would write a story explaining that Milt Kelly (Greene's boss) was a professional marksman, a flycaster, and a managing editor and yet still found time to be a husband and father. More than 20 years later, Paxson observed that style of writing is "still being done and I still cringe. We may have come a long way but we have a long way to go."³⁴

Paxson and Greene also encouraged managing editors to include fewer stories about brides and "club trivia" and more stories about medical, educational, economic, and sociological issues. The women recommended that the managing editors stand behind the women's page editors when they received irate phone calls from brides' fathers asking why there was not space to write about the train on their daughters' dresses. They also requested a new job description for women's page editors. They thought a women's page editor should be a crusader, a newswoman who was alert to what was going on in her community, and a woman with an imagination who could localize the news content of the general wire stories in her section. There was also the question of management skills. Paxson told the group:

This is something that got overlooked a lot of times. Some woman simply was promoted but she needed to learn how to manage the staff, how to keep the staff on its toes. At some point she needed to learn to back up her staff. That's the thing learned from Mrs. Hobby. She was willing to back me up and I've never forgotten that.³⁵

The training session did not have much of an impact, according to Paxson. "Oh, they all told us they loved it," she said. "And then went right back to doing things the way they had always done it."³⁶ Similar programs through Associated Press Managing Editors also highlighted the problem without making significant



Marie Anderson and Marjorie Paxson at the Theta Sigma Phi headliner dinner at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, August 20, 1964. (Photo from the Papers of Marie Anderson, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri).

change.³⁷

As the women's liberation movement got underway, Paxson recognized a growing awareness of women in the newsroom. She wrote an article for the *Iowa Publisher* newsletter in October 1967 about the progress women were making in journalism, although she also recognized that sexism still existed. She wrote, "The walls of resistance to women in the newsroom are yielding, a complete turnaround from 1945."³⁸ But she noted that due to gender-based stereotypes, women were coming into the newsroom at a disadvantage. She wrote, "Most city editors are men, and there is an inborn prejudice against sending a woman on certain kinds of stories."³⁹ She concluded the article by telling young women they did not have to make a choice between a personal life and a professional life: "A woman needn't worry either about having to make the

old choice between marriage or a career. More than half the women who work in this country are married. A smart girl has her cake and eats it, too.”⁴⁰

Professional networking

During her years at the *Miami Herald*, Paxson was elected the national president of the 4,500-member professional journalism organization now known as the Association for Women in Communications (then called Theta Sigma Phi). She held that office from 1963 to 1967. When she took office, the organization—which was founded in 1908 as a sorority for journalism students—was more of a social group than a professional one. According to Paxson, “I turned the organization from a narrow, journalistic social sorority concept to a professional approach. I motivated volunteers who paid dues for the privilege of working in the organization ... to change direction.”⁴¹ Paxson’s campaign for a more professional approach to issues concerning women in journalism was not always well received. The race for the presidency was “bitter.” Many members resisted Paxson’s emphasis on professional training. She was at a local Theta Sigma Phi meeting when she learned she had won. She got a telegram from Anderson: “Congratulations, I guess.”⁴²

According to Chicago journalist Mary Jane Snyder:

Those were decisive years when a philosophy of change was at stake. We needed a woman with strong leadership qualities, a real professional. Marj was the right person at the right time. She hits the ground running. She’s a woman with high expectations who has the talent to mesh divergent people together, yet do it in a non-threatening manner so everybody feels comfortable.⁴³

Paxson’s goals included establishing a national headquarters. At that time the national organization’s files were housed in a member’s garage. She also wanted to put more

professional information in the organization’s magazine, the *Matrix*. She spent much of her free time traveling and speaking to local chapters. During the time she was president, she visited 40 chapters and traveled more than 75,000 miles. She also corresponded with different groups within the organization—writing more than 4,000 letters for an average of 25 a week. In her farewell address as president, Paxson called for the organization to change its name from the Greek letters denoting a sorority to a more professional title, Women in Communications, Inc., although it took several more years for this to occur. She said, “I always had a high regard for the organization. It did spread across the country and there were a lot of prominent women in it. I felt like it could be a force to help women as things changed in the sixties.”⁴⁴

In the years following Paxson’s presidency, the women whom she had recruited stayed involved and pushed for continued professionalism. Decades later, the organization continues to be a professional association that provides a female voice for communications professionals.

A new challenge

In 1968, after 12 years at the *Miami Herald*, Paxson got a phone call offering her the position of women’s editor at the *St. Petersburg Times*⁴⁵ in St. Petersburg, Florida. Although St. Petersburg is a retirement community, the newspaper there was known for having progressive content. Paxson decided to take the job. She had a staff of seven women, but like most women’s page editors, she had limited powers. In St. Petersburg, she could not hire, fire, or control her own budget. She did oversee her reporters and developed her own management style. She explained:

I have never been one who could be really tough. Every now and again I can get mad and (the reporters) will know it. Mostly I tried to persuade people and cajole them into

doing it my way. And then finally if that doesn't work then you get pretty tough.⁴⁶

She was not there long when the newspaper became among the first in the country to change the women's pages into a features section, known as the DAY section—as in MonDAY, TuesDAY, etc. In the reorganization, Paxson was demoted to the number three person in her section. She said, "It was a very uncomfortable position to be in and a very difficult time for me."⁴⁷ The new editor of the section was a man, a situation that was occurring across the nation.⁴⁸ Paxson said some of the women's movement leaders were "very vocal about changing the sections. You could see the changes coming."⁴⁹

For Paxson, her demotion was ironic. In the weeks after the elimination of the section, she learned she had won a 1969 Penney-Missouri award for editing the best women's section. She said, "That award was a tremendous achievement. It was proof that your section was relevant."⁵⁰ After accepting the award, Paxson returned to her newspaper that no longer had a women's section and knew she had to leave. She said, "I had been given the literal two-step, there was no sense in staying."⁵¹ When editors at the *St. Petersburg Times* learned she was looking for a new job, she was fired.

Paxson soon went to work as the women's page editor at the *Philadelphia Bulletin*. It was a strong, respected newspaper at that time,⁵² according to Paxson, although it folded in 1982. Paxson had a staff of 15 women. She discovered her job was a difficult one. Her boss did not trust her opinion and regularly criticized what she did. She said, "I don't think he trusted any woman's judgment."⁵³ The job gave her less freedom than she had experienced in Florida. By 1973, the *Bulletin* decided to eliminate its women's section and create a features section called Focus. Paxson said, "It was the same song, second verse."⁵⁴ She was demoted to associate editor of the Sunday magazine.

Paxson later described this period as the

blackest of her life – all she was responsible for was reading page proofs and handling petty details. She said her lowest point came when she was meeting with a group of professional women and she described her firing and demotions. Paxson recalled, "One of the participants heard me out and then told me: 'Marj, you have to accept the fact that you're a casualty of the women's movement.'"⁵⁵ Paxson said she agreed.

While at the magazine, she was told she should continue to look for stories of interest to women that would run in the features section. Yet, all she could do was make recommendations; she had no power to make sure stories directed at women would actually run. When Paxson made suggestions, she said the response from the city editor was, "We've got more important things to do than that."⁵⁶ During her time in that position, which she described as "the worst fourteen months" of her life, she did try to make changes. She regularly wrote critical memos to Managing Editor George Packard. One of those memos, sent on March 8, 1974, is detailed below:

Today's paper upsets me as a women's news editor. It is completely male oriented. In fact, looking through the pages of the B section, I wonder if women do anything but sing for the president and produce babies. The male dominance of the paper is happening so regularly that I am concerned. It's a mistake, a big mistake. . . . Why not a story on the policewoman's battle for equal treatment, pointing out how backward the Philadelphia police are compared with other police departments. . . . Why not a story on the suits for equal pay and equal opportunity women are filing and winning around the country pegged on those two Camden women? . . . I keep suggesting stories such as these to various editors but they are not interested. I think we need to be interested because I think a lot of our readers are interested. After all, we do have more women readers than men. And women are

doing interesting things these days. I am trying to function as women's news editor but if today's paper is any indication, I am striking out. I need your advice on how we can get some of these women's stories into print.⁵⁷

According to retired Gannet executive Christie Bulkeley, editors at the *Philadelphia Bulletin* did not value Paxson, even though her work was excellent, because she threatened the male-dominated field. During floods in the community in 1972, her women's section continually scooped the city side with stories about how to survive the natural disaster. According to Bulkeley, "Her section became so much more valuable that the hierarchical reaction was to kill the section and put Marj in limbo. ... The initial reaction to the woman producing more valuable news was to decide it must have been a fluke and get her out of the way."⁵⁸

With good journalism jobs hard to find, Paxson tried to stick it out at the *Bulletin*. She liked the Philadelphia area and the fact that her former boss, Jurney, had purchased the house next door to Paxson when Jurney began working at the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. In 1974, Paxson's job title was changed and she became a low-level assistant metropolitan editor overseeing 18 beat reporters. She recalled, "I finally was rescued from purgatory."⁵⁹ But her transition back to a management role was not easy. Paxson was afraid to assume the same leadership role she had shown in Florida and became overly cautious. She began double-checking every decision with her editor, Jim Tunnell. One Sunday, he laid his pencil down and shook his head at her. He said: "You're wasting time. You're acting like somebody who's been badly burned. Don't ask me. Just go ahead and do it. I trust your judgment."⁶⁰

After that conversation, Paxson said her confidence returned, although she still did not have much power. When she was asked whether the fashion editor should travel to Paris despite budget constraints, she responded that

she could make a better call if she knew the department's budget. Editor Dale Davis's response was: "Aren't you glad you don't have to worry your pretty head about things like that?"⁶¹ This lack of power at newspapers later hurt some women when they were promoted and did not have the budgetary and management skills. Sutton became the first female managing editor of a metropolitan daily newspaper without having any real management experience. George Gill (who had recommended her for the position) later said: "Carol was a marvelous people person. What she lacked was experience in leading the troops. She was not prepared to be managing editor."⁶² In one anecdotal example, she had never had a secretary and she continued to write her own letters on a manual typewriter.⁶³

In 1975, while at the *Bulletin*, Paxson received a phone call asking if she would be interested in editing the eight-page bilingual daily tabloid to be published in Mexico City for the United Nations World Conference for International Women's Year. With the approval of the managing editor, she was given five weeks of unpaid leave to edit the newspaper for the conference that included 1,300 delegates from various countries. The name of the paper was *Xilonen*, in honor of the Aztec goddess of tender corn. Although Paxson's title was editor, she was more of a publisher.

Paxson worked in a difficult environment with few resources. One of her biggest problems was the heavy pressure from special interest groups. In an article about her experience published in the *Matrix*, Paxson wrote that one woman shoved her against a wall and shook her fist in Paxson's face because she refused to run the writer's "three-page, hand-written opus."⁶⁴ On the other hand, many influential writers eagerly contributed to the publication. One day, Germaine Greer walked into the pressroom asking if she could write an article. Paxson said it took her half a second to agree. Thirty minutes after walking through the door, Greer returned with the

article and handed it to Paxson to read. When she finished, she beckoned to her and said, “I like this,” Paxson remembered. And Greer said, “I thought so. I was watching you and you smiled at the right places.”⁶⁵

Although Paxson had received a leave to work on the Mexico City paper, her own newspaper did not bother to run the four-part series she put together to explain the main issues addressed at the conference. Paxson started to see the handwriting on the wall and began a job search, although at age 53, she was worried about her prospects. And roles in management position were difficult to find. A 1978 national study of 1,700 daily newspapers showed that women constituted 2.7 percent of managerial positions in daily newspapers with circulations above 25,000, and overall comprised 5 percent of supervisory editors’ positions.⁶⁶

In negotiating her move, Paxson thought back to her former Florida supervisor, Neuharth, who by this time was the head of Gannett.⁶⁷ She wrote him a letter asking if she could get a job at her age. The response was a handwritten scribble for her to call him collect at the Gannett headquarters in Rochester, New York. She made the call and he told Paxson that it was the “silliest question he’d ever heard” and that she should come to interview at Gannett.⁶⁸

After a positive initial interview, Paxson heard back from Gannett with an inquiry about what kind of job she thought she was ready to do. Paxson said she thought she could be a managing editor or a publisher. A few weeks later, she heard again: “We’re very interested and we’ll just keep an eye out. When the opening comes along, we’ll contact you.”⁶⁹ While she waited, things did not improve at the *Bulletin*. After some frustrating weeks, she quit in the spring of 1976.

At the time, Gannett was known as a newspaper chain active in promoting women and minorities. According to journalism historian Kay Mills, Gannett’s philosophies were

based on Neuharth’s views. When he grew up, Neuharth watched his single mother work twice as hard as a man to earn income for the family, so he was aware of gender inequities.⁷⁰ He became active in affirmative action issues after a push from his former wife, Lori Wilson, a Florida state senator, who actively backed the Equal Rights Amendment. According to Mills, “Those who knew the couple say she reinforced Neuharth’s basic concern for fairness toward women that his mother had established.”⁷¹ In his 1989 autobiography, Neuharth wrote that he had a commitment to eliminate sexism and racism: “My preaching began in earnest soon after I joined Gannett and declared war on the good old boys in our business. Inside and outside Gannett, my pitch was that ‘our leadership must reflect our readership.’”⁷²

Neuharth used several techniques to do that. In 1973, when Neuharth became the Gannett chief executive officer, he appointed the first woman publisher at a Gannett newspaper. It was 1969 and 1970 Penney-Missouri winner Gloria Biggs, who Neuharth described as “a highly regarded feature and women’s editor.”⁷³ As a “first,” Biggs was often invited to many conferences. She was a speaker at a New York editors meeting when a man asked her, “Do you think a woman is as good as, better, or worse than a man?” She responded with “At what?” David Bernstein, editor of the *Binghamton Sun-Bulletin*, said of the man’s question, “The catty remark revealed a male insecurity among the editors ... behaving like clever maiden aunts whose powder room had just been invaded by Burt Lancaster.”⁷⁴ Neuharth also instituted a program at Gannett that tied a sizable portion of his executives’ annual salaries to equal employment programs in their departments. Neuharth said: “Even the most chauvinistic of our male managers got the message when it hit their pocketbooks.”⁷⁵

While Paxson waited for a Gannett offer, Journey was writing the official report for the third Status of Women Commission headed by Jill Ruckelshaus. Journey arranged for Paxson to

join the commission staff. Paxson worked for the commission for three months, handling production for the report to be presented to President Gerald Ford. In June of 1976, Paxson heard from the senior vice president for news at Gannett. He said there was an opening for an assistant managing editor in Boise, Idaho. She flew there and decided to take the position at the 60,000-circulation newspaper, earning the same salary as a man would for the same job.

At Boise, Paxson reported to editor Gary Watson. She remembered: "I regarded this as a kind of a training ground. And this was the first time that I learned about working with budgets because I worked with Gary on preparing the budget for the newsroom, for the whole editorial department. He was a great teacher."⁷⁶ She was happy to find that in Idaho, unlike Philadelphia, people communicated face-to-face, rather than by memo, and in stores it was "Thank you, Marjorie" rather than "Thank you, Miss Paxson." While at the *Idaho Statesman*, Paxson received the Women in Communication's 1976 Headliner award for her work on the Mexico City newspaper, the *Xilonen*.

Becoming a publisher

After 18 months in Boise, Paxson was offered the position of publisher of the *Public Opinion*, a Gannett newspaper in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. She accepted and she was flown down and installed as publisher the next day. She became the fourth female publisher of a Gannett daily paper; the company had approximately 60 newspapers at the time.

Chambersburg was near Harrisburg. Paxson described it as a quiet, reserved community – friendly, although there was little social interaction. She met with local leaders and made speeches to local organizations. Paxson said, "You just need to let people know that you're the one who can get things done when you come in as a boss."⁷⁷ Part of being the boss involved dealing with numbers. At the *Public Opinion*, she was in charge of the budgets for

five different departments.

It was at Chambersburg that Paxson's management skills were tested. She had to fire a circulation manager, and the lack of authority given to her in her past women's section positions left her unprepared to take this action. She said, "It was a totally new experience for me because I had never had the authority to fire anybody up to this point."⁷⁸ The regional president recognized that she lacked experience and joined in on a conference call with the employee. Paxson said that through these experiences, she developed her own management style:

I try to speak up and simply be myself. Above all, I do not want to be like a man. My management style involves a lot of persuasion and teaching, a little preaching and occasionally behaving like a double S-O-B (that's "boss" spelled backward"). I want to get everyone involved in a team effort, taking a positive approach to whatever problem we're dealing with. I keep pushing and prodding, asking questions and more questions.⁷⁹

Also while at the *Public Opinion*, Paxson became the associate editor of the daily newspaper for the 1980 United Nations Mid-Decade Conference for Women in Copenhagen. Paxson believed the executive editor, John Rowley of Great Britain, did not want her on the publication. As the conference opened, the executive editor went around the room to introduce the staff: "He got to me and he said, 'And this is Marj Paxson,' and he went on. That's when I interrupted to remind him that I had edited the paper in Mexico City. He wasn't going to get away with that."⁸⁰ The conference newspaper focused on confrontational issues, and Paxson said it was a newspaper she wasn't very proud of producing.

In an article that ran in the Hagerstown, Maryland *Morning Herald* newspaper about the experience, Paxson said the United Nations newspaper was demeaning to women. She put much of the blame on the executive editor,

Rowley, who she said “displayed little understanding of women’s issues and it partially filtered down through the product.”⁸¹ She cited examples of captions written by Rowley describing the meetings as full of “buzzing” activity in a “beehive atmosphere.” When Paxson objected, she felt Rowley’s response was “flip indifference.” She saw her work with the newspaper as that of an activist and a journalist. She said, “I went because I was a journalist first but I’ve been part of the women’s movement for a long time.”⁸²

After two years and eight months at the *Public Opinion*, Gannett moved her to the *Muskogee Phoenix*, in Muskogee – a town of about 40,000 in Oklahoma. Paxson was met at the airport by Tams Bixby III, the publisher who had sold his family’s newspaper to Gannett three years previously. Although he was friendly, she was not well received by all of the staff. She learned that one of the young, male reporters had seriously considered quitting when he discovered his new publisher would be a woman. She said, “His reasoning was that he thought this was a halfway decent paper and he couldn’t understand what it had done to deserve one of Gannett’s token women.”⁸³ He later told Paxson that he had changed his mind after he met her.

On the first day of work, Paxson learned about one of Bixby’s policies. She recalled: “He turned around and looked at me and he said, ‘You might as well know that I have a policy that women can’t wear pants.’ And I said ‘What?!’”⁸⁴ Although Paxson said she had planned to look “every inch the lady publisher” and had purchased a number of skirts, she decided to wear her lone pantsuit to the office on day two. She said:

So the next morning at eight o’clock, wearing that pantsuit, I walked into the *Muskogee Phoenix* through the pressroom, through the composing room, through the news room. . . . By noon, the publisher’s secretary came upstairs and she said, ‘Everybody is asking if there’s been a

change—if they can wear pants.’ So we had a meeting of the department heads that afternoon and I announced a change in the dress code. And my instructions were that they could wear pants, that I really was not going to dictate what either men or women wore, as long as they were neat, as long as they were clean, and as long as they were dressed appropriately for the job they were supposed to do for the *Phoenix*.⁸⁵

She later learned that many of the females went shopping that evening. The next day, of the 45 women working at the paper, 29 were in pantsuits. She recalled, “That story got around town very quickly.”⁸⁶ In fact, Paxson remembered shopping at Sears when the clerk looked down at the name on her credit card. She looked up at Paxson: “Are you the new lady at the paper?” Paxson replied that she was, and the clerk responded: “I’m so glad you let them wear pants.”⁸⁷

In an article introducing her to the community, Paxson said she expected to be taken as seriously as she had been in her last position as publisher, but that she also wanted the community to know, “I am not an ogre, that I do know football.”⁸⁸ Paxson was quoted in an article as saying there should be more women publishers: “Women haven’t been considered for that job until the past few years. . . . It involves persuading women it isn’t the end of the world when you give up writing. The rest of the job is interesting.”⁸⁹

Paxson said she adjusted rather easily to the new newspaper, although she had battles left to fight. At the time, the paper had taken three consistent editorial stands. First, the newspaper supported alcohol by the drink. At the time, the town had liquor stores but no liquor by the drink. That was fine with Paxson, who said she had been “known to take a drink.” The second stand was in support of horse racing and betting. Paxson did not bet on horses, but the paper’s position was fine with her. The third stand was against the Equal Rights Amendment. Paxson told the staff: “That’s going to

change.”⁹⁰

Paxson embraced her leadership role, but she recalled that it took her mother a little time to understand her daughter’s management position. Paxson became known in the community for bringing her miniature dachshund, Tiger, to work. She said, “He was a small dog and so I thought he needed a name that would boost his ego.”⁹¹ Her mother was shocked when she learned that Tiger accompanied her daughter to the office. Her mother said, “I don’t know about your taking that dog to the office, Marjorie. What will they think?” And I said, ‘Mom, I am ‘they.’” That’s when it got through to her that her daughter was really the boss.”⁹²

Paxson said being the publisher in Muskogee was a great way to end her career. She said she didn’t miss writing or editing. She said her focus changed: “When you become a publisher, you really need to become a generalist instead of a specialist because you’re dealing with so many different areas.”⁹³ She did recognize that her newspaper management position was not a sign that women no longer faced the challenges she had overcome; this is a trend that continues today. In April 2006, the American Society of Newspaper Editors released its newsroom employment census and found that women held only 35.5 percent of newsroom supervisory positions.⁹⁴ According to Paxson, while people talk about equal opportunities for women, the more subtle prejudices are still there. She said:

I keep hoping that as the younger generation of male editors comes along, they may have different attitudes. I’m not sure that they will. This goes back for a long time and is a very deep-seated feeling. And I just think we’re going to have to work and work and work at it. . . . I don’t think the deep-seated attitudes are changing that much. I don’t want to sound unduly pessimistic because basically I’m a great optimist. But I just think it’s going to take a long, long time.⁹⁵

Retirement

Paxson was publisher of the *Phoenix* from 1980 to 1986. At age 63, after 42 years in newspapers, she retired. Gannett had a mandatory retirement age for top executives and after 10 years with the company, Paxson qualified for a valuable early retirement package. She had “generous” stock options and an annual income of six figures. As she arranged her retirement, she realized she already had put aside money for her brother, sister-in-law, and their child. She made plans for a donation to the University of Missouri. The result was that Paxson established the National Women and Media Collection housed at the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection at the University of Missouri to help ease a big tax hit. Another motivation was a Gannett Foundation policy that would match money given to universities in a trust. The collection contains personal and professional papers, documentation about sex discrimination in the media and legal challenges to gender discrimination, and other research on women in journalism. She said, “I think you have to give things back, I just feel like I was lucky. . . . So let’s give something back and help someone else. I guess it’s my philosophy.”⁹⁶

Her donation was lauded by many in the journalism community, and at a reception, Paxson was recognized for her generosity and her career accomplishments. Neuharth described Paxson as a role model, an inspiration and a pioneer.⁹⁷ Linda Grist Cunningham, then the executive editor of the *Trenton Times*, wrote of Paxson:

Women, like you, have opened the doors for those of us who have followed. You’ve made it easier for us to knock on the doors of executive hall and actually be welcomed. None of us can take for granted the progress we’ve made, but we can celebrate with you the recognition that is finally coming due.⁹⁸

Looking back at her career, Paxson said she felt the most important work she had done was in Mexico City and the best job she had was as a publisher. She viewed being a publisher like being the conductor of an orchestra: “When everyone is in tune, playing at the same tempo with the same feeling, you can make beautiful music. Yes, being a publisher carries more risk, more responsibilities and more headaches. But it also is more fun.”⁹⁹

In her retirement, Paxson wrote a weekly column for her former paper, called “Nobody Asked Me But ...” She addressed local issues and everyday experiences—everything from planting her garden to complaints about potholes not being fixed. She also wrote about her travels. As a retirement gift, Gannett gave her an airline and hotel voucher. She ended up traveling across the Pacific, visiting Tahiti, New Zealand and Australia. She later went on a major trip each year, including two visits to Russia. The travel columns turned into a book that was published in 1990. In 2001, Paxson received the Sadie Award for lifetime achievement from the Association for Women in Communications.

She continues to live in Muskogee and in 2005 was still contributing columns for her former newspaper. In one column, she criticized the media for not tackling serious issues. She wrote, “In this busy world, there are plenty of topics to talk about and examine in depth. But TV only seems interested in what’s easy—publicizing a writer peddling a book or a Hollywood star hyping a new movie.”¹⁰⁰ Another column addressed the 2004 presidential election. She wrote, “It may be asking a lot, but here’s hoping candidates who win will put the general welfare ahead of partisan politics.”¹⁰¹

Conclusion

Paxson’s establishment of the National Women in Media Collection has ensured there will be a place for people to learn of women’s role in journalism history. Former Women in

Communications president Kay Lockridge wrote to Paxson about the collection, “Once again, Marj, you remind us that it is women helping women—through personal and professional support and encouragement in such endeavors as the Women in Media Collection—that will make the difference for us all.”¹⁰² Associated Press Correspondent Edith M. Lederer wrote to Paxson, “As a pioneer, and a model for those of us who have followed in your footsteps, you will provide the roots for a collection which I know will grow in the decades to come.”¹⁰³ Paxson said she recognizes her pioneering role, especially on women’s pages. She said of her fellow women’s page editors, “We tried our best and we did a good job. I’m proud of the work I did, bringing news to those pages.”¹⁰⁴

Paxson has been vocal about career setbacks that she attributed to the women’s liberation movement. She said not only were women’s leaders reluctant to speak with women’s page journalists but they fought to eliminate the sections without any concern for what would happen to the women’s page editors and staff members after the change. She said she felt victimized twice—first, by the women’s movement leader’s actions and second, by the newspapers that fired or demoted her. It was especially disturbing because she considered herself a feminist who had made her own contributions to the movement.¹⁰⁵

It is important to recognize Paxson in order to understand how journalism’s coverage of women in newspapers and treatment in the newsroom evolved. Some of the battles Paxson fought still have not been won. Newspaper editors continue struggling to reach female readers with stories that address women. News organizations still lack women in publisher positions. As Paxson said in a 1991 interview, women today have more opportunities in journalism than during her career but more needs to be done to push women beyond middle-management positions. “You can’t slacken up in the fight or you go backwards.”¹⁰⁶

Notes

- ¹ Carol Sutton, University of Louisville, Oral History Project, July 21, 1982, CD 1, Part 1.
- ² Marjorie Paxson, biography chapter, *New Guardians of the Press*, Ed. Judith Clabes, Indianapolis: R.J. Berg & Company Publishers, 1983, 129.
- ³ Tribune Staff Report, "Retired Editor Was Trailblazer for Women," *South Bend (Indiana) Tribune*, December 29, 2004.
- ⁴ Aileen Ryan, "Woman's World: 'Not So,' Writes Aroused Editor," *Once a Year*, Milwaukee Press Club, 1961, Milwaukee Press Club Records, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archive, Box 10, folder 21.
- ⁵ Marjorie Paxson, "Women in Journalism," Oral History Project, Washington Press Club Foundation, Session 1, 8-9. The facts used in this paper were verified in a phone conversation with Paxson, June 2003.
- ⁶ Paxson, *New Guardians of the Press*, 121.
- ⁷ Earl English, *Journalism Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia*, Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1988, 81.
- ⁸ Vivian Castleberry, "Women in Journalism," Oral History Project, Washington Press Club Foundation, 27-28. It should also be noted that this paper's author verified the content of the oral history recalled here during a personal meeting with Castleberry in Dallas during September 2005.
- ⁹ Marjorie Paxson, "Remember, But Keeping Looking Ahead, Too," *Muskogee Phoenix*, June 18, 2004.
- ¹⁰ David Davies, *The Postwar Decline of American Newspapers, 1945-1965*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2006, 4.
- ¹¹ Paxson, Session 1, 20.
- ¹² Paxson, Session 2, 2.
- ¹³ Davies, 6.
- ¹⁴ Marjorie Paxson, quoted in the online introduction of the National Women and Media Collection in the Western Historical Manuscript Collection. <http://www.umsystem.edu/whmc/nwm.html>. Accessed July 6, 2006.
- ¹⁵ Eleanor Ostergaard, "Roberta Was Born to Her Job," *Miami Herald*, August 23, 1957.
- ¹⁶ Tribune Staff Report, "Retired Editor Was Trailblazer for Women," *South Bend (Indiana) Tribune*, December 29, 2004.
- ¹⁷ Paxson, Session 1, 21.
- ¹⁸ Paxson, Session 1, 26.
- ¹⁹ Paxson, Session 2, 37. Paxson explained that there were three papers in the city at that time. The *Houston Post* was the morning paper. The *Chronicle* was the afternoon paper with a slightly larger circulation than the *Post*. The smallest circulation paper was the *Houston Press*, a Scripps-Howard newspaper, which later folded.
- ²⁰ Two books address the role women's page editors played prior to the *Washington Post's* Style section creation. Patricia Bradley, *Mass Media and the Shaping of American Feminism, 1963-1975*, Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2003, 133. Kay Mills, *A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Pages*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, 118-119.
- ²¹ Details of progressive women's page editors can be found in Mills 110-125; Rodger Streitmatter, "Transforming the Women's Pages: Strategies that Worked," *Journalism History*, 1998, 77; Rose Ann Robertson, "From Teas and Bridal Veils to Abortion, Abuse and Feminism: How Three Women's Page Editors Changed Journalism," paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication National Convention, 1996, 2-8.
- ²² Marjorie Paxson, telephone interview, June 2003.
- ²³ Paxson, Session 2, 15.
- ²⁴ Paxson, Session 2, 41.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Castleberry, "Women in Journalism," 60.
- ²⁷ Castleberry, "Women in Journalism," 160.
- ²⁸ Paxson, interview.
- ²⁹ Paxson, Session 2, 47.
- ³⁰ Paxson, Session 2, 50.
- ³¹ Paxson, interview.
- ³² Al Neuharth, *Confessions of an S.O.B.*, New York: Doubleday, 1989, 241.
- ³³ Paxson, Session 3, 61.
- ³⁴ Ibid.

- ³⁵ Paxson, Session 3, 62.
- ³⁶ Paxson, Session 3, 63.
- ³⁷ Marie Anderson and Maggie Savoy, "What Does Your Women's Editor Think of You?" Associated Press Managing Editors Red Book, 1963, National Women and Media Collection, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Papers of Marie Anderson, box 3. Also, Harry Sonneborn, "How Is It Going in the Women's Departments? Or What Has Happened Since Anderson-Savoy?" Associated Press Managing Editors Women's Committee, 1969, National Women and Media Collection, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Papers of Marie Anderson, box 3.
- ³⁸ Marjorie Paxson, "Where the Girls Are Going," *The Iowa Publisher*, October 1967, 13.
- ³⁹ Paxson, "Where the Girls Are Going," 13.
- ⁴⁰ Paxson, "Where the Girls Are Going," 14.
- ⁴¹ Paxson, *New Guardians of the Press*, 124.
- ⁴² Paxson, Session 3, 66.
- ⁴³ Diane K. Gentry, "Women in Journalism," Oral History Project, Washington Press Club Foundation. 1991, Introduction, 1.
- ⁴⁴ Paxson, Session 3, 71.
- ⁴⁵ A history of the newspaper is detailed in Robert Pierce, *A Sacred Trust: Nelson Poynter and the St. Petersburg Times*, Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1993. There is no information about Paxson nor the newspaper's women's section in the book.
- ⁴⁶ Paxson, Session 3, 76.
- ⁴⁷ Paxson, Session 3, 78.
- ⁴⁸ Aileen Ryan, "Woman's World: 'Not So,' Writes Aroused Editor," *Once a Year*, Milwaukee Press Club, 1961, Milwaukee Press Club Records, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archive, box 10, folder 21.
- ⁴⁹ Paxson, interview.
- ⁵⁰ Paxson, interview.
- ⁵¹ Paxson, Session 3, 79.
- ⁵² Paxson, Session 3, 81.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Paxson, Session 3, 84.
- ⁵⁵ Paxson, *New Guardians of the Press*, 126.
- ⁵⁶ Paxson, Session 3, 84.
- ⁵⁷ Paxson, Session 3, 86.
- ⁵⁸ Christy Bulkeley, "Women in Journalism," Oral History Project, Washington Press Club Foundation, Session 4, 100.
- ⁵⁹ Paxson, Session 3, 87.
- ⁶⁰ Paxson, Session 3, 88.
- ⁶¹ Paxson, Session 4, 90.
- ⁶² Susan Tift and Alex Jones, *The Patriarch: The Rise and Fall of the Bingham Dynasty*, New York: Summit Books, 1991, 307.
- ⁶³ Tift and Jones, 308.
- ⁶⁴ Paxson, "Mexico" *The Matrix*, Women in Communications Inc., 1975.
- ⁶⁵ Paxson, Session 4, 96.
- ⁶⁶ Jean Gaddy Wilson, "Future Directions for Females in the Media," *Communications at the Crossroads: The Gender Gap Connections*, Eds. Ramona Rush and Donna Allen, Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1989, 161.
- ⁶⁷ It should be noted that Neuharth, as Gannett president and chairman, named Gloria Biggs as the first woman publisher in the chain in 1973, according to "Gains at Gannett" *Savvy*, September 1980, 26.
- ⁶⁸ Paxson, Session 4, 98.
- ⁶⁹ Paxson, Session 4, 100.
- ⁷⁰ Mills, 302.
- ⁷¹ Ibid.
- ⁷² Neuharth, 240.
- ⁷³ Neuharth, 242.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ⁷⁵ Neuharth, 243.

- ⁷⁶ Paxson, Session 4, 105.
- ⁷⁷ Paxson, Session 4, 110.
- ⁷⁸ Paxson, Session 4, 112.
- ⁷⁹ Paxson, *New Guardians of the Press*, 128.
- ⁸⁰ Paxson, Session 4, 114.
- ⁸¹ Robert Vucic, "Forum 80: An Experience for Publisher." *The Morning Herald*. August 6, 1980, National Women and Media Collection, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Papers of Marjorie Paxson.
- ⁸² Ibid.
- ⁸³ Paxson, Session 4, 117.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ⁸⁶ Paxson, Session 4, 118.
- ⁸⁷ Paxson, Session 5, 120.
- ⁸⁸ Victoria Nininger, "Publisher Didn't Expect Transfer to Muskogee," *Muskogee Phoenix*, National Women and Media Collection, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Papers of Marjorie Paxson.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid.
- ⁹⁰ Paxson, Session 5, 122.
- ⁹¹ Paxson, Session 5, 125.
- ⁹² Paxson, Session 5, 126.
- ⁹³ Paxson, Session 5, 125.
- ⁹⁴ Sheila Gibbons, "Women at Newspaper Helms Face Risky Business," *Women's Enews*, July 10, 2006.
- ⁹⁵ Paxson, Session 5, 140.
- ⁹⁶ Paxson, Session 5, 133.
- ⁹⁷ Al Neuharth, letter to Marjorie Paxson, October 7, 1987, National Women and Media Collection, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Papers of Marjorie Paxson.
- ⁹⁸ Linda Grist Cunningham, *Trenton Times* Executive Editor, letter to Marjorie Paxson, October 16, 1987, National Women and Media Collection, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Papers of Marjorie Paxson.
- ⁹⁹ Paxson, *New Guardians of the Press*, 129.
- ¹⁰⁰ Marjorie Paxson, "TV Should Really Question Clinton," *Muskogee Phoenix*, June 22, 2004.
- ¹⁰¹ Marjorie Paxson, "Remember, but Keeping Looking Ahead, Too" *Muskogee Phoenix*, June 18, 2004.
- ¹⁰² Kay Lockridge, letter to Marjorie Paxson, October 14, 1987, National Women and Media Collection, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Papers of Marjorie Paxson.
- ¹⁰³ Edith M. Lederer, letter to Marjorie Paxson, October 7, 1987, National Women and Media Collection, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, Papers of Marjorie Paxson.
- ¹⁰⁴ Paxson, interview.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁶ Paxson, Session 5, 138.