

Remembering Women's History Month

By Laura Molinari
Staff Writer

In occasion of Women's History Month, many events and conferences are being organized at Westchester Community College to the purpose of informing the students on the condition of women in today's society. Every day, for the whole month of March workshops and lectures will be planned on and off campus, presenting different viewpoints on being a woman. During the past weeks much attention was dedicated to analyzing the role of modern women in the work place and the surprisingly still remarkable difficulties that women living in a supposedly "equal society" continue to face in the corporate world.

Science and law, two fields historically dominated by men, unfortunately still seem to be ruled by the male gender and hard to access for women. In these professions women are often ostracized and seem to have to work much harder than their male colleagues to be recognized half of the merit and pay. As a

matter of fact, some would say that we are progressing in a positive way towards equal opportunities in the work place for the genders, but I can't fail to notice that this process seems to be taking way too long to be completed. In the lecture entitled "Women in Science" Dr. Iris Cook emphasized how, still today, only 25% of the United States' physicians are women and how some branches of the medical profession seem to discriminate women to the point of basically excluding them from the practice. In fact, 62% of women physicians work in one of the only six areas that seem to be more willing to accept the female gender. Women mostly work in internal medicine, pediatrics, family practice, obstetrics/gynecology, psychiatry and anesthesiology; our country, the land of opportunities, still doesn't seem ready to accept a woman neurosurgeon. Although today they are admitted to medical school, women still have to fight their way into the practice of certain fields of medicine.

A similar situation seems to be evident in law. Here after struggling for years to acquire the right

of even being admitted to law school, Harvard University waited until the 1950s to let a woman join its law program, women are today still facing many obstacles. The LSAT test, necessary for admission to law school, was created by men for the way men brains are wired and has been proved to be particularly hard to complete for woman, simply because of the way it is structured. Although this is a well known problem, there is currently no plan to create a new and less discriminatory test. The hardships for women that decide to undertake law as a profession are many. As stated by attorney Beverly Rogers during her lecture on women in the law, in this field woman have to face constant discrimination. In fact, although statistics for the admission to law schools around the country show an enrollment of 50% men and 50% women, many outstanding female law students graduate to start their career as a secretary in a law office, while men directly access higher positions even if less qualified. Moreover, today we see an increase in the number of women lawyers, but most of the judges in the United States re-

main men and only one Supreme Court judge, Sandra Day O'Connor, is a woman.

Woman in the corporate world are often "sex-typed" and driven to appear severe and masculine to avoid being discriminated on the base of their gender. Moreover women often become what Dr. Iris Cook defined as "victims of procreation" and risk not to be hired for a job that they are qualified for, simply because of the underlying idea that they may soon become wives and mothers concentrated on their family life and unable to handle a demanding working position. What is easily forgotten is that women are naturally prone to handle many tasks at ones and have shown many times to manage to positively assume the responsibility of family life and career; something, this multitasking ability, that was never demanded from man.

Overcoming the many obstacles that the corporate world puts in a woman's way is not easy, but as demonstrated by both Dr. Cook and attorney at law Beverly Rogers it is possible. Woman need to work together to change the way in which

they are perceived in the working environment and as underlined by both speakers, promote the creation of a more equal society in which gender but also race and religion would no longer be means of discrimination. As stated by attorney Beverly Rogers: "Woman need to learn to become important to themselves, their family and their society, to believe in their capacity to overcome any obstacle. Education is empowering and perseverance is the most necessary quality for anyone that wants to succeed." Both very enjoyable and informative the lectures held by Dr. Cook and attorney Beverly Rogers, were definitely inspiring not only for women but in truth, for everyone that ever felt discriminated against.

The need for equality on the work place is of crucial significance in our modern society and in occasion of Woman's History Month we all need to learn to fight gender based discrimination. Women in particular should understand the need to support each other because as Dr. Cook underlined in her presentation: "The achievement of one woman is the success of all!"

500+ COURSES
AFFORDABLE
NEW YORK

Take the
summer on.