

CHAPTER IV



MYSELF AS THE SPOUSE
OF THE
PRESIDENT-CHANCELLOR



Ina Fitzhenry-Coor is one of a small number of university presidents' spouses who combines a full-time professional career with a young family and the spousal role. She holds a Ph.D. in psychology and is a professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Vermont, where her husband, Lattie F. Coor, is President. Her professional activities include research in the process of psychiatric diagnosis and in child social development, while her spousal duties range from the planning and coordination of official university entertaining to fund-raising for the presidential residence.

SELF-IDENTITY IN THE CAMPUS SPOUSE



by Ina Fitzhenry-Coor

In her memoirs, Anne Morrow Lindbergh tells of the anguish she felt when, standing in receiving lines with her husband after one of his historic trans-oceanic flights, she watched the guests, upon being introduced to her, invariably peer beyond her to the person they had really come to see.

Few university presidents enjoy the prestige of a Charles Lindbergh, but every president's wife has experienced the awkwardness of trying to converse with a guest who obviously was more interested in meeting her husband.

The university presidency has often been described as a two-person single career (Papanek, 1973), in the sense that one of the marital pair is formally employed and remunerated by the institution, while the other is not. In this case, it is the president, not his wife.* However, the implicit expectations of the spouse are such that she may find it necessary to devote all of her time to activities in support of him, his career and the campus.

While historically there is little to define this spousal role, Corbally (1976) has suggested that its components may be traced to the traditional expectations of the pastor's wife when many of our early colleges were governed by presidents who were ministers.

While the components of the role have evolved somewhat over time, the nature of the spouse's duties as hostess and her role as public consort can still easily lead to a loss of individuality. In the eyes of others, she is known as "the wife of . . ." and is assumed to derive both identity and vicarious satisfaction from her husband's accomplishments and prestige.

*To avoid semantic ambiguity in this paper, I have arbitrarily chosen to use certain terms in reference to broader categories. For example, the term "university" refers to institutions of post-secondary education, including colleges and professional schools. "President" refers to the chief executive officer of such an institution, although chancellor is the appropriate term on some campuses. "Wife" has been chosen for empirical reasons: most university presidents are men, their spouses are thus women (all but one respondent to the NASULGC Survey were women).

The pervasiveness of such situations and assumptions, as well as the particular nature of the university presidency, is such that the *self-identity* of the spouse is a timely subject for exploration.

If some kind of identity accrues from association, how shall we differentiate it from a unique and personal self definition? Some have argued that it is a "reflected identity" (O'Neil, 1982), as in a mirror image in which one is assumed to reflect the personhood of another. Others have termed it a "shadow identity" (Papanek, 1973), as though the individual remains in the shadow of the other. For many, it is a "role identity" of such pervasiveness that the individual is subsumed. Experts in this area argue that roles are not definitions, but functions that are performed through patterned tasks and duties; they are not the *total mark* of who we are (Sanguiliano, 1980).

Whatever the tentative definition of identity assumed by others vis-à-vis the presidential spouse, the long-term effects of loss of self may not necessarily be acceptable to the wife. One of the respondents to the NASULGC Survey commented: "I believe in what my husband is doing, but I do not find it a rewarding role for myself." Another stated: "Surely it is neither selfish nor demanding to want to save a part of one's life for oneself, to want to experience the pleasures of an *active* as well as *re-active* life, of a separate and complete identity" (O'Neil, 1982, p. 10). **

I am in agreement with the need for a separate identity. In the early years following our arrival at the University of Vermont, an avuncular member of our campus community invariably introduced me with the words: "We were so lucky that we got Ina along with Lattie—two for the price of one." I think only my husband knew the depth of pain I experienced from this repeated devaluation of my self as an individual.

Jean Kemeny (1979), for many years the first lady of Dartmouth and a woman of great strength and devotion, lamented:

I am not an officer of the college; I am not listed in the college directory, which lists every file clerk; I don't even have a college identification card—issued to *all* employees and students. I exist and perform very unofficially (p. 36).

It is not an overstatement, nor a sign of impropriety for spouses to desire recognition and acknowledgement of individuality. "That yearning for a singular voice—a personal identity exists in us all" (Sanguiliano, 1978, p. 19). It is *defining* and *achieving* it that is the challenge of our particular circumstances.

In the psychological literature, study of the self has variously been called

**The italics in all quotations have been added by the present author.

"self-concept," "self-image," "sense of self" and the "self-system." Despite the plethora of terminology, it is possible to generate a set of assumptions about the self that can aid in our understanding of self-identity in spouses.

The self-referential nature of the concept is obvious: it includes a person's knowledge of who he or she is, the "I," "me," and "mine." Many psychologists have maintained that it is central to the understanding of human beings, their emotions and their actions (Epstein, 1973). Lecky (1945), for example, saw the self as the nucleus of the personality, with one major motive: the striving for *unity*. Some have argued that aspects of the concept of self develop over time; the impact of early socialization on its development has been widely researched (Maccoby, 1980). It has been argued that the self plays a role in the *selective integration* of new experiences into the stable central core (Snygg & Combs, 1949). Interestingly, sex differences in the sense of self and level of self-esteem may be found in experiments conducted with many different age groups (Hoyenga & Hoyenga, 1979). Some of these differences are relevant to the present paper and will be discussed later.

Rogers (1951) believed that the self included those characteristics of the individual that he or she was aware of and over which the individual *believed* he or she could *exercise control*. Thus, the self as a concept is subject to each person's own perception and interpretation of his or her personal qualities and their value. As well, each person has a set of beliefs, perhaps biased by perception, about the extent to which he or she can direct personal behaviors and actions. Such perceptions and belief systems are specific to each individual—private, intangible and sometimes difficult to articulate.

In psychology, because we must depend upon the subject's ability and willingness to describe the self, we would classify it as a subjective concept (Cooley, 1902). From a scientific point of view, subjectiveness makes self-identity more arduous to study, quantify and verify; however, those problems do not negate its existence and its potential for affecting the life of the holder.

Why is self-identity so important? Gergen (1971) argued that the way in which a person conceives of self will influence what he or she *chooses to do* and what he or she *expects of life*. With Erikson (1959), he contends that the recognition of *continuity* is central to self definition.

Others have contended that self-identity and its maintenance are important because threat to the core, stable organization of the self will produce anxiety and stress (Sullivan, 1953; Rogers, 1951; Epstein, 1973). If the threat to the self-concept is sufficiently severe, it may result in emotional disintegration; for example, Bender's (1950) description of a disturbed child who screamed in terror, "I am afraid I am going to be someone else."

Summarizing the set of assumptions posited here, we can say that self-identity refers to those essential, core elements of self perceived by the person which provide a unity of personality, a sense of control and a source of direction in actions.

Because the concept of self is a private, subjective one, it is not always easy to ferret out those elements by which a person defines herself. The NASULGC survey did not explicitly ask the respondent to describe herself in such a way that we could classify the response as her "personal identity." However, the survey did ask many questions about the respondent's avocations, professional activities, and role duties. In addition, the hours devoted to each area and the extent of satisfaction derived from each area were requested. Thus, if self-identity is implied by *actions*, *satisfactions*, and *sense of control*, we can construct definitions of self that apply to this population.

In examining the results of the NASULGC survey, we find that many spouses are engaged in activities that are not necessarily related to the role of first lady. Two major categories emerge: volunteer activities and paid employment. In both of these areas it is possible to establish an identity that is separate and unique from the presidency. However, the manner in which this comes about will differ in each category.

The spouse who enjoys volunteer activities may find a number of options awaiting her assumption of the new campus role. Many university boards implicitly expect her to participate in the community and will often recommend civic groups or secure "invitations" for her. Such commitments are seen as highly beneficial to the two-person single career and to the institution.

Seventy-seven percent of the NASULGC respondents engage in some kind of volunteer service. Their activities range from church-related activities, hospital and mental health boards, art and music groups to historic preservation. For the wife who takes pleasure in these involvements, there are a variety of satisfactions. In addition, she very likely has the privilege of limiting her schedule, thus allowing a balance of time with husband, family and campus. The range of hours devoted to volunteer work is great: while only two percent devote over 20 hours per week, nearly half of the remaining participants give less than four hours per week to these activities.

The range of service is nearly as great as the hours. An examination of the list of each individual's activities often produces an interesting cluster of related commitments. For example, participation in several health related organizations may characterize a few, while music and theatre distinguish others. It is my opinion that these clusters of activities reflect more than simple related

interests in the wife; they also reflect personalities. In so acting, spouses may make a statement about personal identity.

Volunteerism is not always the perfect solution to establishing a self-identity in the spousal role. While there are options from which to choose, less satisfying obligatory commitments often arise. Limits on hourly involvement and family privacy frequently depend upon the spouse's strength of refusal. Furthermore, while these activities may aid in the expression of a separate self-identity, the presidential wife may find that recognition "in her own right" takes a period of time, perhaps years. This may require persistent presentation of her own image and the uncomfortable knowledge that she will invariably be viewed by newcomers in the "shadow role."

Paid employment is the second major category of involvement that was not role specific. It occurs much less often among spouses and, interestingly, it is not age-related. Only 28 percent of the NASULGC respondents have professional occupations; about one-third of these are full-time commitments. Most of the employed individuals are involved in education, often at the university level. Because of the length of time required in this type of career development, we may assume that professional identity existed prior to the election of the husband as president. Further, professional identity seems to carry with it a strong sense of self-identity. In response to the survey question concerning multiple motives for continuing professional occupations, 83 percent indicated "self-fulfillment," 69 marked "independence," while 66 percent also noted "utilization of professional training."

However, unlike volunteerism, the university board of trustees is rarely willing to take an active part in the relocation of the working spouse. One wife specifically noted that trustee criticism was one of the obstacles she had to overcome in order to work. Some spouses who gave up their professions at the time of the husband's election, commented that the board discouraged their continuation of outside employment. In my own case, as a participant in my husband's final interview with the board, the first question directed to me was, "How do you plan to reconcile your professional commitments with your duties as presidential spouse?" I was tempted to reply, "With a 36-hour day."

Other obstacles noted by working spouses have included "proving" themselves professionally to new peers who viewed them as the privileged president's wife. Some respondents noted the physical and emotional drains on the working spouse; conversations with several of these women indicate that the fatigue inherent in juggling job, family and role duties has contributed to a chronic susceptibility to illness.

Despite the logistical difficulties of continuing a career, its value in self-

definition can be appreciated in the responses of spouses who gave up their occupations. When asked if the decision had been a satisfactory one, several said it had not been. Their explanations often alluded to self-identity: "I miss having my very own identity . . .," "I now have no professional identity of which I'm proud," and "Because I loved my work, and am not keeping up with my profession."

Apart from the expression of a separate self-identity through volunteer activities or professional commitments, we are compelled by the results of the NASULGC survey to consider the spousal role itself as a form of identity. Without exception, the respondents indicated that they gave numerous hours each week to the president's institution and its constituencies. While half of the respondents gave at least 20 hours per week to this role, over fourteen percent devoted more than the standard work week of 40 hours. Some of the spouses noted "a sense of accomplishment" in the role; others mentioned a feeling of "fulfillment." Thus, we cannot overlook the possibility that a sense of identity exists, whether or not it is a reflected identity.

One of the most interesting results of the survey was the refusal by most respondents to desire payment for their spousal responsibilities. Of the 80 percent who did not want a salary, half of them saw the role as a volunteer service while another quarter felt it was a marital duty. Less than one-third of the spouses felt it would be helpful to have a job description.

These kinds of results are in contrast to the common sociological contention that the legitimacy of a position may be found in its definition and acknowledgement (Papanek, 1973). It is generally accepted that presidential spouses occupy one of the most demanding yet poorly defined positions in modern society (Corbally, 1976). Why then, we must ask, do most spouses in this sample decline definition and acknowledgement?

Further examination of the survey results indicates that spouses engage in an array of responsibilities and activities; most of them centering about the coordination of entertaining and the supervision of the official house. Interestingly, according to their responses, far more spouses "accept as their responsibility" these activities, than "enjoy doing it."

The perception of the role as a "service" or "duty" and the interpretation of specific activities of the role as "responsibilities" are similar psychological traits. To help us understand why so many wives have this point of view, we should turn to the psychological literature.

Authors of a number of recent studies have tried to explain woman's tendency to define herself in terms of husband and family. Several have viewed this disposition as a product of developmental socialization. Best known is Erik

Erikson (1950), who has described eight stages of psychosocial development. The fifth stage, ordinarily occurring during the late teens concerns the establishment of a sense of self-identity. Theoretically, the resolution of this crisis equips the adolescent for the adult activities of autonomy and industry. This, in turn, prepares the individual for the resolution of the next stage, the establishment of intimacy.

Some developmental psychologists have argued that the sequence from identity to intimacy expressed in this model may well be reversed in females (Douván & Adelson, 1966). Erikson (1968) has more recently agreed with this reversal. He suggests that the young woman holds her identity in abeyance as she contends with the crisis of intimacy, meeting and marrying the man by whose name she will be known. This contrasts sharply with the impact of marriage on the male (Kimmel, 1974) in which marriage is merged with a vocational commitment and may be construed as an additional manifestation, but not a definition, of his masculinity.

Iris Sanguiliano (1980), a psychoanalyst, argues that the outcome of such reversal of stages in females may have serious effects: "In women's life journey, the striving for union precedes and postpones the labors of a personal identity, and sometimes sends it underground" (p. 43). Thus, the search for self-identity may begin much later for women—or not at all.

Carol Gilligan (1982) suggests a fusion of the tasks of intimacy and identity in the Erikson model as it relates to women: "Intimacy goes along with identity, as the female comes to know herself as she is known, through her *relationships with others*." (p. 12).

A distinction should be made in the form of identity ascribed to women by these scholars and the form of self-identity prescribed by them and defined earlier in this paper. Self-identity is truly personal and unique to the individual, a concept of self over which the individual exercises some control and senses unity and continuity. The identity which describes these women who combine it with intimacy is a *reflected identity*—an identity through someone else.

The tendency to rely on the husband's identity becomes increasingly evident as the husband moves toward success as an executive. For example, an acquaintance of mine whose husband eventually served as a college president, related the following story about a regional conference of academic deans that they had attended together:

The wives of the group of 25-30 deans met separately for an informal meeting during the initial day of the conference. As a way of getting acquainted, the group leader suggested that each of them introduce herself

and her activities without reference to her husband or his role. To the astonishment of all, only one of the women was able to do this.

Carol Gilligan has explored the development of the separate paths of males and females' concepts of self in her perceptive book, *In Another Voice* (1982). She attempts to determine the source of those enduring qualities in women that are associated with human relationships; those qualities that seem to override the need for separation and independence. Gilligan agrees with Chodorow (1974) that these characteristics may be traced to the bond of attachment existing between mothers and their children. Because of sex-similarity, little girls may continue to exhibit a concern with relationships, while this characteristic tends to diminish over time in little boys as they establish a sense of male sexual identity. Thus, while separation in relationships can begin early for males, it may continue indefinitely for females and become a criterion for self-evaluation: ". . . women not only define themselves in a context of human relationship but also *judge* themselves in terms of their ability to care" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 17).

Adult women interviewed by Gilligan show an array of characteristics that are associated with the maintenance of human relationships: an extremely strong sense of responsibility to others, fear of the possibility of omission, dependence upon caring relationships, and perpetuation of those relationships through self-sacrifice.

These tendencies are well illustrated by one of Sanguiliano's (1978) female patients:

I still feel there is a big difference between how men and women look at the relationship. Last night I said to [my husband], if I work my whole life to get *the* book of poems out and I was called to win a Pulitzer prize, and you were laid up, I would look first to be with you! Somewhere I really feel that . . . I somehow wouldn't leave you lying there even to go get my most important thing (p. 84).

The same kind of commitment and responsibility may be seen in responses to the NASULGC survey:

Said one spouse in response to the question of how she juggled outside employment and home duties: "My role as the president's wife still comes first."

The greatest single source of frustration in their role was "worry about the effects of pressure on the spouse."

Another commentary on the striving for autonomy and self-identity may be found in a provocative sequence of steps proposed by Jane Loevinger in her post-conformist developmental stages (1970; 1976).

Based upon the responses of over 2,000 women to a sentence completion task, she describes several adult stages that are relevant to our discussion. The first of these stages, interestingly, is called Conscientious; appropriately, the greatest concerns of this level are responsibility and self-sacrifice. The next stage, Autonomy, may be described as modulating an excessive sense of duty through the realization that others (including one's family) have a responsibility for their own destiny. Finally, the establishment of a unique self-identity within the context of one's human relationship becomes the primary concern of a stage called Integration. The step-wise nature of Loevinger's model is appealing in the implicit assumption that these concerns arise and are dealt with in a sequential fashion. It suggests that one must resolve a *series* of natural concerns in the search for self-identity. On the other hand, it also reminds us that each of these stages share in common a relationship between the individual and others—something often called "the self in the social context."

As Loevinger's research is descriptive of the search for self-identity, Gilligan's work is prescriptive, and I think it is particularly applicable to the president/spouse relationship. Far from being a radical feminist, she is an astute observer of the deficiencies of an environment in which *one* bears the identity and is the achiever while the *other* bears the responsibility for relationships and is the nurturer. She advocates the expression of these qualities in *both* men and women. Women need not lose their ability to care in order to express a self-identity; likewise men need not abdicate their achievements to engage in nurturing relationships.

Given our socialization (as well as a possible genetic tendency) to be especially sensitive to human relationships, the question for many women and, I would argue, particularly university presidents' wives, is how to define the "I" within the "we."

This can be a frightening question. Queen & Rose (1981), counselling upper-middle class women who had committed their adult lives to husband and family, discovered that a hidden agenda in many group discussions was the lack of sense of self. But many of the women felt the acquisition of a separate identity would come at a high cost and be potentially destructive to their familial relationships. In one discussion the following exchange took place:

'I don't want to be separate from my husband and family,' said [one woman]. 'That's not what separate means,' said [another]. 'Separate means having a personal autonomy, finding out who you are and following it through.' [A third woman] brought it close to home when she said, 'Isn't that what you've encouraged your children and husband to do? Why not give yourself some of your own good nurturing?' (p. 132).

Gilligan (1982) reinforces this need, saying, “. . . the language of rights underlines the importance of including in the network of care not only the other but also the self” (p. 173).

While the demands of the role of presidential spouse can require full-time attention, there are some pragmatic considerations for establishing a separate self-identity. Given the increasing rate of divorce in the general population and the actuarial data of shorter lives for men (particularly executives), a wife stands a fair chance of finding herself without a “spousal-role.” Given the brief tenure of most university presidencies, dependence upon the role to define herself and her time may be a short-lived portion of the spouse’s adult life. Then what? Self-definition during a period of anxiety and stress? That is not a desirable option.

In response to the NASULGC survey question “What advice would you give to your successor?” the most common response was “Be yourself.” Excellent advice if one truly knows oneself *and* can express that identity. Too often what we do know is not easily stated and more often we are *not* asked to state it.

The process requires not only our own introspection, the searching and creation of a unique identity, it also requires circumstances in which freedom to express that definition is invited and respected.

In that sense, others, as well, are responsible for the self-identity of spouses—for nurturing the opportunity for her self-expression—whether that identity is through avocation, volunteer work or professional activities.

Who are the others who are responsible for this? Most importantly, I think the board of trustees of the university who are interviewing potential presidents are responsible. It is only a beginning to invite the spouse to join the interview process. An essential step is permitting her the freedom in a supportive setting to express those commitments that are uniquely her own. Hearing her choices with respect and with a knowledge that she should be aided in the retention of her own identity is a goal that must be actively acquired by most boards; historically it has rarely been part of the protocol.

Just as salary and fringe benefits are an open part of the bargaining between president-elect and the board, opportunities for continuation of the wife’s personal activities should be part of the discussion. And I do not refer to “theoretical” or “possible” opportunities that may leave the spouse in limbo for years, but concrete ones. All of this assumes that the board must be willing to act on her behalf, as well as his. All of this assumes, as well, the possibility of less role-oriented time from the spouse; the board must be willing to shoulder the responsibility of permitting the hiring of staff (such as secretarial or housekeeping) to aid her in the realization of her own self-identity.

Secondly, the husband as an integral part of the bargaining process, should be aware of and supportive of the wife's personal interests and commitments. He, too, has a responsibility to defend the continuation of those involvements that she cherishes. In case after case, failure of the husband to support his wife actively at this critical moment in the election process has resulted in the oversight of her identity. And if it is indeed a *partnership*, as some observers suggest, it must be mutual.

Finally, the community in which the wife lives (both town and gown) must share in this responsibility as well. The tendency to flood the newcomer with requests and obligations (many based upon the style and commitments of the previous president and spouse) denies her the right to establish a unique personage. Sensitivity to limits of time and energy and the desire for privacy are not ordinarily characteristic of university communities. This sensitivity should become a part of the supportive environment that encourages the presidential wife to be her own person, in her own right.

And so, what of self-identity in university presidents' spouses? I think it must be self-determined and individual in its manifestation. I think it must reflect the unity and continuity of a person's life who, for a time, will function in a very unusual and demanding situation. I think it should permit that person to grasp the meaning of her past and the potential for her future. And I think it *can* be attained in the public-private context of the role if others respect these rights. As Gilligan (1982) states it so vividly:

The experiences of *inequality* and *interconnection* . . . the vision that self and other will be treated as of equal worth, that despite differences in power, things will be fair; the vision that everyone will be responded to and included, that no one will be left alone or hurt. These disparate visions in their tension reflect the paradoxical truths of human experience—that we know ourselves as separate only insofar as we live in connection with others, and that we experience relationship only insofar as we differentiate other from self (pp. 62-63).

REFERENCES

- Bender, L. Anxiety in disturbed children. In P.H. Hoch & J. Zubin (Eds.), *Anxiety*. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1950.
- Chodorow, N. Family structure and feminine personality. In M.Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (Eds.), *Women, Culture and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.
- Cooley, C.H. *Human Nature and the Social Order*. New York: Scribner's, 1902.
- Corbally, M.W. *The Partners: Sharing the Life of a College President*. Danville, Ill.: The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1977.
- Douvan, E. and Adelson, Jr. *The Adolescent Experience*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966.
- Epstein, S. The self-concept revisited: Or a theory of a theory. An address presented to the meetings of the Canadian Psychological Association, Montreal, 1972. Reprinted in D. Krebs (Ed.), *Readings in Social Psychology: Contemporary Perspectives*. New York: Harper & Row, 1982.
- Erikson, E.H. *Childhood and Society*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1950.
- Erikson, E.H. The problem of ego identity. *Psychological Issues*, 1959, 1, 101-166.
- Erikson, E.H. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1968.
- Gergen, K.J. *The Concept of Self*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1971.
- Gilligan, C. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Hoyenga, K.B., and Hoyenga, K.T. *The Question of Sex Differences: Psychological, Cultural, and Biological Issues*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1979.
- Kemeny, J.A. *It's Different at Dartmouth: A Memoir*. Brattleboro, Vt: The Stephen Greene Press, 1979.
- Kimmel, D. *Adulthood and Aging: An Interdisciplinary Developmental View*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974.
- Lecky, P. *Self-Consistency: A Theory of Personality*. Long Island, N.Y.: Island Press, 1945.
- Loevinger, J. *Ego Development: Conceptions and Theories*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976.
- Loevinger, J. and Wessler, R. *Measuring Ego Development, I: Construction and Use of a Sentence Completion Test*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970.
- Maccoby, E. *Social Development: Psychological Growth and the Parent-Child Relationship*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1980.

- O'Neil, K. On Being a Partner While Remaining a Person. A paper presented to Presidents' and Chancellor's Spouses at the annual meetings of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. St. Louis, 1982.
- Papanek, H. Men, Women and Work: Reflection on the Two-Person Career. In J. Huber (Ed.), *Changing Women in a Changing Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Queen, R., & Rose, K. Middle-Aged Women: A New Kind of Revolutionary. In B. Lindau & C. Kaplan, (Eds.), *Toward a Feminist Analysis: Proceedings of the Women & Society Symposium*. Winooski, Vt: The St. Michael's College Press, 1981.
- Rogers, C.R. *Client-centered Therapy*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1951.
- Sangiuliano, I. *In Her Time*. New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1978.
- Snygg, D., & Combs, A.W. *Individual Behavior*. New York: Harper & Row, 1949.
- Sullivan, H.S. *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*. New York: Norton, 1953.



Carolyn Enright DiBiaggio received an A.B. in English from the University of Michigan (1957), and an M.A. in English from Wayne State University (1962), and has done advanced study in higher education administration. Her professional involvement has included teaching, counseling, and a variety of administrative positions at three community colleges and five universities. She is the wife of John A. DiBiaggio, President of The University of Connecticut, and the mother of David, Dana, and Deirdre.

DUO CAREERS



by Carolyn Enright DiBiaggio

As the title of Jean Kemeny's book, *It's Different at Dartmouth*, indicates, there has been an encouraging shift in perception of the role of the president's wife by the academic and public communities at Dartmouth. At the same time many other spouses have recognized a "subtle revolution" occurring in their own consciousnesses regarding the search for redefinition of identity and career roles. In general, women today are questioning and reassessing their roles; they have become more vocal in their commitment to personal careers and markedly more independent. A change in women's role status should be anticipated, and it will surely have an effect on the spouse of the university's chief executive and her role in the institution.

This essay speaks to the career of the university spouse in three different terms. The first, and most prevalent, is the "two-person career" in which two married persons contribute to the development of a single career—that of the university chief executive. (This may otherwise be known as "two for the price of one.")

The second concept is that of "dual careers" in which two married persons follow separate and independent careers. In this case, the spouse does *not* engage in the duties and responsibilities ordinarily associated with the role of the wife of a university president.

The third term is the concept of the "duo-career" in which the spouse, in effect, maintains two roles simultaneously—an independent professional career as well as her duties as the wife of the university president. In a sense—in this latter case—she engages simultaneously in the development of both her own professional identity and in the career achievements of her husband.

The two-person single career is the path that most university presidential couples follow. Historically, the female spouse is thrust into a role that lacks definition and embraces multiple expectations, both formal and informal. As others have pointed out, it is rooted in our history in such scenes as the pioneer woman standing with her man as they forge a life together in the wilderness. Or, the pastor's wife who serves beside her husband in ministering to the flock.

The latter image applies as well to the early period when college and university presidents were pastors. These women participated in their husbands' occupations and enjoyed their achievements vicariously since there was no direct acknowledgement or remuneration.

Jean Lipman-Blumen, a renowned sociologist, is the creator of the concept of "vicarious achievement," an oxymoron which perfectly embodies all of the ambivalence and ambiguity associated with the "two-person single career." "A vicarious achievement ethic is the underlying mechanism whereby women are channeled into indirect achievement, low status, occupational roles. To experience achievement satisfaction through the accomplishments of another individual . . . is the essence of the vicarious achievement ethic" (Lipman-Blumen, 1973, p. 1).

The reasons for the two-person single career, other than the historical ones, are rooted in a view of the appropriate gender role of women as well as a belief that it benefits the institution. Universities communicate certain formal and informal expectations to the wives of their chief executive officers. These expectations serve to reinforce the commitment of both husband and spouse to the institution. In particular, they convey role behavior imperatives to the wife that are seen as highly beneficial to the organization, especially since they involve no salary cost.

The spouse who responds to these multiple role demands puts her own self-image at great risk; she may see herself as only an extension of her husband, having a kind of reflected identity. By and large, traditional gender role definitions have accustomed wives to taking this risk. Discomfort with this traditional, one-dimensional role of the vicarious achiever may be seen, however, in the following listing of greatest frustrations experienced by two-person single-career spouses in the NASULGC survey:

1. Worry about the effects of pressure on the spouse
2. Too little time with spouse
3. Too little time with family
4. Unpredictable demands on time which take precedence over own activities
5. Too little time for own pursuits
6. Impossible to separate official life from personal life
7. Lack of personal privacy
8. Lack of time with friends and relatives
9. Isolation from others because of spouse's position
10. Subjection to criticism of spouse by others
11. High personal overhead expenses

12. Way of life altered (out of control)
13. Having responsibility without authority

Initially we find that items 1 through 3 are strong indications of the stresses and pressures on the personal relationship—the marital partnership. Secondly, we note that the complaints listed on items 4 through 13 reflect precisely those characteristics required of reflected identity. Thus, the personal consequences of the traditional, vicarious achievement spousal role and those traditional expectations with which the survey respondents express frustration, are precisely those which most inhibit the development of individual identity.

Even for those contemporary spouses who choose the traditional option of “two-person single career,” concerns were voiced and pitfalls enumerated in spouses’ responses to the NASULGC survey. One such is typical:

I would particularly like to have credit for performing a job in terms of the need for future positions. “Wife of the President” is not something one can use on questionnaires, so it sounds as if I have done nothing.

Within the university setting and within the presidential family, we find few cases of “dual careers” as it has been defined in this paper. By this term, we mean separate and independent careers *without* the duties ordinarily associated with the spousal role. There are isolated cases among wives of presidents of *private* universities in this country; however among members of NASULGC the only cases of this type were male spouses. These two men, when questioned about their roles, indicated that they had their own high-level professional careers which they pursued full-time. Neither engaged in the traditional duties of the presidential spouse, such as supervising the official residence or coordinating social events. Those duties were completed by university staff members who had been hired expressly for those purposes. The only component of the traditional campus partnership that was maintained was an occasional public appearance (as spouse) at some campus events. Even then, it was “to please her” rather than to expressly contribute to the career development of the chief executive officer.

As one male spouse in the NASULGC survey expressed it:

I do *not* play a role as spouse of the president. There are not official or unofficial responsibilities that I have assumed . . . The president and her staff direct *all* social functions as well as the care and maintenance of the president’s house. My professional career is quite separate from that of my wife’s. Events that I may attend are selected on the bases of the pleasure of her company and the personal enjoyment I may receive (e.g. athletic event). All spouses should try to be supportive—that is my only self-imposed responsibility.

The "dual-career" literature in sociology has explored the question of what happens when both husband and wife seek and have demanding careers. What are the resulting dilemmas, problems, and career patterns? Much of the literature attests to the fact that women have made great sacrifices and have given up social and community affairs in order to participate in their intellectual and professional pursuits.

When the woman who pursues a paid professional position also holds the job of presidential spouse, the frustrations and demands are vastly intensified. Not only must she overcome a generic societal unease with her professional career, but she is responsible as well for a range of spousal duties which are neither defined nor even acknowledged.

Almost 30 percent of the female NASULGC respondents work for pay outside the role of spouse, with the average hours per week being 25. Of those who work for pay, 73 percent work 20 hours or more per week. Of the employed spouses, 58 percent were professionals employed in their field of training prior to their mate's selection. Of those spouses professionally involved prior to their mate's selection as president, 59 percent continued their professional involvement following that selection. The results of the survey make it clear that these women also willingly assumed all, or some major part, of the spousal role. Thus they carry on two careers simultaneously, as a "duo-career."

Women who are both partners in the two-person career and committed to independent individual careers have created a new hybrid career style which I term "duo-career." The duo-career phenomenon has evolved through the "two-person career" and, when combined with the "dual career," creates a synthesis of expectations and demands of "dual-career" with those of the "two-person career." It is a concept that best describes the kind of career style of my own personal experience.

Moreover, the frustrations in defining and maintaining a "duo-career" were described by survey participants as follows:

1. Recognition that I be paid for work done even though my husband is university president.
2. Reduced credibility as an academic and serious researcher.
3. Promise from system president that he would make every effort to see that I was given an opportunity to be interviewed and that department's hiring efforts would not suffer if they hired me before my husband accepted position.
4. Scheduling.
5. Proper management of time and proper rating of priorities.
6. Maintaining a high energy level.

7. Criticism by certain members of the board of trustees and certain politicians and others of the university community.

Yet, a significant number of female spouses choose the difficult path of the double career. Why do they make this decision? According to the NASULGC survey, motivation for those working in a separate career outside the spousal role includes the following:

1. self fulfillment (83%)
2. independence (69%)
3. intellectual stimulation (69%)
4. to utilize professional training (65%)
5. to associate with different people (65%)
6. income (55%)

Among incentives reported by survey respondents, self-fulfillment was ranked the most important and independence and intellectual stimulations together ranked second. Respondents described personal motivations in the following ways:

To be a creative person in the area of my expertise.

I have always worked and I could see no reason to stop. I have my self-development to consider as well as my husband's.

I love my work, which is why I'm going back to it. I am also a better wife, mother and person when I'm working because I'm completely happy—as my family will attest. I would not be happy or fulfilled if I just had work and/or family or husband. But by the same token, I do not feel completely happy or fulfilled with a family and husband and no work.

I enjoy my job as president's wife very much and I wouldn't trade it for anything. My husband and I are extremely close so this job has a big advantage for us in that we can do it together. However, I can't wait to get back to surgery—my special world.

I think we all need something special for ourselves, be it a job outside the home, volunteering, or pursuing a special talent or interest. I feel this even stronger since I began doing this job. It is easy sometimes to lose your own identity, control over you and your family's life and your own sense of worth. It's hard being married to someone a large group of people view as king.

Karen O'Neil, spouse of the president of the University of Wisconsin System asserts: "There is an inherent tension in lives such as ours, a tension which takes place between the demands and expectations of the partnership in which we find ourselves . . . and the private needs, goals, and expectations we have for ourselves as individuals . . ."

Therefore, what motivates many spouses to commit themselves—in the face of these inherent tensions—to “duo-careers” is what Ina Fitzhenry-Coor reveals when she states that most spouses had been educated and professionally trained long before the appointment of their mates to presidential offices. As an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Vermont, and also spouse of that university’s president, she notes “For most of us involved in duo-careers, our training preceded our husbands’ appointments as presidents, so it is part of our ongoing careers.”

In this regard, Kim Burse, wife of the president of Kentucky State University, writes:

There were plenty of people who took for granted that I would simply quit my job and allow my career as C.P.A. and financial analyst to come to a “screeching halt” It was, in fact, assumed that I would sacrifice and forget all I had worked for to accept a role as “first lady.” . . . Shocked were many when I informed them that I had no intention of quitting my job!

Anne Wexler Duffey, who was an assistant to President Carter and now heads a Washington, D.C. consulting firm, is also the wife of Chancellor Joseph Duffey of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She reveals the compounded demands of the “duo-career” lifestyle of presidents’ spouses when she states her perception of it: “. . . a lot depends on what point in your life you’re doing what we’re doing. When Joe came to work at the University, I already had a thriving business in Washington. It didn’t make sense to give it up. There was no question of that.”

Although a portion of the professionally employed NASULGC respondents range in their careers from chief executive of a consulting, public affairs firm to a physician and a museum curator, most are involved in education.

But since the majority of employed spouses are involved in education, it is important to underscore the fact that many universities and colleges are often isolated from major cities and their larger number of job opportunities. This presents a dilemma to the professionally-trained spouse.

She can choose to commute, however, as Anne Wexler Duffey does between Washington and Amherst; or she can attempt to find a position in a neighboring educational institution (if that option is available) or, finally, she can establish herself professionally at the same educational institution which employs her husband as chief executive officer.

I have found the benefits of the latter choice to be obvious and real: the opportunity to work closely with the partner; the intellectual stimulations and cultural opportunities; keeping a young mind through involvements with

students; the knowledge of the institution from the perspective of a professional, and many other advantages.

However, the spouse who elects to work on the same campus also encounters many disadvantages, the most important of which is the issue of identity. As one spouse stated in a telephone interview: "The necessity of facing the whole issue of how to maintain a separate personage within the two-person quality—not the president's wife in occupational settings—but the president's wife in appropriate settings."

Reverberations of this abound and may be deeply felt by the spouse employed by the same institution as the president, with very unusual ethical problems. For instance, should the spouse be excused from departmental and other meetings if anything "delicate" is to be discussed or if reactions to university policy, etc., are going to be voiced? Confidentiality is a crucial concern.

Notwithstanding the previously mentioned benefits of a professional relationship in close proximity to the president, there exists the potential for tensions as a result of two careers in the same institution. Additionally, there is the problem of establishing oneself as a separate professional in the eyes of one's academic peers, coupled with the ambiguities of the whole issue of friendship. As one spouse revealed: "If I begin to have a friend in the university setting, I am invariably heading down the road to being used," and: "Perhaps if I were at another university, I could have a close professional friend because there would be no personal gain."

Consequently, the spouse employed at the same institution as her partner comes to the realization that her power base and her vulnerability are one and the same.

Those who have experienced the dilemmas of "duo-career" at the same institution which employs the president have gained great insight into the institution that would not have been possible if only the spousal role had been chosen. These spouses can confirm the professional involvements, satisfactions, and successes that they have experienced. However, one of the obstacles that remains is the fact that no matter how professional and well-intentioned the participants of academe are, the awareness that a "duo-career" partner is also the spouse of the president is never totally forgotten.

But there are generic societal pressures felt by all "duo-career" spouses. There is the strain of accommodating two disparate professional paths within a marital partnership. And beyond that—for presidents' spouses—there is an often implicit but usually pervasive lack of support from the governing board and the institution for recognizing her need for personal and professional

identity. In recruiting a president, the governing board should be fully aware of the advantages of an engaging and competent spouse.

The spouse of the chief executive officer of a university who desires to fulfill her independent career aspirations faces multiple obstacles because of the demands and expectations of the "two-person" career in which she is involved. Moreover, universities continue to lag behind the times in gender-role perception, refusing to confront and assimilate this significant societal change.

In a telephone interview, one spouse observed: "The universities are certainly far behind the curve in having (spousal) expectations that are absolutely unreal."

An obstacle to the promotion of the partnership, as well as the continuation of a "duo-career," is often the board's refusal to consider the spouse's identity and needs. In a telephone interview, another presidential spouse stated that she thought this was the source of multiple problems and stresses in the partnership. She indicated that the board had not even afforded her the courtesy of an interview—"it's such a slap in the face . . . this is a blatant indicator that they view us as non-entities—non-persons."

In the entire NASULGC survey, 97 spouses responded that they did not have a written job description. Fifty-three affirmed that they were part of the interview process when the governing board members considered their spouses for the presidency; however, 46 were not afforded this important opportunity. Ultimately, 82 indicated the spouse *should* be included in the interview process for a variety of reasons:

- To learn the expectations of me.
- So that the board can learn my expectations.
- So that I can judge the job.
- So that the board can judge me.

Beyond the governing board's traditional shortsightedness in failing to respond to duo-career issues initially, there is, as well, the failure of the university community to respond to, or come to terms with, its unexpressed expectations and conflicting needs of the spousal role. This is a very basic and constant challenge to both private and public aspects of the presidential partnership.

Traditionally, the governing board's inability or unwillingness to articulate its expectations of the spousal role, coupled with the university's disregard or avoidance of the spouse's need for personal and professional identity, have stymied the spouse's freedom to pursue both personal and professional goals.

As Thompson and Thompson noted in a 1983 report in the *Journal of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities & Colleges*:

. . . The spouse might want a career of his/her own and be unwilling to assume the traditional role model normally associated with the companion of a president . . . Thus, there would be a reluctance on the part of a career-oriented individual to relinquish professional ambitions and a high salary . . . Some colleges and universities might find themselves in a situation in which they cannot expect to pay for the talents of one person and get the second to perform—without pay—in the accustomed manner. The one-for-the-money, two-for-the-show combination of human resources could turn out to be a vanishing breed (Thompson & Thompson, 1983, p. 44).

At the same time it would be an injustice to these intrepid women who sustain a duo-career, to overlook their insights concerning its management. Survey respondents noted that they schedule as far in advance as possible, delegate, train helpers, organize carefully, and establish priorities. Clearly, this reflects the need to divest some of the more routine responsibilities of the unacknowledged spousal role. Here the governing board can be of extraordinary aid in providing the staff structure to make a duo-career possible.

Other concerns must be attended by the presidential couple themselves. As Anne Wexler Duffey puts it: "We pursue our careers in different places—elements of commuter marriage—integrating totally separate lives with totally separate interests. It takes extra work—little tricks such as when I fly into Hartford, he sends a car to meet me, and his secretary puts five issues of the daily campus newspaper in the car for me to read so that I know what's going on.

And ultimately the campus must share in an understanding of the innovative and pioneering steps of the duo-career spouse. Happily, one respondent reported: "The university community has been terrific—there has never been any question or hint of concern or disapproval—I have enough presence here as a hostess so that they're satisfied," and "The university has been extraordinarily supportive."

Thus, the responsibility for confronting and resolving the multiple demands of "duo-career" lifestyles rests not only with the presidential partnership, but also with the governing board and the institution.

That, however, is not to ignore the pain and pleasure of the here and now so poignantly stated by one of these women: "You know, being a president's wife is a little like being a fiddler on a roof."

In summary, then, it appears that "dual-career" and "duo-career" lifestyles for presidents' spouses are making a new mark in contrast with the traditional "two-person single career." This evolution shows heartening concern for

recognition of the partnership and its needs, as well as what many see as the need for gender redefinition and promotion of a new androgynous career ethic. The assumption that governing board recruitment of a president inevitably brought the institution "one for the money, two for the show" may still be unspoken, but it is no longer unchallenged.

REFERENCES

- Kemeny, Jean Alexander. *It's Different at Dartmouth*, The Stephen Greene Press, Brattleboro, Vermont, 1979.
- Lipman-Blumen, Jean. *The Vicarious Achievement Ethic and Non-Traditional Roles for Women*, A paper presented to the Eastern Sociological Association at its annual meeting: New York, 1973.
- Thompson, Patricia and Thompson, Hugh. *One For The Money, Two For The Show*. AGB Reports, The Journal of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1983, Vol. 25, Number 3, May/June, 1983, pp. 44-46.



Kim M. Burse is the Assistant Director of the Kentucky Development Finance Authority and Treasurer of the Commonwealth Small Business Development Corporation, both of which are located in Frankfort, Kentucky. Frankfort is the home of Kentucky State University where Kim's husband, Raymond Burse, is the President. Having received an undergraduate degree in accounting from the University of Kentucky, and certification as a CPA from the State of Kentucky, she has subsequently worked in both the private and public sectors. Kim has written this chapter based upon her first year as spouse of a university president, which commenced July 1, 1982.

MY FIRST YEAR



by Kim M. Burse

In retrospect, my initial year as a spouse and principal adviser to a university president began on a May evening in 1982. My husband, Raymond M. Burse, and I agreed he should accept an invitation to become one of the nominees for the position of interim president of Kentucky State University (KSU) in Frankfort, Kentucky. The 96-year-old KSU encompassed a single campus with 26 buildings and approximately 2,300 students. Its legacy included a rich and distinct heritage which encouraged the attainment of excellence in scholarship and the development of a sense of obligation to contribute to the intellectual, cultural, spiritual and economic growth of the community.

Our decision indicated Raymond would change careers. Therefore, we would have to part with the quiet sort of life we knew and join the ranks of those in the public eye. Hence, we would leave our newly-decorated 40-year old home in Louisville (60 miles from Frankfort), a major segment of my immediate family and a whole host of wonderful friends.

On the other hand, my husband and I at very early ages (Raymond was 30 and I was 27) would be given the opportunity to share in the further growth and development of Kentucky State University and become a part of its everlasting contributions to future generations. For all of our working lives, both Raymond and I had been submerged in the business and corporate worlds—Raymond as a practicing attorney and I as a CPA and financial analyst. We were truly fascinated with the kind of bubbling excitement associated with being a part of university life. We considered the university environment intellectually and culturally stimulating, and a fantastic place to meet a diverse group of people. Yet the overwhelming reason for our wanting to become a part of the university was to help students in their pursuit of a quality education.

Our dilemma was typical of numerous couples who each year toil over the university presidency question. For the majority, the positive points more than outweigh the negative ones. Our decision was a joyous one, and it marked a great turning point in our lives.

The Perception of My Role

The news spread like a wild fire the day the Board of Regents announced their decision. Coverage of the decision won wide attention on radio, television and in newspapers across the state. Everyone I saw for weeks after that point offered their congratulations and best wishes for us both.

It was not until weeks later that it dawned on me that I had not been formally included in the interview process surrounding the selection of the interim president and spouse. Another glaring absence was the lack of explanation by the Board of Regents of my role and job as spouse.

Even though we were in the age of the liberated woman, the Board of Regents, like many other university governing bodies, had not yet recognized the efforts of the spouse and the tremendous role the spouse plays in conjunction with the president. The lack of awareness on their part implied they had only limited expectations of the spouse.

Evidently, the only expectation was that the spouse would accompany the president to all university events—official and unofficial—with a smile. Many would describe such a role as one for an “ornamental spouse”—one who is seen but not heard; present but not useful.

I, on the other hand, expected far more from myself and had no intention of being “ornamental.” Even if I had to create my role, it would be one that reflected my style and high standards of expectation. My role would be complementary to that of the president and together we would form a partnership of two people.

Nonetheless, before we agreed my husband should accept the interim position, we discussed and concluded that I would (only if I wanted to) retain my present position as a financial analyst for Humana Inc., in Louisville.

During the period of intense publicity, very few people (only my family, close friends and cohorts at work) expressed any interest in how this change in my husband's employment would affect my career and present position.

There were plenty of people who took it for granted that I would simply quit my job and allow my career as a CPA and financial analyst to come to a “screeching halt.” The B.S. degree in accounting, as well as the CPA certification I had obtained, were totally disregarded. It was, in fact, assumed that I would sacrifice and forget all I had worked for to accept a role as “first lady.” Most would giggle and ask me, “When are you going to have your first tea party?” Very few were aware of the responsibilities, time commitments or daily routines of the “first lady” on campus, but this really did not surprise me.

Shocked were many when I informed them I had no intention of quitting my

job! A few even gasped when I added the drive to and from work would be 110 miles per day.

Since we had no children and the size of the student body as well as the campus were relatively small, I knew I could give my “all” to the university on a part-time basis and still maintain my full-time job. I felt the quality of time spent on university matters was far more meaningful than the quantity of the time. Dedication and commitment were on my side.

Many spouses are faced with the dilemma of role description and professional involvement following the selection of their mate as university president. A significant amount of soul searching takes place the first year after the selection. Yet, the results of the first year are so strongly dependent on the choices we made.

The “Mrs. Burse Syndrome”

The official welcoming reception was held shortly before we moved to town and will always be remembered as the event marked with a sea of faces. *It was truly wonderful!* Unfortunately, this event also marked the beginning of the “Mrs. Burse” or “president’s wife syndrome.” I became aware that the university staff and the university community initially could not have cared less about me as an individual. Few, if any, even wanted or cared to know my first name. All that mattered was that I was the president’s wife, Mrs. Burse. It was as though I was expected to be a mirror, reflecting odds and ends of my husband’s thoughts without having any critical input or making any judgments of my own. My uniqueness as a human being was not even considered.

Past activities of previous presidential spouses on our campus seem to have been limited to attending meetings, banquets or other campus activities which really never required meaningful participation (i.e., introducing persons listed on the program of an event, making presentations of awards or acting as a guest speaker).

Initially, this type of mentality disturbed me but, deep, down inside, I was convinced that hard work—and time—would work to my advantage.

Our New Home

Described as a “dream house” by many of my friends, the official University House is truly beautiful. The entire first floor of the home is furnished by the university with the upstairs reserved for the president’s family. The house is less than 10 years old and is located on the far side of the campus which is somewhat isolated from day to day activities.

Many official university houses are located in the heart of the campus. These houses, typically, are over 50 years old and they serve as center points for fund raising and entertainment activities.

Moving into an official university house is always difficult because it requires a meshing of the presidential family's belongings into a prearranged setting. Major furnishings are generally provided in the public areas, but final decorative touches are always missing.

Thus, one of my first tasks as spouse of the president was to complete the decoration of the house. Normally this is a necessary requirement because all "first families" find a need to mold their homes into an environment which reflects their tastes—if only in a small way. Typically, 500 or more guests per year are entertained in these official houses, therefore, the need is to make them hospitable as well as representative of university history and tradition. We assume the awesome task of decorating, even though in some cases first families are new to the area and have very little knowledge of decorating services available. A saving grace can be the university staff assigned to the house. They combine links from the past and to the future.

The First Football Game

The first home football game was one major event on campus where there were numerous students, faculty and citizens from the Frankfort community. It was a memorable event even though we did not win the game. We had been to several college football games before, but there was a distinct difference in observing a game as an unattached spectator and in observing as a university presidential couple. We carefully observed every event that occurred that day. Similarly, I felt we were also watched ever so carefully. Everyone was curious as to how the new presidential couple would conduct themselves at a football game.

I hope we did not shock too many people with our spontaneous bursts of applause and cheers when the tide of events flowed positively and grumbles when they were reversed. We also openly expressed our pleasure and delight with the marching band during the half-time performance. By the end of the game, I was sure the crowd regarded us as average football spectators, and from that game forward there was never really a question about our ability to "act normal" at a football game.

My Growth and Development in My New Role

Subsequent weeks were filled with endless banquets, receptions and speaking engagements for the president which required my presence. My role as spouse

broadened as I assumed duties such as hostess, supervisor of the house staff, co-director of the official house, and campus representative. At that point, I still had not received any directions from the board of regents, thus, I continued to use on-the-job training as my major information source.

My days started abruptly, at 5:45 a.m., Monday through Friday. The commute from Frankfort to Louisville took approximately one hour and 15 minutes. I constantly used my lunch hour to run errands and wrap up loose ends related to our move or to the decoration of the campus house. On occasion, I would find time to grab a bite to eat, but that mainly consisted of a cola drink and snack crackers. I was not overly excited about eating lunch anyway, since evening meals generally included banquets of some type.

More times than not, I left the office exactly at quitting time because of the constant need to attend an event on campus later that evening. Somehow the president and I always arrived at most events exactly on time or with plenty of time to spare.

As time progressed, I became an expert in small talk as do many spouses of university presidents. All of us become very socially inclined as we develop communication skills and diplomatic techniques which may not have otherwise emerged. In addition, we learn to endure practically any event no matter how boring.

The various events on the university campus offered a fantastic opportunity for me to interact with a variety of people, participate in a whole host of interesting activities and become involved in decisions which truly made a difference to the university. I was a working consort with my husband and was loving it every step of the way. Together we were a unique team dedicated to serving a great university.

Nonetheless, the other side of the coin had to be examined: the effect of the university life on our marriage and homelife during the first year.

There were many meals eaten alone, many discussions about the ranking of my priorities and where the university fell in that ranking, many evenings spent alone, many nights interrupted by phone calls regarding the university, constant scheduling and cross-referencing of schedules, unpredictable demands on our time which took precedence over our personal activities, and event after event. University life was strenuous to say the least.

To add to that stress was the awkwardness of making true friends. In the back of my mind was the thought that some people would be friendly only because of my spouse's position. Similarly, there was a fear of being used by someone to extract information regarding the university. Unfortunately, everyone became suspect until enough time passed for me to feel comfortable with my sur-

roundings and the people I came to know. I later made many warm and lasting friendships, but during the interim, old friends were considered a necessity for mere survival.

We as spouses learn to accept quality time and become “touchy” about the free time we have for ourselves and with our spouses. Busy schedules become the norm to fill voids created by the lack of time spent with our partners in marriage. University life is demanding, indeed, but we learn to endure. We look at the environment as a challenge to be mastered and we concentrate on the positive aspects. Our commitment to our spouses and the university keeps us “ticking.”

The Changing of Jobs

Luck was on my side during the first six months after our move. During that time period, my work load remained steady and did not require very much overtime. Nonetheless, after Raymond had been selected as the permanent president, I realized a decision had to be made regarding whether or not to remain in the job I held.

The decision process created a great deal of anxiety because it involved a reexamination of personal goals and priorities. I realized that there were numerous events, activities and causes with which I wanted to be involved; however, there were only 24 hours in a day and only one of me. *I had to make a decision.* My self-fulfillment, independence, intellectual stimulation and future career were in question.

I had been engaged in a juggling act for the last six months which was draining my energy bit by bit. Thus, I decided I could maintain my personal goals by accepting another position with the Kentucky State Government located in Frankfort, my resident city. This change would afford me the opportunity to maximize the time I could spend with my husband and take part in other outside activities of personal interest. I chose to change and it has proven to be for the better.

As a result of the change in jobs, I was able to carve out a small, but important amount of spare time. I was able to enroll in an evening class in elementary Spanish—something I had always wanted to do. The class allowed me to achieve two objectives: (1) It allowed me to learn Spanish and, (2) it allowed me to become one of the university's commuting night students. The opportunity gave me insights into the campus as viewed by our night students and this became a valuable asset in later months.

Another exciting part of my first year on campus centered around the organization of the Kentucky State University Women's Club.

It was a shocking surprise to learn that the university had never had such a club in the past. Therefore, I called a small group of women together to help me develop proposed objectives, bylaws and a constitution for the club. In addition, we planned an informational reception for those interested in forming a women's club.

The organization of such a club drew some skepticism, because it represented a new endeavor. I was quite pleased at the final turnout for the reception and with those who have continued to participate. I felt a great sense of accomplishment when the club became an official group on campus and it proved to everyone that new endeavors could be successful as well as make tremendous contributions to the university.

I am sure all spouses of university presidents find a particular interest on their campus to which they contribute a great amount of time and effort. Those items of interest always become true success stories for the university. Thus, the effort and commitment generated by the spouse for these projects offer more proof that the university really does get two for the price of one!

The Closing of Our First Year

Graduation marked the end of the primary segment of the school year. Administrators, faculty and staff came together on graduation day for one of the most beautiful and meaningful ceremonies held during the year. The payoff for each student's four-to-five-year effort became apparent on that day. The graduating students' faces passing by us, one by one, became an unforgettable sight. The thought that our partnership efforts directly and indirectly affected the educational experience of those young people gave us a warm glow. For this was the reason for our efforts and sacrifice.

After graduation ceremonies were concluded, vacation became the next item on our agenda. The prior 12 months were run with full steam ahead and, thus, it was time to unwind and review the past year's activities as well as plan for the upcoming year.

Our first year was truly exciting and it produced a definite change in our lives. The change, as well as our new roles, became integral parts of both our lives. During that first year, the university learned that it had a unique *team* at the helm. The university community no longer thought of me as someone to be seen but not heard. This allowed me to put to rest the "Mrs. Burse Syndrome" once and for all.



Sue Young is the wife of Charles Young, Chancellor of the University of California, Los Angeles—a position they have held for 15 years—almost half of their 33 years of married life. They have two children, Liza and Chuck, Jr., who have graduated from the Chancellor's Residence to homes and families of their own.

Active in many university and community organizations over the years, Sue Young has a B.A. degree in political science and is pursuing further studies in linguistics.

THE QUESTION OF REMUNERATION



by Sue Young

Over the past few years, the topic of the desirability of remuneration for the performance of duties by the spouse of a university president or chancellor* has been discussed many times in academic circles. The growing interest has prompted the inclusion in this book of an essay on the feasibility and desirability of such remuneration. Here the spouse referred to is the female because the dominant force of university heads is still represented by men and because the services provided are those most normally associated with the spouse/wife rather than the spouse/husband. Much of the supporting material of this discussion is derived from the "1983 Survey of Spouses of Presidents/Chancellors Who Are Members of The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges." The conclusions are based on 104 survey responses from a total of 138 surveys distributed.

Until recently, the subject of remuneration would probably not even have been considered in a book about university presidents' spouses. There has been a long-standing tradition of a certain status afforded the president's wife, but there has been little formal acknowledgement of her responsibilities and power. Remuneration has evidently been considered unnecessary or inappropriate for someone in her position. It has been expected that she would graciously volunteer her time and talents in the pursuit of her husband's goals and accomplishments. His successes would be her reward.

Today, throughout the nation, attitudes toward volunteerism are changing. More and more women who previously had performed in various volunteer roles are electing to enter the work force. In some instances they are abandoning their volunteer work altogether; while in the arts, in hospitals, in the field of politics, to name a few, many jobs previously reserved for volunteers only are being changed to paid staff positions. To a great number of women this development has meant financial independence and a rise in self-esteem. This 1983 survey of NASULGC spouses indicates, however, that the desirability of

*Used interchangeably are the terms president and chancellor since either refers to the chief executive officer of the campus or system.

this trend from unpaid to paid is not shared by all women. To the majority of those university presidents' wives responding in this survey, remuneration for their particular position was not an attractive option.

For 20 percent of the spouses surveyed, however, now did seem the proper time to consider the feasibility of offering payment to university presidents' spouses for the services they presently perform on a voluntary basis. Someone does have to do the things a president's wife does. There is not a university presidency in the nation that is a one-person job. Whether or not a wife exists, someone is performing the vital administration of social events. Should there be public acknowledgement that a necessary and valuable job is being done that, were it not for the free labor of the spouse, would have to be paid for?

There is no question that the university powers-that-be want the very best representative in their president's wife. After all, she is the campus's official hostess; she represents the institution wherever she goes and whatever she does, even when she would rather be a private person; she makes decisions about entertainment and house expenditures involving many thousands of dollars based upon her tastes, her instincts, her needs, her abilities, her sensitivities to the campus and the community; in her role as a non-employee she often serves as supervisor, mentor, and trainer of paid university employees; she frequently holds the key to opening up the proper environment for major university fund-raising activities in her home.

Why is it, then, that 80 percent of those surveyed did not believe that they should be paid for their work as spouses? In enumerating some of their specific reasons for rejecting remuneration, the key word used in the survey responses was "flexibility."

If paid, I would lose what little flexibility has been retained; the president/chancellor salary should be high enough to cover services of the spouse.

Remuneration is inappropriate concreteness for what must be a flexible situation.

I have more flexibility for my private life as wife and mother without salary.

I am not interested in working for the university as a paid employee as it would lessen my flexibility of choices.

Other spouses were specifically concerned with the budget difficulties currently being experienced on their campuses, and, therefore, rejected the idea of their being paid for their services.

One wife said, "I view my responsibilities, in part, as an opportunity for service to my husband, the university, and the state. However, I would have

preferred the opportunity to volunteer my services, rather than service being mandated." It appears that some wives felt that they had had no voice in the matter of whether or not they wanted to perform the full-time duties of a university president's wife. Even under this condition, however, most still preferred not to be paid.

There obviously are many problems with this concept of being compensated for work being done because it comes with one's spouse's position. It would be a radical change in the life patterns of some wives to consider being remunerated for something they had always done out of a sense of partnership and devotion. The interjection of a salary might bring about a re-ordering of priorities with possibly far-reaching consequences in their personal lives.

From the information supplied in the survey responses, a composite of a president's wife would be that of a woman over 50 years old and in a first marriage. In addition, she would be a college graduate and not professionally involved prior to being the president's spouse. At least for the present, this picture represents the majority of those surveyed for whom the time seemed not right to make a decision toward such a radical change as that of receiving remuneration for their services.

Why, then, is there a growing awareness that "two for the price of one" is becoming less acceptable? I once heard this phrase from a university president who was paying tribute to his lifelong partner on the event of their retirement. She had been involved in a most intimate way in his entire career, and he considered the university fortunate, indeed, to have been clever enough to hire only him and yet reap the benefits of her services, too, for all those years.

Recent events have forced us to become aware of the spouse's role. As an example, more and more women are becoming heads of universities. This has brought into focus the fact that when there is no wife (for a male spouse would not be expected to perform the duties which fall upon the female spouse), provisions must be made to hire one or more persons to assume the wifely duties of managing, hostessing, planning, budgeting, training, and supervising. Paying someone to do this work also occurs when there is a bachelor president. And there is an increasing practice of husband and wife separate careers being carried on simultaneously. In the survey, approximately 10 percent of the spouses are employed full time. In some cases this means that they have no time to give to the duties of a president's wife, and someone else is hired to carry out these functions. In other instances, they diligently try to excel at both jobs, sometimes to the detriment of their outside paid position.

On another front, the growing divorce rate in the United States has forced women in general to take a better look at how their lifetime is accounted for.

Having to enter the job market when one has devoted her life to non-paid work, brings on the painful realization that past performance not monetarily rewarded is performance not highly valued by prospective employers. This is an employer attitude that some people are valiantly trying to change because volunteer work many times is performed at the highest level and requires a great deal of skill.

Unfortunately, a president's spouse is not immune from being divorced, or widowed. Capable and intelligent as she is, she might find herself in the position of having to prove her high-level managerial skills to the job world. As one wife put it in her survey response:

I would particularly like to have credit for performing a job in terms of the need for future positions. "Wife of the President" is not something one can use on questionnaires, so it sounds as if I have done nothing.

The results of this survey show that 96 percent of the spouses do not now have a written job description. For many, this is deliberate, and is necessary for them to maintain their flexibility. For those who are considering either the possibility of remuneration for the job of president's spouse, or the possibility of documentation of experience for gaining outside employment, a written job description would be necessary. Until their responsibilities are formally spelled out, few spouses can expect to be taken seriously in a bid for recognition of the professional level of their services.

For all of us, change is frightening. From the wife's point of view, being remunerated for her position could cause changes in relationships with her husband, the staff, friends, members of the university governing board, and with those serving the campus in a volunteer capacity.

By receiving payment for her activities, a wife would, in principle at least, have become an employee of her husband. Somewhere along the line he probably would have been involved in negotiating the amount of her salary. Subsequently, her work would have to be evaluated, and her husband, perhaps, would be in the position of being loyally, but uncomfortably, defensive of her performance. What had previously been a private discussion between married partners would have become a semi-public evaluation. The survey results indicate that 95 percent of the spouses have never been evaluated. It seems that most spouses perform their tasks exceedingly well but find the demanding situation acceptable only because they are not told what to do and are not put in the vulnerable position of being formally evaluated by others.

If the wife were to be remunerated, her role in the interview process would likely take on larger dimensions because the search committee would be

focusing on her talents as well as those of her husband. As of this 1983 survey, 47 percent of the spouses had had no part in the interview process when the governing board members considered their husbands for the presidency. Only 12 percent had had anyone at the institution even explain the expectation of their role as spouse before their husbands were hired.

It may well be that no one *can* explain the wife's role ahead of time because of the overwhelming focus which is put on the president's role and because of the assumption that it is his show and, therefore, up to him to know his wife's capabilities. Because of her husband's expectations, her previous experiences, her family demands, and her personal achievements, each wife would bring to the role her own special stamp, and it may be that the job must be tailored after the fact.

Remuneration for presidents' spouses would undoubtedly bring about more awareness on the part of the members of the governing boards of the vital assistance many wives afford their husbands in the performance of this life-consuming occupation known as university president/chancellor. This would have the salutary effect of making the wife's contributions a matter of public record and would afford her more job security in the future. However, the larger the acknowledged role of the wife, the more her personal attributes would have to be considered in the interview process, and the less control the presidential candidate would have over the criteria upon which he is to be judged for his position.

The change from volunteer to paid spouse might also have an effect upon relationships with other volunteer workers on campus. There are, after all, the wives of vice-chancellors, vice-presidents, deans, and others who perform frequent hostessing functions for the university. Where does one draw the line as to who should be remunerated for these services? Is remuneration only for the official hostess in the official residence? Does the full-time aspect and the level of the job make the difference? No other spouse within the university community has the large constituency of the president's wife—a constituency consisting of all faculty, all students, all alumni, all staff on campus, and a wide spectrum of the community. This makes comparisons difficult.

Every university is aware that the spirit of volunteerism is an important aspect of its development programs, sometimes involving hundreds of alumni and friends in various support groups, councils, and advisory boards. Without these volunteers, universities could lose many of the vast resources that they have in their alumni and friends. Frequently, women volunteers look to the president's wife as a role model. They identify with her generosity in giving of her time. The more she participates in their activities, the better they feel

about themselves. What happens to these relationships when the president's spouse is no longer a volunteer? Does such a change jeopardize the status which volunteer alumnae now perceive themselves to hold?

These questions are not easy to answer. This survey showed only four instances in which the president's spouse was now actually being remunerated for her position as wife of the president. How long these salaries have been in effect and what repercussions they have brought about were not revealed. With time, we will have more data to assess the impact of these truly pioneer experiments, but for the moment we can only surmise what changes they might effect in university relationships.

If we were to assume the feasibility of remuneration for the president's wife, there are the questions of how much and in what way she would be paid. No two institutions operate in the same way. No two presidents' wives have the same needs. Therefore, there would be a wide range of individual adaptations necessary.

According to the survey, of the 20 percent of wives who thought they should be paid, over half believed their salary should come from general university funds. A little over one-fourth thought they should be paid from general foundation funds (that is, funds which arguably would be unavailable for general university purposes). The remaining spouses preferred to share the president's own salary by having it in two parts, reflecting one payment to the president and one to his wife.

The amount of salary suggested varied widely, with 40 percent saying that they should be paid \$30,000 or more a year, and 24 percent thinking the amount should be \$12,000 or less. The other responses fell somewhere in between.

It is clear that even with those who are certain that they should be paid, the question of how, by whom, and how much varies greatly. However, the fact that some presidents' spouses are now being compensated for their services (ranging in amount from \$2,000 to \$30,000 annually), indicates that when it is considered necessary for the well-being of the university, a way can be found to arrive at both the proper source and the proper amount of spousal payment.

One conclusion to be reached from this study is that for the overwhelming majority of the wives surveyed, there is a need to protect the *status quo*—to say to the world, "I am proud to volunteer my time. It makes me feel good to know that I can be of help to my husband. Placing a monetary value on my services would add strain to an already demanding job. It is only because of the flexibility my life has as a volunteer that I am able to keep my husband, my

family, and myself happy, while at the same time giving my best efforts to the university and the community.”

Another conclusion to be drawn from this discussion of remuneration, is that there is a need by some spouses to change the system—to say to the world, “I believe that this position, which I have assumed by virtue of being married to my husband, is a full-time career which draws upon my considerable skills and talents and for which I should be adequately compensated. I need this recognition for my self-identity and proof to the outside world of my contributions to the university for the time that I am here.”

In the survey, one-third of the wives under 50 years old felt that remuneration was desirable, as compared to a little over one-tenth of those 50 and over who felt the same way. As pointed out earlier, the majority of those surveyed was over the age of 50. This might indicate that a future trend will be toward desiring remuneration as older presidential partners retire and younger couples assume leadership. Whether the spouse is paid separately or whether the president’s salary is increased sufficiently to reflect his wife’s contributions, are arrangements which might best be handled when one is entering the presidency. For those already in the position, the upheaval of change might be too overwhelming to tackle. As one wife wrote, “Even if it were possible to be paid for my services, I would not accept it as my self-respect would be lessened.”

Perhaps, however, the time has come to put away the *automatic* arrangement of two for the price of one when hiring a university president and his partner. Perhaps we are in a period of transition in which the role of the presidential spouse can be individually defined and can either retain its traditional volunteer status or can make the change to paid professional.

The mere fact that this topic is being discussed here and now is a tribute to all spouses of presidents and chancellors. The commitment that they have shown throughout the years deserves recognition. The message is clear: A vital job is being done. If, as a result of this publication, university governing boards across the nation become more informed on the role of the partner’s spouse, they could act to see that future presidential appointments carried with them the choice of whether or not remuneration was in order for the president’s partner.

