

CHAPTER V



THE YEARS AHEAD



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THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE



by Joan E. Clodius

My spouse tells me that no self-respecting, modern-trained social scientist would touch this title because it involves extrapolation from what is ideally a longitudinal study for which we have only a single year's set of data drawn from a specific survey instrument. My thought here is that he may be right, but on the other hand economists aren't doing very well these days, and we historians know that the past is prologue. By studying the present, by relating it to the observations of the past, we can make some informed judgments about what the future may be like. Another thought here is that the future will probably be very much like the present, and the more near-term the future, the more it will look like the present. Our interest, then, should lie in the next decade or two, a time long enough for changes to take place and short enough to relate to the present.

Having told you that my method will be to make a projection from the present into the next decade or two, I need to characterize the present and shall do so based on our own survey and the writings of Riesman, Corbally, Kemeny and others. There are basically three different categories of spouses in the NASULGC world with one category containing persons of two groupings that have quite different attitudes toward their role. The three categories are as follows:

1. *Two for One.* The board hires and pays a chief executive officer and the spouse is thrown in with the deal. The closest analogy outside the academy is the spouse of a minister, as some studies suggest, but I also believe it is true of spouses of principals in all positions having high public visibility and endowed with large pieces of public responsibility and trust, such as ambassadors in the foreign service and members of Congress. Within this category there are two groups. One portion is made up of those who like the arrangement, or at least go along with it. The other is made up of those who don't like it, fret about the conflicts and frequently resent the role.

2. *The Separate Career.* This characterizes the spouse who has a separate job and carries the obligations, responsibilities and salary that go along with it. Being married to the university chief executive is parallel to the job and career.

The "other" jobs which derive from being married to the university may be handled in part—or entirely—by the spouse or are handled partially by someone other than the career spouse.

3. *The Professional Manager and Partner.* This describes the spouse who, finding the amorphous nature of the role, defines it in terms of duties and responsibilities and moves to establish its professional dimensions and her role as the partner of the chief executive. There is much here that is in common with category 1, the major difference being that category 3 gives explicit definition and professionalism to the role and to the function. In that sense it might be called a "two for two."

There are substantial hazards in trying, thusly, to categorize and describe the variation that exists among spouses because no one individual person is likely to fit exactly among spouses because no one individual person is likely to fit exactly into a category. Yet, each spouse who reads this will try to figure out, "where did she put me?" The relevant questions are—Where did you place yourself? Where would you like to be?

It is terribly intriguing to realize that the answer to the question of the university spouse role in the future lies here in the present. All of the persons who will be the active decision makers as to that role are now alive and most are functioning as mature adults. Those now active in the over-50 age groups will have their places taken by the under-50 cohort. Regents and trustees whose service is terminated in the next decade or two will be replaced by currently living men and women. We just don't know who they are and what they think about the job of university spouse.

But we can do a bit of speculation about governing boards in state universities and we can make some assumptions. We can speculate that the composition of boards will modify to include more women as members. Thus, we can expect there to be reflected on the board an awareness and a better understanding of the role of the chief executive officer's spouse. We can assume there is no lessening of the demand for "accountability" on the part of the state for its public officials. This means getting job descriptions down in writing, allocating funds and resources to support the enterprise and checking after the fact to see that things are going well. These two things—a speculation and an assumption—suggest a climate of receptivity, or, if not receptivity, a climate of non-hostility to a clarification and definition of the functional area heretofore dumped on the chief executive officer's spouse.

We should also realize that most boards do not take up subjects as a matter of original jurisdiction. Most prefer to think of themselves as policy boards rather than being administrative and managerial. Unfortunately, we all have heard

horror stories of meddling, but since the model aspires in the direction of policy, let us assume that the board hopes to be responsive to matters brought before it by the university administration.

The relevant question is what will the university administration propose to the governing board about the definition, responsibilities, roles, financial support, support help, compensation, etc. for a job that simply must operate out of the chief executive's office. In those institutions where the discussion has not taken place before, it will not be easy. The university chief executive officer deals with scarce resources and this next decade is not likely to be one of generosity from state sources. The chief executive officer is surrounded by competing demands—from academic departments for teaching and research, from the library, from student activities and affairs, from extension and public service, from university relations and public affairs, and from his own office as well. If more funds are added to support the spouse's role, less funds are available for the College of Arts and Sciences, and this is true whether old money is being reallocated or new appropriations come from the state for educational and general expenses. In the mind of the chief executive it may be just a bit easier to ask his spouse to continue to make sacrifices for the university than to ask it of the academic deans.

Furthermore, there is an attitude, unfair and unjust though it may be, that supporting the chief executive's role by supporting the spouse's role and making her more effective as a partner is somehow unethical when done with public funds. The chief executive senses this, even if it hasn't shown its ugly face. In my observation these stories and rumors can range from malicious gossip to disparaging remarks about the spouse, to signs of disaffection with the way the university is being run and lack of public support for the institution.

Attitudes are difficult to change, and they change slowly if at all. This is reason again to give specific content to the responsibilities, expectations and specific financial support to the role of the spouse as manager and partner. When this is done, we can expect better understanding, better acceptance and better support for that role into the future. Timidity about endorsing an activity about which there has been controversy will disappear as a strong positive image of virtue emerges.

The good news for the university is that at last recognition and definition may be given to a job that heretofore was undefined and untitled and underfunded, yet everyone knew existed and had to be done. The good news for most spouses is that here, at last, is a job description, a set of expectations and a listing of resources available. The bad news is that all three may be unrealistic for what needs to be done, or that the spouse and the job may not be a good fit.

Lack of goodness of fit may range all the way from the spouse personally being unwilling or unable to assume some or all of the university job to an almost complete lack of resources for the spouse to work with.

It is difficult to make any judgment about the future in these matters. A remarkable finding in the survey was the great variation that was reported by respondents both as to themselves and their roles. One might expect as the university job is described and characterized in a set of expectations, there would come some commonality in the specifications and the variation would be reduced in the future. This possible reduction in variation on the job side then must be set off against the remarkably consistent advice given among spouses "To be yourself." "To thine own self be true."

My economist husband tells me that labor market analysis may be useful in understanding this apparent contradiction. It would be relatively straightforward for a job analyst to write up a job description with tasks, duties and responsibilities tied to the chief executive's office. The description might include such things as directing programs at the official university house, planning and executing official entertainment at the house, supervising a house staff for cooking, serving, cleaning and maintaining the residence, representing the chief executive in a protocol capacity both on and off campus, and carrying out other general and specific public affairs functions. The job would be given a title (such as special assistant), a salary range would be established, and the university personnel office could advertise the job in the prescribed manner and list the qualifications and experience sought in applicants. After the applications are received and evaluated, references checked, interviews conducted, the personnel office would offer the job. Presumably someone would accept and the position would be filled.

This approach has the virtue of establishing that there is such a job in the institution, that it has objective validity in its own right, and that compensation is appropriate and expected. Indeed, isn't this the case where the chief executive officer is a single or married female, or a single male? Someone is hired or a current employee is used in some category to execute these essential university functions.

This approach may be somewhat flawed on the supply side when the obvious candidate for the job is the spouse of a married male university chief executive because the labor market does not recognize the uniqueness of this spousal role. This is what makes its definition so very difficult, but not impossible, when set in terms of expectations. That board members already have clear expectations for the spouse is seen in Deborah Toll's essay reporting on Tennessee.

A precautionary note is in order. There are disadvantages in getting every-

thing rigidly defined in terms of specific tasks, duties, and responsibilities, especially if it were meant that the spouse is to get the job. Again, the survey points out the great many ways that spouses modify, adapt, alter, adjust and juggle in order to cope with the many circumstances in which they find themselves. To accommodate to the variation we find among spouses on the labor supply side, and to accommodate to the great variety of circumstances that are found on the university side, one must write job descriptions with a great deal of sensitivity to the circumstances and a great deal of flexibility in what is done and how it should be done. It would be possible to write a flexible job description in terms of *goals* and *expectations* rather than in terms of tasks and duties and to evaluate the incumbent relative to the former and not the latter. These expectations already exist in many cases and they need merely to be codified.

At the end of this essay is my attempt to pull together from my personal experience and conversations the various expectations expressed by spouses like myself who have thought, "Oh, if we knew then what we know now, things would have been different because we would know what to ask and what to ask for." When such expectations are set forth, there are implications for the spouses in each of our categories, and for some more than others.

Moreover, in my judgment, there are great advantages in all categories to have job descriptions, goals and expectations drawn up and made a part of the understandings between governing boards and the presidential couple.

In the "two for one" arrangement, the greatest benefit to the spouse will come in the recognition of her role and the realization of self-identity. The voluntary contribution in kind by the spouse will take on greater meaning and likely be more highly valued even though uncompensated. Those who like the voluntary role (and there are many who do) should like it better, and even the less enchanted should feel better about themselves when they see that recognition is given explicitly to their contribution.

The separate career spouse should feel greatly relieved and greatly challenged in seeing spelled out a university position, functionally related to the president's office, but not directly an obligation of the president's spouse. If the separate careerist pursues her career, it is clear that the university must hire someone else to carry out those university related obligations. On the other hand, if that university position is salaried, the careerist may choose to give up the outside job in favor of the one in the institution. But how in the world can the possibility of such an option be considered if it is not somewhere spelled out in the process of the offering and accepting of appointment of the university's chief executive?

The manager and partner spouse should also gain in having a clear statement of job, goals, and expectations. Like her "two-for-one" counterpart she should gain great psychic income from having others know and understand her role. In the event it leads to compensation there is that satisfaction as well and surely there would be no compensation for a job that could not be characterized in some way understandable to governing board members and state auditors.

A special group to gain will be system and campus first ladies who may come to know for the first time in their lives (in history?) what is expected of them individually and in respect to one another. What better basis to begin the communication that Judy Ikenberry says is foremost in easing tension and strain.

Another special group is that of the female president and the male bachelor president who stand to gain through having some spelled-out understanding with the board about how "official" functions are to be performed in the absence of the traditional, volunteer, female spouse. While the survey responses are too few for generalization, my impression over the years is that the male, separate career spouse manages to maintain his own life, but like his female counterpart, has feelings of anxiety, ambiguity and inadequacy. The male bachelor president, in the absence of a spouse, forthrightly hires personnel and delegates "official arrangements" out of the chief executive's office.

With respect to all categories, I believe it is essential for spouses to begin to think through and redefine their roles as "partners" to the president. Karen E. O'Neil has begun this by using the term "public partnership" to identify the obligations of the spouse by virtue of the fact of marriage to the chief executive. It suggests a parallelism to the marital partnership that I find attractive and descriptive but troublesome in legal and business terms. The business and professional meaning defined by Webster is: "partnership involves close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities as in a common enterprise."

This fits the marital partnership and marriage contract, but the absence of partnership as far as the university is concerned is clear when one considers what happens to the spouse's joint rights and responsibilities on the public side if she becomes widowed, or the chief executive is fired. Yet, it is true that spouses have worked as partners in a common enterprise—the university—and have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to their spousal role. Only, thus far, it has been all responsibilities and no rights.

If we use a little common sense and ask the market about what can be hired and what cannot be hired, we can separate out the official or "public" from the marital—the official being related to maintaining the house, entertaining,

representation and public relations. The official or public job is one that any qualified person might hold, or the functions might be divided among a number of persons hired by the university. In practice, the job is not defined, and the functions are executed by the president's spouse. On the other hand there is the marital, legal partnership which the spouse holds by contract and carries out in the functions of nurturer of the family, supporter and confidant of the chief executive, neighborhood solicitor of causes, the link of communication to the extended family, and the other, myriad things eloquently described in this volume. At the present time I believe the only real "partnership" in the executive suite is the marital partnership and the future lies in gaining recognition for and setting expectations relative to the official functions in the chief executive's office.

In reflecting on my own personal experience and observations, in recalling scores of conversations, in considering the responses to our survey, and in drawing on the wisdom and experience of the authors of these powerful and eloquent essays, I conclude that the future holds three developments. One is increased *recognition* for the role of the spouse. The second is the *definition* of that role, and, following these, is eventual *compensation* for at least that part of the total effort which would have to be paid for by the university in the absence of a female spouse. The first is already underway and is simply a part of the increasing awareness by women and society generally of the female role. The shorthand is "consciousness raising" in the social literature, but I prefer to think of it as an adult continuing education program within the higher education family. Definition will come as we confer together, write books and articles, ask questions, analyze experiences and seek comparisons. Sue Young makes the case for compensation. It will develop more easily if the functional goals and expectations can be related to the market where analagous services can be hired and the personnel are paid. Equal pay for equal work is only fair and just.

I also believe that progress will be slow in the beginning but that acceptance will come steadily. It does not seem realistic that noble spouses will bring imperial governing boards and presidents to sign a Magna Carta, or that some profound sociologist's theory will suddenly change our world. Rather, I think that the collection of case studies and case histories such as represented in this volume will gradually bring a consensus that change is in order. The present reality is that more and more women are having careers. Spouses in the academy, from which most chief executives are drawn, are more likely to be career and job and compensation-oriented than the average or typical spouse in our survey who is over 50 and has been conditioned to accept the "charming and gracious" volunteer role. The upcoming generation of spouses will have

different lives to lead and they will be living them in a world of different attitudes and values. The guiding concepts are awareness, understanding, education, fairness, and justice.

APPENDIX

In what follows I have tried to organize the topics into what may be *asked of* the spouse (expectations) and what the spouse might *ask for* from the board to assist her in meeting the expectations.

What is Expected of the Spouse?

Campus Involvement: The Gown. Is the spouse expected to be involved with the faculty in any way? To attend any service or social functions associated with schools and colleges or departments, recognition dinners, scholarship teas, faculty spouse functions, international clubs, newcomer groups, etc? Is something expected beyond mere presence at such functions?

What is expected of the spouse with respect to students, both male and female? Is she expected to visit living groups, fraternities, sororities (her own if not others), residence halls? What about foreign students, scholarship students, and other clubs representing important student interests and activities? Is she expected to have a special interest and involvement in the student union and its music, theater, and artistic activities? Is she expected to contribute to student recruitment activities and high school student visitations, pre-registration orientation for new students, and parents' weekends?

And alumni? Every year brings more class reunions it seems, additional alumni to be recognized for distinguished service, more need for increased efforts at fund raising among them, and ever larger numbers of women. What is the expected level of involvement? Is it ceremonial presence, participation, entertaining, correspondence?

What is expected with respect to the endless special events—the visit of a distinguished teacher and scholar, the retirement of a noted member of the faculty or staff or the much sadder event of death, the special programs of women's groups or other interests?

And athletic events? Is the spouse expected to attend football, basketball, ice hockey, crewing, soccer and other such events on campus? (While she sits and cheers, she may also be worried about time and energy for her own fitness program.)

Community Involvement and Leadership: The Town. What are the expectations held for the spouse, as a high-visibility volunteer, to involve herself in the community? Should she serve as an active member or board member for the YWCA, Girl/Boy Scouts, Community Chest, March of Dimes, the symphony, the local or state historical society, local hospitals, museums, special schools, and church or synagogue? Is her contribution expected to be in money as well as time? What about special commissions and projects such as those to preserve and restore neighborhoods, historic districts, historic houses and buildings, and to conserve and to beautify the native landscape?

The Residence and Entertaining. What are expectations with respect to both the maintenance and use of the residence? Where does the responsibility lie for both noting and initiating action on house repairs, routine plumbing needs, electrical, painting and decorating needs, window washing, snow removal, gardening, lawn, tree and shrubbery, tennis courts and swimming pool maintenance? Is the spouse expected to use it as a private home and also as a public place—one to be on display at various times? Is it a historic house, and what are the implications for the spouse? If it is a large house with extra bedrooms, what is expected with respect to housing and feeding official guests and visitors including board members? Is it expected that the house is to be used for official entertaining or will entertaining be in other university facilities, such as the student union or alumni house? Is there a problem with respect to serving alcoholic beverages? Are rented facilities and use of private clubs appropriate? Who should be entertained? The list might include faculty, students, campus visitors, alumni, community leaders, past or prospective donors, members of the board, the governor and legislative leaders, commencement speakers, honorary degree recipients, and *ad infinitum*. Who expects to be entertained, and what are the board expectations about who should be entertained? What are the expectations with respect to lifestyle in entertaining? Is it down home or formal, intimate or large scale, plain or fancy, or all of these?

Representation-Official and Protocol. Do the board members have any expectations with respect to the spouse's relationship to themselves? Is the spouse expected to have only a social relationship with members—perhaps to house and feed them, to look after their spouses, and otherwise be charming and gracious? Or is she sometimes to report to the board, to undertake certain assignments, and to receive some direction? Is she expected to develop certain activities of her own such as speaking to national and state groups to represent the university, to participate in seminars and workshops of interest to the university and relevant to her competence and position, to appear on television

and radio talk shows, to cultivate the alumni, to give special attention to past and prospective donors both individuals and foundations?

Personal and Professional. It is assumed that every spouse meets the expectation of being "charming and gracious." But is it expected that she give 100 percent of her non-family time to the institution? If not, can she give her non-family time to her own professional career with full board support and without substantial loss to the university? Are there negative expectations about her trying to combine university obligations and personal interests and pursuits either full time or part-time?

Travel. Is the spouse expected to travel with her husband, or alone when appropriate, in execution of the several responsibilities she may share? A few examples include recruitment of students, meetings with alumni clubs, meetings of national associations in higher education, conferences on matters affecting the university, and representation in the institution's overseas projects, and meeting prospective and past donors.

What Resources are Available?

Basically the questions revolve around the adequacy of budget and facilities to support the activities expected of the spouse.

Staff. What can the spouse expect to have in the way of staff to take care of the residence, its repair, maintenance, etc., and the garden and grounds, but perhaps more importantly, someone who *cares* about the residence and *will see* that things are done? What assistance can the spouse expect in executing housekeeping functions such as cooking, cleaning, catering, and clean up?

Can the spouse expect the services of a secretary whom she supervises for official correspondence, invitations, cards, ordering supplies, keeping records, keeping accounts and coordinating events and schedules? Can the spouse expect the services of a "go for?" Someone is needed to run errands, buy supplies, make and receive calls and, when necessary, provide child care if there are children in the home.

House and Facilities. Is the house safe and secure? Is it adequate as a family home and as an official residence without remodeling, or providing separate houses? Are the kitchen and pantry large enough? Are there adequate dishwashers, cooking equipment, food processors and mixers, cooking ranges and ovens, refrigerators and freezers, washing machines and dryers? Are the accessories adequate in terms of china, glassware, silverware, table linens, and linens and towels and blankets for guest rooms? Are there adequate numbers and kinds of tables, chairs, beds, nightstands, closets and storage space? What part of

these furnishings and accessories may the spouse expect to come from the university and what part from family resources? Who carries and pays for the insurance on personal and household effects in the official house? Is there a schedule of periodic major cleaning, redecorating and replacement to remedy the ravages of time and entertaining? (There should be.)

Other resources. Is there a university foundation supported by non-tax money with funds available to the spouse or husband that can be used for legitimate needs not otherwise funded, such as a gift to a foreign official or flowers to a prospective donor? Might it include spouse's travel to university related events? Purchase of alcoholic beverages for entertaining as well as candles and flowers? And perhaps more controversial, assistance with a wardrobe that is directly related to university appearance?



What personal qualities are expected of a president's spouse?

THE LAST WORD

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Above and beyond such routine expectations of being free from suspicion like Caesar's wife or attracting lasting loyalties like the Virgin Mary, the president's spouse should reflect other strong personal characteristics.

Those in academe will be looking for traits that strengthen the academic mission, such as the intellect of Eleanor Roosevelt, an appreciation of research like Madame Curie, and the ability to raise funds like Lady Bird Johnson. In the give and take of campus power struggles, it would also help if she had the political savvy of Golda Meier.

The President's spouse must be versatile—equally adept at supporting the arts like Joan Mondale, or engaging in locker room chatter like Phyllis George.

Communicative skills rank high on the list of attributes—things like drawing people out like Barbara Walters, handling massive correspondence like Ann Landers, or deftly turning a phrase with wit and humor like Erma Bombeck.

Appearances are also important—little things like presiding over affairs of state like Queen Elizabeth, while managing affairs of state like Margaret Thatcher.

She must have Jackie Kennedy's flair for redecorating old presidential residences while maintaining the wholesome hominess of Little House on the Prairie. She must serve simple, sumptuous banquets like Cleopatra's reception for Marc Antony on a Mrs. Colonel Sanders' southern fried chicken budget.

Her wardrobe, like Nancy Reagan's, should reflect style and elegance and appropriate frugality.

In times of crises, she must maintain the majestic calm of Greer Garson's Mrs. Miniver, the combative spirit of Joan of Arc, and the healing instincts of Florence Nightingale.

Like the Biblical Ruth, she must go when it's time to go, and stay when it's time to stay.

When little people are involved, she must be skilled at changing diapers, wiping noses, braiding hair—or mending clothes, minor wounds, and bruised feelings—in short, an expert in Erma Bombeck's "Second Oldest Profession."

She must be willing to eat a lot of meals alone (or with the children or the housekeeper), say warm and cheerful goodnights over the telephone, and stoically subordinate celebrations of birthings and birthdays, anniversaries, and other personal events to the campus calendar. All the while, she also is spreading herself thinner than United Way in covering the community, and logging more hours and miles than a marathon runner preparing for the Olympics. And, like a lady weight lifter—she must be durable.

In summary, the *perfect* president's spouse may be as hard to find as a college president who can walk on water.

But appreciated—you bet. Recently, an admiring president said of his spouse, "My wife is an angel, she's always up in the air harping."



(Footnote: If the president's spouse is a he, then someone will have to rewrite the book.)