

Remarks by Cathy E. Minehan
at a Pine Street Inn Journey Home Breakfast
for Women in Financial Services
Wednesday, November 2, 1994

Good morning. I'd like you to thank you all for coming to have breakfast with us today. It is an honor to assist the Pine Street Inn in its efforts to educate women about the Inn, and about the Women's Inn in particular. I visited the Women's Inn earlier this year and was truly impressed, and moved, by what I saw. So, when Joan Bok asked me to host this morning's breakfast, I accepted immediately.

Since 1969, the Inn has served the City of Boston by meeting the emergency shelter needs of thousands upon thousands of men and women. Over the past five years (since 1989 the Inn began automated tracking) an average of 750 women per year have passed through its doors. While emergency shelter remains the primary mission of the Pine Street Inn, it has also undertaken a series of programs to address the longer term needs of the homeless. This includes transitional housing, permanent housing, and job and life-skills training.

On the day that I visited the Inn, I met a woman who had first come to the Inn for emergency shelter who was being trained on the job for a cook's position with the Inn. While she was being trained, she was getting a paycheck that she used to reimburse the Inn for her living costs. By doing this, she was learning important life skills: how to open and manage a checking account, pay bills, and how to manage her money. I also saw bright, clean and orderly transitional housing for women, and learned that permanent housing and facilities for mothers and children are also available. Finally, I became aware of the extensive, one-on-one counseling that is provided to longer term residents. They are not inmates, they are guests; they are not transients, they are patients whose success in moving to a more productive life is the goal of everyone at the Inn.

That was quite a day for me. I realized that the most important ingredient that separated me from them was the love and support I have received all my life, from my family, friends, and colleagues. I know this is a realization that all of us have

had at one time or another, but then forget about as we go through our very busy lives - working hard, trying to do the best job you can, trying to succeed in whatever profession. In some of our cases, we're also raising a family, regularly making difficult decisions about whether to be "here" or to be "there" -- do I attend Brian's soccer game, or do I accept this speaking engagement?

There is no question that we got here from hard work and dedication. But we also got here because of someone else, and very likely because of the support of another woman. Maybe it was your mother, a camp counselor, a teacher, or female counterparts in the business community. No matter where it came from, the support of a female role model is something that all of us in this room have had.

As most of you know, I arrived in Boston better than three years ago to take the number 2 position--that of Chief Operating Officer--at the Boston Fed. That job involves managing the vast array of operational duties here at the Bank--check processing,

cash operations, electronic payments, as well as being responsible for budgets, planning, and all the internal building functions. Until that point, there had never been a woman in the COO slot at any Reserve Bank. For me, being a first was not new. I began my career with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in 1968. I was their first female management trainee and in my initial assignment as a bank examiner, I was the first woman to travel as part of the examination team. Over the 23 years I spent in New York, I held positions at varying levels in over a dozen different areas of the Bank, and chaired several committees of System leaders from around the country. Most of the time in these assignments I was one of a handful, if not the only woman at my level. I never gave this much thought, frankly, until recently, since I truly believed it was competence, drive and intelligence that opened doors and what sex you were was interesting but not terribly relevant.

I must say I have changed my mind about that since coming to Boston. I have seen first hand through a network of women that I was introduced to -- many of whom are here this morning --

that women supporting other women is vital if more of us are to succeed in formerly all male positions.

How did these women help me? They gave me political insights, invited me to meetings, introduced me to male colleagues they thought I should know, corrected me when they thought I might be conveying the wrong message in some subtle, or not so subtle way. In short, they took on my getting the Boston Fed presidency as a task of some meaning and importance to them as women. They believed as I do now that we must get beyond the female firsts, to the point where the unseen barriers to women progressing as far as they want to and are capable of are removed. To do this more women must make it to positions of leadership. True progress will take more than a tolerance of a variety of styles in senior management. It also takes the role models at the top so that those coming up can realize that success is possible.

Reaching a position of leadership also brings with it a great deal of responsibility. You become one of those role models to

whom other women look, not only for inspiration, but also for help and support. I believe you all understand that, and that is why you came here today.

What I saw at the Pine Street Women's Inn spoke to my heart. What I want to tell you now will surely speak to your intellect.

From an economic standpoint, the shelter is providing a service that is vital to the community.

First of all, the most obvious benefit is that the basic needs of thousands of men and women are being met. They would otherwise be in the streets seeking food and warmth. This has obvious benefits not only to them but also to the rest of us who in some senses are richer and happier knowing that the unfortunate among us are cared for.

A secondary benefit of the shelter program lies in the fact that this private non-profit entity enables public programs to be less costly. To the extent that the Pine Street Inn and other shelters are providing services to individuals who would otherwise

be served by government programs, the burden on public sector budgets is lessened. And in fact, the Pine Street Inn can be a very cost-effective alternative.

For example, the Department of Mental Health estimates its average cost of inpatient care in a state hospital to be \$125,000 per person per year. The cost for each person in a group home is \$55,000 per year.

In contrast, the Pine Street Inn estimates a cost of \$40 per night in the shelter or an annualized rate of \$14,600 - only a fraction of Dept. of Mental Health costs.

The transitional housing programs at Pine Street cost \$48 per night, or an annualized cost of \$17,520; again, a fraction of Dept. of Mental Health costs. And the regular lodging house costs for Pine Street are only \$17 per night, or \$6205 per year.

I quote this data not to reflect badly on the Department of Mental Health. It obviously has a wide range of very serious problems to deal with. The Pine Street Inn and others like it can deal with

some of these problems, however, for some people and for them and for us it is the better alternative.

On the health care side, the Pine Street Inn clinics are seeing an average of 300 men and women every day, at a cost of about \$5 per visit. The Women's Clinic sees about 60-100 women per day, at the same cost.

These clinics aid in the early intervention of illness and in the provision of preventive services. Again this has got to be cost-effective, especially when compared with the high cost of visits to emergency rooms.

The money to fund all this has to come from somewhere. On a much different scale, I am familiar with the kind of resources it takes to bring people along from a disadvantaged state to a productive one. Here at this Bank we have a Skills Development Center, where we train disadvantaged men and women, mostly of high school age, in basic clerical skills. You would not believe how much care, one-on-one attention and guidance, and time it takes to get them to the necessary skill level to be productive at

the Bank, or elsewhere in business around Boston. And these are not homeless women. They have not fallen completely through the cracks when they enter the program, although some of them most surely would. However, the success stories make it all worthwhile. Many of the graduates of the Skills Center have gone onto productive careers. Two of them are Executive Secretaries in the Bank, and a very special graduate works in my office.

The Pine Street Inn has many success stories too. I hope you will become a part of them.