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**WOMEN IN  
LEGAL WORK**

WOMEN'S BUREAU BULLETIN 265

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

James P. Mitchell, *Secretary*

WOMEN'S BUREAU

Mrs. Alice K. Leopold, *Director*

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

James P. Mitchell, Secretary

WOMEN'S BUREAU

Mrs. Alice K. Leopold, Director

*Griffin, Verna Elizabeth.*

Employment Opportunities for

# WOMEN IN LEGAL WORK

Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 265

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

John R. Mitchell, Secretary

WOMEN'S BUREAU

Washington, D. C.

Employment Opportunities for

# WOMEN IN LEGAL WORK

Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 103

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## FOREWORD

The law, for centuries a profession for men, has in the past few decades opened its doors to women. The legal profession is a highly competitive one where it is not easy to gain a foothold, but where success is highly rewarded. Guidance from the legal profession is sought by the Nation and its people on complex questions relating to labor-management relations, taxation, the development of natural resources, international relations, and many other aspects of national life. Moreover, the law offers unique opportunities to promote justice and to help individuals protect their rights.

Increasing numbers of women students give serious consideration to the legal profession in planning for a career. This bulletin is intended primarily to summarize for such students and their counselors the progress of women in the legal field, the preparation needed, and the prospective opportunities for women as practicing attorneys and in salaried positions where legal training is required. Much of the material will also be of interest to prospective employers and clients of women lawyers.

Alice K. Leopold,  
*Director, Women's Bureau.*

FOREWORD

This bulletin was prepared in the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor by Verna E. Griffin under the direction of Mrs. Stella P. Manor, Chief of the Division of Program Planning, Analysis, and Reports.

Acknowledgment is made for valuable assistance, many thoughtful suggestions, and a critical review of the manuscript to the Director of the Survey of the Legal Profession (under the auspices of the American Bar Association), to various officers of the National Association of Women Lawyers, to the Information Service of the American Bar Association, and to numerous other individuals and professional organizations directly concerned with the legal profession.

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- ★★1869 The first woman attorney on record in the United States was licensed to practice law without court opposition (by the State of Iowa).
- ★★1869-1870 A licensed woman lawyer presented a case in court (in Iowa).
- ★★1870 A woman lawyer was admitted to practice before a U. S. District Court (in the District of Columbia).
- ★★1870 A law degree was conferred on a woman for the first time in the United States.
- ★★1879 A woman lawyer was admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court.
- ★★1896 Two women lawyers founded the Washington (D. C.) College of Law, and one was the first woman to become a law school dean.
- ★★1918 A woman lawyer became a Federal judge upon her appointment to the bench of the Juvenile Court for the District of Columbia.
- ★★1918 Women lawyers were accepted for membership in the American Bar Association.
- ★★By 1920 All States admitted women lawyers to practice under the same provisions granted to men.
- ★★1921 A woman lawyer became Assistant Attorney General of the United States.
- ★★1934 A woman lawyer was first appointed to a U. S. Court of Appeals, for the Sixth Circuit.
- ★★1947 A woman lawyer became United States Supreme Court Librarian.
- ★★1955 Over 5,000 women lawyers were listed in the Law Directory.

## Employment Opportunities for

# WOMEN IN LEGAL WORK

## PROGRESS AND OUTLOOK

### *Historically Speaking*

Since 1869, when Iowa licensed the first woman attorney in the United States, women lawyers have achieved much to offset their late entry into the legal profession. By 1920, they could be admitted to the bar in all States on an equal basis with men. Today, virtually all law schools enroll women students, and all courts admit qualified persons—regardless of sex—to practice before them. The American Bar Foundation reported over 5,000 women among more than 220,000 lawyers listed in the 1955 Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory.<sup>1</sup>

A number of law schools had opened their doors to women students long before the turn of the 20th century—one as early as 1833. On the other hand, some law schools admitted only men well into the 20th century—even as late as the 1950's.

A national group of women lawyers was organized in 1899—the National Association of Women Lawyers. The American Bar Association first accepted women members in 1918; today, they represent about 2 percent of its total membership. Some local bar associations were quick to accept women. For example, the New York County Lawyers Association has accepted women members ever since its organization in 1908. Many bar groups, however, limited their membership to men for a long time. As a result, during the past half century women lawyers have organized their own local groups in order to meet their need for professional association.

<sup>1</sup> American Bar Foundation, *Lawyers in the United States. Part One: Distribution. December 1966.* The Foundation estimated that the Directory listings included about 90 percent of all lawyers.

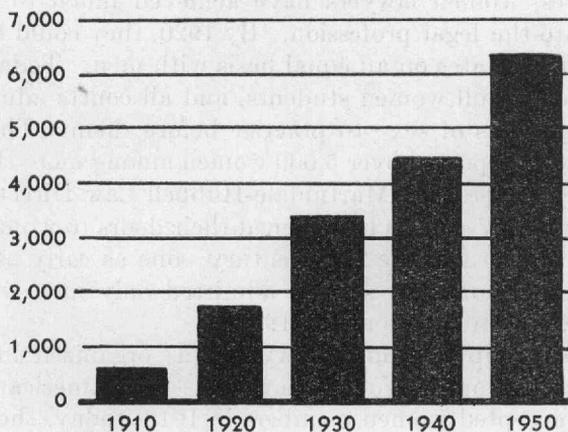
Many factors, economic, social, political, have contributed to women's progress in the legal profession. During World War II, for example, new fields of law were created; and large numbers of legal jobs were vacated as men went into the armed services. Many of these openings were filled by women who, thus, had an opportunity to demonstrate their competence in legal work.

History offers many examples of women who have had successful careers in law. As their competency gains more widespread recognition, their professional vistas no doubt will continue to widen.

### Statistically Speaking

Although today the proportion of women in the legal profession is small, it has increased considerably over the years. In 1910, women represented less than 1 percent of all lawyers and judges; by 1950, they accounted for about 3.5 percent. Furthermore, women represented almost 9 percent of the net increase in lawyers and judges over this 40-year period.

Chart 1.—Number of women lawyers and judges,  
1910 to 1950



Between 1940 and 1950, women represented some 75 percent of the net increase of 2,818 among all employed lawyers and judges reported by the census. The number of women in this category rose almost 50 percent—from 4,187 to 6,256 during this 10-year period—as compared to an increase of 2 percent in the number of all employed lawyers and judges. In the legal field, there was 1 woman to every 41 men in 1940 as compared with 1 to every 28 in 1950. (See table 1.)

**Speaking of Current Employment****● For Lawyers in General <sup>2</sup>**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently reported that employment opportunities in the legal profession are favorable for graduates of law schools who rank in the top 10 percent of their classes. These graduates are often offered jobs in leading law firms, large corporations, and Government agencies, as well as desirable law clerkships to judges in major courts. Other law graduates in 1956 encountered difficulty in obtaining the limited number of attractive salaried positions.

The employment outlook for the profession as a whole is reported to be better in salaried employment than in independent practice. Since the large Government and private organizations that employ most of the salaried attorneys are located in and around large cities, most salaried legal positions exist in metropolitan areas.

Recent law graduates entering independent practice have faced considerable competition from the great number of established, self-employed attorneys. In addition, lawyers who open their own law offices usually need outside funds for office expenses during the first year or two, since they often have low net incomes while acquiring a clientele.

An estimated 5,500 new lawyers are needed each year to replace lawyers who leave the profession because of retirement, death, and other reasons. Over 8,000 law degrees were earned in 1955-56 (as compared to over 14,000 in 1948-49), according to Office of Education data. A number of these graduates, however, have used their training in related, nonlegal fields.

A continuing overall decline in the number of persons earning law degrees and entering the profession may help to ease the current competition. On the other hand, even with such a decline, the supply of new legal talent reportedly will continue to exceed the demand for the next few years. However, authorities in the profession believe that the services of competent, well-educated lawyers will continue to be in demand.

With a gradual increase in the demand for legal services anticipated during the next few years, newly created jobs may also help to close the gap between the number of graduates and the number of entrants needed each year for normal replacements. Among the factors that may lead to this increased demand is population size, which has been increasing while the number of lawyers admitted to the bar has been

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<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed overall outlook for lawyers, see the 1957 edition of the Occupational Outlook Handbook.

Table 1.—Employed lawyers and judges, by region and by sex: 1950 and 1940

Region	Total		Men		Women		Percent of total	Percent increase, 1940 to 1950
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution		
<i>1950</i>								
United States.....	180,461	100.0	174,205	100.0	6,256	100.0	3.5	+49.4
Northeast.....	60,967	33.8	58,811	33.8	2,156	34.5	3.5	+26.1
North Central.....	49,100	27.2	47,664	27.4	1,436	23.0	2.9	+43.2
South.....	48,504	26.9	46,671	26.8	1,833	29.3	3.8	+82.9
West.....	21,890	12.1	21,059	12.1	831	13.3	3.8	+76.1
<i>1940</i>								
United States.....	177,643	100.0	173,456	100.0	4,187	100.0	2.4	-----
Northeast.....	62,380	35.1	60,670	35.0	1,710	40.8	2.7	-----
North Central.....	51,209	28.8	50,206	28.9	1,003	24.0	2.0	-----
South.....	44,851	25.2	43,849	25.3	1,002	23.9	2.2	-----
West.....	19,203	10.8	18,731	10.8	472	11.3	2.5	-----

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Census of Population, 1950 and 1940.

decreasing since the 1930's. In addition, lower- and middle-income groups are expected to turn to the profession for assistance in greater numbers as more legal-aid offices and lawyer-referral services become established. The increasing complexities of business and legislation also indicate a greater specific demand, especially for lawyer specialists in such areas as corporation, patent, administrative, labor, and international law.

### ● For Women in Particular

In a highly competitive climate, getting started in law practice is a major problem confronting all law graduates. While the outlook for women lawyers depends upon the outlook for lawyers in general, some specific comments can be directed to their employment.

For establishing independent practices, women law graduates might well investigate the opportunities in small cities and suburban areas, especially those where a growing demand for legal services is found to exist and where there are fewer lawyers. While women professional workers are more numerous in large cities, great numbers of independent lawyers are already located in these areas.

To women who seek salaried legal employment, excellent academic records from law schools recognized as having high standards are especially important. Many women lawyers find Government employment attractive, and various Federal agencies have reported an acute shortage of young qualified lawyers. Opportunities for advancement may also be more numerous in Government service, especially for lawyers who remain in public service long enough to acquire the experience needed for responsible legal posts.

Many of the recent men and women law graduates have been employed outside the legal profession in related jobs by private industry and Government. A number of women who have succeeded in such fields as teaching, finance, writing, and business administration feel that their legal training was a definite asset to their careers, even when not a job requirement.

While most attorneys today are in general law practice, there is an apparent tendency for increasing numbers to specialize in certain kinds of legal cases. On the whole, women's opportunities in the legal profession may grow with this trend, especially in such areas as taxation, domestic relations, probate, and patent law. New, expanding areas of legal specialization create new jobs for qualified legal talent.

Women lawyers often state that in their own practices they seldom encounter any strong reaction against women as lawyers. They stress that while some of this reaction does exist, it is lessening. An outstanding woman practitioner believes that clients are more likely

to be skeptical of someone new than they are to be prejudiced against women lawyers. This point of view is supported by reports from women who have been in practice and who have been accepted by clients and employers along with their male colleagues. Women lawyers have one advantage: Since their number is relatively small, they are noticed and remembered.

A high scholastic record at an outstanding law school is a valuable asset to a woman lawyer. Women who write articles for professional journals and participate in public affairs find that such activities help them to become known to their colleagues and potential clients.

Once established in the profession, a well-qualified, highly competent woman lawyer can anticipate professional success. Furthermore, the individual successes of outstanding women lawyers serve to open career doors in legal fields that have been partially closed to women lawyers as a group.

## SOME BASIC FACTS

### *What is Legal Work?*

A lawyer's life is spent in solving problems—the myriad problems of humanity. Each task presents an intellectual challenge, a contest, new and constant opportunity for bloodless conflict.<sup>3</sup>

About two-thirds of all lawyers are practicing attorneys. Most of these are self-employed, working independently in their own law offices or in partnership with one or more lawyers. A small number are employed as law clerks or associates by another lawyer or by a law firm. The remaining third includes lawyers in salaried posts as judges or teachers, or as members of the legal staff of a private firm or Government agency. Some combine salaried posts with independent practice. Whether self-employed or salaried, a lawyer may accept all types of cases or may specialize in cases of certain types.

Three major duties summarize the responsibilities involved in law practice: To counsel clients; to prepare legal documents and papers; and to represent clients in court. In counseling clients, lawyers advise them about their rights and liabilities under law. In preparing legal documents, they draft contracts, mortgages, leases, property titles, deeds, tax reports, wills, and many other legal papers. In representing clients, attorneys seek out legal facts and evidence and analyze the claims of all parties involved. In court, they speak for their clients in pleading their cases before judge and jury. Lawyers also serve in the courts as judges to hear and decide upon cases brought before them.

Some lawyers act primarily as trustees, judges, executors, law professors, legal writers and editors, or prosecutors. Some are trial attorneys, with most of their time spent in the courtroom. Others limit their duties entirely to the law office, where they handle such problems as out-of-court negotiations and legal research for the preparation of cases for trial attorneys. A sizable number act as attorneys for Government agencies, where their duties may also include drafting proposed laws and law-enforcement procedures.

A well-trained legal mind which combines both systematic thinking and common sense is considered necessary for a competent law practice. The Survey of the Legal Profession<sup>4</sup> has listed several

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth R. Redden, *So You Want To Be a Lawyer!* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1951.

<sup>4</sup> The Survey of the Legal Profession, under the auspices of the American Bar Association, included studies on lawyers' characteristics, legal education, legal ethics, and special problems of the American Bar. The results up to 1954 have been conveniently summarized in *The American Lawyer* by Albert P. Blaustein and Charles O. Porter, 1954.

other basic qualities of a good lawyer, including:

- fact consciousness.
- a sense of relevance.
- foresight.
- precision and persuasiveness in using language.
- dislike for preconceptions and approximations.

### What Do Lawyers Earn?

An income survey by the United States Department of Commerce in 1955<sup>5</sup> showed that, on the average, lawyers' income reaches a peak after about 20 to 25 years in practice. In comparison, incomes are considerably lower for lawyers in practice less than 10 years. A report for the Survey of the Legal Profession roughly estimated that only about 25 percent of women lawyers remain in practice long enough to reach their peak earning power.

According to the Department of Commerce survey, the median net income for all lawyers in 1954 was \$7,833. The median net income for lawyers in practice for 20 to 25 years was \$9,863; for those with only 5 to 10 years of practice, it was \$7,020; and for lawyers with less than 5 years, \$4,856.

The Department of Commerce survey also reported median net incomes for lawyers by source of income:

<i>Major source of legal income</i>	<i>Percent distribu- tion of lawyers</i>	<i>Median net legal income</i>
Total.....	100. 0	\$7, 833
Nonsalaried, independent practice.....	61. 0	7, 382
Salaried, in law firm.....	6. 8	6, 774
Salaried, in other than law firm <sup>1</sup> .....	19. 6	9, 067
Judge.....	3. 4	11, 100
Lawyer in private industry.....	8. 9	10, 330
Law teacher.....	. 9	8, 429
Civilian, nonjudicial Government lawyer.....	5. 5	7, 578
Lawyer in other organizations.....	. 9	7, 227
Combined sources, salaried and independent.....	12. 6	(2)

<sup>1</sup> Excluding lawyers in military service.

<sup>2</sup> Not available.

Lawyers' incomes may also reflect whether their clients are individuals or business firms. Generally, when gross income is low, a greater percentage of total income is received from individuals; however, as gross income rises, a larger proportion is received from business firms. For example, lawyers who grossed \$25,000 or more

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed report of this survey, see: *Income of Lawyers in the Postwar Period, Survey of Current Business*, December 1956, pp. 26-36.

in 1954 received almost 50 percent of their incomes from individuals. Those who grossed \$75,000 or more averaged only about 14 percent of their income from individuals, with the remaining 86 percent derived from services to business firms.

The latest record of incomes for women lawyers and judges is for 1949, reported in the 1950 census. Their median income at that time was about 60 percent of the median for all lawyers and judges. Incomes of \$10,000 and over were reported by 28 percent of the men and 7 percent of the women.

New lawyers just starting out in independent practice may discover that their overhead expenses approximate their incomes during the first year or two in practice. In the early 1950's the Survey of the Legal Profession estimated these expenses at about \$3,000 for the first year, even in rural communities. Many of these lawyers, therefore, will find that other financial resources are necessary to tide them over the first year or two.

### ***Where Do Lawyers Practice?***

The majority of women lawyers are located in metropolitan areas of 200,000 or more population, and a large proportion are concentrated in a few States. Almost one-fifth are in New York State, followed by large numbers in California, the District of Columbia, Illinois, and Ohio. Women lawyers and judges constituted the largest proportion of the total (but less than 6 percent) in the District of Columbia, Alaska, California, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, and New York. (See table 2.)

Between 1940 and 1950, the number and proportion of women lawyers increased in all regions of the country, according to census data. The largest proportionate gains were made in the South and the West. For every 10 women lawyers and judges in 1950, 4 were in the Northeast, 3 were in the South, 2 were in the North Central States, and 1 was in the West. (See table 1.)

A similar concentration pattern was noted for all lawyers as for women. In 1955, about half were located in New York, California, Illinois, Ohio, Texas, and Pennsylvania. By regions, a third of all lawyers and judges were in the Northeast at the time of the 1950 census. The North Central and South regions each had over a fourth, and only a little more than a ninth were located in the West.

Women law graduates may generally anticipate acceptance in localities where many women lawyers are practicing. On the other hand, these areas usually receive the largest influx of the new graduates each year, so that competition for the limited number of beginning legal jobs is often keen. Women can expect even greater

Table 2.—Lawyers, by State and by sex, 1955

State	Total lawyers reporting	Male	Female	Percent female of total
Total <sup>1</sup> .....	221, 600	216, 564	5, 036	1. 3
Alabama.....	2, 151	2, 113	38	1. 8
Alaska.....	124	119	5	4. 0
Arizona.....	1, 027	1, 002	25	2. 4
Arkansas.....	1, 689	1, 651	38	2. 2
California.....	16, 543	16, 012	531	3. 2
Colorado.....	2, 450	2, 405	45	1. 8
Connecticut.....	2, 945	2, 915	30	1. 0
Delaware.....	361	358	3	0. 8
District of Columbia.....	8, 030	7, 606	424	5. 3
Florida.....	5, 397	5, 272	125	2. 3
Georgia.....	3, 962	3, 867	95	2. 4
Hawaii.....	369	361	8	2. 1
Idaho.....	614	609	5	0. 8
Illinois.....	16, 482	16, 120	362	2. 2
Indiana.....	4, 308	4, 224	84	1. 9
Iowa.....	3, 314	3, 249	65	2. 0
Kansas.....	2, 373	2, 337	36	1. 5
Kentucky.....	2, 975	2, 937	38	1. 3
Louisiana.....	3, 061	2, 986	75	2. 5
Maine.....	923	904	19	2. 1
Maryland.....	3, 637	3, 563	74	2. 0
Massachusetts.....	8, 168	7, 954	214	2. 6
Michigan.....	7, 079	6, 921	158	2. 2
Minnesota.....	3, 814	3, 748	66	1. 7
Mississippi.....	1, 838	1, 811	27	1. 5
Missouri.....	6, 141	6, 023	118	1. 9
Montana.....	847	831	16	1. 9
Nebraska.....	2, 163	2, 124	39	1. 8
Nevada.....	336	331	5	1. 5
New Hampshire.....	531	518	13	2. 4
New Jersey.....	7, 372	7, 225	147	2. 0
New Mexico.....	698	694	4	0. 6
New York.....	35, 360	34, 443	917	2. 6
North Carolina.....	3, 009	2, 973	36	1. 2
North Dakota.....	632	620	12	1. 9
Ohio.....	12, 310	12, 069	241	2. 0
Oklahoma.....	3, 948	3, 831	117	2. 9
Oregon.....	2, 115	2, 080	35	1. 7
Pennsylvania.....	10, 228	10, 078	150	1. 5
Rhode Island.....	909	900	9	1. 0
South Carolina.....	1, 486	1, 472	14	0. 9
South Dakota.....	738	721	17	2. 3
Tennessee.....	3, 457	3, 399	58	1. 7
Texas.....	10, 636	10, 417	219	2. 1

<sup>1</sup>Includes Alaska and Hawaii.

Table 2.—Lawyers, by State and by sex, 1955—Continued

State	Total lawyers reporting	Male	Female	Percent female of total
Utah.....	876	857	19	2.2
Vermont.....	403	395	8	2.0
Virginia.....	3,775	3,698	77	2.0
Washington.....	3,230	3,152	78	2.4
West Virginia.....	1,646	1,624	22	1.3
Wisconsin.....	4,688	4,623	65	1.4
Wyoming.....	432	422	10	2.3

Source: American Bar Foundation. Lawyers in the United States. Part One: Distribution. December 1956.

acceptance in States where they represent a relatively large percentage of all lawyers.

On the average, the income of lawyers usually increases as community size increases. For example, the Department of Commerce survey revealed that lawyers' average (mean) income in cities of 100,000 to 250,000 was about the same as their national average, but that average income in larger cities was generally above the national average. Salaried lawyers had a slightly higher average than independent practitioners in communities with a population between 2,500 and 5,000; but the average earnings were considerably lower than those of independent practitioners in cities between 500,000 and 1 million.

Average net incomes may also vary among States and regions. Based on data from 30 States and the District of Columbia, the average (mean) income for all lawyers in 1954 ranged from \$7,831 in Florida to \$12,184 in California. California also reported the highest average income for independent lawyers, but Pennsylvania and Illinois reported highest average income for salaried lawyers.

### Why Do Lawyers Specialize?

In both independent and salaried practice, most lawyers today are general practitioners, but an increasing number are becoming legal specialists. Growing complexity in business activities and legislation partly accounts for an increasing demand for lawyer specialists. This complexity may also prompt more clients to consult lawyers who specialize in their particular type of legal problem.

Basically, lawyers who handle all kinds of legal problems for all types of clients are general practitioners. To become skilled, they

need adaptability, a broad knowledge of all kinds of law, and extensive experience.

Lawyers who limit the kinds of cases that they will accept are in specialized practice. They are found for the most part in the specialized divisions of large law firms and in large cities where the greatest demand for specialized services usually occurs. Their decision to specialize may be based on a personal interest in a particular field of law or on prior nonlegal technical training, such as using a knowledge of engineering in patent law practice.

Law graduates generally start out as general practitioners to gain broad experience in many areas of law. From an economic point of view, it is often impossible for them—particularly for young non-salaried lawyers—to limit their practice at first. After a few years, they may then turn to specialization, either in salaried employment or in their own law offices. This step may be the result of preference, or it may be the result of circumstance. For example, some lawyers may find that most of the cases brought to them deal with tax problems and, therefore, decide to specialize in this field.

Lawyer specialists may center their practice on certain fields of law, such as probate or real estate law, or on major types of cases, such as criminal or civil cases. They may also concentrate on certain types of legal work, such as courtroom litigation or legal research; or even by type of clients, such as corporations or individuals. Furthermore, a specialist in tax law, for instance, may handle only cases which involve income, inheritance, or property taxes.

Women's opportunities seem best in those law specialties where their contributions to the field have already been recognized. Some of these are real estate and domestic relations work, women's and juvenile legal problems, probate work (about a third of all women judges are probate judges), and patent law for those who have the required training in science. As early as 1938, transportation law was noted as an attractive field for women lawyers. Current reports indicate that more and more women are working on the legal staffs of life insurance and trust companies.

On the whole, women's opportunities in the legal profession may increase as a result of the trend toward specialization. As more lawyers enter areas of specialization, a demand is created for new lawyers to replace them in general practice. Furthermore, some women lawyers may be able to develop their competency in one field of law more readily than in many fields as required in general practice. And recognition of their competency is the key to women's widespread acceptance in the legal profession.

# WOMEN IN LEGAL WORK

## *In Independent and Salaried Practice*

On the basis of information on employed lawyers and judges gathered for the 1950 decennial census (see table 3), it appears that:

Among every 100 *women* in this category, about

- 41 were self-employed;
- 31 were salaried in law offices and private businesses;
- 28 were working for Government agencies.

Among every 100 *men* in this category, about

- 61 were self-employed;
- 25 were salaried in law offices and private businesses;
- 14 were working for Government agencies.

Women accounted for over 6.5 percent of all lawyers and judges employed by Federal, State, and local governments; almost 4.5 percent of those salaried by private law and business firms; but only 2.5 percent of the independent, nonsalaried lawyers.

**Table 3.—Employed lawyers and judges, by class of worker and by sex, 1950**

Class of worker	Total		Men		Women	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total.....	180, 461	100. 0	174, 205	100. 0	6, 256	100. 0
Private wage and salary workers.....	45, 236	25. 1	43, 296	24. 9	1, 940	31. 0
Government workers.....	26, 428	14. 6	24, 695	14. 2	1, 733	27. 7
Self-employed workers.....	108, 758	60. 3	106, 188	61. 0	2, 570	41. 1
Unpaid family workers.....	38	( <sup>1</sup> )	26	( <sup>1</sup> )	13	( <sup>1</sup> )

<sup>1</sup> Less than 1 percent.

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Census of Population: 1950.

Several factors account for the fact that proportionately more women than men are salaried rather than self-employed attorneys. Among these factors is perhaps the deterrent of a high initial investment required to open their own law offices. Many women may consider salaried employment to be more practical, especially when they do not plan such long careers as do many of their male colleagues

or when they anticipate combining their legal careers with family responsibilities. In areas where women have not yet established themselves in the legal profession, the woman lawyer may also find that salaried employment—where the prestige of the firm serves to attract a clientele—offers her the best available opportunities.

Most women who are self-employed attorneys practice alone; however, law partnerships of husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, or fathers and daughters are not unusual. Some women who conduct independent practices share office space and expenses with other lawyers. By such informal arrangements, they need less capital to get started and yet can have independence in their law practices. Independent and ambitious women who open their own law offices often do so in order that they can do the kind of legal work that interests them most. This is notable among women lawyers who particularly want to work directly with clients and to handle court cases.

Women law students are often encouraged to seek entry into the profession in those areas where women lawyers have already gained widespread acceptance. Such areas include Government employment, independent practice based on such specializations as probate and juvenile cases, and work on legal-aid cases. Nevertheless, women in the past have entered all types of legal work, and a number of them have scored outstanding successes.

#### ● Law Firms

About 8 percent of all lawyers are employed by law firms as law clerks or associate attorneys, according to the 1954 survey by the Department of Commerce. Beginning clerks and some associates handle minor, preliminary work to assist more experienced attorneys in the preparation of legal cases. It is only later, after gaining some experience, that they are given their own cases to handle. In some firms, associates are more experienced and, therefore, have more responsible duties.

Because their salaries are fixed, although relatively low in the beginning, and because they have no responsibility for office expenses, law clerks and associates can by-pass the proverbial "starvation period" faced by beginning lawyers who open their own law offices. Moreover, salaried lawyers do not encounter the problem of building a clientele, for their clients are generally those of their law firms. In addition, in large firms with specialized legal divisions, lawyers can gain experience in various legal specializations, a decided benefit to those who plan to specialize in the future. On the other hand, salaried lawyers must do the kind of work given to them by their firms, while lawyers who practice independently can be more selective.

Law graduates may also enter some law firms as junior partners, whose duties are often similar to those of associates. In other cases, a junior partnership is a line of advancement for outstanding associates or a position for a "member of the family." Senior partners are members of the firm who set policies, and make all major decisions. They generally handle the more important cases, as well. Their incomes, often a stated percentage of their firm's net income, are generally determined by the relative prestige, influence, and responsibility of each partner, as well as by their financial contribution to the firm.

Women lawyers employed by law firms often have duties that involve legal research rather than client contacts and trial work in court. Experience in legal research can be useful for later part-time work for those who have family responsibilities but who do not want to leave law practice entirely. Women law graduates, however, have experienced difficulties in finding employment in law firms, most of which reportedly do not interview them for employment.

*The Bar Register: 1957* rates some 3,000 law firms as preeminent in the profession, on the basis of investigations and recommendations from local bar members and groups. Of these firms, 32 listed 35 women among their 262 partners. The names of half of these women were part of their firms' names, a signal recognition of prestige. In addition, at least 50 firms with a total of 334 associates had one or more women associates. About half of these women were in firms that had up to 5 associates each, whereas about half of all associates were in firms with over 10 associates.

Most of the women partners were in firms with less than 10 partners; while most of all partners were in those with more than 10. The size of the law firm, however, bears no consistent relation to the rank of its women partners. For example, a woman ranked fifth in a 20-partner firm; another, fifth in a 6-partner firm; and two women ranked seventh and eighth in a 14-partner firm. Usually the contributions of partners (such as professional prestige, contacts, finances, and services) determine their relative rank in the firm.

As a rule, incomes of law partners, as well as salaries of law clerks and associates, tend to be highest in large law firms. The pattern is generally for an increase in average income to accompany an increase in the number of firm members; but only a small percentage of nonsalaried lawyers are in the larger firms. For example, lawyers who practiced alone averaged \$7,315 in 1954; whereas, partners in firms with over 8 members averaged \$36,102. On the other hand, over 65 percent of all nonsalaried lawyers practiced alone, while about 2 percent were partners in firms with over 8 members. (See table 4.) The average income for law partners in 5- to 8-member firms was over 3

times as much as for those who practiced alone; for those in firms with over 8 partners, almost 5 times as much.

**Table 4.—Percent distribution of nonsalaried lawyers and average (mean) net income, by size of law firm, 1954**

Number of members in law firm	Percent distribution of members	Average net income per member
All law firms.....	100. 0	\$10, 258
1 member.....	65. 0	7, 315
2 members.....	17. 9	11, 169
3 members.....	7. 9	14, 830
4 members.....	3. 2	19, 824
5 to 8 members.....	3. 9	23, 849
9 or more members.....	2. 2	36, 102

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, Office of Business Economics, *Income of Lawyers in the Post-war Period, Survey of Current Business*, December 1956, p. 33.

### ● Legal-Aid Offices

One of the responsibilities recognized by the legal profession is to assure legal service to persons who need it, even when they are unable to pay regular fees. Emphasis upon this responsibility, as well as a more articulate demand for legal services by low- and middle-income groups, has promoted recent growth in the number of legal-aid and lawyer-reference offices. The latter usually refer moderate-income clients to lawyers who will accept their cases for fees somewhat below those generally charged.

On the other hand, legal-aid offices or societies generally provide free legal services to low-income groups. Local bar members may contribute part of their time to these services; yet some legal-aid offices have full-time lawyers on their staffs. Salaries, which are customarily low, and expenses of these offices may be met through contributions from local bar or Community Chest organizations. Some cities, however, include legal-aid divisions within their local government.

Because of the social-service nature of these organizations, women are often considered particularly well suited for legal-aid employment. Furthermore, most of the cases brought to these offices require legal advice or the preparation of documents, and only a small percent involve any courtroom work. For much the same reasons, women themselves often find this type of legal work particularly interesting.

### *In Government Employment*

Government agencies employ the largest number of all salaried lawyers. Over 6,000 attorneys were employed by Federal agencies, exclusive of the Armed Forces, in 1954, according to the Civil Service

Commission. The results from a survey of opportunities for lawyers in the major Federal agencies employing attorneys, conducted by the American Law Student Association in early 1958, indicate that the current number of attorneys in the Government is not materially different. The *1957 Occupational Outlook Handbook* reports that, in addition, municipal governments employ about 8,000, and that State governments account for another few thousand. There are also some 7,000 judgeships throughout the United States; however, not all judges are lawyers.

● The Federal Government

Most Federal agencies conduct their own recruitment programs to fill legal positions. Many agencies also have their own entrance examinations for lawyers, which may include written and oral tests and an agency check of law-school grades, activities, and experience of each applicant. Because of the reported shortage of young, qualified lawyers, some agencies also provide special training programs. For instance, the Department of Justice offers a growing internship program to law-school honor graduates.

Over 7,200 women were employed in legal and kindred jobs by the Federal Government in 1954, according to a Women's Bureau report based on Civil Service Commission data.<sup>6</sup> Women represented over 30 percent of all workers in these jobs.

Almost 750 of these women were employed in various job classifications that require training equivalent to graduation from an approved law school. They comprised about 7 percent of all workers in this group, but up to a third of those in some specific jobs. Following are the job classifications held by these women:

<u>Job classification</u>	<u>Number of women attorneys in 1954</u>	<u>Percent distribution</u>	<u>Percent of all employees</u>
Total professional legal series.....	747	100.0	7
Adjudicator.....	370	49.5	15
Attorney-adviser <sup>1</sup> .....	172	23.0	6
Trial attorney <sup>1</sup> .....	104	13.9	4
Legal assistance.....	43	5.8	21
General attorney <sup>1</sup> .....	17	2.3	2
Naturalization examiner <sup>1</sup> .....	11	1.5	9
Attorney-editor <sup>1</sup> .....	10	1.3	32
Legislative attorney <sup>1</sup> .....	9	1.2	8
Other classifications <sup>2</sup> .....	11	1.5	1

<sup>1</sup> These titles also require admission to the bar.

<sup>2</sup> Includes 4 deportation exclusion examiners, 3 hearing examiners, 3 estate tax examiners, and 1 attorney-trial examiner.

● U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, Government Careers for Women.

Most of the women in each of these professional jobs were concentrated in relatively few agencies. Over 75 percent of those classified as adjudicators were employed by the Veterans' Administration and the General Accounting Office; about half of the women attorney-advisers, by the Departments of the Army, Justice, Treasury, and Agriculture; and almost two-thirds of the women trial attorneys were employed by the Justice Department alone. A similar pattern was noted for all 747 of these women attorneys. Almost 60 percent of them were working in 3 agencies, listed below with the other Federal agencies which were the prime employers of women's professional legal talent:

<i>Federal agency</i>	<i>Number of women attorneys in 1954</i>	<i>Percent distribution</i>	<i>Major job classification</i>
Total women attorneys..	747	100	
Veterans' Administration.....	204	27	Adjudicator.
Department of Justice.....	131	18	Trial attorney.
General Accounting Office.....	91	12	Adjudicator.
Department of the Treasury---	45	6	Attorney-adviser, trial attorney, and legal assistant.
Department of the Army.....	42	6	Attorney-adviser.
Department of State.....	36	5	Adjudicator.
Department of the Interior---	32	4	Do.
Department of Agriculture.....	17	2	Attorney-adviser.
Department of the Navy.....	13	2	Do.
Department of Labor.....	13	2	General attorney, trial attorney, and attorney-adviser.
Other Federal agencies.....	123	16	

Most of the 747 women were performing work that involves major responsibilities and supervisory functions. In 1954, almost a fourth were in positions which then had annual salaries between \$7,040 and \$11,800 (Federal service positions which are graded GS-12 through GS-15). Another five-eighths were in positions with annual salaries between \$5,060 and \$6,940 (graded GS-9 through GS-11).<sup>7</sup> Following are the grades held by this group of women:

<sup>7</sup> As of March 1955, these salary rates were increased by 7.5 percent, and as of January 1958, by 10 percent, bringing the salary range, excluding longevity rates, for positions graded GS-12 through GS-15 to \$8,330 through \$13,970; for positions graded GS-9 through GS-11, to \$5,985 through \$8,230.

<u>Grade of position</u>	<u>Number of women lawyers in 1954</u>	<u>Percent distribution</u>
Total.....	747	100
GS-5.....	8	1
GS-6.....	0	0
GS-7.....	84	11
GS-8.....	17	2
GS-9.....	245	33
GS-10.....	61	8
GS-11.....	163	22
GS-12.....	99	13
GS-13.....	44	6
GS-14.....	20	3
GS-15.....	6	1

In addition to the 747 women lawyers, another 6,498 women were employed in other legal classifications by the Federal Government in 1954. Such jobs involve quasi-legal work where a knowledge of particular laws, regulations, or precedents is required, but where graduation from law school is not necessary. Among the occupation classifications held by these women in 1954 were:

<u>Job classification</u>	<u>Number of women in quasi-legal jobs</u>	<u>Percent distribution</u>	<u>Percent of all employees</u>
Total.....	6,498	100	48
Claims examining.....	4,364	67	56
Legal-instruments examining.....	1,147	18	74
Legal clerical and administrative.....	427	7	64
Docket clerk.....	262	4	69
Contact representative.....	161	2	9
Insurance examining.....	69	1	44
Land-law clerical and administrative.....	58	1	66
Immigration inspection.....	10	(1)	1

<sup>1</sup> Less than 1 percent.

Again, most women in these classifications were employed by a few agencies. Almost 60 percent of the women claims examiners worked for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the Department of the Treasury; over 80 percent of the legal-instruments examiners, for the Treasury, Veterans' Administration, Housing and Home Finance Agency, Justice Department, and Department of the Army.

Like the women attorneys, about 60 percent of the women in quasi-legal classifications were employed by three agencies. Following are

the Federal agencies that employed the greatest numbers of women in these jobs in 1954:

<u>Federal agency</u>	<u>Number of women in quasi-legal jobs</u>	<u>Percent distribution</u>	<u>Major job classification</u>
Total.....	6,498	100	
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.	1,794	28	Claims examining.
Department of the Treasury---	1,386	21	Do.
Veterans' Administration.....	917	14	Do.
Department of the Army.....	650	10	Do.
Railroad Retirement Board....	219	3	Do.
Department of Justice.....	195	3	Legal instrument examining, and docket clerk.
Department of the Air Force...	183	3	Claims examining.
Department of the Navy.....	182	3	Do.
Housing and Home Finance Agency.	178	3	Legal instrument examining.
Department of the Interior....	115	2	Land law, and legal clerical and administrative.
Other Federal agencies.....	679	10	

In 1954, about 12 percent of the 6,498 women doing quasi-legal work were in positions which had annual salaries between \$4,205 and \$5,810 (Federal service positions which are graded GS-7 through GS-9). Over 80 percent were in positions with annual salaries between \$3,175 and \$4,545 (graded GS-4 through GS-6).<sup>8</sup> Following are the grades held by these women in 1954:

<u>Grade of position</u>	<u>Number of women in quasi-legal work</u>	<u>Percent distribution</u>
Total.....	6,498	100
Below GS-3.....	1	(1)
GS-3.....	446	7
GS-4.....	2,093	32
GS-5.....	1,445	22
GS-6.....	1,693	26
GS-7.....	453	7
GS-8.....	193	3
GS-9.....	121	2
GS-10 through GS-14.....	49	1
No report.....	4	(1)

<sup>1</sup> Less than 1 percent.

<sup>8</sup> As of January 1953, the salary range, excluding longevity rates, for positions graded GS-4 through GS-6 was raised to \$3,755 through \$5,390; for positions graded GS-7 through GS-9, to \$4,980 through \$6,885.

### ● Other Government Jobs

Women with legal training are working for State, county, and local agencies, as well as for the Federal Government. A large number of Government lawyers are employed in the offices of prosecuting attorneys, such as solicitors or corporation counsels for city governments, district attorneys for counties, and attorneys general for States. This kind of legal work involves considerable court litigation, in addition to legal advice to the various governments. Top-level jobs are usually held by men. On the other hand, some women lawyers work on the legal staffs of attorneys or corporation counsels, especially on the larger ones. A few have advanced to such posts as State assistant attorney general and district attorney.

Within the legislative branches of Government, women may conduct legal research and draft legislative proposals. Lawyers are employed in legislative reference bureaus which offer technical legal services. A few are also employed for such work by legislators themselves.

Furthermore, women lawyers serve in professional nonlegal government positions where a technical knowledge of law and legal procedure is useful, as in research analysis, administration, and economics. For instance, some are classified as labor economists conducting research in the field of labor legislation. A law education is apparently also useful in top administrative positions. A survey in the early 1950's reported that about 20 percent of all Federal executive employees with salaries over \$10,000 had had professional legal training.

### ● The Judiciary

Women are also serving as judges in practically every type of court in the Nation. They are in county, juvenile, probate, and domestic relations courts; in State circuit and district courts; and in United States appeals, district, tax, and customs courts. The judicial post yet to be held by a woman is Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

At least 185 women were among the judges listed in the Directory of American Judges for 1955.<sup>9</sup> The Directory, however, excluded some minor judicial posts—such as justice of the peace—sometimes held by women. Also excluded were such specialized courts as the Tax Court of the United States, where one woman serves on the bench, and the Court of Military Appeals.

Among these women judges, a few served within the Federal judicial system in 1955. The highest judicial post held by a woman is justice of the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. This woman has served in this court since 1934, having previously been a justice of

<sup>9</sup> Directory of American Judges, compiled and edited by Charles Liebman. Chicago: American Directories, Inc., 1955.

the Ohio Supreme Court for two terms. In 1955 another woman was judge for the U. S. Customs Court in New York City; and a third was on the bench of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Five more women had been appointed to municipal-type Federal courts, like the Juvenile and Municipal Courts for the District of Columbia, as well as to a Territorial court for Hawaii.

By far the greatest number of the women judges listed in the Directory, about 150 of them, served in various county courts, such as Probate, Superior, and Surrogate Courts, and Courts of Ordinary. Some of these judges also have jurisdiction over other courts and divisions that handle juvenile and domestic relations cases. A few of the women judges (13) were in State courts, mostly State Circuit or District Courts. Another 19 were judges in various municipal courts in major cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Toledo, Minneapolis, New Orleans, and Los Angeles.

Roughly 9 out of 10 of the women judges were elected to their posts; the rest were appointed. As a rule, those who were appointed served in major courts for large cities and States. All the women Federal judges and most of the women judges serving on the bench for municipal courts in major cities and high-level State courts were lawyers.

Over half of all the women judges listed in the 1955 Directory were concentrated in 8 States: Georgia (32), Kansas (16), Connecticut (14), Michigan (12), California (8), Ohio (8), North Carolina (7), and Oklahoma (7). Another 30 women judges were within 5 States. Only 17 States in 1955 had no women judges in the courts covered by the Directory.

Biographical sketches of these women judges disclose that only a third held law degrees or had been trained by reading law in law offices. Of these, 57 were also members of the bar. Of the remainder, 84 apparently were not lawyers, and insufficient information on professional status was available for 39 of them. That most of these judges had no formal law training may be because many were in elective offices for which a law degree was not required.

### ***In Private Industry***

Lawyers are employed on the legal staffs of manufacturers, insurance and real estate firms, banks, public utilities, and many other large firms in private industry. Most are employed full time, but some combine salaried employment with part-time independent practice.

There are a very large number of jobs in private industry for which legal training may be required or desired. For instance, a knowledge of tax law is essential to a tax specialist in an accounting firm; of laws which relate to closing real estate sales and handling mortgages, to a

broker in a real estate firm; of legal procedures in the settlement of claims, to an examiner in an insurance company. A discussion of a few other areas can illustrate what women with legal training can do in private industry.

Insurance is generally regarded as an attractive field for women. An informal survey in the early 1950's by the Institute of Life Insurance found that an increasing number work in life insurance legal departments, and that in at least two cases a woman was chief legal counsel for her company. The general counsel for a large insurance concern advises women law graduates seriously to consider the life insurance field, since excellent opportunities for women in handling legal aspects of insurance, mortgage loans, and policy titles exist in this field.

According to a Women's Bureau survey made several years ago, 2 women lawyers were among 21 women officers recorded by the 30 insurance companies studied.<sup>10</sup> Besides these officers, women lawyers were employed by 4 other firms included in the survey. According to the survey report:

Women attorneys in insurance companies were found working on various assignments. One \* \* \* dealt with legal questions connected with the handling and distribution of trust funds. Another was executive secretary to the general counsel, assisting him on cases and acting for him in his absence.

In two companies, women without legal training were in policy-title divisions doing work which required some knowledge of insurance law. One \* \* \* said that her work was concerned with changes in beneficiaries, setting up procedures, and drawing papers for settlement-assignment options. \* \* \* Another woman had held the title of supervisor in the settlement division for 26 years. \* \* \* As with the other women doing this type of work, she saw her lack of legal training as an obstacle to further advancement.

Two legal positions common in the insurance field are those of claims attorney and claims examiner. Claims attorneys supervise the disposition of claims made against their companies. Sometimes they also draw up or direct the legal wording of insurance contracts, release papers, and other insurance policy documents. For life insurance at least, little courtroom work is involved. Claims examiners usually assist claims attorneys. They may not be required to be lawyers; however, some knowledge of insurance law is necessary. In some companies, newly employed law graduates start out as claims examiners.

Banking, another field in which women have advanced to responsible positions, also offers opportunities for women lawyers.

<sup>10</sup> United States Department of Labor, Women's Bureau. Women in Higher-Level Positions, Washington, D. C.

An example of success in this field is that of a woman who left teaching to attend law school. Her early experience included serving as legal secretary to a State supreme court justice and working on the legal staff of a manufacturing firm and later for a law firm. Then she entered a Milwaukee trust company, advanced to trust officer within 4 years, and later became its first woman vice president. Before she was 40 years old, she was appointed Assistant Treasurer of the United States. She also attained a record in the insurance field when she became the first woman on the board of trustees for a large life insurance company.

Another example of a woman lawyer in banking is the woman who helped to organize a savings and loan association in a major Ohio city, a financial institution which has ranked among the seven largest in the State. This woman entered private practice over 40 years ago, combining real estate and finance specializations with general practice, and she served over 25 of these years as a municipal judge. Besides organizing the savings and loan bank, she has also served as its president. While this financial organization services the general public, it is the first of its kind to be organized, operated, and controlled entirely by women.

Patent law, also, offers opportunities to women lawyers who have the required scientific backgrounds.

A few years ago, about 50 women were qualified to appear before the United States Patent Office as registered patent attorneys. Most of them were employed by private patent firms or represented clients through their own law offices; a few were employed by private scientific research firms. Of note is the fact that several of these women attorneys started out as patent examiners in the U. S. Patent Office. Currently, a woman is Assistant Commissioner of the Patent Office, having previously been a patent attorney in private industry.

Many other fields of private enterprise have their examples of women lawyers, as well. For example—

There is the woman lawyer for one of the top national radio and television networks. She became its secretary and general counsel within 10 years, later moving up to vice president and special assistant to the president of the network.

In the petroleum industry, there is the woman lawyer who worked with maritime, insurance, and tax problems for an oil company, advancing to assistant secretary and general counsel within 5 years.

There is also the woman lawyer who was director of industrial relations for a nationwide dairy products firm in one of its major divisions.

A number of top business executives have been attorneys, advancing from legal departments where they were able to gain a thorough understanding of the practices, policies, and basic problems of their firms. Furthermore, some women executives report that legal training could have been useful in their own nonlegal business careers.

These examples illustrate only a few of the successes achieved by women lawyers in private industry. They point up some of the areas of legal work which have been and can be entered by women who have sufficient interest and ability and who acquire the necessary professional training.

### ***In Services to the Legal Profession***

People with legal training are also employed as law teachers and professors, editors and writers for law publications, law librarians, and executive secretaries of bar associations. Varying amounts of legal training are required in these related professional services. For example, law professors generally are law graduates and members of the bar; law editors may or may not have to be law graduates; and law librarians may be required to have a law degree, a degree or training in library science, or some training in both areas.

Data from the Department of Commerce income survey indicate that about 1 percent of all lawyers in 1954 were law teachers (see p. 8). Those whose entire legal income came from teaching law had a median net income of \$8,429.

Some law schools report that they prefer to hire law instructors who have had experience in actual law practice; however, they may not make this a specific requirement. Law professors, who generally must have earned advanced degrees in law, often acquire prestige as authorities in their fields. As a result, they frequently are sought out for advice and consultation by practicing attorneys, as well as by law and business firms.

While their number is obviously small, women law graduates have become law teachers and professors, and even law school deans.

For example, there is the woman appointed in 1942 to a western law school who, according to the dean, was the only woman law professor in an accredited law school at that time.

The first woman on the faculty of a major law school in New York City was appointed in 1953 to teach a tax seminar to graduate law students. She had previously been a tax specialist in the United States Treasury and in a private law firm and had written a law text on Federal income taxes.

Still another example is the first woman law professor appointed to the faculty of a long-established law school in the Nation's Capital. She was appointed to teach a course in real property. Her record also shows that she was one of the first women students admitted to the same school, ranked first in her class, and has earned two law degrees.

In view of increasing enrollments and teacher shortages, it can be anticipated that more women law graduates will be employed as law instructors and professors in the future.

With the great dependence of lawyers upon complete legal reference facilities, the work of law librarians ranks as another important service to the profession. Training in library science may be the only stated job requirement in some instances. A knowledge of law, however, is considered useful in selecting pertinent references and precedents for legal cases and research projects, as well as a knowledge of general library tools and administration.

The retirement of law librarians, the creation of new positions, and the expansion of facilities have reportedly led to a number of openings in this field. Employment opportunities for women in law libraries have been favorable and are expected to remain so. Furthermore, some of the more desirable posts in major court and law-school libraries have been held by women with legal training.

Probably the most outstanding example in this field is the woman lawyer who has been Librarian for the United States Supreme Court since 1947. She had been a law school librarian and an associate librarian for the Supreme Court before she was appointed by the Court as its first woman librarian. This honor is emphasized even more by the fact that since 1887 only 4 people have held this position, 3 of whom have been lawyers. Another woman lawyer is Chief of the Hispanic Law Division of the Library of Congress.

One leading authority in the profession noted the opportunities for women lawyers as executive secretaries of the many existing bar associations, especially in smaller localities. Admission to the bar is not always required, but law training is highly desirable and may be required. He further noted that this is a growing service to the profession and one that should appeal especially to women who like executive-type work.

# PREPARATION FOR A LEGAL CAREER

## General Educational Requirements

To qualify for admission to the bar, prospective lawyers generally must complete 3 years of college and 3 years of full-time law school, as well as pass a State bar examination. There is, however, a wide range in the amount of general and legal education required by each of the 48 States and by some 165 law schools in the United States.

Following is a list of the *minimum* amounts of general education required of students prior to beginning law study, as set by State bar authorities:<sup>11</sup>

<u>Minimum requirements</u>	<u>Number of States</u>
High-school education.....	2
2 years of college, or equivalent.....	19
2 or 3 years of college, depending upon length of law school curriculum....	4
3 years of college, or equivalent.....	17
4 years of college, college degree, or equivalent.....	3
No requirement.....	3

Some law schools require more than the State minimum. Most of them specify the equivalent of 3 years of prior college work, or only 2 years if the law school offers a full 4-year law course. A college degree is required for admission to some law schools.

Law schools usually state the amount of prior education required for admission, but they generally do not specify particular college courses. Students who plan to specialize in future practice, however, can take related courses—such as accounting for the prospective tax attorney; engineering or science for the patent attorney. The Survey of the Legal Profession polled 118 leaders in the profession to list undergraduate courses that they considered useful to law students. Among those listed most frequently were English, economics, American and English history, mathematics, Latin, logic, scientific method, philosophy, and accounting. In short, courses which train students to think systematically and to write and speak clearly and fluently are recommended.

Some States require students to register with proper State bar authorities before beginning their legal studies. A few States require this registration only when a student is studying in a law office. Most States, however, do not require any registration.

<sup>11</sup> State requirements and American Bar Association standards covered in the following sections are drawn primarily from the 1956 Review of Legal Education, published by the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association. Current Reviews are available without charge from the American Bar Association, 1155 East 60th Street, Chicago 37, Ill.

### **Methods of Obtaining Legal Training**

Requirements for law study vary from State to State by method and length of legal training. Depending upon the States in which they wish to practice law, students may receive their training:

1. By "reading law" in a law office;
2. By taking formal courses in a law school; or
3. By combining law school and law office study.

#### ● **By "Reading Law"**

In the early days of the American bar, many prospective lawyers prepared themselves for law practice by "reading law." This early training was a kind of law clerkship, or apprenticeship, whereby "students" read law books and documents in the office of an attorney. As their training progressed, they were allowed to assist the practicing lawyers with actual cases.

Laws covering bar-admission requirements in some States still permit law-office study to fulfill *minimum* training required prior to taking State bar examinations. On the other hand, with much emphasis within the profession upon high standards of legal education and the current lack of regard for law-office study, students preparing for legal careers today are generally advised to attend law schools.

As of 1956, 22 of the States still permitted from 2 to 4 years of law-office study to meet their minimum legal educational requirements in full. Several of these States specified which law offices were acceptable for this method of training. Of the remaining States, 25 States expressly prohibited law study wholly outside of a law school,<sup>12</sup> and Montana made no provision for law-office training.

#### ● **By Attending Law School**

Law schools began to supplant the law office as the center of legal training during the late 19th century. This change accompanied an increased interest in high standards of legal education by the professional associations. Today, all States provide that training entirely within a law school can meet their educational requirements; whereas, half of the States do not accept training wholly within a law office.

In 1956, the minimum periods of time to be spent in law school study ranged from 1,250 classroom hours (about 2 years) to graduation from an approved law school (3 to 4 years). In addition, 4 States required that a law-office clerkship of 6 to 9 months follow law-school study.

<sup>12</sup> States not permitting law study entirely by "reading law": Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The rules of admission to practice before the United States District Court and the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia also prohibit law-office study.

Many States further specify which law schools offer acceptable training, such as those approved by the American Bar Association, the State bar examination board, or the State supreme court. In 1956 about 91 percent of all law students, including about 87 percent of the women, were attending the 128 law schools approved by the American Bar Association. The organized profession recommends that students attend full-time day classes, but night courses of comparable coverage and duration are acceptable. About 33 percent of all law students, including 44 percent of the women, attended night courses in 1956.

Some well-known law schools often have more applicants for admission than they can accept. They may then select their students on such merits as college grades, amount of previous college work completed, undergraduate college attended, and personal recommendations. General admission requirements, which vary among law schools, can be found in catalogs distributed by the schools through their admissions offices.

Currently, 45 schools require prospective students to take a standard law-school admission test given by the Educational Testing Service;<sup>13</sup> others strongly recommend that it be taken; and some law schools administer their own admission tests. These tests are designed to estimate the aptitude of potential law students to handle legal work.

The Survey of the Legal Profession estimated that a complete legal education, including prior college work, costs in the vicinity of \$10,000. Law students who must supplement their own resources may seek scholarship aid from their law schools. In addition, loan funds which carry reasonable interest rates are available through most law schools. Specific information on available scholarship and loan funds is covered in law-school catalogs and in the bulletin of the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare on "Financial Aid for College Students."

### ● By Combining Law School and Law Office Training

A third method of legal training is to combine formal education in a law school with practical training in a law office. In 1956, 19 States allowed such a combination, 4 of which<sup>14</sup> further required prior registration and approval by State bar authorities. Most of the 19 States merely set the combined number of years of training required, but a few specified the time to be spent in each. Of these States, Washington provided for supplementary law-office study only when the prescribed time spent in law school did not yield a law degree. Of the remaining 29 States, 24 did not permit law-office training to

<sup>13</sup> For the current bulletin containing information about the standard law-school admission test, write to: Law School Admission Test, Educational Testing Service, 20 Nassau Street, Princeton, N. J.

<sup>14</sup> Massachusetts, North Carolina, Texas, and Vermont.

replace any part of their law-school requirements;<sup>15</sup> and 5 made no provision for combining these methods of study.<sup>16</sup>

### *Legal Education and Women*

About 75 percent of the women and 88 percent of the men reported as lawyers and judges by the 1950 census had completed 4 or more years of college. The slightly smaller proportion of women in this group may be related to several factors. One is that this group included older women who turned to law offices for their legal training in the days when their admission to many law schools was difficult. Today, however, the representation of women among new law graduates is roughly the same as their representation among lawyers. They received 3.5 percent of the first professional law degrees earned in 1955-56 (291 of a total 8,285), and they represented 3.5 percent of all lawyers and judges at the time of the 1950 Census.

The number of students graduated from law schools has decreased for most of the academic years since the late 1940's. On the whole, the rate of decrease for women law graduates has been slower than for men. For example, for the years 1950-51 and 1955-56, women law graduates decreased less than 30 percent; but male graduates decreased more than 40 percent. As a result, women represented about 2.9 percent of all law graduates in 1950-51, but about 3.5 percent in 1955-56.

Many women have achieved outstanding records in law school. For instance, almost a fourth of all women who have been graduated from the Columbia University Law School have maintained "A" averages (the top rating) in their academic work. Women in a number of law schools have led their classes, served as student editors for law-school publications and on law-review staffs, and have been graduated with honors. Published articles on outstanding successes of women lawyers often include notations of similar academic achievements.

The amount and quality of legal education received by women are important factors contributing to their opportunities in the legal profession. In the first place, an overcrowded profession predicates the employment of the top graduates of widely recognized law schools. In the second place, comprehensive legal training is a useful tool for developing competence in active law practice. And competence demonstrated in legal work can bring the success and professional status that women lawyers seek.

<sup>15</sup> Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

<sup>16</sup> Arkansas, Georgia, Kansas, Mississippi, and Montana.

### **Admission to the Bar**

Each State has established standards for admission to the bar. In order to be admitted to practice in the courts, prospective lawyers must meet the requirements of the State where they intend to practice. State requirements usually include character references, at least the minimum amount of legal training, and a bar examination. Persons with the first professional degree of LL. B. (bachelor of laws) are qualified to take the bar examination.

Written bar examinations generally test applicants on the laws and legal precedents which are fundamental to law practice in a particular State. Most States allow candidates who do not pass the first time to take bar examinations again, but they may limit the number of times. For example, Illinois allows a candidate to take its bar examination five times.

In 42 States, candidates for admission to the bar for the first time must also meet residence requirements. These requirements range from a bona fide intention to become a resident, to a specified length of prior residence ranging from 1 month to 1 year.

Lawyers who have been admitted to the bar of one State may be admitted to the bar of another State through reciprocal agreements, without having to take a second examination. Generally, other basic State requirements as to character and amount of legal training still must be met. A few States that do not have reciprocity arrangements require applicants who have been admitted to the bar in other States to take a written examination.

Although all States have admission requirements, some admit certain candidates to law practice who have not met all of them. A few States admit without written examination veterans of the armed services or graduates of specified law schools, generally the State university. The number of States offering such privileges, however, is small, for 39 States and the District of Columbia specify that *all* new or first-time applicants must pass a bar examination before they can be admitted to law practice.

Lawyers admitted to a State bar must comply with special rules in order to practice before Federal courts and agencies. These may include the formal introduction of the lawyer to the court by an attorney previously admitted to the court; residence where a court is located and has jurisdiction; or prior admission to another court. For example, to be admitted to practice before United States district courts in 26 districts, a lawyer must have been admitted to the highest court of the State. To practice before the United States Supreme Court a lawyer must first be admitted to the highest court of any State or Territory and must present character references from reputable practicing attorneys in the applicant's locality.

### ***And Finally—Entering the Profession***

To enter salaried employment, besides direct contact with employers, law graduates may turn for assistance to one of the many professional placement offices.

Among the offices that offer assistance are law-school placement bureaus which keep up with staffing needs of private and public offices. These bureaus compile information for their students on various job openings, especially those in the same community, and give information on the qualifications and availability of their students and alumni to potential employers. Assistance on questions involved in entering into independent practice may also be available. Law graduates may also turn for placement assistance to agencies outside their law schools, such as private and public employment offices and local bar associations.

The most usual entrance-level job in salaried employment is that of the law clerk. Four States require applicants for admission to the bar to have completed several months of experience as law clerks. Competition is keen for clerkships in large, outstanding firms because of opportunities there for wider contacts, greater prestige, and often higher salaries.

After several years of experience in a law firm or legal department, some lawyers then move into independent practice. Law clerkships may also be viewed as initial training for legal research jobs or for advancement as legal assistants to prominent attorneys, justices, and public officials. Some offices also hire law students for summer employment as law clerks to give them practical training to supplement formal legal education.

## IN CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that law is a long-established profession, women are relative newcomers to the field. They represent a small but growing proportion of lawyers in this country. They have demonstrated their abilities and have achieved success in practically every field of law. A pioneering spirit, in addition to special ability, interest, and thorough preparation, is still needed in many areas of legal work. The ambition and determination of women lawyers, however, have begun to pave the way to greater opportunities for women lawyers of the future. The diligence and support of high standards exemplified by many women lawyers are helping the modern Portia gain recognition as a serious-minded and competent member of the profession. Though the field is highly competitive, the number of women in legal work is likely to continue to grow as their competence gains wider recognition. For capable women lawyers who are challenged by the demands of the profession, the rewards are well worth while.

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