

## points of view

## In the wake of Hill v. Thomas

THE WORKPLACE MAY never be the same.

Following Hill v. Thomas, C.E.O.'s all over the country are reviewing their sexual harassment policies. A C.E.O. in my own house is doing the same.

And well they should.

Because, as you now know, nearly every working woman has a story. And most certainly every working woman journalist. So if you're tired of that - stop reading NOW.

My first job fresh out of college in the '60s was as an assistant editor for the employee newsletter for a New York City electronics company. One of my duties was to interview four or five employees each week on an issue of the day - much like the Community Corner - which appears in this newspaper. I also had to take their pictures.

Each Monday, the job required my going out into the factory where the rule of thumb was to whistle and make crude remarks upon the appearance of I would assume, any female. Amidst that I had to wade into a group of those workers and do my job.

EACH SUNDAY NIGHT, in anticipation, I cried.

My male boss was sympathetic to the situation, but he never went any further than expressing sympathy. There was no thought back then that that was impolite much less illegal. After all, that's what groups of men did - whether at work or play.

Hopefully, no more.

Another change in the workplace is coming.

In Texas two lawsuits are in the works against companies, whose



Judith Doner Berne

employees were involved in auto accidents while driving drunk.

Salespersons, these employees are, for whom conventions and sales meetings are part and parcel of their job, including the drinking which apparently accompanies them.

Although the three martini lunch may not be as prevalent these days, free flowing liquor at sales meetings and conventions is still very much in evidence.

But now companies are being held responsible for the employee who after leaving a convention drunk ruins others' lives.

IN THESE HARD economic times, businesses throughout the land are getting lean and mean; as they say. Many are laying off employees or have instituted hiring freezes.

But for those in personnel and yes, law, neither may apply.

Between reviewing and updating sexual harassment policies and tackling the area of business drinking, they'll be busy.

And the workplace should be better for it.

Judith Doner Berne is assistant managing editor for the Oakland County editions of the Observer & Eccentric.

## School systems harassed women

QUESTION: This past week has been filled with the Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill issue. Who is telling the truth or not, I don't know. How much does sexual discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct exist in education?

ANSWER: I vowed that I would leave sex, other than sex education, out of my column. Yet, in this enlightened era, I guess the former shock value of sex is just common talk today.

Sexual discrimination was so common place when I started in education, I didn't even know it existed. It was a way of life.

I personally (not bragging, but more ashamed) didn't recommend a woman for directorship of a federal grant in the mid-'60s because she would be working with dirty, tough kids. As a young, first-time administrator, I believed it was a position for a male.

The woman I turned down told the board of education president - a very bright and beautiful woman, a person I deeply respected - about my rationale for not recommending her for the job.

The board president, an honors graduate of a prestigious university, spent two hours with me. They were probably the best two hours of my life as to understanding sexist attitudes and stereotypes. I knew I was wrong and sex education rose its ugly head with me in appointments for administration during my next 22 years in education. But that hasn't always been the case!

I REMEMBER when women first broke into the central office, usually as reading consultants. That was because reading consultants in the '60s centered around the elementary schools, which was where women belonged, according to conventional wisdom.

By the '80s, some women had made it to an assistant superintendent position - some, not many.

And these women who have made it to a superintendent position were as brave or crazy as the pioneers who traversed the country in covered wagons.

One woman superintendent friend of mine never carries a woman's purse to superintendent meetings. She tells me it immediately categorizes her as a female - not as a peer - as soon as she enters the door where the 27 other superintendents are sitting - all males.

Yes, it has been a tough struggle. But because of the Thomas/Hill fiasco - regardless of your position - women will be even more commonplace in major leadership roles because of their own competencies as opposed to tokenism or quotas.

As discrimination of women in education is defusing, so will harassment. It is not a matter of good taste, it has become a matter of job



Doc Doyle

protection for males so inclined.

YOU SAID you hoped that our teachers and administrators were above sexual discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. Probably no more than in any business where females and males work together, but I will give you just a couple of tabloid type sexual misconduct situations.

I remember male and female high school teachers who would arrive at school at 6:30 a.m. and meet behind the curtain on the stage "to prepare their daily lesson plans."

The students knew the nature of the lesson plan, let administrators know and we had to counsel these two teachers, who were married to other people, into preparing lesson plans some other place.

There was the good-looking junior high male teacher who would mesmerize a carefully selected eighth grade girl who was lacking in parental affection. When the girl became a ninth grader and had left his building, he began secretly meeting her. By the time the girl terminated the relationship, he had nurtured a new crop. He was discovered and was "counseled" out of education; the parents didn't want to pursue the issue.

AN ELEMENTARY administrator I knew, a great guy but a real ladies man, always recommended very attractive single women and would bypass female job candidates some believed had more talent. His philosophy was: There are plenty of candidates out there, hire the best looking, unmarried candidate.

Many other stories could be told. My purpose, however, is not to try to shock or entertain.

It simply is a fact that we, in education, discriminated against women for years. And, yes, we have the same sex issues found in any work place.

The majority of our teachers and administrators are beautiful, go-to-work, go-home-to-family people. But sexual discrimination, sexual misconduct and some sexual harassment still does exist. If you don't buy this, your view of educators must be that they come from a different planet.

James "Doc" Doyle, a former teacher/school administrator/university instructor, is president of Doyle and Associates, an educational consulting firm.

## from our readers

## Endorsement was from '89 campaign

To the editor:

I understand that there may be some confusion as to whether the Farmington Observer has already published its endorsement of candidates for the Farmington Hills City Council in the Nov. 5 general election.

According to some, this confusion may be due in part to a favorable quote contained in some of my campaign materials.

This quote is from the Farmington Observer's editorial endorsement of me in my successful 1989 city council campaign. The quote, while completely accurate, is undated.

While I would certainly like to receive your endorsement again, we will all have to wait a few more

weeks to see which candidates are so honored.

Lawrence A. Lichtman  
Farmington Hills

## Mr. B's gets an 'A' from this reader

To the editor:

It is great to know that Mr. B's is coming to downtown Farmington. I have been a "B's" customer for well over 10 years, pulling in for slop burgers, seasoned fries, and good times with family and friends.

As a Farmington resident for seven years and Rochester resident for 20, I believe that Mr. B's is what Farmington needs to enhance the downtown image. Mr. B's in Rochester is a downtown landmark of good food in a relaxed atmosphere.

Royal Oak is hopping with a new

vitality with Mr. B's on Main Street.

Farmington deserves a Mr. B's. Mike Nash has the right idea in investing in downtown Farmington. Good food and a little fun is the boost Farmington's downtown businesses need.

It is great business news which will make great business "cents" for everyone in the downtown area. But most importantly, the slop burger and seasoned fries will soon be right down the street from my house once again.

It's the kind of thing that makes your town a hometown place to "B's".

Milissa M. McDade,  
Farmington

## Let's have more for kids

To the editor:

I am a sixth grade student studying journalism. My parents sub-

scribe to the Farmington Observer.

I appreciate the paper because the writers keep my interest. However, there is one area in which I believe you could improve. It would cause me to run to my mailbox to get the newspaper.

What I am looking for is a section that is comparable to the magazine Highlights. This would include: puzzles, stories, brain teasers, feature articles, and perhaps a variety of creations from boys and girls that write in.

This addition to the Farmington Observer would make young readers value your paper more. What do you think?

Ruth Plonka,  
Farmington

## Opinions are to be shared

Opinions and ideas are best when shared with others.

That's why the Farmington Observer encourages its readers to share their views with others in the From Our Readers column.

Submitting a letter to the editor for publication is easy. Letters should be typewritten or printed legibly and kept to 300 words. Letters must be signed and include the address of the sender.

Letters should be mailed to: the editor, The Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336.

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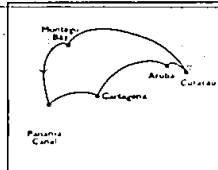
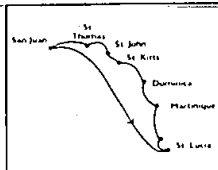
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