FOR WOMEN AND THE MEDIA, 1992 was a year of sometimes painful change—the aftermath of the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings; the public spectacle of a vice president’s squabble with a fictional TV character; Hillary Rodham Clinton’s attempt to redefine the role of the political wife; election of women to Congress and to state offices in unprecedented numbers.

Whether the “Year of the Woman” was just glib media hype or truly represented a sea change for women likely will remain subject to debate for years to come. It is undeniable, however, that questions of gender and media performance became tightly interwoven, perhaps inextricably, in 1992. What do the developments of 1992 portend for media and women? What lessons should the media have learned? What changes can be predicted?

We invited 15 women and men from both inside and outside the media for their views on those and related issues affecting the state of the media and women in 1993 and beyond. The result is a kind of symposium of praise, warnings and criticism for the press from journalists and news sources alike, reflecting on changes in media treatment of women, and in what changes women themselves have wrought on the press and the society.

LINDA ELLERBEE
Three women have forced people to rethink their attitudes toward women and, perhaps more importantly, caused women to rethink
how we see ourselves. Two of those women—Anita Hill and Hillary Clinton—are real. And, in a way, so is the third: Murphy Brown. Each of those three women has, through the mass media, moved us an inch here or a couple of inches there. Solid moves. Mainly, they did it by being women without apology.

Each of them has been pressured to let others define her—we felt this with Hillary Clinton throughout the campaign, as each group would try to define her. Same with Anita Hill and, in fact, the same with the character Murphy Brown. Each of them has done things outside the agenda of the fairly anti-female attitude that has prevailed in America for the last 12 years or so: Hillary Clinton daring to be a woman, wife and a lawyer and—how dare she!—not bake cookies. Murphy Brown having a baby with a man to whom she is not married and, God forbid, keeping it; Murphy Brown being a network correspondent and a graduate of the Betty Ford Center. There's a combo.

I've always hated the term "role model," but the truth is that we need them. We have needed to see what has happened to these women. There have always been smaller role models, but "mass media" implies mass and these three strike me as being the three prime movers of the last decade, certainly of the last couple of years.

It has been good for all of us to see the injustice of how Anita Hill was treated by the United States Senate. It shakes you up a bit at a time when women in America, when all right-thinking people, need to be shaken up. It's good to be a little frightened about what almost happened to Hillary Clinton and what may yet happen. It's good to see the blood stirred when Dan Quayle stands up and says, "Those aren't good families," and the rest of America rises back up and says "Oh, yes they are." What I'm looking for in the '90s is my highest hope—more women without apology.

All of this is very healthy. I'm very sorry for Anita Hill (I have to believe the woman, by the way). And I'm sorry for the problems Hillary Clinton is going to have with a lot of people in this country. And I'm sorry for all the women who can't find good day care and aren't being paid equally. But by stirring up women, and only by stirring up women, are we going to make these changes. And women
how we see ourselves. Two of those women—Anita Hill and Hillary Clinton—are real. And, in a way, so is the third: Murphy Brown. Each of those three women has, through the mass media, moved us an inch here or a couple of inches there. Solid moves. Mainly, they did it by being women without apology.

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have been noticeably unstirred in the last 15 years. You have to remember my age. I go back to the '70s; I've been disappointed in the last 15 years. I am glad to hear the noise starting again; I think the calm is over.

Linda Ellerbee, a writer and columnist, is president of Lucky Duck Productions in New York and founder, writer and executive producer of Nick News/5.

GERALDINE FERRARO
I'm going to take a little credit for the assignment of so many women to visible roles in the news, especially during this political year. It started in 1984, when news organizations were looking for women to put on my plane. A lot of those reporters have since become much more visible and have taken over important roles. You can't turn on a news show today where you won't find a woman commentator, and I think that's terrific. In addition, when news organizations reach out for experts to give their views on issues, they're reaching out more and more frequently to women.

The media are finally waking up to the fact that 52 percent of the population is female and that some of us like the idea of having women's views aired, of having women participate in these discussions. The media are recognizing that when you have two white guys giving their views on issues, it's usually the views of white guys. A woman would see it in a different way. In addition to the fact that we 52 percent of the population enjoy seeing one of us up there, the news organizations and the public benefit from getting an additional perspective on the news, a fuller picture from a commentator with a different viewpoint—something that's not so monotonal.

We've made the first step—the news organizations are taking advantage of the talents of women. Now let's get some women in those executive offices; the glass ceiling that we talk about really does exist. That's the main challenge facing women, issues of pay and the opportunity to be part of the inner workings in the executive offices, making the decisions, whether on the stories that are going to be carried or on the pay scale of the people who are employed. Unless you
have women in top executive positions, the decisions are still going to be made by the monotones. But it’s not a monotonal world.

Geraldine Ferraro, the 1984 Democratic vice-presidential candidate, has been appointed by President Clinton as a U.S. representative to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

SUSAN FALUDI

Depressingly, the biggest change I see is not in how women are covered in the media but simply in whether they make it into the news pages in the first place. To invoke Samuel Johnson’s famous misogynist remark about women writers being like dogs walking on their hind feet, the wonder is not that the media are reporting women’s issues well, but that they are reporting them at all. When Betty Friedan’s path-breaking *The Feminine Mystique* was published in 1963, neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* bothered to review it. Today, the media at least dimly realize that they have some responsibility to cover the publication of feminist books, the release of feminist films or the actions of political organizations—although the coverage remains haphazard and is most enthusiastic when there is an opportunity to make fun of the women involved. And the media recoil from this responsibility to women’s issues as much as they fulfill it. Witness the pathetic under-coverage of the pro-choice march on Washington in the spring of 1992; the largest demonstration in the Capitol in American history (far larger than any of the ‘60s anti-war marches or even Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” rally) got less ink or airtime than the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade.

The media cover “women’s issues” when women force the media to cover them—that is, when a female whistle blower speaks so loud (or when the hostile reaction to her accusations from men in power have become so deafening), that the media can no longer avert their eyes. The media did not “break” any of the major news events involving women in the past couple of years; instead, the women came to the media or, more commonly, bypassed the neglectful media entirely and went to the courts or Congress. In fact, the big women’s stories
of the last year and a half are virtually all yesterday's (or yesterdecade's) news: Clarence Thomas, Sen. Bob Packwood, Tailhook (the "gauntlet" has been around since at least 1986), breast implants. The media could have broken these stories on their own ages ago. (The incriminating documents on breast implants, for example, are decades old.) And what about today's stories on women's conditions that wait fruitlessly for enterprising reporters to investigate and expose? While the media exhaust themselves in endless moralizing over Zoë Baird's employment of an undocumented nanny, where are the stories on the vast army of undocumented women who are being put to work in Dickensian conditions in our proliferating sweatshop industries (where they are likely to make a third of Ms. Baird's nanny wages, and no room and board)? While the media rush to cover the silicone injections story where the damage has already been done, where are the stories examining new health dangers to women? It would be nice, for example, to see some real reporting on the contraceptive Depo-Provera, which—despite the FDA's recent approval—has been linked with breast cancer in the World Health Organization's study of nearly 12,000 women. But Depo-Provera has gotten nothing but unexamined cheers in the mass media about "unparalleled safety" and the betterment of women's "choices." Are the media planning, yet again, to wait three decades until breast cancer rates surge and one of the dying women comes forward?

I'd like to say that the other "most significant development" for women in the media is their increased representation inside that institution. But the facts point in the other direction. Recent surveys of women's numbers in the media employment rolls find that women's progress is largely stalled and, in some respects, women have lost ground and are worse off than in the '70s. A recent California State University study, for instance, found that there were actually slightly more female announcers and voice-overs in 1974 than in 1991. They found similarly bleak news about coverage: the proportion of TV news stories about women, for instance, has fallen from 10 percent in 1974 to 3 percent in 1991.

If women want to make a real difference in media coverage and treatment and employment of women, we'd be wise to stop waiting
for the media to grant us a sliver of airtime and move at once toward gaining control of a whole new pie: the new technology that will define the media in the future, from pay-per-view TV to E-mail. If the media men don't want to make room for women in "their" institution, then women's best bet is to build a new media house—and determine for ourselves what gets displayed in the many new rooms of our own.

Susan Faludi, a Knight Fellow at Stanford University, is author of Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women.

Camille Paglia
In the past two years, feminism exploded into the media and became hot news again. But the serious, legitimate issues of date rape and sexual harassment were done to death and turned into mass hysteria. Feminist books became best sellers, but they also exposed deep divisions within feminism itself that the media had lazily ignored. For 20 years, dissident feminist voices like mine could not get heard. From the moment Gloria Steinem founded Ms. magazine and became a power on the New York social and political scene, the media servilely surrendered to the white, middle-class lady's view of feminism, which many of us from the '60s found genteel, sanitized and repressive.

Since my recent notoriety, I have had many opportunities to observe the inner workings of the major media. With few exceptions, the sloth, superficiality and ignorance about long-standing feminist issues are not to be believed. Media people just repeat the simplistic Steinem party line like robots. Catharine MacKinnon, a puritanical anti-porn extremist endorsed by Steinem, is trotted out on program after program as if she were Grandma Moses. I am constantly battling to get the opposing position heard and have pulled out of several network shows when producers began to buckle under hardline pressure. And there are many programs and major print organs that are completely closed to me.

My message to the media is: Wake up! The silencing of authentic debate among feminists just helps the rise of the far right. When the media get locked in their Northeastern ghetto and become slaves
of the feminist establishment and fanatical special interests, the American audience ends up looking to conservative voices for common sense. As a libertarian Democrat, I protest against this self-defeating tyranny of political correctness.

Camille Paglia, a professor in the department of humanities at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, is author of *Sexual Personae* and *Sex, Art and American Culture*.

**Sally Quinn**

It's ironic that, until recently, men have been the leaders in the world of communication, which is so clearly a women's field. Most of the heads of big publishing houses, for instance, the editors and agents, most of the really good ones, are women. Most of the people I know in the media who are really good are women. And there are more and more women everywhere in the media—television anchors and interviewers and correspondents; there's hardly a local news show that doesn't have a woman co-anchor, women cover the White House for the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek* and the *New York Times* and the networks.

So I'm not part of the doom-and-gloom crowd that says, "Oh my God, they're keeping us back." There aren't that many women editors of major newspapers, but we're coming along; you have to remember that the revolution was only about 25 years ago—women have come an enormously long way.

I'm not saying that men aren't good at these things or that men shouldn't be in their jobs, but I feel that, in real life, in interpersonal relationships, women are better communicators. And the impact it has had on the media is that women are writing much more accurately about what's really going on, in an interpersonal way.

For instance, where a male reporter might say, "Yesterday, the president said blah blah blah blah blah...," a women might say, "The president said such and such. Although it was unusual for him to be so irritable, he had had a cold all day long and..." When you have women writing that story you get a much clearer picture of what's really going on because women are less likely to be afraid to write about who the people are—they personalize the coverage more. You always get a sense when women are covering something that you have
a better grip of what's actually going on, instead of a clinical, cold look at the "facts" of a news story. They can give a better sense of how it makes a difference if the president's sick or if he's just had a fight with his wife or with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, or if he twisted his ankle while he was jogging.

People know there's a lot going on in their lives, and I think women look at the whole picture more than men do, which provides more personal context, more depth and more information. And that's the point, isn't it?

Sally Quinn is a journalist and author in Washington, D.C.

JOAN KONNER
Schools of journalism and mass communication now have enrollments that are between 60 and 70 percent women. The Columbia Graduate School of Journalism has had between 58 and 62 percent women since I have been here. The latest information I have is that newspapers employ less than 40 percent women. That percentage drops precipitously at decision-making levels. It also has been reported that 90 percent of the hiring at newspapers comes from the journalism school pool.

Therefore, there clearly is a disconnect between graduates of journalism schools and hiring in newspaper newsrooms. It may be that when the business gets bad enough, those doing the hiring will cast a wider net and find many more women journalists than they now consider.

On the television front, the absence of women in editorial decision-making positions, both at the networks and most stations, is nothing short of disgraceful.

Joan Konner is dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University in New York.

SEYMOUR TOPPING
Women, like minorities, disabled people and gays, have been slighted by the media over the years. Content audits of newspapers reveal
improvements in attitudes; attention given to sexual harassment and other issues has stirred the media out of their acceptance of long-standing discriminatory attitudes. Women in newsrooms are challenging old sins and any backsliding that may appear in news reports or how staff is managed. Nevertheless, subtle discrimination persists. The same is true of the other news media, whether we are speaking of how rape cases are covered, sexual references and allusions, or whether subjects and issues of prime concern to women are adequately addressed. The problem will not be fully solved until we have more women in executive positions. On reporter and junior editor levels, we have fair representation of women in most shops; in fact, the gender mix now in journalism schools indicates that women will be in the majority in newsrooms in the next decade. However, there is a lag in the promotion of women to top editorial jobs. Media, to be fair and accurate, require diversity at the executive level. That is the only way to achieve a degree of sensitivity in the management of media that will eliminate discrimination.


CHARLAYNE HUNTER-GAULT

I always have a bit of a problem with the argument that women, simply because they are women, will make a difference on how the news is approached and covered. I don’t think that is necessarily the case; it’s not even a case that we should be making. Yes, more issues are being brought to the forefront as a result of more women being in the media. There’s no question that there are women covering the weightier issues and heavier beats such as politics and foreign policy, but it would be difficult for me to assess how much substantive difference that has made.

Take Cokie Roberts after Clinton’s pre-State of the Union speech to Congress—it was a good, solid political analysis, and I’m not sure that gender had anything to do with that. What was important to me watching it as both a media person and as a woman, was that there was a woman doing an tremendously creditable job, every bit as intelligent and insightful as any male correspondent.
I suppose that more and more voices or perspectives from women will inevitably result in some differences. But I never was of the position that there ought to be more women because they bring a different voice, although I think that will inevitably happen and that would be all for the good. There ought to be women because they are qualified and capable.

There is frustration with the glass ceiling; I certainly feel it and other women I know feel it because very few of us have anything that is truly our own—although many of us have a lot of flexibility within what we do and a lot of choice. Even though we have those choices, very few of us have the power to make ultimate decisions on content. This is not an issue of whether we make a difference; it's just an issue of letting us have the opportunity to make decisions.

Charlayne Hunter-Gault is national correspondent for the "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour."

ELLEN GOODMAN

One of the less heralded facts of declining newspaper readership in the 1990s is the emergence of a gender gap among people under 35. Young women are 7 to 9 percent less likely to be daily newspaper readers than men.

It would be nice to blame this on the infamous time crunch in young women's lives. Nice to find yet another reason for men to lift the double burden: Share housework, save a newspaper. But full-time working women are more loyal newspaper readers than women who are part-time workers or homemakers.

It turns out that women across the board are more likely than men to feel that the paper doesn't speak to them. Or about them. As Nancy Woodhull, a founding editor of USA Today who now runs her own consulting firm, says, "Women around the country really notice when the press doesn't report their existence. It's like walking into a room where nobody knows you're there. If you have choices, you don't go into that room anymore."

The search for a welcome sign to hang on the newspaper door has brought up the question of "women's pages." In the 1960s, these pages were the ghetto to which women, children, food, home and family
were restricted. In the crest of the women’s movement, many of us in the business embarked on a movement to integrate the whole paper.

As someone who has been around this argument for a couple of decades, I have no problem with experiments in recreating a woman’s “place” in the paper if—here comes the big if—the place doesn’t become a ghetto again. And if it doesn’t take the pressure off changing the rest of the paper.

Men and women are more alike in their news interests than they are different. Moreover, the surveys on “difference” that I’ve seen suggest that what women really want are stories that go deep, that focus on matters close to their lives, that are less about institutional politics than about how institutions affect people.

They want to read about families, relationships, health, safety, jobs, learning, the environment. That’s a pretty good guide for any gender and any editor’s story list.

Ellen Goodman is a columnist for the Boston Globe. This is excerpted from an April 1992 column and reprinted with Goodman’s permission and that of the Washington Post Writers Group.

**SANDRA BALL-ROKEACH**

The status of women in communications industries remains problematic. The conclusions reached in earlier studies hold with respect to low participation of women in ownership and executive-level decision making in broadcast and other media industries. Restructuring of media industries in response to fragmentation of audience, declining advertising base in recessionary times, and economies of scale production (particularly in print) do not seem to have substantially altered the overall position of women nor ethnic minorities. The expansion of ethnic alternative media (radio, magazines and newspapers, etc.), for example, does not hold great promise for women of color to assume central decision-making or ownership positions.

Independent film production does involve some notable female participation, primarily white women connected to men in high positions in the industry. However, the female-produced, directed or written film remains the exception, and problems of distribution
It is not clear whether the increasing national and international content in local TV news afforded by news video services has opened an opportunity for women in those news service industries. Finally, development of the Lifetime cable television channel suggests an opportunity for women to gain experience in key management and production roles that may extend opportunities beyond this women's channel. However, we need to know more about the nature and level of women's participation in this cable channel before we can conclude anything about its potential contribution.

Sandra Ball-Rokeach is professor in the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California and co-editor with Muriel G. Cantor of Media, Audience and Social Structure.

DONNA ALLEN
Progress, yes. After so many years of our making the point, some of the mass media's 90-percent-male decision makers are starting to acknowledge that women have something different to say on news issues, that we add a different perspective out of our different experiences and different hormones. Next to come is acknowledgment that in this sense all issues are women's issues, and that the public needs our information and viewpoints if the nation is to make viable and informed decisions.

It is also progress that the mass media have discovered that there are some major issues they have not been reporting. We now may have some hope for the dozen-plus other issues lined up behind sexual harassment waiting to be recognized.

But yet to come is acknowledgment that people have to speak for themselves if the public is to get the information it is now missing. No matter how sincerely men may sometimes try to report our information and perspectives for us, the news still comes out theirs. While the principle of people speaking for themselves may eventually require restructuring of the communication media on a common-carrier model, it first requires recognition that women-owned media are valid sources of information. It is in women's media that our information originally gains voice and the rich variety of our multicultural experi-
Symposium—In the Media, A Woman's Place

ence is added. Had the mass media been treating our women's media as seriously as they have science media for science news, for example, the sexual harassment issue would not have come as a surprise.

The women who well know the existence of our information and who also know the importance to domestic decision making of getting it to the public need to move into the news-defining positions at the top of mass media structures. This is the major challenge for the future.

Donna Allen is president of the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press in Washington, D.C.

NANCY WOODHULL

Women's economic clout is the most significant development regarding women and the mass media today.

Women control consumer buying in this country. The new CEO of Sears announced that women are the key to that company's rebound. He is not alone in that assessment. Women are the target demographics for advertisers. Why? Studies show women influence 81 percent of consumer buying. On their own they have considerable clout. They purchase 50 percent of new cars and are 60 percent of the new investors on Wall Street. If advertisers want to reach a market segment and the mass media want to keep advertisers, the media must reach those audiences. It is not a question of ethics or enlightenment, but of economic survival. No issue could be as clear-cut in a free market.

There is statistic after statistic that show this trend is ongoing. Women will continue to be the most powerful life-changing force this world will see in the next two decades. Since 1987 they've gotten the majority of bachelor's and master's degrees. They are 45 percent of the professional work force. In the '90s, women-owned businesses with 50 or more workers will employ more workers than the Fortune 500 companies.

Every media company has a slogan along the lines of: "Know thy reader." But the product rarely reflects the philosophy. Example: Look at the car-buying statistic I cite, then look for the cars ads in a local paper. They're in the sports section. Try to convince the sports department that the content of the section should reflect more items of inter-
est to women. Try to convince the advertising department or the publisher that auto ads should run in other sections. As much as all involved want to "serve the reader," changing the approach is a tough sell.

This should be basic journalism. If women were a large suburb outside your major metropolitan area, you would want them to be your customers, to want to read your newspaper or watch your TV newscast. You'd learn about that suburb, develop contacts there and know who the movers and shakers were. In exactly the same way, the media need to know the communities of women. They should take time to get to know the many different kinds of women and how they participate in society, to get to know the leaders and the plain folks. Talk to them. Associate with them. Ask their opinions. Include them.

Two critical issues affecting women and the mass media over the next decade are related: First, how will newspapers deal with the problem of symbolic annihilation? Second, how will women change the character of mass media when they break through the temporary barrier imposed by symbolic annihilation?

Symbolic annihilation means that unless the media reports your contributions, your opinions—your existence—then for all perceptive purposes you do not exist. Symbolic annihilation is like walking into a room and no one noticing that you are there. Eventually you don't go into that room anymore. It's a problem for women and a problem for media.

Until the press starts picturing and quoting women as more than token participants in society, women will go to their own rooms for their information and to find ways to use their newfound power. If they find reliable sources of news coverage via fax, computer networks or newsletters, the impact on current mass media will be dramatic.

A tsunami is a huge mass of moving water at sea. When it rolls against the ocean bottom closer to shore, it becomes steeper and more powerful. When women confront an issue with real clarity of purpose and meet real resistance to change, they are like a tsunami.

A tsunami can sweep a shoreline clean of rigid structures, but ships in harbor that have prepared by letting out enough anchor cable can survive its force. The smart companies today are learning how to respect and ride women's incoming tide. Rigid structures,
unable to adapt to the changing needs of a society where women play an increasingly important role, risk being swept away.

Nancy Woodhull, president of Nancy Woodhull and Associates, is a trustee of The Freedom Forum board and was a founding editor of USA Today.

JEAN GADDY WILSON
I have a friend, a man, who says, “Isn’t it marvelous that women are a recent phenomenon?”

If you were planning an insurrection and teach-in for women—how to be heroines in their own lives, how to look at their own issues—you could watch what runs against “Monday Night Football” on the other networks. You would see made-for-television movies where women might be brutalized but are heroic, overcoming great odds. In a world where most women’s existence is invisible and where women’s activities and changes in the past three decades have been portrayed by most of the press as aberration, some television entertainment, to survive, has become a national teach-in on women’s self-worth.

Mainstream media continue to uphold status quo ideas about the role, scope and the abilities of “the others,” whether women or minorities. I think media will rue the day when they were not open and exploring with fascination the change and shift in women, a real-world power shift that has already happened. The media, as always, simply attempt to catch up. “Roseanne,” “Murphy Brown,” “Designing Women” only recognize the contours of a changed landscape. These programs are not in front—they trail what women are doing in their lives. The most significant development affecting the media is that women massively changed long ago, but those powerful changes were displayed simply as the odd, the unruly, the shrill, not reality. Media still don’t see it. And, if media ignore the truth of women’s changing national character, why should women show up for the insult of being invisible?

If I were a publisher or media company head, I would try to parallel the shift by doing some hard mathematics, figuring out precisely how much of my success depended on serving women’s infor-
mational needs. It would have to be at least 52 percent because that’s the portion women are of the population. But, since 81 percent of all consumer decisions are made by women, that’s where I would start—spending 81 percent of my budget on studying today’s women, understanding women’s current reality, inventing ways to simply communicate adequately with women. Realizing that my company is still filled primarily with white males and very few minorities—a stable framework that’s not going to be changed overnight—I would use that money to hire outside thinkers who are not tied to the old and have them construct ways to interact with women. Testing the concepts with women my company needs to serve, I would refresh the information in my medium. Using that simple formula, my company would be enabled to connect with people that have the most influence on whether my medium strives, survives, thrives.

But I don’t see mass media understanding and organizing themselves to effect the change to serve women. The media don’t understand that women of each generation are more different than they are alike. This shift has already occurred. And the media are not just losing women—women have husbands and friends and fathers and sons, who also live differently from those portrayed. The nation, the city, the business world are full of heroines. The public knows it.

I fear most of the press are behind the curve, they don’t even know where the curve is, and it’s moving every day. Today’s mass media interpretation of the world becomes less acceptable every day as society undergoes transmogrification outside of the press’s line of vision.

Jean Gaddy Wilson is executive director of New Directions for News at the University of Missouri.

Jennifer Lawson
In the past two decades, we have seen the status of women in the mass media rise substantially, due largely to the confluence of two broader trends.

First, the media themselves have proliferated and diversified. A plethora of new cable television channels, radio stations, magazines and on-line computer services are reaching broad and niche audiences.
At the same time, the women's movement in all its aspects has gained strength as a force for societal change. Issues such as women's economic empowerment, sexual harassment, domestic violence and reproductive rights gained clarity and momentum as the media carried them nationally and globally.

As the messenger for news of women's growing activism and economic clout, media organizations could hardly ignore the implications for themselves as consumer-driven businesses. And women had begun to gain footholds inside the industry, working up through the ranks of communications-related fields.

The ultimate result: Media hungry for new audiences have expanded the number of women on the air, in print and eventually, in the boardroom. Women of color, too, have benefited from a growing emphasis of racial diversity and the value of minority consumers to advertisers.

Public broadcasting was in most respects ahead of the curve, since our commitment to sexual, racial and cultural diversity is not driven by bottom-line considerations, but by our 25-year-old charter as a service to the American public. And although public television, like its commercial counterparts, still has too few women and minorities in key positions, progress in recent years has been tangible.

Women are among public television's top reporters, producers and independent filmmakers; women, African Americans, Hispanics and others are taking positions and beginning to break boardroom barriers at the station level. And a steady stream of public television programming continues to focus on the perspectives and concerns of women.

This same energy and commitment must be applied industry-wide, but I would argue that improvements in hiring are just a start. Media organizations must make an institutional commitment to the value of diversity, not as a numbers game—a woman here, an Asian American there—but across the entire spectrum of thought and cultural experience.

There is no monolithic women's voice, Hispanic voice, or gay and lesbian voice. The combined perspectives of our backgrounds and philosophies weave an intellectual tapestry of elegant complexity, impossible to represent through token hiring gestures.
Diversity needn't wait until more women and minorities get to the top—nor does their arrival guarantee that diversity will be achieved. The challenge of the next decade will be to institutionalize diversity by moving it beyond a political necessity to a societal value.

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STEVEN GORELICK

It is in moments of what British sociologist Stanley Cohen calls "moral panics," when a flood of public attention is finally showered on a serious social issue and politicians rush to activate the machinery of social control, that many of us are tempted to suspend normal standards of fairness and objectivity. People like myself, for instance, who believe sexual harassment to be epidemic and systemic, are all too likely to excuse violations of civil liberties as a necessary evil. Reporters are too easily tempted to jump on the bandwagon and nail someone like Randy Daniels, who stepped down as New York Mayor David Dinkins' deputy mayor-designate, after being accused loudly in the press of sexual harassment of a former co-worker.

I neither defend Daniels nor claim any special information about his guilt or innocence. He may, in fact, be guilty as charged. On the other hand, he may be the victim of a false accusation. Whatever the truth, the important point is that media consumers, with the press in the grip of these "moral panics," never have even a fighting chance to know the truth.

In this regard, I can't resist sharing the comments of a city editor of a major metropolitan daily I interviewed recently on another social problem. The editor very aptly described the sense of being lost and confused during these "panics." "In some ways it was incredibly exhilarating," he said. "It's like a hurricane. Except hurricanes are amoral. They aren't embedded with social forces, larger questions, or moral and ethical questions. They come, they hit, they cause damage. You aren't left with any lasting questions except: Were we well enough prepared for it?
“But these kinds of stories leave you completely awash in an ethical and moral sense. Some of the bonds that existed before no longer exist. Things that you thought you could trust no longer adhere.”

It’s hard to restrain ourselves when, as advocates champing at the bit to raise public awareness of a problem about which we care deeply, we find that a sensational case has suddenly exploded into public attention. Yet, giving in to the feeding frenzy and nailing a culprit accused of the unspeakable before the facts are in does not necessarily lead to a public better informed about serious social problems such as sexual harassment or child abuse. In the collision between public outrage and civil rights, there is much heat, but rarely much light.

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