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SPECIAL REPORT

How Women Lead

20 of America's Most Powerful Women on Their Lives—And the Lessons They've Learned

Oprah Winfrey, chairman of Harpo Inc.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID LUTENBURG

WHEN TWO

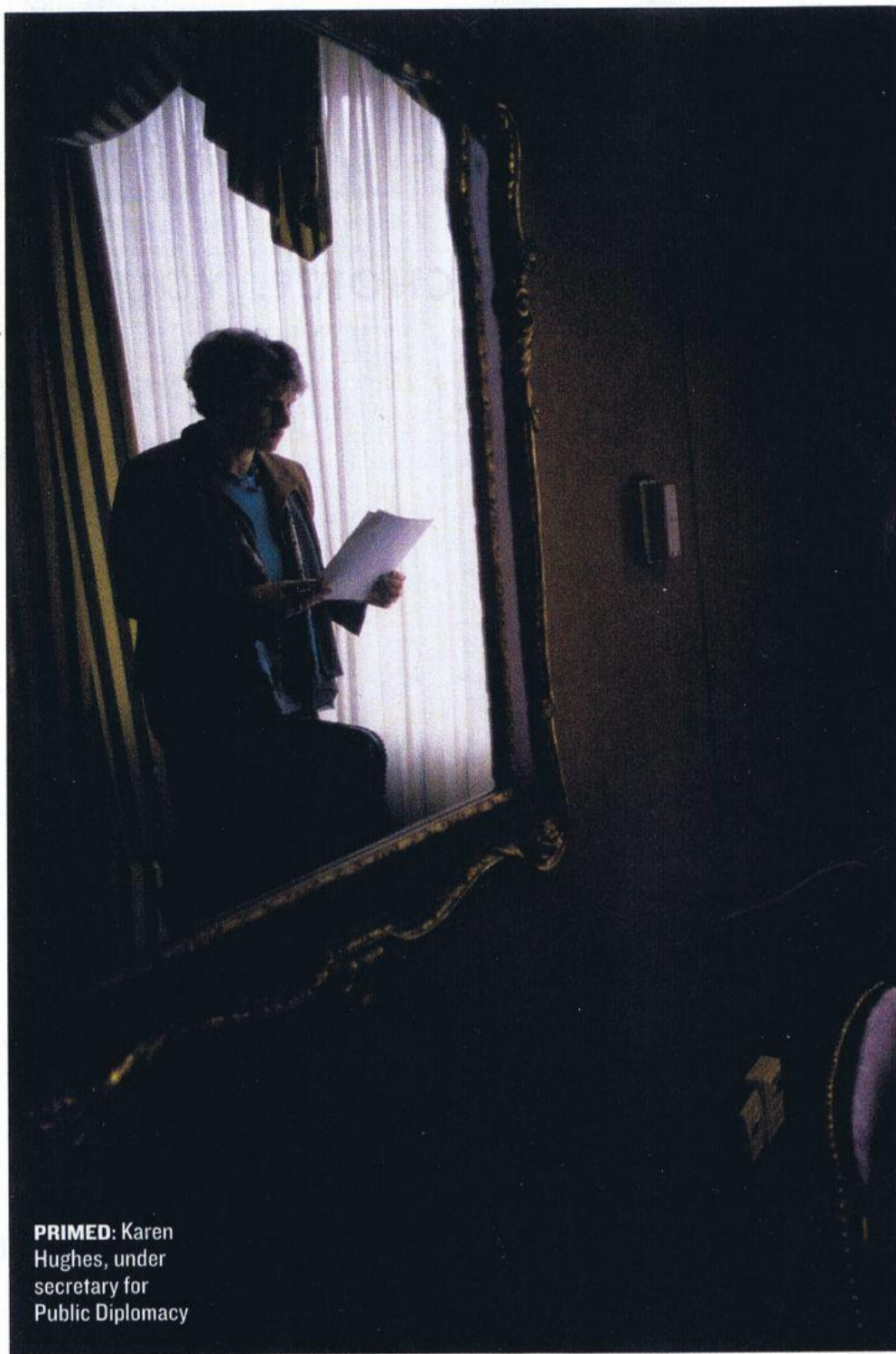
As a growing number of female executives rise to the top, how will they change the culture of the workplace?

BY BARBARA KANTROWITZ

THIS SHOULD BE A season of celebration. America has its first female in the Oval Office. Everywhere you

look, there are women surgeons, police officials, hard-charging executives and even amazingly resourceful undercover operatives. So why aren't women across the country cheering? Well, perhaps because those role models—important as they are—are all fictional. They're stars of popular TV shows like "Commander in Chief," "Grey's Anatomy" and "Alias." When will the real world catch up?

Without question, there has been a huge transformation in the past few decades. Women's earning power continues to rise along with their educational accomplishments. They are now more than half of all college students and about half of all medical and law students. It is no longer a big deal to see a woman at the helm of the nation's most prestigious universities, even at a technological powerhouse like MIT. Women are an important presence in a number of industries, like film. "The women who wanted those jobs had no reason to believe they couldn't have them," says Sony



PRIMED: Karen Hughes, under secretary for Public Diplomacy

MEN LEAD



Pictures executive Amy Pascal of her peers. "We didn't look sideways or backwards." And even in the august chambers of the Supreme Court, it is a measure of how far we have come since Sandra Day O'Connor's groundbreaking nomination that in the continuing debate over Harriet Miers, no one has suggested she shouldn't be confirmed because of her gender.

But there are other, more troubling developments as well. Earlier this year the president of Harvard got in trouble for suggesting that women didn't have the right stuff for science (he has since apologized). Recent stories about women at elite colleges who want to ditch it all to stay home with their kids have prompted a furious debate among professional women. There is a fear that all those glass ceilings have been broken for naught and younger women who grew up with working mothers struggling to have it all have decided that the struggle just isn't worth it. Whether younger women stick with that choice is, of course, still unclear. Their future undoubtedly holds many surprises, at work and at home, just as it did for the groundbreaking generation that preceded them. "There is no real *balance* of work and family in America," says Marie Wilson of the White House Project, which supports female political candidates. "You integrate work and family and do the best you can."

It has been about 30 years since women first started entering the workplace in large numbers. There is now a critical mass of women in leadership positions. It's a good time to see how they've changed the workplace as they've climbed the ladder. Do women lead differently than men? The conventional wisdom is that they are more intuitive, more collaborative. If so, have they changed management culture when they make it to the top? What lessons would they pass on to the women who aspire to follow their path? In this report we talk to dozens of women who have led the way in one of the most significant social revolutions of the past century.

With VANESSA JUAREZ

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLES OMMANNEY FOR NEWSWEEK

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HOW I GOT THERE

Eight prominent women give first-person accounts of turning points in their personal lives and careers. What these leaders all display is a continuing passion for their work.

OPRAH WINFREY Media Entrepreneur

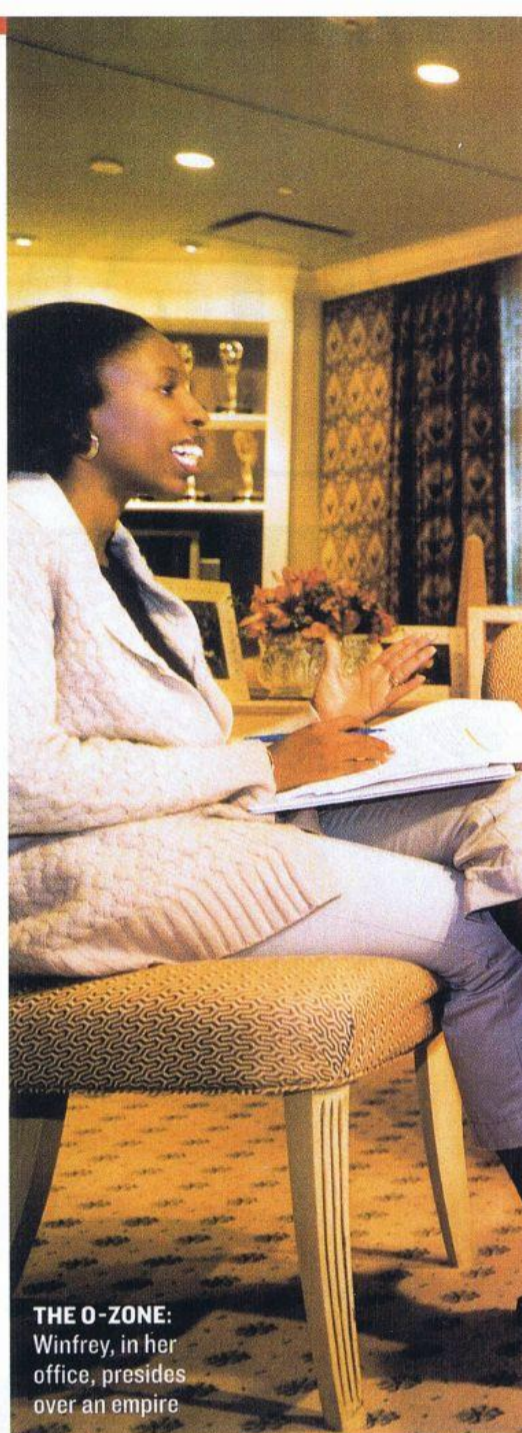
“I GREW UP WITH THE AMERICAN public, and everybody knows I worked hard for my success. When I started, my goal was just to have a job. I was 19 and I couldn’t believe I was on TV. My first job paid \$10,000 a year. I wanted to “make my age,” and when I was 22, I was making \$22,000. I remember being in the bathroom at the television station in Baltimore and my friend Gayle and I were jumping up and down and going, “Oh my God, can you imagine if you’re 40 and you’re making \$40,000?” But after I had my own show in Chicago, I understood that I had a power base that could be a force for something good. I decided that I was going to try to operate from the center of myself and do good in the world, which gives a response in kind. I think that the show’s

been successful because I’m always aiming for the truth. I relate to the core of everyone’s pain and promise because I’ve known pain and promise. I understand that the common denominator in the human experience from the thousands of people that I’ve talked to is that everybody just wants to be heard. Having that understanding and that connection has really given me wings to fly because I know that I can talk about anything to anybody with a sense of respect and integrity.

OPRAH WINFREY

Personal data: Born Jan. 29, 1954, in Kosciusko, Miss.
Education: Tennessee State University
Family: Unmarried; has been with Stedman Graham for about 20 years
First job: Newsreader on Nashville local radio, 1971
Career highlights: Oscar nomination, 1986; started national show, 1986; first black female billionaire
Pets: Sophie and Solomon, cocker spaniels

I’m very conscious and cautious about what I do in my personal life and what I put out into the universe through the airwaves because I realize I’m speaking to millions of people in 118 countries who all have their varying ways of interpreting what I have said. Where I am on the show is always where I am personally, and where I am right now is in a space where I realize that I have less time remaining on earth than I have had unless there’s going to be some



THE O-ZONE: Winfrey, in her office, presides over an empire

miracle that’s going to give me another 50 years. The realization of that is exciting and constantly stimulating.

Success is a magnifying glass on your personality. Who you are just becomes more intense. The real beauty of having material wealth is that you don’t have to worry about paying the bills and you have more energy to be concerned about the things that matter. How do I accelerate my humanity? How do I use who I am on earth for a purpose that’s bigger than myself? How do I align the energy of my soul with my personality and use my personality to serve my soul? My answer always comes back to self. There is no moving up and out into the world unless you are fully acquainted with who you are. You cannot move freely, speak freely, act freely, be free



unless you are comfortable with yourself.

All the women leaders I have met led with a greater sense of intuition than men. I am almost completely intuitive. The only time I've made a bad business decision is when I didn't follow my instinct. My favorite phrase is: "Let me pray on it." Sometimes I literally do pray, but sometimes I just wait to see if I wake up and feel the same way in the morning. For me, doubt normally means don't. Doubt means do nothing until you know what to do. And I'm really, really, really attuned to that.

I tell women all the time that you have to fill up yourself so that you have enough to give to other people. Running around on empty does not serve you or your family or your work. If I go too long without a break, I start to feel it. It's like an engine running out

of gas. I just physically don't have what it takes to be as up, clear and connected with the audience. So I have to give myself rejuvenation time. For me, that's walking through the woods with my dogs. That is sitting under the oaks reading or doing absolutely nothing. I have to replenish my well; it's essential for me.

Right now, I'm incredibly excited about my work in South Africa. I'm going to change the future for thousands and thousands of girls because I'm going to give them an education. I'm going to go out into the villages, into the rural areas, the forgotten places, and find the girls who have the potential to excel and be leaders in the world. I'm going to create a leadership academy. I believe that the fu-

ture of Africa depends upon the future of its girls and women. That's the only thing that's going to turn that continent around.

I feel blessed to have a platform that allows me to reach millions of people every day with my show and my magazine. I'm often inspired by the work we do. Recently on our show, I asked viewers to help me track down child predators. Within 48 hours, we had captured two of the men we featured. As a victim of child molestation, this was big for me and for millions of others.

When you can use your voice in a way that really speaks to people, it resonates. Whether it's a school or a book or just an idea. That's what fun is. That's what living really is. Living with a capital L.

View

a photo gallery of significant moments in Oprah's career at Newsweek.com on MSNBC

VERA WANG

Fashion designer

“I KNEW THE WORLD I WANTED to be in, but I wasn't sure I could break into that world. My mother was an incredible clotheshorse, so I grew up loving fashion. I lived in Paris during my junior and senior years at Sarah Lawrence. When you're in Paris, you can't help but notice fashion. I wanted something to do with fashion. I would have done anything. I would have swept floors. I would have licked envelopes. I just wanted to be part of it.

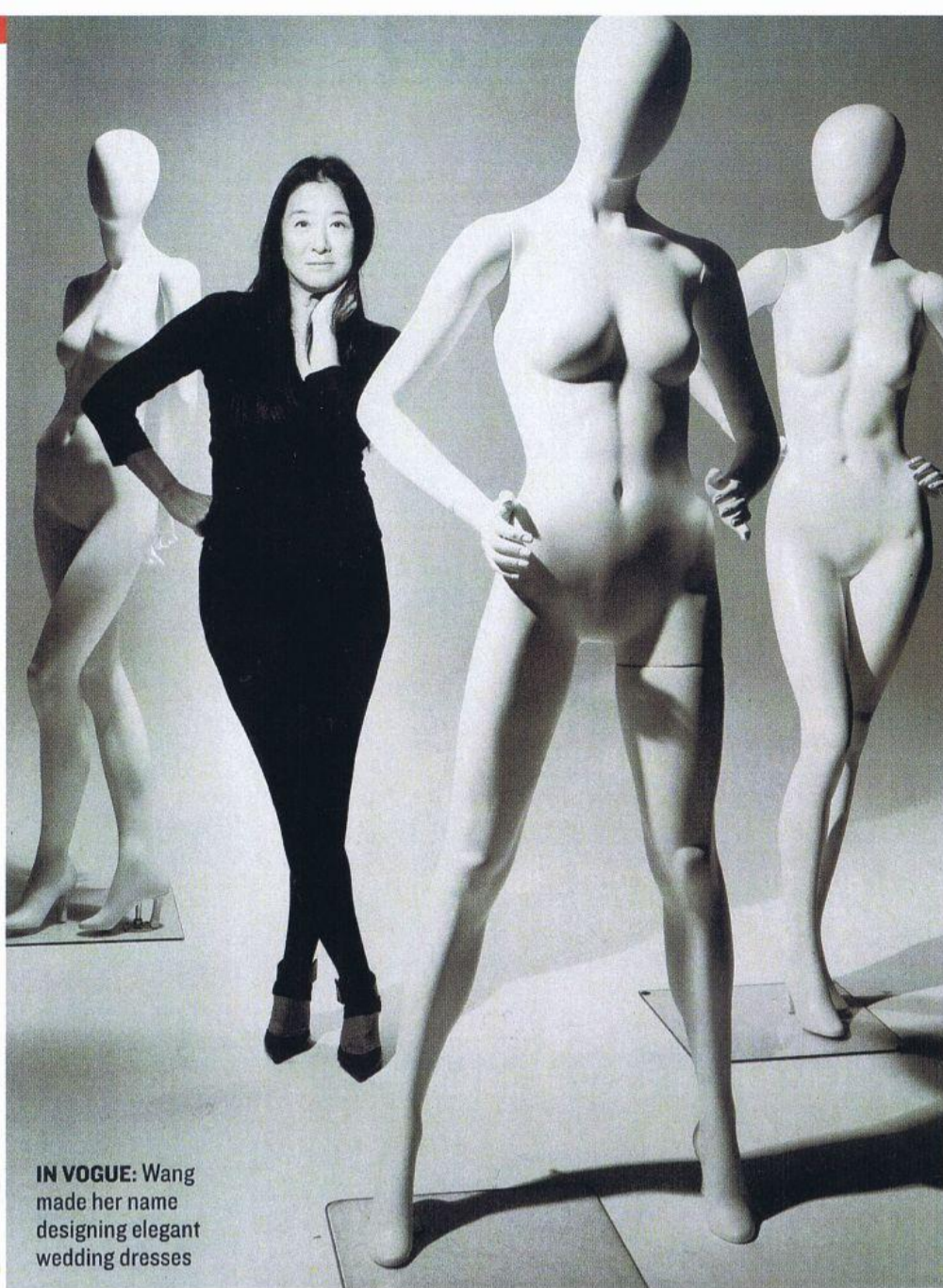
In the summers, I worked for Yves Saint Laurent—as a salesgirl in the boutique on Madison Avenue. I met Frances Patiky Stein, an editor at Vogue. She told me to give her a call when I got out of college. I did and I got a job. She felt I had a special something. On my first day at Vogue, I wore Saint Laurent and my nails were painted black or red, which was very much the rage in Paris at the time for young women. The editors looked at me and said, “Go home and get changed because you're going to be doing dirt work.” I came back wearing jeans. It was a dream come true.

Vogue is a seductive place because of what you get to see and what you're privy to; it's a world that I can't even explain. I thought I would do it for a year or two and I ended up staying 16 years. During that time, I rose to be one of the youngest editors ever in the history of Vogue. By 23, I was a senior editor, and then I became European editor for American Vogue in Paris.

I think I always had an eye and Vogue made that eye even sharper. An eye is a new way of viewing something old. Everything's been done in fashion. It's how you bring newness to the concept. I mean, a white shirt is a white shirt, but how do you wear it? Those are the things that editors are always searching for, particularly in a picture because you only have so long to capture the magic of fashion.

When I was almost 40, I got married and started my own business. I started with bridal because I'd had so much trouble finding my own wedding dress. You have to have a platform to begin with and then build upon the platform. You have to have something that pays the rent and that can grow at your own pace. I had bridal.

When I started, I was scared. I had worked as a design director for Ralph Lauren and I saw how hard it was to get product made, shipped



IN VOGUE: Wang made her name designing elegant wedding dresses

on time and sold. I knew the chances for success were very slim because it's more than about talent. It's also about timing. It's about reaching your customer. It's

about having allure for the press. I remember signing a lease for the store thinking, this is my death warrant, because how am I going to pay this rent? It did not take off right away. I built up my business client by client.

Now I feel like I'm always on the job. Sometimes, my daughters have dinner here with me in the office. They leave for school at a quarter of 7 and I'm usually sleeping, because when I get home at night, I work. I design in bed, from about 11 to 2.

That's when I have creative time to myself. In the day, I'm juggling clients. My husband's a great, great partner—as a husband and a father. He's also a workaholic. If I didn't have somebody who was really into his own profession, there's no way he'd put up with a wife like me. I don't drink caffeine but I like to have a cocktail at night. I love apple martinis.

Women do lead differently from men. I try to share a tremendous amount with my staffers. I feel everything: the tribulations of business, the responsibility to people who depend on me to feed their families. Those things are always in my decision-making processes. Art and commerce are often conflicting concepts. You have to make compromises because the most cutting-edge things are not necessarily what sells. You have to find a balance; it's a very difficult thing to do.

VERA WANG

Personal data: Born June 27, 1949, in Manhattan


Education: Sarah Lawrence College

Family: Married in 1989; has two daughters

First job: Salesgirl at Yves Saint Laurent, 1970s

Career highlights: Senior fashion editor, Vogue; design director, Ralph Lauren, 1987; started bridalwear company, 1990

On her free time: Watching television, shopping with her daughters



ROLE MODEL:
Hughes with
Secretary of State
Condoleezza Rice

KAREN HUGHES Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy, U.S. Department of State

“ONE OF THE THINGS I SAY WHEN women ask me for advice is: make the ground rules very clear. It’s hard to accept a job that requires you to be at the office 15 hours a day if you intend to really only be there 10. It’s one of the things we discussed when I came to work at the White House. I picked up the phone and called the president-elect and said, “You know, I’m always going to work very hard and long hours, but I also need to spend time at home.” A job is important and, for much of my life, was necessary to earn a living. But my job is not my whole life. My most important responsibility is to my family and to the child I chose to have. My job is going to have to allow me to fulfill that responsibility, or I need to look at a different job. But there are two sides to this. You have to be willing to ask and you also have to have the kind of employer who’s willing to consider and be flexible. My boss, the governor, and then, the president, believed in that, too. Ever since I first worked for him, he has always said if you’re a mom or dad, that’s your No. 1 obligation

in life. I’ve been very blessed to have employers who were willing, at different points of my career, to give me a lot of flexibility and a lot of opportunities, like bringing my son along on the presidential campaign. As you can imagine, when you’re running for president and you have so much at stake and one of your key people comes and says, “By the way, can I bring my child along?” it’s got to give you some pause. But to his credit, Governor Bush immediately said that’s a fabulous idea. It was really one of the most rewarding experiences of my entire career to have my son travel with me.

It would, however, have been easy for me as a senior woman to do what was right for my own family and not to say much about anybody else’s. But I felt an obligation to speak up and let others know that it was OK for them to make their family a priority, too. I used to try and take a “midweek moment,” where I would try to leave the office a little earlier one afternoon a week. When a reporter heard about it and ended up doing a story, I thought it would send a signal to women who were

more junior that they could make the same choices.

When I came to Washington, I thought of myself only as a member of the president’s staff. But I think my decision to move home to Texas because my son was unhappy in Washington caused people to view me as a leader, particularly on the issue of work-family balance. I remember a mother stopping me in Austin and introducing me to her daughter and saying, “I want my daughter to grow up and be like you.” It made me feel I had an obligation to try to live up to that.

After I left the White House, I wasn’t planning on coming back to Washington. I

promised my family that I would spend the rest of my son’s senior year at home in Texas and make home-cooked meals. I’m not sure I did great on the home-cooked meals—but I tried. I did more than usual.

I started to think about what I would do once my son went to college. Then the president and the secretary of State said they wanted me to work on public diplomacy. This was something I started working on while I was still at the White

KAREN HUGHES

Personal data: Born Dec. 27, 1956, in Paris

Education: Southern Methodist University

Family: Married; one son and a stepdaughter

First job: Television reporter in Dallas-Ft. Worth

Career highlights: Press director for the then Governor Bush, 1994; counselor to the president, 2001

Toughest task: Conducting a press briefing on September 11, 2001

CALL TO DUTY:
Baxter comes
from a proud
military family



House. After September 11, I realized that we were not doing a very effective job as a government in communicating with the world. I said I couldn't start until later in the year, after my son left. But I compromised on that. When I was in Washington for the Inaugural, I had breakfast with my son and asked him what he thought about it. He said, "I think you ought to do it. You really care about it and it's really important to my generation." That just really hit me. It is important to his generation.

SHEILA BAXTER Brigadier General

“MY PARENTS WERE THE MOST influential people in my life. They instilled a strong spiritual background in all five of us. Franklin was a small town and we grew up knowing all of our cousins. I had a talent for basketball. I learned to play through my male cousins, the only girl with all these guys out there. I was also the first African-American elected homecoming queen at my high school in 1972 right after desegregation. One of my friends got the idea on the bus. He said, "We could win this thing next year if we just selected one person. Let's nominate Sheila." I

think the school officials counted the votes twice because they couldn't believe it.

My parents sacrificed and worked lots of hours to make sure that we had an education. I majored in physical education at Virginia State College but I wasn't sure what I was going to do when I graduated. My cousin Sandra Baxter was married to a captain at Fort Bragg. We went to visit him and the lightbulb came on. I loved the atmosphere and decided to join ROTC. It was an unusual choice because there were only a few women in the program. Col. Jona McKee, the professor in charge, was a Vietnam vet, so he actually knew what it took to be an officer. He didn't cut us any slack, and I thank him today.

When I first entered the Army, I was a lieutenant stationed at Fort Meade, Md. My battalion commander was Lt. Col. Robert Bowles. He called me in one day and he said, "Lieutenant Baxter, I want you to give me your 20-year plan." And I said, "Sir, I don't even know what

I want to do in 20 minutes." But it focused me. I came back to him and I said, "Sir, I want to be like you. You are a battalion commander in a medical unit and that's my goal." He said, "OK, we're going to map it out five years from here, 10, 15, 20, in five-year increments." He said, "I'm going to send you to Korea." A year and a half later, I was on my way to Korea. When I got back, I went to Fort Sam Houston in Texas, where I met my other mentor, Brig. Gen. Richard Ursone. He kept saying, "Baxter, here is where I

think you ought to go." He's been my mentor since I was a captain.

The other thing that is very important is my spiritual background. I received my calling in the ministry in 1988 when I was stationed in Germany. The Lord called me through a dream. It was 2 in the morning and I jumped up out of the bed. I heard his voice clearly. The next day I talked to my pastor and he put me into a training program. I was licensed with

SHEILA BAXTER

Personal data: Born April 4, 1955, in Franklin, Va.

Education: Virginia State College, Webster University

Family: Middle of five children; not married

First post: Lieutenant at Fort Meade, Md.

Career highlights: Has served in Korea, Germany and Iraq; first female general in the Medical Corps

On her reading list: "Winning" by Jack Welch

the Church of God in Christ. When I retire, I plan to go to seminary and pursue a divinity degree.

I'm the commanding general at Madigan. We are responsible for the health care for six surrounding states and also for soldiers coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan. Every week we go up on the wards and talk to the soldiers. You look them in the eye and they say, "Hey, I was just doing my job and I want to go back and be with my buddies." That's an incredible inspiration.

My sister Nadine and my other siblings have always been there for me. Being promoted to brigadier was huge. We had the ceremony at the Women's Memorial in Washington, D.C. All of my family members were there, my brothers and sisters, my uncles and aunts. My father was an infantryman in World War II and two of my uncles have served. One of my brothers was Air Force, three cousins were Air Force, one was in the Marines and two were in the Navy. I have a niece who is in Iraq today. I'm very proud of her.

VERA RUBIN

Astronomer

"I THINK MY CAREER HAS BEEN unconventional, but maybe all women's careers are unconventional. I grew up in Washington, and from my bedroom window you could see stars in those days. Watching was more interesting than sleeping. I started reading about astronomy because I was puzzled by what I saw. In the library, I found a biography of Maria Mitchell, a female astronomer who discovered a comet in 1847, and that's about when I made my decision to become an astronomer. I applied to Vassar partly because Maria Mitchell had taught there. After three years, I graduated and married Bob. Our parents lived in the same apartment complex. He was studying physics, chemistry and math at Cornell. When I first met him, I asked if he knew Richard Feynman, who was teaching physics there and was someone I idolized. He said he was studying under Feynman. Why shouldn't I marry him?"

At Cornell, I opted for a master's degree in astronomy because Bob was already en route to a Ph.D. I had no women classmates in astronomy and only one or two in physics. For help with my work, I generally turned to Bob. I was very interested in how galaxies move relative to each other, so I analyzed galaxy motions for my master's thesis. My results showed that there were large clumps of galaxies moving relative to other clumps, in addition to overall expansion of

STARSTRUCK:
Rubin has spent
her life pondering
the universe



the universe. The chairman of the department said I really ought to present these results at the meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Philadelphia, but he added that, of course, I wouldn't be able to because my first child would be only a few weeks old. Then he said that because I wasn't a member, I wouldn't be able to put my name on the paper anyway so he could put his name on it and present it. So I said, oh no, I can give it. My talk was brief. I didn't know a soul. Afterward, there was much discussion about why the results couldn't be correct. I thought these were very cross astronomers. One gentle astronomer from Princeton suggested I wait until there was more data. The headline in The Washington Post said, YOUNG MOTHER FINDS CENTER OF

CREATION, or something like that.

We moved to Washington for Bob's job, but I was unhappy not doing astronomy and decided to get my astronomy Ph.D. at Georgetown. The physicist George Gamow was at George Washington University at the time and I met him

and we talked about whether there was a pattern in the distribution of the galaxies. Georgetown agreed to let Gamow be my thesis adviser. Like my master's thesis, my Ph.D. thesis was rejected for publication in the prominent astronomy journals, eliciting a postcard from Gamow, my strong supporter. He wrote: "I told you so."

In 1965, when I was offered a job at the Department of Terrestrial

VERA RUBIN

Personal data: Born July 23, 1928, in Philadelphia

Education: Vassar College, Cornell University, Georgetown University

Family: Married; her four children are all scientists

First job: Teaching at a community college, 1954

Career highlights: Measured galactic spin, 1964; her findings led to the discovery of dark matter

Would like to visit: Our neighboring galaxy, Andromeda, for the view



ON DECK: Sweeney keeps watch in a Disney television studio

Magnetism at the Carnegie Institution of Washington, I said I wanted to go home at 3 every day. So they offered two thirds of the salary I was getting teaching at Georgetown. There had never been a woman staff member. Ten years later I asked to be paid full time, and I was. Then I said, "I'm still going home at 3."

With Kent Ford, a staff member who had built a telescope instrument that could measure accurate motions of the galaxies, I spent my observing times over the next 25 years measuring speeds of stars in galaxies and motions of galaxies in the universe. Night after night, with my eye at the telescope eyepiece, I wondered if someone was looking down on our galaxy. Some exposures were six hours each, only two exposures on a long winter night. It could get very boring and almost disorienting. Every 20 minutes or so, I would flash a light just to show where the floor was. I always feel

like I'm racing the sunrise when I'm observing. Now, you're at the computer, not in the dome. It's very unromantic. On the other hand, you learn a lot more each night.

When Kent and I discovered that the motions of stars within a galaxy showed that most of the matter in a galaxy is invisible and not radiating, I expected we'd soon learn what dark matter is. That was 30 years ago, and I'm impatient. We still don't understand what dark matter consists of.

I'm also impatient about the progress of women in academia, which has been much worse than industry. The statistics for women scientists are pathetic. This is a battle young women may have to fight. Thirty years ago we thought the

battle would be over soon, but equality is as elusive as dark matter.

ANNE SWEENEY TV executive

“WHEN I WAS GROWING up, my family was totally organized around the children, and everything was about our education, our opportunities. There was no distinction between the boys and the girls. My mother told me to follow what I was passionate about and to believe that the only obstacles you're going to have are the ones that you fabricate for yourself. I always felt supported and accepted. No mistake was ever so big that you couldn't go home and talk about it.

I went through a period of desperately wanting to be an actress and then had the very good fortune to have a friend who was a casting director. He had me audition for a commercial and after the audition, I went into his office and I saw stacks and stacks and stacks and stacks of head shots. I realized I didn't want to be a picture on the floor. I wanted to be involved in television, but not waiting to be called. I wanted

to be engaged every day.

When I look back, I know I've taken a lot of jobs not because it was a repeat of my last job or the repeat of a previous success. I wanted and was excited by the challenge. If you don't know how to do something or if something scares you or looks impossible,

you're going to work a lot harder, and in the end you're going to be gratified.

Whether you have succeeded or failed, there's a lot more gratification in trying something that you haven't done and didn't know how to do.

That's what was so enticing to me about the new job 18 months ago. I had to figure out what I should be bringing into a world where we're putting broadcast and cable and worldwide Disney channel and Soap.net and ABC Family and TV anima-

ANNE SWEENEY

Personal data: Born Nov. 4, 1957, in Kingston, N.Y.

Education: The College of New Rochelle, Harvard

Family: Married; two children

First job: Page for ABC network, 1978

Career highlights: Heads FX network, 1993; president of Disney Channel, 1996; head of ABC, 2000

Career switch: Decided to go into television after giving up plans to become a teacher

MAESTRA: Alsop rehearses with the Bournemouth Symphony

tion and all of these pieces together. How do you make that stronger and how do you make that a more powerful segment for the company? That excited me. But it was also the great unknown. When that particular bell goes off, I'm hooked.

MARIN ALSOP Conductor

“I REMEMBER HEARING MUSIC before I could speak. My parents would practice every day. I could probably sing you all of the warm-ups my mother used to play on the cello. My earliest memories are of people playing chamber music at our house. Later, when they both started working at the New York City Ballet, I would spend a lot of time listening and watching the dance. I was hearing music all the time. It just becomes part of who you are.

When I was 7, I started going to a summer camp for violinists called Meadowmount. I also enrolled in the pre-college program at Juilliard. What I liked about the violin was the physicality of it, the way you hold it. I liked the social dynamic of it. At camp, I started playing in string quartets. At Juilliard, I played in the orchestra for the first time, and that blew me away. I really loved the people aspect. I don't know if that's because I'm an only child, but I was always drawn to being in groups.

I fell in love with the idea of being a conductor when I was 9. I was at a young people's concert and Leonard Bernstein was conducting. It felt a little bit like what I imagine a calling would feel like. You just say, "That's what I want to do." I'm sure it was his charisma but there were other things, too, especially the idea of being part of a huge team. All through my childhood I would always end up being the captain of the team even if I wasn't a very good player. It's all about the thrill of being able to galvanize people to a unified end game.

After I graduated from Juilliard, I started creating my own mini-galaxies. I had a string quartet, then a piano trio and then a string orchestra which I kind of led, and then a swing band. These self-generated projects seemed to work for me. In the late 1970s, I met an arranger who used to play with Woody Herman's band. He wrote us some music. We didn't even know what swing music was. We were all at Juilliard. What did we know? We played it like it was Mozart. It was pretty funny. He's still one of my dear friends and I only wish I had a video of him laughing the first time he heard us!

I started getting called to do a lot of session work and put together string sections for recording dates and commercials. It paid well and I decided to save all my money so I could start my own orchestra, Concordia. The frustration of wanting to be a conductor is that you can't practice. All my musician friends in the orchestra were extraordinarily helpful, and they had lots and lots of constructive criticism. Conducting's all body language. When a woman makes a gesture, the same gesture as a man, it's interpreted entirely differently. The thing I struggled with the most was getting a big sound from the brass because you really have to be strong. But if you're too strong, you're a b-i-t-c-h. As a woman, you have to be careful that it's not too harsh. It's a subtle line.

I applied to audition for Tanglewood five times before I got an audition. When I finally got an audition in 1988, I was just over the moon. One day they called me in and said, "We've decided that you're going to conduct the concert with Leonard Bernstein." I was stunned. Bernstein came to the conducting class. He said hello to all his friends and then he said, "Where's Marin?" I felt like the clouds parted and God was speaking to me. Bernstein was more than a teacher; he coaxed the essence out of people. He talked to me about being me. There was one rather cathartic rehearsal day where he came up to me and said, "The conducting's fine but it really isn't moving me." It was so devastating. Then he said, "Let's give the orchestra a break and then you'll come back and do this again." He said forget about conducting now. Just be yourself and be the music. But then I came back in and it was the weirdest experience. I felt like I'd had a massage. I thought I had nothing to lose. I'm just going to try it. I remember in the middle of the piece—this makes me cry—he came up to me and whispered, "That's it." It was so liberating.

Tanglewood opened up opportunities for me. Once I was able to get some auditions, I could win the job. I didn't go into conducting to win a popularity contest. I became a conductor because I'm passionate about the music. And I'm passionate about people doing the best and being the best they can be, and sometimes you have to push people to do that. If everybody just loves you, you're probably not doing a very good job. My past experiences with the Baltimore Symphony have been nothing but positive. So the reports that the musicians

MARIN ALSOP

Personal data: Born Oct. 16, 1956, in Manhattan

Education: Yale, Juilliard

Family: Father was a concertmaster and mother a cellist with the N.Y.C. Ballet

First job: Freelance concert violinist, 1976

Career highlights: Music director, Colorado Symphony, 1993; MacArthur fellow, 2005

Away from the podium: She likes running, hiking and learning German. (Italian is next.)

were unhappy with me took me by surprise. A small group of people probably felt very disenfranchised. I have a responsibility to try to heal this orchestra and be a real champion for these musicians. I need to set an artistic agenda that will hopefully carry everybody above the turbulence.

MARIA OTERO

Nonprofit CEO

“I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN LA PAZ, Bolivia, one of nine children. I now consider myself a Latina, but coming to terms with that took a lot of work. When I was about 12, my father, who was a lawyer, was offered a position at the Inter-American Development Bank. Just like that, my parents informed us that we were moving to Washington, D.C. It was difficult when we first moved here. My parents bought a relatively small house; every room became a

bedroom. My grandparents followed us, as did a couple of uncles. It was like living in La Paz. I spent most of my high-school years desperately trying to assimilate.

In my sophomore year at the University of Maryland, I fell in love with romantic poetry and decided to become a literature professor. But at that time, in the early 1970s, there was a lot of political turmoil in Latin America. My older brother raised my political consciousness. He was studying economics at George Washington University and becoming increasingly involved in politics. But I really wanted to bury myself in the bubble of the humanities.

I had an identity crisis. Was I Bolivian or American? I struggled with this and ultimately decided to give up literature, to abandon doing my dissertation and my Ph.D. and to study political economics. I really wanted to spend my time on something I cared about even more. I started economics from

scratch and then went back to Bolivia for a couple of years because I really had to determine who I was. Living in Bolivia as an adult and preparing myself to then come back to the United States and do more graduate work in economics was very significant. That's what helped me accept that I could be both Bolivian and American. By the time I moved back to study at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, I felt everything was open to me. I was studying with wonderful professors and I learned so much about Latin America. I knew this is what I wanted to do with my life.

After working around the world, I decided I wanted to focus on helping women empower themselves through work so they can be leaders in their own lives. I started looking for a group that did that and found ACCION International, which puts small amounts of capital in the hands of poor people with businesses. Most are women.

ACCION allowed me to realize my dream. By this time I had been married for five years and had two little boys. My husband, Joe Eldridge, had worked in human rights all his life, so living in Central America in the mid-1980s was appealing to him. My sons, Justin and David, were 3 and 1 and spoke Spanish because of me. So we moved. Many times I would get on the back of the little scooters that the loan officers of the organizations would ride into the hills, into the slums, and visit people who lived with poverty as their constant companion. After almost three years, we came back with three children, with our daughter, Ana.

Bill Burris, ACCION's president and my mentor, asked me to open an office in Washington. For years after that, I was the No. 2

person at Accion, but I never really aspired to be president because we were very rooted in Washington, and ACCION is headquartered in Boston. Then, I was nominated by the board to become president and move to Boston. My kids, then teenagers, said no, so I proposed running it from Washington. To their credit, the board gave me a chance to do that.

Being a woman makes me a better manager. We reinforce each other. In some ways, being able to develop a management-leadership style that is based on forming a team is very much in line with the way I interact with my sisters or other women. We're all in it together.

Barbara Kantrowitz, Holly Peterson and Pat Wingert conducted interviews for this story.



MARIA OTERO

Personal data: Born Aug. 26, 1950, in Bolivia

Education: University of Maryland, Johns Hopkins University

Family: Married in 1981; has three children

First job: University teaching assistant, 1972

Career highlights: Program director, Center for Development and Population Activities, 1979; CEO, ACCION International, 2000

Hobbies: Photography, gardening, reading

ON POINT: Otero wants to help women learn to become leaders

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMIEN DONCK FOR NEWSWEEK

A NEW TEAM IN TOWN

In San Francisco, women are in charge of the public's safety—and they're doing the job their own way, with a little help from their friends.

BY KAREN BRESLAU

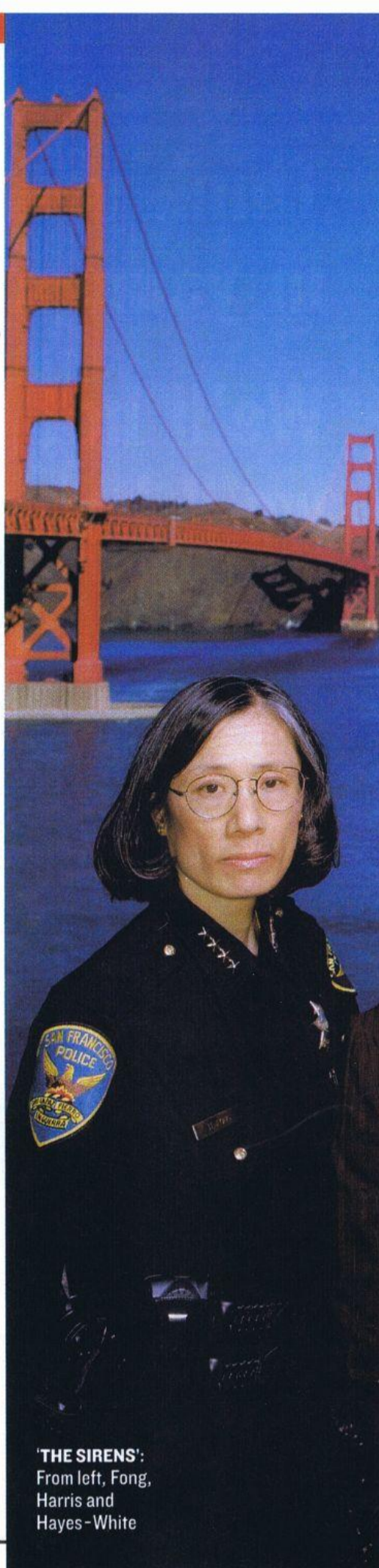
THE THREE-ALARM FIRE had already claimed three lives. When San Francisco Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White arrived at the burning downtown tenement in the middle of one night last month, she noticed several residents huddled on the sidewalk refusing treatment from her paramedics. Gently quizzing the terrified survivors in Spanish, the chief learned why: the illegal migrants, who were living 12 to a room when a mattress caught fire, feared that their rescuers would turn them in for deportation. Hayes-White assured them that wouldn't happen. Then she summoned a bilingual officer to continue comforting the survivors while they received first aid. "People think it's all brawn," she says. "But more often than not, this is a job that requires a lot of interaction with people. There's a real sense of calm that comes in a crisis when you relate to someone who looks like you, speaks like you and thinks like you."

Luckily for Hayes-White, in San Francisco she has plenty of other women to lean on who share the burden of protecting public safety. Police Chief Heather Fong is the first Asian-American woman to lead her department. District Attorney Kamala Harris is the first African-American woman to lead hers.

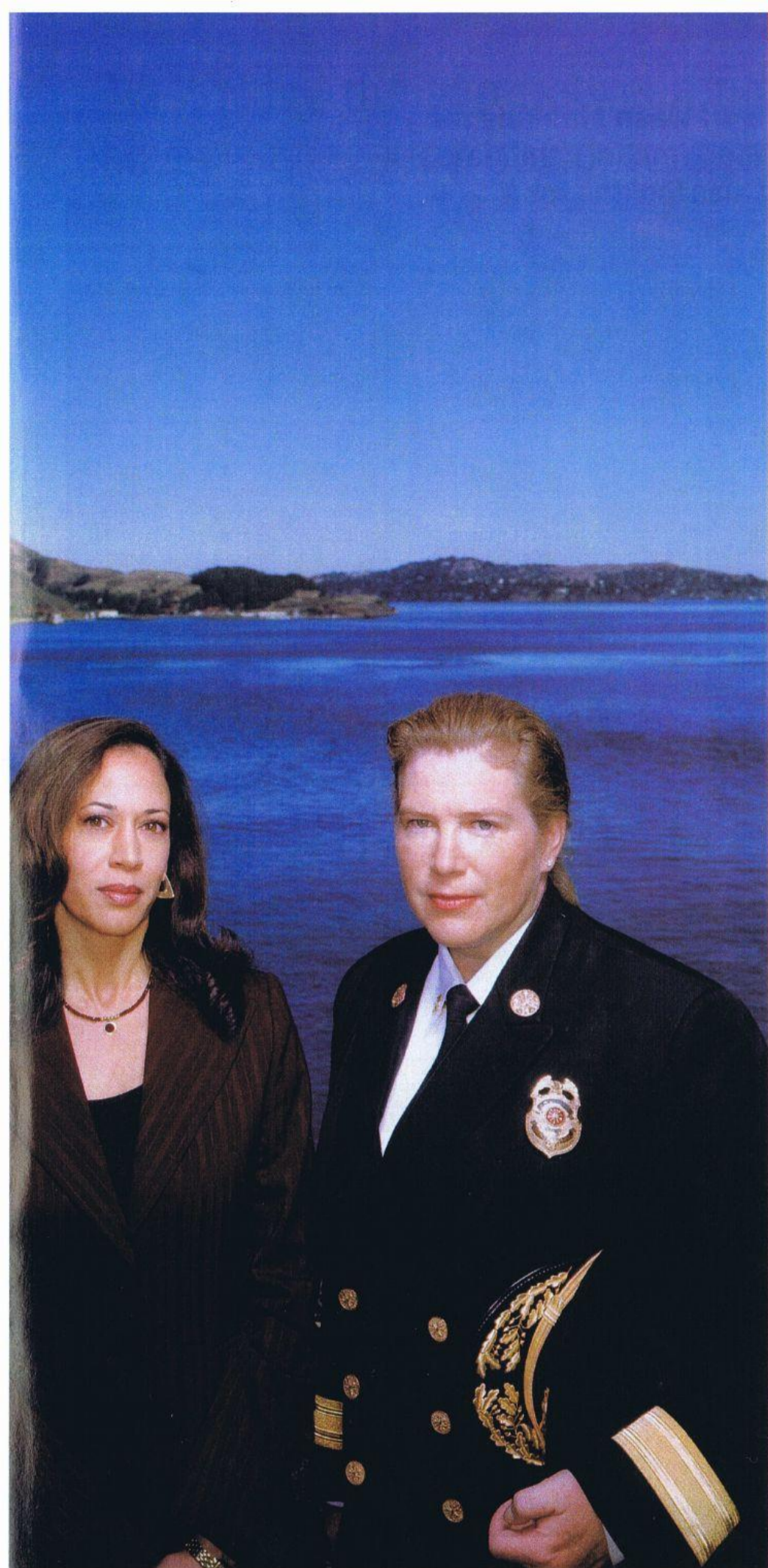
If you die in San Francisco, your untimely passing could be investigated by a female coroner and a female medical examiner. If the "Big One" hits, Director of the Office of Emergency Services and Homeland Security Annemarie Conroy, who nicknamed her colleagues "the Sirens," will coordinate relief efforts. It's no accident, says Mayor Gavin Newsom, that public safety in his city is managed almost exclusively by women. Except for the district attorney, who was elected in 2003, he appointed them all. "I wasn't looking for the 'woman' candidate," Newsom says. "I was looking for a competent team."

In the post-Katrina world, Newsom reasons, the public demands nothing less than the compassionate, collaborative and practical approach he gets from his women chiefs. And as Katrina showed all too clearly, there is no more critical task in a disaster than the ability of first responders to coordinate and communicate with each other and the public. "America loves the macho guy with the cigar and the crew cut," says Newsom. "But America also likes results. I've often sat in envy of the ability of women to multitask, put ego aside, not complain, and solve the problem."

Like Newsom, 38, his "Sirens" belong to a new generation of reformers. Hayes-White, 41, entered the firefighting academy in 1990, two years after the fire department was ordered by a consent decree to admit



'THE SIRENS':
From left, Fong,
Harris and
Hayes-White



women—a legal battle that lasted for 18 years. An athletic mother of three young sons, Hayes-White mastered the physical demands of her profession, but saw firsthand the problems caused by the station-house boozing that was long part of San Francisco's firefighting culture. As chief, she has publicly disciplined not only violators, but also their supervisors for failing to enforce the department's zero-tolerance policy on alcohol and drug use.

Being a parent, says Hayes-White, has been the best preparation for leading 1,700 firefighters. "It's about consistent discipline, setting clear boundaries, rules and expectations." It's also about nurturing. When one of her firefighters was injured during last month's blaze, Hayes-White visited the burn unit almost every day until the woman was released. To promote departmental pride, Hayes-White comes to work each day in her full uniform and requires the same of her command staff.

District Attorney Kamala Harris and Police Chief Heather Fong inherited departments that were at war with each other. The feud climaxed in 2002, when Harris's predecessor indicted the police chief and his command staff after a fracas, involving off-duty police officers and a bag of leftover Mexican food, that became known as Fajitagate. Although a judge eventually threw out the charges, the police chief resigned. Months later his successor was also forced out, following another off-duty brawl. Fong, then an assistant chief known as a stickler for discipline and decorum, assumed behind-the-scenes management of the 2,100-member force until Newsom appointed her chief last year.

It's hard to imagine a less rough-and-tumble cop than Fong, 49. She holds a master's degree in social work and made her mark as a rookie by helping to translate wiretaps of Chinese gang members. Growing up in Chinatown, Fong spoke a Cantonese dialect at home with her parents, who, like many Asian families, says Fong, "didn't regard law enforcement as a desirable profession for their children." But that didn't deter Fong, who joined a police-cadet program in high school, then took a break during college to attend the police academy in 1977, shortly after it started admitting women.

Harris, 40, the hard-driving daughter of an Indian mother and a Jamaican father, both academics and civil-rights activists, grew up in Berkeley. But anyone who mistakes her for a softhearted liberal should think again. As a prosecutor in Oakland, Harris never lost a felony case sent to the jury. In San Francisco's most crime-ridden neighborhoods, Harris has become a hero

to mothers of murder victims, with whom she meets regularly to review the prosecutions of their children's accused killers. During her first year in office, Harris has boosted the conviction rate for felonies from 62 percent to 79 percent.

At the same time, she has also embraced innovative prevention strategies. For youthful offenders leaving prison, Harris is creating a re-entry program to provide schooling and job training. She helped raise money to build a safe house for teen prostitutes. "We have to dispense with old conversation about being 'soft' on crime or being 'hard' on crime," says Harris. "We have to talk about being smart on crime."

Harris's efforts to improve relations with the police department got off to a rough start when an undercover police officer was shot and killed shortly after she took office in 2004. Harris, a Democrat opposed to the death penalty, announced that she would instead seek life in prison for the accused killer. The decision enraged police. Despite those tensions, Harris and Fong continued to meet regularly, in part to signal to their departments that the work of law enforcement had to go on. Newsom gives the two women credit for continuing

"I wasn't looking for the 'woman' candidate. I was looking for a competent team."

—MAYOR GAVIN NEWSOM

to communicate, unlike their male predecessors, who went for years without speaking to each other.

If there is one word that comes up again and again among San Francisco's women chiefs, it is "communication." "There are many ways to mediate and defuse situations," says Fong. She pushes her officers to patrol beats on foot to get to know neighbors. That willingness to try tactics that aren't "badge heavy" is typical of women who are now assuming command in other large cities, including Boston, Milwaukee and Detroit, says Margie Moore, director of the National Center for Women and Policing in Arlington, Va. "Eighty percent of modern policing is about communication, prevention and management," she says.

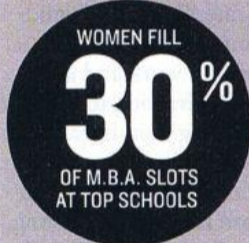
Women are also making strides in firefighting, as the first generation of women to be admitted in the 1980s ac-

quires enough seniority to reach the chiefs' ranks. In addition to Joanne Hayes-White, there are female chiefs in Minneapolis, Tallahassee, Fla., Tacoma, Wash., and a handful of smaller cities. Those numbers will increase in the coming years, says Terese Floren, head of Women in the Fire Service, Inc., an association of women firefighters. "Fire departments are learning that having a more diverse team of responders gives you more options in responding to human tragedy," she says.

Although Hayes-White had only 14 years on the job, Newsom said she had the right skills to lead. "I didn't look for someone who said, 'Here's how we've done it for 40 years,'" says Newsom. "I wanted an entrepreneurial approach." Hayes-White and Fong recently decided to conduct joint training for police and firefighters who often respond to the same emergencies. When the women took their top brass to lunch last year to celebrate the Chinese New Year, passersby in Chinatown flocked to the windows, thinking there had been a calamity. Even their deputies asked what the purpose of the meeting was. "I had to say, 'Guys, relax, we're just having lunch,'" says Hayes-White. But in San Francisco, ladies who lunch also save lives. ■

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Business Despite making significant strides in the past 50 years, women still lack pay parity with men.



Women in the Fortune 500:



Corporate officers



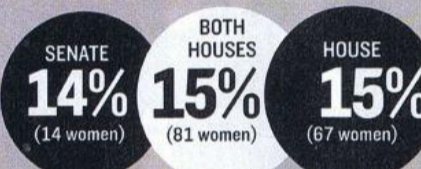
48% Percentage of all privately held firms at least half owned by women

80% Percentage of the median male salary earned by women

9% The percentage of teenage girls who say they want to pursue a career in business, compared with 15% among boys

Politics The first woman was elected to Congress in 1917. Since then, 224 have served. About 63% have been Democrats.

Women in Congress now ...



... in state offices ...



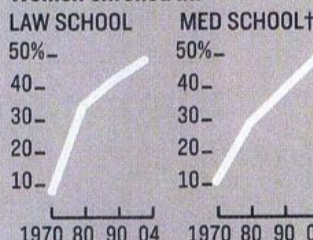
... and holding positions in the cabinet



Medicine and Law

Women outnumber men at the top of many professional schools.

Women enrolled in:



Law-school deans/admins. **65%** (2,447 women) 2001

Med-school dept. chairs **10%** (279 women) 2003

The Military This traditional bastion of maleness is gradually opening its top ranks.



ALL OFFICERS WHO ARE WOMEN **15%** 2004

*TWO OF THE NINE—MARCE FULLER AT MIRANT AND EILEEN SCOTT AT PATHMARK STORES—HAVE LEFT THEIR POSTS AND BEEN REPLACED BY MEN SINCE FORTUNE'S LIST WAS PUBLISHED IN APRIL. †BASED ON MATRICULANTS. SOURCES: NEWSWEEK RESEARCH CENTER, CENTER FOR AMERICAN WOMEN IN POLITICS, CATALYST, CEO BUSINESS LEADERSHIP INDEX, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, SIMMONS COLLEGE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN MEDICAL COLLEGES

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

What holds too many women back? A fear of speaking up, says Rosabeth Moss Kanter.

AS A YOUNG SOCIOLOGY PROFESSOR, Rosabeth Moss Kanter studied life in 19th-century utopian communities. By the late 1970s, however, her focus had shifted to a less idealized environment: the modern American corporation. Since then Kanter, a professor at Harvard Business School, has authored 16 books; the latest is "Confidence: How Winning and Losing Streaks Begin and End." She spoke with NEWSWEEK's Daniel McGinn about how confidence affects women's careers.

Excerpts:

MCGINN: Part of "Confidence" focuses on athletics. Does playing a sport build confidence, and is it different for men and women?

KANTER: Sports is a realm where you get instant feedback about whether the team has succeeded or failed. It's very clear what the individual's contribution is, and you have repeated episodes of performance, day by day or week by week. In business it may not show up for years. So sports has been a phenomenal realm for developing leaders—male leaders have often played competitive sports. Title IX, which mandated that girls have opportunities equal to boys in athletics, was very important—it's shaped a different sensibility on the part of women about what they can achieve. In the formal surveys we did for the book, there was practically no difference between the comments men and women made about their sports experiences. The girls wanted to win as much as the boys did.

How do women's decisions to interrupt their careers to have children affect their confidence?

There are many reasons women who have a lot of education and professional skills are deciding to stay home to raise their children. But women who leave the work force for a time do sometimes begin to doubt themselves in terms of their professional skills and ability. So that's the loss of confidence you're talking about—when



IN THE GAME: Kanter says that sports help build leadership skills

they're not in the game every day, some women have doubts about how easy it will be to go back. It begins to feel more and more overwhelming to step back in, because you'll have to learn a lot of things again and convince people of your skills. The women who have an easier time transitioning back are women who still practice their skills when they're not in the paid work force. If you keep your skills sharp by using them in a community organization or being clear about what your skills are, there's more confidence going back.

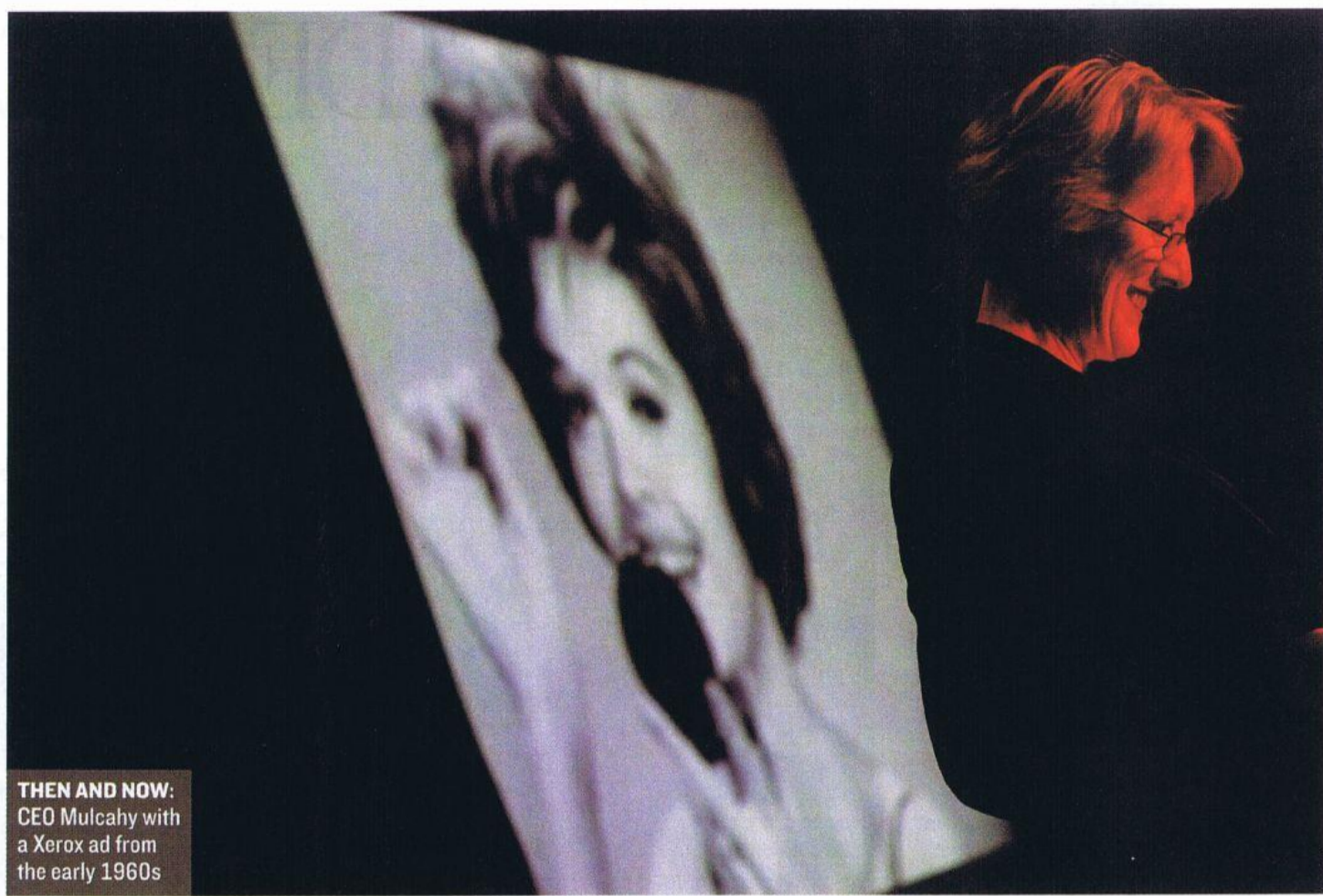
Among your M.B.A. students, are the men more confident than the women?

The women are very bright and very motivated. There is no talent difference that I can see. There sometimes is a difference between the men and women in the willingness to claim air time in class. The men seem to feel that they can start talking and eventually they'll have a point to make. The women are slightly more likely to feel that they ought to have something valuable to say before they say it. That's a good quality, but it means that if I don't watch it and make sure to call on

many people who don't have their hands up, men are likely to be claiming more of the air time, which can make them look more important. The women are just as likely to have wonderful things to say, but there's a kind of self-censorship going on.

That self-censorship reflects a lack of confidence, no?

Confidence is the expectation of a positive outcome. If you think you're going to be criticized and attacked if you don't have all the facts, you hold back. If you hold back, you don't try, and you don't know how good your ideas are. Every single prominent woman I know has been in a situation where she's in a meeting with lots of men but not too many women. She makes a pivotal comment, and later on it's repeated by and credited to one of the men in the room. This is sometimes a topic of conversation among women: How to handle it when that happens? How do people get credit for their ideas? This is something that can discourage women from speaking up. But my goal here is empowerment—I want to empower more women to speak up. ■



THEN AND NOW:
CEO Mulcahy with
a Xerox ad from
the early 1960s

IN GOOD COMPANY

Women hold close to a third of top management jobs at Xerox. Inside a 'kinder culture.'

BY DANIEL MCGINN

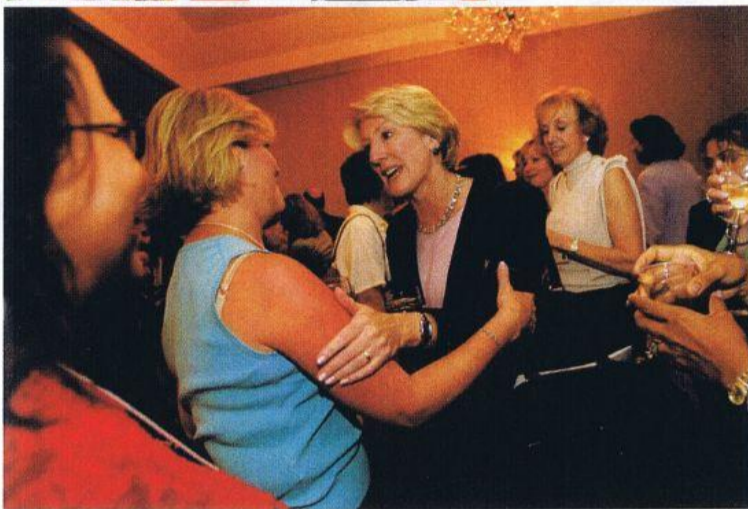
LESLIE VARON'S BOSS LIVED BY a simple rule: if he was in the office, she should be, too. In the early 1990s Varon worked in finance at Xerox, and the department's VP was an old-style organization man. "You could set your watch by the hours this man worked," Varon says, recalling 12-hour days that often began at 7 a.m. For Varon and her colleagues, that meant missing

family dinners. After much discontent, they called a meeting. Couldn't they take work home in order to get out in time for supper? The boss agreed, slowly growing to believe that an employee's value lies in her work, not the hours spent at her desk. As for Varon, her earlier departures don't seem to have impeded her career: today *she's* Xerox's finance VP.

Her status as a female officer would make her a rarity at many companies, but

not at Xerox. The \$15.7 billion document-management company is one of only nine in the Fortune 500 with a female CEO, but its gender diversity extends far beyond the corner office. Of Xerox's 32 corporate officers, eight are women. So are 800 of its middle managers, more than 30 percent of the total. The company is routinely ranked among the best places for women to work. Inside its Connecticut headquarters, female employees describe a culture where no one hesitates to reschedule a meeting to take a child to the pediatrician. Managers are judged—and compensated—on meeting diversity goals. At Xerox, "people really believe this—this is not cosmetic," says David Nadler, chairman of Mercer Delta Consulting, who worked with Xerox for 20 years. "They don't see diversity as somehow in conflict with meritocracy."

It's an attitude that began taking root nearly 40 years ago, when Xerox's top management became concerned about its treatment of black employees. By the 1970s, Xerox was aggressively hiring blacks and supporting a caucus of black employees who met to network and discuss griev-



JOB ONE: At Xerox, diversity throughout its ranks is a top priority. Chief engineer Vandebroek (above) closely tracks success in recruiting women. Mulcahy (left) meets and greets at a Xerox networking event.

ances. And as feminism took hold, Xerox's progressive attitudes on race made it especially receptive to changes. But David Kearns, Xerox's CEO from 1982 to 1991, says he moved to promote women not because of fairness or altruism but because drawing from a bigger labor pool would help Xerox compete. "You had to get all of the people [involved] or you weren't going to be able to succeed," he recalls. During the 1980s, female employees formed a Women's Alliance, which lobbied management to promote more women.

Many of today's senior Xerox women directly benefited from these early moves. Anne Mulcahy began as a sales rep in 1976. Though her numbers were great, she figured her Xerox career would be limited by her refusal to relocate with her husband and two children. But her bosses accommodated her by letting her commute to ever-bigger jobs. "[They said], 'We think you've got a career path here and we want you to take it as far as you can,'" she says. She took it far indeed: in 2001, with Xerox mired in financial crisis, Mulcahy became CEO. She cut the work force from 79,000 to 58,000,

refreshed the product line and strengthened the balance sheet. The result: its stock price is up 65 percent, and Mulcahy recently ranked ahead of Oprah Winfrey on Forbes's 2005 list of powerful women.

Like Mulcahy, other women who've ascended say their performance was the main propellant. But they admit being a woman usually helped. Some describe special mentoring or attention along the way. Ursula Burns, an African-American engineer who now runs Xerox's largest division, recalls "a special spotlight put on me" when she broke into the management ranks. Tales of preferential treatment—along with numerical targets for women—might raise the ire of affirmative-action opponents. So be it. "If [somebody] wanted to write an editorial in *The Wall Street Journal*, I don't particularly care," Mulcahy says.

Around headquarters, there are subtle signs of what executives describe as Xerox's kinder culture. Instead of shaking hands, executives sometimes greet with hugs. Mid-level employees seem remarkably at ease among top officers. By most accounts, employees feel free to refuse to schedule 7:30

a.m. meetings because of day-care constraints. Under Xerox's evaluation system, behavior can count as much as performance: even high-achieving bosses who publicly berate subordinates or are insensitive to employees' personal lives can be quietly pushed aside. "We deal with problems, but we deal with them in the way a mother would deal with her children—we're gentler," says Burns. "It's more maternal."

When you listen to such happy talk, it'd be fun to hook each member of this mahogany row to a polygraph so she'd dish on what it's *really* like to work here. Even without truth serum, they admit there are limits to the flexibility: senior officers describe careers built on 70-hour workweeks and nonstop travel. Most of these women have children; to provide stability at home, many have husbands who've dialed back or quit their careers. But there's still angst. "When you spend four nights in five away from your family during the school year ... there's a lot of anxiety there," Burns says.

There's also anxiety about the underlying business. While Mulcahy has brought Xerox back from the brink, lately its revenue growth has stalled. On a recent weekend, 400 female executives paid their own way to the 17th annual meeting of Xerox's Women's Alliance. But before the weekend of networking, wine tastings, Pilates and trips to Lord & Taylor (along with a speech by *NEWSWEEK* contributor Anna Quindlen), Mulcahy spoke about the challenges they face. "Until we turn the revenue corner in a meaningful way, that puts enormous pressure on the bottom line," she said. Then, putting the family-friendly ethos into action, Mulcahy ditched the conference to attend parents' weekend at her son's college.

Revenues aren't the only area in which Xerox can improve. Despite the firm's track record, the National Association of Female Executives currently ranks seven companies—including Avon, Liz Claiborne and IBM—as better places for women managers. To rise higher, says NAFE president Betty Spence, Xerox needs more women with profit-and-loss responsibility and among its top earners. Mulcahy adds that it needs more women abroad; she'd also like to hire more Hispanics and female engineers. Sophie Vandebroek, the company's chief engineer, carries charts listing her success in recruiting women, but until colleges produce more female gearheads, she can do only so much. As for the future, colleagues are rooting for Burns to someday succeed Mulcahy (who turns 53 this week) as CEO, but they know there are no guarantees. Even for a company that's come a long way, baby, there's still far to go. ■