The Life and Times of Gertrude Meth Hochberg

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ABSTRACT

This biographical study will fuse together the many different resources and historical documents that help to shed light on the life and times of Gertrude Meth Hochberg, a woman who has often been described as decades ahead of her time. By examining Hochberg's distinguished career in advertising as well as in public relations at Bryant College, I will demonstrate the important ways that she promoted the advancement of women in higher education, business, and the non-profit sector both at Bryant College and within the wider Rhode Island community.

INTRODUCTION

Beginning with Abigail Adams' famous 1776 letter to her husband, John Adams, in which she exhorted him to "Remember the Ladies," American women have fought to end sexism and gender inequality.[1] It was not until 1920 that the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified, which earned women the right to vote. This was just one small victory among a wide variety of challenges women faced—and continue to face—in the fight for equality. Beyond the political sphere, women were viewed as inferior to men in the work force, as well as within society at large. Feminists and other pioneers have played major roles in enabling women to feel more confident, and it is their efforts which have allowed women to make significant advancements in American society.

Women in the Workforce in the Early Twentieth Century

Two social prejudices American women faced in their efforts to become a part of the workforce is the belief that women were intellectually inferior to men and the idea that women should not work outside the home.[2] The views of women as the inferior sex were a result of the Cult of Domesticity, a nineteenth century ideal which romanticized the woman's role as a mother and a morally superior being. The idea of true womanhood placed the women's sphere in the home, giving household work and child rearing "new ethical and spiritual significance." The nuclear family became the backbone of society and a woman was charged with the task of raising her children to be moral citizens of their society.[3] A respectable woman worked to maintain the home and raise children whereas her husband would work to support the family monetarily, in the capitalist economic environment where women were not welcome as they were viewed intellectually inferior and incapable of making proper decisions in this field.

In 1900, the labor force was made up of only 18.3 percent women, more than half of whom were foreign-born. On average, women wage earners during this time were making half that

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[1] Ellen Carol DuBois and Lynn Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009) 156.

[2] Barbara J. Harris, *Beyond Her Sphere: Women and the Professions in American History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978) 3.

[3] Ibid., 3.

of men wage earners.[4] Qualifications and labor market discrimination are gender-specific factors which have and continue to contribute to the wage gap. In the early 1900s, it was more common for women to find work as secretaries and clerical workers rather than in specialized fields. "Because both women and their employers expected women to leave the work force and eventually marry, it made no sense for their employers to train them for more responsible positions."[5] By 1920, the percentage of women in the workforce rose to 21.4 percent, but only 12 percent of the female labor force was employed in professional fields.[6] Since the 1920s, women have steadily become more active members in the workforce, and they have continued to hold positions that had previously been considered male-only positions.

Ratifying the Nineteenth Amendment and Equal Rights

Earning the right to vote was a landmark in the struggle for gender equality. The fight for women's suffrage lasted many decades, officially beginning with the issuance of the Declaration of Seneca Falls in 1848 and ending on August 26, 1920 when Tennessee became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment.[7] The Nineteenth Amendment focused specifically on guaranteeing the vote for women. Both political parties in the United States during their 1920 campaigns cited women's issues in their platforms, recognizing the fact that women were a large constituency that potentially held a lot of power in the election.[8]

Although this would not be the first time in American history that women would be given the opportunity to be active in politics, the Nineteenth Amendment welcomed new adventures for women political activists. "In 1920 white women formed the League of Women Voters, which emphasized lobbying, voter education, and get-out-the-vote drives in the overall mission to train women to be good citizens." Women were also energized in state and local governments, lobbying for child and women labor laws, health legislation, municipal reform

[4] DuBois and Dumenil, 456.

[5] Sharon Hartman Strom, *Beyond the Typewriter: Gender, Class, and the Origins of Modern American Office Work, 1900-1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 173.

[6] Ibid., 456.

[7] Harris, 127.

[8] DuBois and Dumenil, 522.

and legal rights.[9] In 1923, the Equal Rights Amendment was first introduced in Congress.[10] As suffragist leader Alice Paul asserted, the right to vote alone would not end "artificial handicaps" placed upon women in legal matters.[11] Following the suffrage movement, feminists and advocates of women's rights sought to end the remaining vestiges of discrimination against the female sex.

GERTRUDE METH HOCHBERG

Gertrude Meth, a native of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, was born on June 7, 1911, nine years before the federal women's suffrage amendment was ratified. She was a pathfinder and independent woman who developed a long and distinguished career in advertising and public relations. Throughout her career, she also worked tirelessly to promote the status of women in higher education, business, and the non-profit sector. Indeed, those who knew and worked with Gertrude Meth Hochberg often describe her as a woman who was decades ahead of her time.[12]

The eldest of five children, Gertrude[13] grew up in comfortable, middle-class surroundings. Her father, Louis, was the owner and manager of a successful grocery business in Wilkes-Barre and her mother, Rose, followed the traditional path of homemaker. In the late nineteenth century, Louis, an Orthodox Jew, had emigrated from Austria to the United States to escape being drafted into the army. Gertrude and her siblings were raised under the Jewish Orthodox faith.[14] From a young age, Gertrude was very intellectual and aware of the world

[9] Ibid, 522.

[10] The Equal Rights Amendment passed both Houses of Congress in 1972 but was never ratified.

[11] DuBois and Dumenil, 524.

[12] In preparing this Honors Capstone Paper, I interviewed over 15 family members, friends, and co-workers of Hochberg. Virtually all interviewees voiced their support for Hochberg as a woman who was decades ahead of her time.

[13] Although it is common practice to refer to an individual by their last name in a biographical narrative, I will frequently refer to Gertrude Meth Hochberg as "Gertrude," as she was so affectionately referred to by family, friends, and colleagues.

[14] Erica Hochberg Stern (Daughter of Gertrude Meth Hochberg) in e-mail conversation with the author, March 10, 2011.

around her. She was a selfless young woman and often put her family's needs before her own.[15]

Early Career

In April 1926, as a part of her Oratory Entry for the Grand Army of the Republic High School in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, Gertrude Meth, only fifteen years old, offered her first statement on the role and status of women in America. She wrote, "Woman is no longer content to be man's background. She has stepped forward to face the world by his side."[16] At this time, in the 1920s, the image of the flapper gave women a sense of rebellion and sexual freedom in the United States. Dancing and drinking, along with more risqué fashion, characterized the changing conception of female sexuality, particularly with younger women.[17] Meth, however, focused on more serious pursuits. Rather than the flapper, she championed women who hoped to find their rightful place in the business world. She continued, "Can you not see in the pioneer woman a prophecy of the present business woman who each day goes forth to meet an ever-changing situation?"[18] At the young age of fifteen, Gertrude Meth had unknowingly mapped out her life's work.

Following her graduation from the Grand Army of the Republic High School in the spring of 1928, Gertrude Meth enrolled in the "Extension Courses for Teachers" offered by the University of Pennsylvania in Wilkes-Barre the following fall.[19] This was one of the few programs opened to both men and women at the University of Pennsylvania in 1928.[20] The Teacher Training Program included courses in Sociology, English Composition, and English Literature. It also offered courses in the newly established Preparation for Journalism program

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[15] Rabbi Leslie Gutterman (Rabbi at Temple Beth Al in Providence, Rhode Island) in discussion with author, October 12, 2010.

[16] Gertrude Ellen Meth, "Her Honor Woman" (Oratory Entry, Grand Army of the Republic High School, 1926).

[17] DuBois and Dumenil, 532.

[18] Meth, "Her Honor Woman."

[19] Nancy R. Miller (Archivist at the University of Pennsylvania), e-mail message to the author, February 7, 2011.

[20] Women had first been admitted to the University of Pennsylvania in 1876. Mark Frazier Lloyd, "Timeline of Women Pioneers and Women's Achievements at the University of Pennsylvania," *University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania,* July 2001, http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/women/chron5.html#a.

in which Gertrude enrolled.[21] Unfortunately the stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing Depression cut Gertrude Meth's college career short. Her father's grocery business suffered, and Gertrude, after only a year at the Wilkes-Barre campus of the University of Pennsylvania, was forced to withdraw from college in order to help support her family and four younger siblings.[22]

In 1930, at the age of nineteen, she succeeded in finding a job as a reporter for her hometown newspaper, *The Wilkes-Barre Times-Leader.* This would mark Gertrude's formal entry into the world of work. With the exception of the three years when her two children were very young, she remained in the workforce until her retirement in 1977. However, Gertrude did not find her position at *The Wilkes-Barre Times-Leader* rewarding or challenging. In a 1985 interview, Gertrude explained, "I tried very hard to shed the ivory tower image in my life…and here [in the industry of journalism], I was limited for being a woman [because] in those days, back in the thirties…a woman could only cover society and could not do any of the interesting news coverage." [23]

Beginning in the 1890s, society pages in United States newspapers were explicitly named "women's pages" that focused on "the 'four Fs' – family, food, furnishings, and fashion". The idea of women's pages was created when newspaper editors realized that very few women were reading their publications. In order to attract a larger readership, newspapers developed "women's pages." There was little, if any, political coverage, breaking news, or investigative journalism in the women's sections.[24]

The realization that her byline would never be seen on the front page, covering breaking news, discouraged Gertrude from maintaining a position as a reporter. Not until the 1960s did

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[21] 1928_1929 University Catalogue, The University of Pennsylvania Archives

[22] Erica Hochberg Stern (Daughter of Gertrude Meth Hochberg), in discussion with author, February 6, 2011.

[23] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, interview by Valerie Quinney, 1985 in Providence, Rhode Island. This interview was conducted by Quinney for the book, *Bryant College: The First 125 Years* (Smithfield, Rhode Island:Bryant College, 1988) for the official history of Bryant.

[24] Dustin Harp, "Newspaper's Transition from Women's to Style Pages," *Journalism* 7, no. 2 (2006): 199.

a wider majority of women in journalism become critical of the gendered sections and "women's pages" were eliminated.[25] Three decades earlier, Gertrude Meth recognized the disparity between men and women in the newspaper industry. Years later she commented, "I quickly became bored with that and started a career in advertising…I found advertising suited me very well—it was exciting."[26]

In the early 1930s, at the height of the Depression, Gertrude Meth began working at Gimbel Brothers (Gimbels) Department Store in New York City. Gimbels opened its first modern store in Milwaukee in 1887. It expanded nation-wide, opening in New York City, in 1910. It was located on Herald Square, about a block from Macy's Department Store. The corporation went public in 1922 and was one of the top twenty-five department stores in America until 1970. In 1930, with net sales over 120 million dollars, Gimbels was the largest department store in the United States.[27]

Gertrude Meth began as the advertising copy chief and progressed to advertising manager at Gimbels when it was one of the premier department stores in the United States. While she worked at Gimbels, she sent home as much money as she could, usually about $10 a week, to help finance the college education of her younger sisters and brother. She continued the practice of sending money to her parents until their deaths.[28] During the difficult economic times of the Depression, married women, in particular, were discouraged from entering the paid workforce and were often viewed as taking jobs away from men.[29] In addition, women who worked earned significantly less than men, about sixty-five cents to every dollar a man earned.[30] However as a young, single woman working in advertising, Gertrude was mostly isolated from these prejudices.

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[25] Ibid., 200.
[26] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, interview by Valerie Quinney, 1985.
[27] Robert Hendrickson, *The Grand Emporiums: The Illustrated History of America's Great Department Stores* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979) 72-73.
[28] Erica Hochberg Stern (Daughter of Gertrude Meth Hochberg), in discussion with author, December 1, 2010.
[29] DuBois and Dumenil, 538.
[30] Ibid., 538.

In 1932, Gertrude Meth moved to Providence, Rhode Island and began working at The Shepard's Department Store as Assistant Advertising Manager. Shepard's opened in 1880 and by 1903 was one of the largest department stores in New England.[31] Although Gertrude knew no one in Rhode Island, she accepted this position because she saw this as an opportunity to maintain a good job in advertising during the Depression.[32]

A few years later, Gertrude became Advertising Copy Chief at Shepard's. While at Shepard's, she became an active member of the Women's Advertising Club of Rhode Island. Founded on June 22, 1920, the Woman's Advertising Club was the first organized, professional club for women in Rhode Island. The mission of the club stated that the organization "aims to enable women engaged in advertising, salesmanship and business administration to cooperate for the purpose of mutual advancement."[33] The Club's objectives sought to improve education and training in order to advance the status of women in advertising.

During the early decades of the twentieth century, Women's Advertising Clubs were established throughout the United States. Existing advertising clubs did not admit women, and, consequently, Women's Advertising Clubs arose in response to these discriminatory practices.[34] The Women's Advertising Club of Rhode Island was part of this larger national movement to expand opportunities for women in advertising.

In 1938, Gertrude originated the first Advertising Scholarship Award given by the Club. She conceived the idea of an advertising essay contest for senior high school girls and "the idea was picked up by the national federation [the Advertising Federation of America] shortly thereafter."[35] Due to her dedication and activities in the advertising field, Gertrude Meth was

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[31] "Shepard's Department Store," *The Providence Preservation Society's Ten Most Endangered Properties,* April 1994. http://wiki.ppsri.org/tiki-index.php?page=Shepard%E2%80%99s+Department+Store

[32] Interview with Stern, February 6, 2011.

[33] "Women's Ad Club a 'First,'" *The Providence Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island), Nov. 29, 1959.

[34] "Advertising Women of New York. Records, 1912-1970: A Finding Aid," *Radcliffe College* (Boston, Massachusetts), November 1970.

[35] Ibid.

elected the sixteenth President of the Women's Advertising Club of Rhode Island in 1939. At that time, she was the youngest woman to be elected head of the Club. As president, Gertrude sought to advance the mission of the Club and was keen on expressing both her appreciation and admiration for her fellow professionals. During her year as president, the Women's Advertising Club hosted monthly Dinner and Supper meetings to educate their members on a variety of topics in the field; additionally, they began a monthly newsletter titled "Ad Peps" which gave an overview of the Club's activities and highlighted accomplishments of Club members. Gertrude was known throughout her career for her ability to forge relationships with her colleagues, a characteristic that allowed her to progress as a professional. In 1940, at the conclusion of her tenure as president, Gertrude addressed the members of the Advertising Club and remarked, "Now it is part of the golden past, your staunch support and unbounded helpfulness. Always you sought to lighten my task, you, my board, my counsel in club surveillance."[36] At this time Gertrude had also been invited to teach the first course in Retail Advertising offered at the Rhode Island School of Design because she had a good understanding of the business side of the field. She taught this course until 1945.

Throughout her nearly fifty years in the field of advertising and public relations, Gertrude established high goals for herself, and she left a lasting impact on many of her peers. In 1964, she was selected as the Advertising Woman of the Year by the Advertising Federation of America, the oldest national advertising trade federation in the United States.[37] Her nomination packet, prepared by the Women's Advertising Club of Rhode Island, stated, "Gertrude's dedicated efforts to advance advertising and attract new creative talent to this challenging field have won local and national recognition from grateful colleagues and scores of her students now pursuing satisfying careers in this field."[38]

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[36] "South Sea Island Magic," *Program and yearbook for the Nineteeth Annual Banquet of the Women's Advertising Club of Providence,* May 22, 1939.

[37] The Advertising Federation of America was founded in 1904 and was the predecessor to the American Advertising Federation. "About the Advertising Federation of America," www.aaf.org.

[38] "Gertrude Meth Hochberg, 1964 Advertising Woman of the Year," Nomination packet by the Women's Advertising Club of Rhode Island, Providence, June 1964.

The award celebrated her expertise in the field as well as her devotion to advancing and educating young professionals, particularly those pursuing careers in advertising. One of Gertrude's mentees wrote to her some thirty years after she first met Gertrude to thank her for her kindness: "I remember you with a great deal of fondness…you would give me a chance to get that experience I needed" as an aspiring fashion designer. "I've never forgotten your kindness."[39] Gertrude was "notorious for her boundless willingness to help and place qualified people in the field."[40] This is just one of many instances in Gertrude's life where she provided young students, particularly women students, unique opportunities to pursue independent careers. She was a role model and mentor in her professional field. In Gertrude's nomination packet, her peers also admired her perspective on the family as the cornerstone of American society, celebrating her ability to balance work and family with ease and grace. The nomination stated, "With all her professional and civic activities, Gertrude has never lost her perspective as to the prime importance of dedicated attention to her family. She is a sterling example of the mother who knows that the home which is dominated by true family love is the cornerstone of the American way of life."[41]

Family Life

In 1938, at the age of 27, Gertrude Meth married Robert Hochberg, then 35. They met in Providence through mutual friends. Robert Hochberg, born in 1903, was raised in Providence, Rhode Island, and attended Hope High School. Following high school, he attended Boston University where he studied law, although he never formally entered the legal profession. Instead, he became the founder and owner of a small medical supply company called "Robert's Medical Supply;" he was the sole employee of his company.[42]

Although Gertrude's career was very important to her, she strove for a balance between family and work. According to family and close friends, Gertrude and Robert had a rather unconventional relationship for a married couple at that time. Gertrude's long-time rabbi,

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[39] Arietta Salisbury Tapner, in a letter to Gertrude Meth Hochberg, May 25, 1977.

[40] Ibid.

[41] "Gertrude Meth Hochberg, 1964 Advertising Woman of the Year," Nomination packet by the Women's Advertising Club of Rhode Island, Providence, June 1964.

[42] Erica Hochberg Stern (daughter of Gertrude Meth Hochberg) in e-mail communication with author, February 17, 2011.

Leslie Gutterman of Temple Beth-El in Providence, noted, "He was not as much of a public persona as Gertrude; Robert was a quiet man and Gertrude drew a lot of strength from him."[43] In fact, Robert did as much housework as Gertrude did. For example, Gertrude would make the grocery list, but it was Robert who went to the store and did the shopping.[44] Both Robert and Gertrude were also "very involved in the community as volunteers and they were caring in terms of commitment to individual responsibility [with respect to] social justice issues."[45] Additionally, they were very active members within Rhode Island's Jewish community. In the early years of their marriage, they belonged to the Conservative Temple Emanuel in Providence. In 1948, they joined Temple Beth-El, a Reformed Synagogue, located near their East Side home in Providence where they both served on its Board of Trustees for many years.[46]

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States officially entered World War II. During World War II, many couples, including Gertrude and Robert, put off having children because of the uncertainties associated with living in wartime America. Robert was nearing the age of 40 when the war broke out and was too old to be drafted. Nonetheless, he wanted to serve his country and volunteered for the Marines. He was stationed in Washington, D.C. throughout the war years.[47]

During the post-war decade, the long-time trend of fewer children would be temporarily reversed. In the 1930s, women gave birth to 2.4 children on average; this number would spike to 3.2 children on average in 1950. "More babies were born between 1948 and 1953 than had been born in the previous thirty years."[48] Married American couples were more enthusiastic about starting a family after the war ended in 1945. The children born into American families in the postwar decade became known as the "baby boom generation." Gertrude and Robert raised two children, Erica and Mark, both of whom were part of the baby

[43] Rabbi Leslie Gutterman (Temple Beth-El), phone interview with author, October 12, 2010.
[44] Interview with Stern, December 1, 2010.
[45] Erica Hochberg Stern, in e-mail communication with author February 17, 2011.
[46] Erica Hochberg Stern, in e-mail communication with author, March 10, 2011.
[47] Interview with Stern, February 6, 2011
[48] Dubois and Dumenil, 590.

boom generation. Erica was born on December 7, 1945. Two years later, on November 26, 1947, Mark was born. However, Gertrude and Robert were not the typical, young baby boomer parents who lived in the suburbs. When Erica was born in 1945, Gertrude was thirty-four. By contrast, 67 percent of mothers of children born in America in 1945 were twenty-nine years of age or younger. The average age of mothers in 1945 was about twenty-four, ten years younger than Gertrude.[49]

BRYANT COLLEGE

While Erica and Mark were very young, Gertrude temporarily left the paid labor force in order to be home with her children. However, in 1949, she learned of a job opening in the Public Relations department at Bryant College. Jeanette Jacobs, a former president of the Women's Advertising Club of Rhode Island, told Gertrude about the opening. Mrs. Jacobs was the wife of Henry L. Jacobs, the President of Bryant College from 1916 to 1961. At this time, Bryant was located on the East Side of Providence near Brown University. Gertrude was attracted to this job because it gave her the flexibility she needed to raise her two small children while also engineering a successful career.[50] Like many women in the postwar decade, she felt torn between being a mother and being a professional woman, and Bryant gave her the opportunity to be both. Her desire for a career at this time sharply contrasted with many women in the 1950s who embraced the "feminine mystique."

The "feminine mystique" is a post-World War II ideal that redefined a woman's role as primarily wife and mother. By contrast, during World War II many women were encouraged to take on different jobs, including factory and defense jobs, which previously had been viewed as being fit only for men. This energy of women in the workforce was thwarted as soldiers began to return to the United States. In 1945 many women were being laid off from wartime jobs or returning to the sphere of domesticity to make room for returning war

[49] "Live Birth by Age of Mother, Birth Order, Race and Nativity of White Mothers: United States 1945," *Vital Statistics of the United States 1945*, March 20, 2011, www.cdc.gov

[50] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, interview by Valerie Quinney, 1985.

veterans. "Most opinion makers advocated reinstating women to their rightful place, the home, so that returning GIs could expect full employment and a stable family life."[51]

In the years following World War II, "affluence contributed to an emphasis on domesticity and the nuclear family." An increase in disposable income led to more people owning homes.[52] Many women accepted their role as housewife during this time; however following the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Freidan in 1963, a "second wave of feminism" swept across the United States. The book explored the mental and physical health of homemakers during the 1950s and early 1960s. Friedan stated, "[Woman] must create, out of her own needs and abilities, a new life plan, fitting in the love and children and home that have defined femininity in the past with the work toward a greater purpose that shapes the future."[53] She argued that "women needed creative work…and that women's life plans had to integrate marriage and motherhood with independent work in order for them to be healthy individuals."[54] Long before Freidan called on women to strike a balance between being a mother and pursuing an independent career, Gertrude Meth Hochberg had already embraced this lifestyle.

The position at Bryant College initially appealed to Gertrude Meth Hochberg because it provided her with the flexibility to combine family and career. As she learned more about Bryant College, however, she became "very excited to join with them in their mission to educate young men and women for life as well as a livelihood…for not only did this College promise each student an education for business, but a job" as well.[55] She saw the College as a pioneer in preparing men and women to be leaders in American business.

One of the first challenges Gertrude Meth Hochberg took on at Bryant College was revitalizing the college catalogue. At the time, it was very bland and unoriginal. Gertrude

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[51] DuBois and Dumenil, 554.
[52] DuBois and Dumenil, 588-590.
[53] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique,* (New York, Dell Publishing Co. Inc., 1974) 326.
[54] Cynthia Harrison, *On Account of Sex: The Politics of Women's Issues 1945-1968.* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988) 172.
[55] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, interview with Quinney, 1985.

changed the appearance dramatically; it became lively and personal, showcasing student activities and classroom scenes. Along with this, Gertrude compiled a bulletin, titled "Your Career in Business," which received attention from business firms, colleges, religious organizations and government agencies. It described "in detail the advantages, opportunities, aptitudes, requirements, and salaries each field has to offer or requires from the prospective student." The bulletin, although requested internationally, was mainly aimed at high school students interested in business careers.[56]

Gertrude also began a marketing campaign with the hometown papers of all Bryant students. When students enrolled at Bryant College, her office would send a notice to their hometown paper and their high school counselor. When students joined an organization, they were to relay that information to the public relations office so the hometown and high school newspapers could be notified. Gertrude sought to define the mission of the school and get the word out about Bryant College. She said, "It seemed to me that more people should know about this institution because I thought it was so soundly organized for Middle America."[57]

Gertrude was very proactive in publicizing Bryant College in a positive light and in a way that embodied the school's 1950s motto, "Education for Business Leadership."[58] Her hometown newspaper campaign provided the College with free publicity throughout the country. Additionally, Gertrude organized a radio program titled "Bryant's View," which ran through the late 1960s. The show would highlight faculty expertise on daily living issues, such as how to buy a house, how to buy stock, and how to invest in insurance. It brought attention to Bryant's educational value to the local community.[59]

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[56] Carole Oliner, "New College Bulletin Attracts Wide Attention; Compiled by Mrs. Hochberg," *The Archway* (Providence, Rhode Island) April 7, 1959.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Bryant's motto remained "Education for Business Leadership" until it added the Liberal Arts College in 2004 and became Bryant University.

[59] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, Interview by Valerie Quinney, 1985.

INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AT BRYANT

Gertrude Meth Hochberg had a tremendous impact on Bryant College, not only by increasing the publicity of the school but also by expanding opportunities for women at Bryant. During the anxiety-laden Cold War era, many Americans were eager to reinforce rigid gender roles as a means of creating social order.[60] Gertrude, by contrast, encouraged women to pursue an education that would prepare them for business leadership. A self-proclaimed feminist, Gertrude was an ardent advocate for equality among male and female students; much of her work would ensure expanded opportunities for women at Bryant. She played an integral role in bringing many positive role models for women to Bryant's campus.

In 1953, for example, Gertrude proposed that Oveta Culp Hobby come to Bryant to receive an honorary degree and deliver the Commencement Address. During World War II, Hobby had served as Director of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), later the Women's Army Corps (WAC). WACs were the first women, other than nurses, to serve in the Army. After the war, in April 1953, Hobby was appointed the first woman secretary of the newly-established United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Hobby was also the first woman to deliver a Commencement Address at Bryant College. She was a pathfinder for women who were actively involved in the national government. As Valerie Quinney noted in *Bryant College: The First 125 Years*, "Undoubtedly, this was the work of Gertrude Hochberg, who wanted role models for the women students at Bryant."[61]

Bryant College's Centennial Celebration and "The Status of Women in America" Symposium

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the President's Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). During his campaign for president in 1960, Kennedy cited equality for women under the law to be a major legislative objective in the Democratic Party platform. In a statement given by President Kennedy on the purpose and goals of the Commission, he said, "we must set forth…the story of women's progress in a free, democratic society, to review

[60] DuBois and Dumenil, 593.

[61] Valerie Quinney, *Bryant College: The First 125 Years* (Smithfield, Rhode Island; Bryant College, 1988) 50.

recent accomplishments, and to acknowledge frankly the further steps that must be taken."[62] The Commission was charged with "developing recommendations for overcoming discriminations in government and private employment on the basis of sex and for developing recommendations for services which will enable women to continue their roles as wives and mothers while making a maximum contribution to the world around them."[63] The final report of the PCSW, published in 1963, withheld support for the proposed Equal Rights Amendment, but it did endorse equal pay for equal work and helped to spark a renewed interest in women's issues.[64] In receiving the final report, President Kennedy stated, "the skills in human relationships, the understanding, the ability to supply many kinds of care, that [women] have developed in their years at home are much needed in community institutions."[65]

Bryant College celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1963, the year the PCSW issued its final report. Although the school had welcomed women since its incorporation in 1863, the College's enrollment was about 62 percent male to 38 percent female one hundred years later.[66] There were 1,569 students enrolled in the College during its centennial year, but only 590 of those students were women.[67] Gertrude Meth Hochberg had always admired Bryant College's attention to creating and maintaining equal opportunities for women. As Dr. E. Gardner Jacobs, President of Bryant College from 1961 to 1968, stated in 1963, "Bryant, a coeducational college, has for 100 years contributed to the rise of women's status by

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[62] John F. Kennedy, "Statement by the President on the Establishment of the President's Commission on the Status of Women," *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum,* December 14, 1961, http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKPOF-093-004.aspx.

[63] DuBois and Dumenil, 624.

[64] Dubois and Dumenil, 623.

[65] John F. Kennedy, "Remarks at presentation of final report of President's Commission on the Status of Women," *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum,* October 11, 1963.

[66] Jillian Emberg and Jessica Komoroski, "Women at Bryant: a History, 1863-Present" (Smithfield, Rhode Island) 2009. http://digitalcommons.bryant.edu/library_misc/2/

[67] "Centennial Symposium and Convocation," *Program for Bryant College Celebration* (Providence, Rhode Island) 1963.

preparing them for professional careers in business and the teaching of business subjects."[68] As the College prepared for its centennial celebration, Getrude explained that President Jacobs and the institution wanted to "relate centennial year events to community concerns."[69] In order to showcase Bryant's interest in women and their place in American society, Gertrude planned a centennial symposium, titled "The Status of Women in America," held on November 18, 1963.

Although Gertrude believed that Bryant demonstrated an interest in the professional lives of women since its founding, she had to battle feverishly with male administrators and faculty to convince them that a symposium on the status of women was a good idea. "She argued that there were seven male students to every female student on the Bryant campus and that the college had to do something spectacular to attract the attention of young women."[70] Gertrude modeled the Symposium after the report submitted by President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women, whose final report had been issued in October of that year. The Bryant Symposium was organized to include a keynote speech, panels on various topics regarding women in America, and discussion sessions.

Dr. Esther Peterson delivered the keynote address at Bryant College's Symposium on the Status of Women in America. Peterson became head of the United States Women's Bureau in 1961 and proposed the idea of a commission on the status of women to President Kennedy later that year. "Peterson had strong union ties and enthusiastically supported [Kennedy's] program for revived activism on the part of the federal government, especially on behalf of disadvantaged Americans" such as women.[71] She also served as the Assistant Secretary of the United States Department of Labor and Executive Vice Chairman of the President's Commission on the Status of Women. Eleanor Roosevelt served as the honorary chairwoman of the President's Commission.

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[68] "The Status of Women in America," *Invitation to Bryant College Centennial Symposium and Convocation (*Providence, RI) 1963.

[69] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, "Bryant Will Conduct Symposium on Status of American Women," *Providence Sunday Journal* (Providence, RI) October 27, 1963.

[70] Quinney, 63.

[71] DuBois and Dumenil, 624.

Peterson's speech at the Bryant Symposium, titled "The Status of Women in America," elaborated on the report issued by the President's Commission and offered clarifications on misconceptions surrounding the report. Additionally, Peterson spoke of the importance of education for every woman and the need for educational institutions to prepare women to cope with life outside the classroom. She said, "Women have the potential to contribute to a higher quality in American life, but to realize that potential we must make our American institutions more suitable to contemporary life…While many of the Commission's proposals were geared to strengthening the position of the home, it was also concerned with strengthening the position of the woman who works outside the home."[72] In her keynote address, Peterson noted that, in 1963, one in three workers was a woman, and, of the twenty-four million women working at that time, half of them were married.[73] Peterson emphasized that the quality of all of American society would be enhanced only when American women were able to develop their full potential. As a testament to her work and devotion to advancing the status of women in the workplace, Esther Peterson was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Science in Business Administration at Bryant College's Centennial Convocation.[74] The "all-star program of women speakers" that followed Peterson's captivating keynote speech included Marion Stephenson, Jessie Bernard, Pauli Murray, and Wilma Soss.[75] Marion Stephenson, first woman Vice President of NBC, presided over the Symposium.

The first panel topic was "Sociological Aspects of the Status of Women" and featured the well-known sociologist, Jessie Bernard, Professor of Sociology at Pennsylvania State University. She discussed the ever-changing societal expectations for women. She also looked at the literal, albeit confusing, idea of a woman's status, explaining that "the status of a

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[72] Dr. Esther Peterson, "The Status of Women in America," *Bulletin of Bryant College* (Providence, Rhode Island) November 18, 1963.

[73] "Upgrading Housewife Urged at Symposium," *Providence Evening Bulletin* (Providence, Rhode Island) November 19, 1963.

[74] The Centennial Convocation was also held on November 18th, 1963, following the Symposium on the Status of Women.

[75] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, "A Salute to Bryant College" *Press Release from Bryant College News Bureau* (Providence, Rhode Island) November 18, 1963.

relatively untrained woman who is the wife of the department head is higher than that of a trained woman who is a professor herself."[76]

The next panel discussion was titled "Women's Rights as Individuals and Citizens," presented by noted African American legal scholar and senior fellow at Yale Law School, Pauli Murray. Murray considered herself a humanist, not a feminist, and saw parallels between the gender, labor, and race movements.[77] Murray was also a member of the President's Commission on the Status of Women, sitting as a member of the civil rights committee. Her committee was charged with evaluating the legal status of women from 1920, when women first earned the right to vote, to the present. She explained, "We were compelled to conclude after our study that despite substantial gains since the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment, women have not yet achieved a role in public life commensurate with their numbers, skills, or abilities, or with importance of their political contribution to the Nation."[78] She cited examples of discrimination against women, particularly focusing on the lack of women in political positions as well as in state judiciaries. She concluded by stating that society, particularly American society, must tap all of its human resources; "women constitute a partially untapped resource, the neglect of which could well cost us our leading position among the nations of the world."[79]

The formal sessions concluded with the panel "Women as Stockholders," led by Wilma Soss, commentator of the NBC program, "Pocketbook News," and founder of the Federation of Women Shareholders in American Business. Her speech focused on the necessity for the financial education of women, as well as the need for women's colleges to provide the same economic and financial curriculum as male institutions. This is necessary, Soss explained, because women make up a large percentage of all clerical and sales workers, a constituency that would often be offered profit-sharing plans and stock options from their employers. One

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[76] Dr. Jessie Bernard, "Sociological Aspects of the Status of Women," *Bulletin of Bryant College* (Providence, Rhode Island) November 18, 1963.

[77] Madeleine Corey, "Looks to 14th Amendment…as a Woman, as a Negro," *Providence Sunday Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island) November 17, 1963.

[78] Dr. Pauli Murray, "Women's Rights as Individuals and Citizens," *Bulletin of Bryant College* (Providence, Rhode Island) November 18, 1963.

[79] Murray, "Women's Rights as Individuals and Citizens" 1963.

of the most important aspects of being a shareholder in a company is voting rights, an area where Soss cited continued discrimination against women and encouraged women to utilize these rights in their chosen occupations.

The Symposium on the Status of Women in America at Bryant College was "unquestionably the most significant event in its history" during its first 100 years.[80] The experiences of the women panelists offered a diverse look at the position of women in American society. The issues that the panel addressed and the questions these women posed to the audience were groundbreaking and innovative. By fostering such discussions, the professionals at Bryant College, particularly Gertrude Meth Hochberg, showed that they were well ahead of their time with regards to women's issues. The Symposium was "the first major national event to honor the achievements of women following The Status of Women in America report."[81] The magnitude of success surrounding the Symposium is a testament to Gertrude's dedication to the advancement of women professionally. Her desire to ensure that women's issues were recognized by Bryant College was evident when she first conceived the idea for the Symposium.

Following the Symposium, congratulatory letters poured into the offices of President Jacobs and Gertrude Meth Hochberg from attendees and participants alike. Esther Peterson said it was "a day that will always stand out in my memories."[82] Governor John H. Chaffee commended Bryant College for "the effective leadership it [exercised] in the fight to secure a more enlightened view of the role of women in today's society."[83] Edna R. Macdonald of Hope High School called the Symposium "an outstanding cultural and informational day."[84] The Director of Public Relations at Rhode Island College could not recall "any event that had

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[80] Dr. Charles H. Russell (Vice President for Academic Affairs), letter message to Bryant College students, October 22, 1963.

[81] "'The Status of Women in America' A Symposium and Convocation November 18," 1963.

[82] Esther Peterson (Assistant Secretary of Labor), mail message to Dr. E. Gardner Jacobs, November 21, 1963.

[83] John H. Chafee (Governor, Rhode Island), mail message to Dr. E. Gardner Jacobs, November 12, 1963.

[84] Edna R. Macdonald (Head of Guidance Department at Hope High School), mail message to Gertrude Meth Hochberg, November 21, 1963.

been so unanimously praised by everyone on all sides. It certainly was an inspiring program and a real contribution by Bryant College to the intellectual atmosphere of Rhode Island."[85] The following year, when Gertrude was nominated and selected as Advertising Woman of the Year, her colleagues stated that Gertrude brought "the distilled essence of her many years in advertising – bold planning, sparkling publications, imaginative promotion, and massive national coverage" to Bryant's Symposium on the Status of Women in America.[86]

Gertrude's work and success was not only recognized in the local Rhode Island community, but on a national level as well. In 1968, for example, Gertrude was listed in the Marquis *Who's Who of American Women.* The Marquis *Who's Who* publications are compilations of biographical data of the leaders and achievers of the United States. Each *Who's Who of American Women* entry includes personal and career histories, education, achievements, and memberships.[87] Undoubtedly, Gertrude's work and community involvement represented her as a pioneer and a leader of women in her field.

The Rhode Island Permanent Advisory Commission on Women

Gertrude Meth Hochberg was recognized state-wide for being a pioneer and advocate of women's equality, particularly after the national recognition received by the Symposium on the Status of Women in America. As a direct result of the success surrounding the Symposium, Governor John Chafee, recognizing Bryant's leadership in the social movement of equal rights for women, invited Gertrude to form the Rhode Island Commission on the Status of Women.[88] The Rhode Island Commission, established in 1965, was one of fifty state commissions that were eventually established. These commissions affirmed the importance of women in the home but, at the same time, became advocates for women who desired to be treated equally with me in the workforce. "Female activists within…the state commissions strove to improve opportunities for women, using the commission's agenda as a

[85] Mary G. Davey (Director of Public Relations at Rhode Island College), mail message to Gertrude Meth Hochberg, November 19, 1963.

[86] "Gertrude Meth Hochberg, 1964 Advertising Woman of the Year," Nomination packet by the Women's Advertising Club of Rhode Island, Providence, June 1964.

[87] "Who's Who of American Women," *Marquis Who's Who,* March 7, 2011, www.marquiswhoswho.com.

[88] Quinney, 63.

guide."[89] Later, in 1970, Hochberg was appointed by Governor Frank Licht to serve as the first chair for the Rhode Island Permanent Advisory Commission on Women.

Unlike radical feminists of the early 1970s, who sometimes turned their backs on men as allies and were incorrectly dubbed as "bra burners" by the press,[90] Gertrude always reached out to men in her efforts to promote the status of women. In order to distinguish herself as a moderate feminist from the more radical feminist groups, Gertrude bluntly stated at the first annual meeting of the Rhode Island Permanent Advisory Commission on Women, "I need men and bras for the same reason…For support."[91] Through this statement, Gertrude was responding to the incorrect perceptions held by the media about radical feminists and, in her own comical way, assured the people of Rhode Island that she understood the important roles that men also played in the fight for women's equality. She had an uncanny ability to take sensitive situations and put a lighthearted twist on them that allowed her to express her beliefs in a non-threatening way. This is just one of many personality traits that allowed Gertrude to be so well-respected by the media and her colleagues.

The Permanent Advisory Commission met monthly to examine various issues regarding equality for women, particularly in the work force; it affirmed the importance of the role of women in the home but also offered suggestions for fair employment practices. The Commission sought to improve the state by teaching women how they could participate more freely in social, political, and economic affairs. For example, on October 17, 1971, the State Commission organized "Rhode Island Women's Day." The rallying theme was, "Every Woman is Somebody," and the Commission invited every Rhode Island women's

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[89] Harrison, 169.

[90] In 1968, feminists targeted the Miss America Pageant as being degrading to women. They staged a theatrical demonstration outside the event and carried signs that read things such as "Let us Judge Ourselves as People." The protestors had a trash can where women could dispose of items such as wigs, curlers, high heels, and bras—items that women used to change their appearance that made them more appealing to men. The media wrongly spread the rumor that these items were set on fire, coining the protestors as "bra burners" though in actuality no items were burned. March 11, 2011, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/missamerica/peopleevents/e_feminists.html.

[91] Lorraine Hopkins, "'There's a new spirit among women,'" *The Providence Sunday Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island) October 10, 1971.

organization to participate. This program was "concerned with home, family and education, as well as work" and addressed the issues through a series of workshops.[92] The event was one of the first of its kind; it brought together a large network of women activists to create self-awareness and heighten the potential of women as participating citizens. Gertrude stated, "We are in great need of the benefit of women's talents as community leaders as well as in business and the professions."[93] She once again advocated on behalf of all women in professional work and celebrated the women of Rhode Island through the Governor's Commission. The work that the Commission completed continued to play a significant role in the struggle for equality for women, particularly in Rhode Island, throughout the second wave of feminism.

In 1980, in celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the Rhode Island Permanent Advisory Commission on Women, ten women were honored for doing something which society had labeled "non-traditional for women." As the first chairwoman of the state's first advisory commission, it is not surprising that Gertrude was invited to present the citations to these ten pioneering women of achievement, a group that included Edith Coolidge Hart, the first woman radio announcer in the United States, and Kathleen Hildebrand, the first women member of the Local 28 Plumbers Union. Gertrude stated that the women being honored "symbolize the innovative and important roles women play in our state."[94] She explained, the commission concerned itself "with the importance of every woman in the state and that includes dealing as a political force with whether or not women in Rhode Island are prepared and willing to accept the additional potential roles which are offered to them."[95] Today, the Rhode Island Commission on Women, the successor to the Permanent Advisory Commission on Women, continues to advance women's equity in the state. It exists under similar values that defined the first Permanent Advisory Commission on Women. Their mission continues to

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[92] "'R.I. Women's Day' To Be Held This Sunday," *The Smithfield Observer* (Providence, Rhode Island) October 14, 1971.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Bert Wade Cole "Ten who got there first: Women honored for pioneering achievements," *The Providence Journal Evening Bulletin* (Providence, Rhode Island) September 26, 1980.

[95] Ibid.

advance women's equity in the state. "It works to promote rights and opportunities for all women across all arenas, including—but not limited to—education, health, economic development, employment, legal rights, political participation and the quality of individual and family life."[96] More than four decades earlier, Gertrude understood the needs of women in the state and, through the first permanent commission, provided a forum for all women's voices to be heard. The current work of the Commission is a testament to Gertrude Meth Hochberg's groundbreaking efforts to improve the lives of the women of Rhode Island.

BRYANT MOVES TO SMITHFIELD: A PUBLIC RELATIONS SUCCESS

In September 1971, Bryant College made a landmark move when the College relocated from its campus on the East Side of Providence to the 220-acre estate in Smithfield, Rhode Island. The land, donated by Earl Tupper of the Tupperware Corporation, would allow the College to move out of Brown's shadow and create its own unique identity. The planning process began in 1968 and included negotiations with contractors, architects, and the townspeople of Smithfield.

By moving the entire college to a new location, administrators, and particularly Gertrude Meth Hochberg, would be tasked with the challenge of presenting the move in a positive light to current students, future students, faculty, staff, administrators, and the local community. In fact, Gertrude was the only woman administrator on the committee that concerned itself with the design of the Unistructure, the building that would house all academic classrooms and faculty offices.[97] The College would have to ensure that the new, innovative design of the Smithfield campus would still deliver the most up-to-date education for business leadership that Bryant College had guaranteed its students since its establishment in 1863.

Throughout the construction process, there was much speculation surrounding the completion of the new campus. The College set what seemed to be an "illogical timetable…[setting] itself almost irrevocably in mid-summer on a course to open" by the start of the school year in

[96] "About Us," *State of Rhode Island Commission on Women*, March 7, 2011, www.ricw.ri.gov.

[97] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, Interview with Quinney, 1985.

September 1971.[98] Bryant's buildings on the East Side campus were taken over by Brown on September 1, 1971 and, ultimately, Bryant had to move to Smithfield for the start of the academic year. Construction was running behind schedule and administrators pushed back the start of classes.[99] Incredibly, the campus was ready for students and administrators to move in by mid-September and the first day of classes at the "new" Bryant College campus was held on September 20, 1971.

The following spring, in order to publicize the benefits of the new campus, Gertrude organized a three-day Dedication Celebration to be held from April 28 to April 30, 1972. The celebration included a symposium on "Education for Business Leadership," a Dedication Convocation, an Alumni Dinner-Dance, and a Dedication Open House.[100] Coverage of the Dedication Celebration occurred in more than twenty newspapers throughout Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Perhaps the most impressive coverage of the new campus was *The Providence Journal*'s 20-page supplement, "Salute to Bryant." Gertrude explained that the special feature came "at no cost to the college" and brought "widespread interest due to the more than 250,000 circulation of this respected paper."[101] Obtaining favorable publicity of this type at no cost to the College became a testament to Gertrude's unrelenting dedication to getting the word out about Bryant College and the passion she poured into every project she took on. She was a persistent partner with the local newspapers and became well-respected by her colleagues in the field.[102]

Each year, the New England and Middle Atlantic Districts of The American College Public Relations Association (ACPRA) held a joint conference which included workshops, presentations, and awards for excellence. When Bryant moved to its Smithfield campus, the joint region included one hundred ten colleges and universities. In 1973, over three hundred

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[98] Arthur J. Turgeon, "The Miracle of Bryant," *The Providence Sunday Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island) April 23, 1972.

[99] Quinney, 89.

[100] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, "Bryant College Dedication," Bryant College News Bureau Press Release for April 28, 1972.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Charles Bakst (reporter for *The Providence Journal)*, in conversation with the author, DATE.

college public relations officials gathered in New York City for the conference. That year, Gertrude submitted the public relations campaign for the new Bryant campus to the ACPRA for the National Communications Award. The Dedication Celebration won first place in this competition, beating out competitors such as Yale and Harvard. The campaign was cited by the ACPRA judging panel for "the scope and quality of the news releases used in the local, state and national press and the broadcasting media; also for the internal publications including the college newspaper, alumni bulletin, parents' bulletin, feature articles and other publications."[103] Gertrude explained in the entry form that the College's campaign successfully made "an indelible impression of the change of locale and the new image this College wishes to project as a modern, forward-looking institution".[104] ACPRA noted that "[Hochberg] was instrumental in securing more news coverage for the Bryant dedication than any college event in the northeast received [in 1972]…and most of the work was done in an incredibly short three month time span."[105]

Gertrude's work allowed the "new" Bryant College to take off. The dedication weekend attracted over 25,000 students, parents, and local citizens. One result was that enrollment applications came pouring in almost immediately.[106] Her personal definition of good public relations was "that in service to a cause you believe in," and Gertrude continued to believe very strongly in Bryant's mission. This, along with her "sharp political sense, the ability to work like a horse, and an energy level which is nothing short of phenomenal," made the Bryant College Dedication Celebration one of the most effective public relations campaigns in Rhode Island at that time.[107]

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[103] "Bryant News Bureau Wins Award for Excellence," *The Archway* (Smithfield, Rhode Island) March 15, 1973.

[104] "The Bryant College Dedication Celebration, 1973 ACPRA Nation Communications Competition," Entry form by Gertrude Meth Hochberg, Smithfield, March 1973.

[105] Carol Stocker, "The Hochberg slingshot wins her a giant award," *The Providence Sunday Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island) April 1, 1973.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

Gertrude seamlessly continued to combine her family and professional life throughout her twenty-eight year career at Bryant College. When the College was in Providence, Robert drove Erica and Mark to school and Gertrude to work. Bryant's location on the East Side of the city gave Gertrude easy access to her children. After their school day ended, they often joined their mother at Bryant. Especially in their pre-teen years, they were a regular fixture in their mother's office.[108] When Bryant moved to Smithfield in 1971, Gertrude, at the age of 60, learned how to drive so that she wouldn't need to rely on her husband for the twelve mile commute to the new campus. Erica, now 24, and Mark, 23, were young adults well on their way to establishing their own, independent and successful careers in education and medicine. Gertrude was a role model for her children and gave them the tools to be self-reliant. Her son said, "For us, she is not only a role model as a woman's professional but also a role model as a working mother."[109]

Attracting Women to the "New" Bryant: Symposium for the Advancement of Women in Business

Despite the success of the publicity campaign surrounding Bryant College's move to Smithfield, women still represented a minority on campus. Starting in 1972, Bryant's administration began to think of ways that they could increase the enrollment of women students. Gertrude Meth Hochberg responded to this initiative by organizing a seminar, titled "The Symposium for the Advancement of Women in Business," which was held on October 11, 1972. According to the event's program, the Symposium was "devoted to creating a forum for discussing the expanding opportunities for women in business today."[110]

At this time in American history, the "second-wave of feminism" was picking up momentum, opening up opportunities for women across the country to hold executive positions in business. In 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment was approved by both houses of Congress in 1972[111] and Congress also passed the Equal Employment Opportunity Act which prohibited

[108] Interview with Erica Hochberg Stern, December 1, 2010.

[109] Mark Hochberg (son of Gertrude Meth Hochberg), in a letter to Professor Judy Barrett Litoff, April 8, 1999.

[110] "Bryant College Presents a Symposium for the Advancement of Women in Business," *Program for the symposium,* October 11, 1972.

[111] The Equal Rights Amendment would never be ratified.

sex discrimination in employment and hiring.[112] In recognition of the new opportunities being opened up to women in the world of business, Gertrude sought to "inspire young women of high school age to set their sights higher, away from the secretarial level and up toward management leadership."[113] Working with the Development Office, Gertrude created a package announcing the "Symposium for the Advancement of Women in Business" that was sent out to two hundred high schools within a fifty mile radius of Bryant College; two high school junior women students and one counselor from each school were invited to attend the Symposium.

Over five hundred high school women and their counselors, representing over one hundred schools in the area, attended the "Symposium for the Advancement of Women in Business" on October 11, 1972. In order to encourage maximum participation from the women students, Gertrude asked the Development Office to work with local corporations to sponsor students from their communities who were attending the Symposium by providing scholarship aid that would pay for the seminar fees. The program included a keynote address from Dr. Juanita M. Kreps, the first woman member of the Governing Board of the New York Stock Exchange and James B. Duke Professor of Economics at Duke University. Gertrude explained to Dr. Kreps that Bryant needed to attract more women, and that the United States "needed more women to go into business and look toward getting into executive positions. [Kreps] thought it was a marvelous idea."[114] During her keynote address, Kreps discussed the importance of women educating themselves for such executive positions and she talked about the implications surrounding women who were in strategic positions of power in business.[115] In honor of her work at the 1972 Symposium as well as her academic and business accomplishments, Kreps was awarded an honorary degree from the College in 1972.

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[112] Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Viking, 200), xxiii.

[113] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, "The Changing Role of Education: Some of the Challenges Higher Education Faces Today," *Bulletin of Bryant College* (Smithfield, Rhode Island) 1973.

[114] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, interview with Quinney, 1985.

[115] Ibid.

The "Symposium for the Advancement of Women in Business" included three seminars. The first, "Expanding Horizons for Women in Business," was offered to the high school counselors; Anna Tucker, Chief of the Rhode Island Department of Labor, Division of Women and Children, was one of the panelists. Following this panel, the students were able to choose between two seminars: "The Challenging Role of Women in Business" and "Education Women for Business—some specifics." The day's events concluded with informal discussions on career opportunities for women in a variety of business fields.

This event was another sparkling public relations success for Gertrude Meth Hochberg, and she credited the Symposium with increasing the female enrollment at Bryant by 17 percent.[116] She once again provided the Bryant community with positive role models for women and showcased Bryant's appreciation for women in the local and national media. After the event, Gertrude sent press releases about the program to many newspapers along the entire eastern seaboard of the United States.[117] Her audience included the students and their counselors, the local community, and the large corporations that sponsored the event. "We felt that it was at this critical juncture in the lives of young women, where career choices are made, that young women need to be aware of the education preparations needed for positions at the administrative level…and it behooved [these large, sponsoring organizations] to cooperate in order to encourage and to find qualified women for the high level positions the government insists they hire."[118]

Gertrude Meth Hochberg Honored with the Sixth Annual Eleanor Collier Award

On April 10, 1975, the ACPRA awarded Gertrude Meth Hochberg with the Sixth Annual Eleanor Collier Award. She received the award at a conference of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, a New England subsidiary of the ACPRA.[119] At this time, Gertrude was only the second woman to win the Eleanor Collier Award. The first woman, Eleanor Collier, for whom the award is named, served Boston University for forty

[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Hochberg, "The Changing Role of Education."
[119] "About Us: History," *Council for the Advancement and Support of Education*, April 17, 2011, www.case.org.

years as the Director of Public Relations and was the first women to hold the position of the National President of ACPRA. The award is given to "distinguished professionals in the field of public relations who best exemplify the high standards of leadership and achievement."[120] The award still exists today and is presented to an individual whose contribution to his or her profession encompasses the education and expertise required to be an outstanding professional.[121] Gertrude had served Bryant College for twenty-five years when she received the 1975 Eleanor Collier Award. Throughout her tenure she had successfully expanded enrollment and publicity for the College, often at a minimal cost to the school, and she provided the women at the College the resources to be leaders in their field.

Beyond leadership in public relations, Gertrude was also a leader in her community. She was active in many non-profit groups and religious organizations. Gertrude directed the publicity campaign for the Rhode Island division of United Way, a non-profit organization aimed at improving the lives of people in need. The United Way was established in 1887 when a Denver priest, two ministers and a rabbi "recognized the need for cooperative action to address their city's welfare problems."[122] The Rhode Island division was formed in 1926, and it was created in response to a growing need for less fortunate individuals to have access to monetary resources for everyday needs, such as medical care.[123] She was also an active member of her faith; for example, Gertrude was an officer and founder of the Women's Intergroup Committee of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ). The NCCJ was founded in 1927 in response to anti-Catholic sentiment during Al Smith's Democratic campaign for President.[124] The NCCJ sought to use educational methods to make

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[120] "Bryant PR Director Honored," *The Evening Bulletin* (Providence, Rhode Island) April 11, 1975.

[121] "Achievement and Recognition Awards" *Council for Advancement and Support of Education* March 8, 2011, www.casei.org.

[122] "History," *Live United, United Way,* March 12, 2011, www.liveunited.org.

[123] "United Way Rhode Island – Then and Now," *United Way of Rhode Island* March 8, 2011, www.uwri.org.

[124] In the 1990s, the National Conference of Christians and Jews became known as the National Conference for Community and Justice. "History," *The National Conference for Community and Justice*, March 8, 2011, www.nccjctwma.org.

"friendliness and cooperation among religious groups a national habit."[125] The NCCJ featured educational road-shows, speaking out against prejudices particularly attacks on an individual's faith. In the 1940s and 50s, the NCCJ focused their education on the conflicts of World War II, especially the persecution of Jews in the Holocaust. Gertrude also remained an active member of Temple Beth-El in Providence, her long-time place of worship. At one time, she was the only woman officer of Temple Beth-El, and she served on its Board of Trustees for nine years.[126] Throughout her career she was active in many civic causes, but her first commitment remained Bryant College.

MAKING HISTORY: VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Gertrude Meth Hochberg was a pathfinder among working women and a role model throughout her career. She was integral in getting Bryant out of Brown's shadow and fostering its own unique identity as a leader in business education. She was an advocate for women and intuitively promoted Bryant College as a pioneer institution for all students, particularly for women interested in business. Gertrude truly dedicated much of her working life to the enhancement of Bryant College.

On September 12, 1975, at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, Gertrude Meth Hochberg was elected Vice President for Public Affairs, effective October 1, 1975.[127] Her appointment to this position was groundbreaking. She was the first woman to be appointed a Vice President at Bryant or at any college in Rhode Island. This would pave the way for future women to break into the realm of high-level administrative positions in higher education, particularly in Rhode Island.

The presence of a woman as a Vice President was very important for the women faculty members at Bryant College. At the time that Gertrude was appointed Vice President for

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[125] "The Purpose and Program of the National Conference of Christians and Jews," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 16, no. 6 (1948): 325.

[126] "St. Anthony's Guild to Hear Mrs. Hochberg," *The Woonsocket Call* (Providence, Rhode Island) April 10, 1975.

[127] "Gertrude M. Hochberg Appointed Vice President of Public Affairs," *The Archway* (Smithfield, Rhode Island) September 19, 1975.

Public Affairs, Bryant was changing its culture. The administration was considering phasing out the secretarial courses—which attracted the most women to Bryant prior to the 1970s—and, as a result, women professors were being hired to teach more specialized courses. For example, Dr. Phyllis Schumacher joined the faculty in 1971 as a member of the Math Department. Women had not been a part of the Math Department before this time, and Gertrude became a mentor for the faculty who were brought in as a part of the changing ideals of the College. Schumacher explained that "having a woman in administration would allow female faculty members the opportunity to feel better represented."[128] Other women faculty who were hired during the late 1960s and early 1970s included Gaytha Langlois (Science), Mary P. Lyons (English), Janice Smith (Accounting), Janet Morahan-Martin (Psychology), Nora Barry (English), Vera Froelich (English), and Judy Barrett Litoff (History).

Gertrude's professional demeanor and loving personality made her a natural fit for the position as Vice President of Public Affairs; not only was she a brilliant public relations professional, but she took the time to understand her colleagues and the students of Bryant. Joseph H. Hagan, former Bryant Vice President for Public Affairs and council member of the National Endowment for the Humanities, in a letter to Bryant's student newspaper *The Archway*, stated "I cannot imagine anyone better suited for the important responsibilities of that post. She has rendered exceptional service to Bryant."[129] Gertrude hoped to use her new position "to increase the recognition of the serious and purposeful student body" for she admired the drive and dedication of Bryant students.[130]

When she became a part of the inner circle of administration, Gertrude realized that there were still many people who needed a lesson in public relations. In a 1977 interview with *The Providence Journal* Gertrude explained, "When [my male counterparts] heard a reporter was on the phone with a question, they would cringe. I was appalled at their treatment of the

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[128] Phyllis Schumacher (Professor of Mathematics at Bryant University) in conversation with the author, October 13, 2010.

[129] Joseph H. Hagan was Gertrude's boss prior to her appointment as Vice President. He left Bryant for a position with the National Endowment for the Humanities. Joseph H. Hagan, "Beneficial Changes," *The Archway* (Smithfield, Rhode Island) November 7, 1975.

[130] "Gertrude M. Hochberg Appointed Vice President of Public Affairs," *The Archway* (Smithfield, Rhode Island) September 19, 1975.

media…Our administrators know a lot about keeping the College in the black, but there are things they still don't always understand [about working with] people." Dr. William T. O'Hara, president of Bryant College from 1976 to 1989, explained, "[Gertrude] has a way of finding something positive in everybody."[131] She was "one of the state's most highly successful college publicists and working women," and her appointment to Vice President at Bryant College was a testament to her character. "A dynamo of energy, she's…a 'pioneer' in the field of women's rights, doing what other women's libbers are just talking about."[132]

Induction into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame

In 1977, the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame inducted eleven new members. These eleven inductees included ten men and one woman: Gertrude Meth Hochberg. The Hall of Fame was established "for the purpose of spotlighting the contributions of those whose efforts, in any line of endeavor, have added significantly to the illustrious heritage of Rhode Island."[133] The 1977 induction marked the 12th annual awards dinner and Gertrude was only the nineteenth woman to be inducted into the hall since its founding.[134] In her remarks at the induction ceremony, Gertrude expressed her gratitude for the Hall of Fame Selection Board as well as the people of Rhode Island. "To me, this state is the crown jewel of the larger forty-nine…we are fiercely independent—a vibrant people, diversified, individualistic."[135] The attendees of the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame dinner were so moved by Gertrude's remarks that she received a standing ovation. Gertrude commented after, "I'm overwhelmed…I'm still trying to figure out what I said that brought them to their feet. Four people, including the governor, have asked me for a copy."[136] Following her induction into the Hall of Fame, her career was celebrated throughout Rhode Island by colleagues and

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[131] Richard D. Dujardin, "Look out world, here comes Gertrude!" *The Providence Sunday Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island) June 19, 1977.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Program for the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame: 12th Annual Dinner and Induction Ceremonies, May 16, 1977.

[134] "Inductee Listing," *Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame*, March 9, 2011, www.rihertiagehalloffame.org.

[135] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, in remarks at the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame Induction, (Cranston R.I.) May 16, 1977.

[136] "Look out world, here comes Gertrude!" June 19, 1977.

friends alike. Gertrude Meth Hochberg's induction into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame speaks volumes to the impact she had throughout the state of Rhode Island.

A Roast for Gertrude

In July of 1977, two years after making history in Rhode Island and after twenty-eight years of service to Bryant College, Gertrude Meth Hochberg retired from her position. Throughout her career, a career filled with honors, achievements, advocacy, and expertise, Gertrude left a lasting impact on many colleagues. In order to showcase their affection for Gertrude, a group of coworkers and friends organized her retirement celebration, held on June 21, 1977. In honor of all she had accomplished in Rhode Island throughout her long and distinguished career, Rhode Island Governor J. Joseph Garrahy issued a Proclamation making June 21, 1977 Gertrude Meth Hochberg Day. In the proclamation, Garrahy cited many of Gertrude's outstanding achievements, including being the first woman vice president of any college in Rhode Island, her induction into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame, and her service to the Permanent Advisory Commission on Women.[137]

The retirement celebration was titled "A Roast for Gertrude Meth Hochberg" and it included a cocktail hour, buffet dinner, a "roasting" show, and dessert hour. Three hundred twenty friends, family members, press and media representatives, and colleagues from Bryant attended the celebration which was held in Salmonson Dining Hall at Bryant College. The show, which turned out to be less of a roasting and more of a praising, opened with former Governor Licht who paid "tribute to the woman he had named to chair the Commission on Women…the choice of her was natural, he told the gathering."[138]

The roasting also featured songs and poems from long-time friends of Gertrude. Using the tunes of various well-known melodies, the roasting committee made their own lyrics honoring Gertrude. These lyrics expressed how much everyone who knew Gertrude cherished her and valued her ideas. The roasters adored her bright and charming personality. Using the tune of *There are Smiles,* the roasters sang, "The gal who fills our lives with meaning, is the one right

[137] J. Joseph Garrahy (Governor of Rhode Island), Proclamation of "Gertrude Meth Hochberg Day," June 21, 1977.

[138] James Anagnostos, "320 Attend Roast for Gertrude Meth Hochberg at Bryant," *The Woonsocket Call* (Providence, Rhode Island) June 22, 1977.

here for us to see. She's the gal who brings us all that sunshine, she's the gal that we call V.P." They acknowledged the lasting impact she had on Bryant College, when they sang to the tune of *Til We Meet Again*, "Smile the while we say 'goodbye' to you, you have made our cloudy skies more blue. You've brought us fame and fortune, too. We will not forget you, Gertrude."[139]

True to character, Gertrude concluded the program with remarks of her own, showcasing her wit and quick-thinking. She offered her great appreciation for each "roaster" and took time to thank all of those in attendance. Gertrude said to the audience, "Much as I am honored by the time and effort you took to roast me, I am equally honored by all the wonderful friends and relatives who have come here to celebrate…Let it be known that most of us here have worked together—we built a college, we forged good will and sought advancement for our many causes and beliefs. We shared joyful experiences that have welded each one to the other."[140] As always, Gertrude was genuine and heartfelt. Following her remarks, she once again received a standing ovation following her remarks. Although this would mark her formal retirement from Bryant College, her legacy both at Bryant and throughout Rhode Island would continue to live on. A colleague in broadcast media summed it up when he said, "Gertrude is Bryant College. Her behind-the-scenes journalistic ingenuity has, over the years, brought academic prominence to her school. Yes, Bryant has achieved collegiate greatness and much of the credit for this fine reputation can be attributed to a job well executed by Gertrude Hochberg."[141]

Following the Roast, letters poured into Gertrude's mailbox congratulating her on her lifetime of service to Bryant and the wider Rhode Island community. Gertrude saved and cherished each letter; they were all personalized and heartfelt, confirming the lasting impact Gertrude had on everyone with whom she had worked. One coworker saluted Gertrude for many

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[139] "Toasting at the Roasting," program of lyrics for the Roast of Gertrude Hochberg (Smithfield, Rhode Island) 1977.

[140] Gertrude Meth Hochberg, in response to The Roast for Gertrude Meth Hochberg, June 21, 1977.

[141] Harry V. McKenna (WEAN News and Public Affairs Director), in a letter to Gertrude Meth Hochberg, June 21, 1977.

things: "your years of service to Bryant College, the inspirations your words and deeds have given those with whom you worked, and not least of all for the pleasure of having you as a co-worker in the Bryant vineyard."[142] William T. O'Hara wrote to Gertrude, "Your support, wisdom, and never-failing optimism have helped me to negotiate what could have been a very strenuous year."[143] Mary P. Lyons, Professor of English at Bryant College, congratulated Gertrude on so many jobs well done, saying "I have come to think of you as the paragon of the career woman. You are a true professional and a lady of great warmth, humor and energy."[144]

RETIRED BUT NOT TIRED

In 1978, in order to acknowledge the many unselfish ways that Gertrude gave to the College and its students, the Bryant Alumni Association established an endowed Gertrude Hochberg Alumni Scholarship. The scholarship, a lasting tribute to Gertrude, is awarded annually to a deserving son or daughter of an alumnus with proven need. Through this scholarship, "the Bryant alumni are acknowledging the numerous contributions Mrs. Hochberg made…During her years at Bryant College…[Gertrude] gave so much to so many that it seemed only fitting to establish a scholarship fund in her name to carry on her unselfish spirit of giving."[145]

This would not be the only time that the Alumni Association honored Gertrude Meth Hochberg. At the Alumni Reunion of 1983, Gertrude was inducted into the Alumni Association as an honorary member. Her induction was based upon her twenty-eight years of service to Bryant College as the Director of Public Relations and Vice President of Public Affairs. In the citation of Gertrude's induction, the Alumni Association stated, "When you retired in 1977, Bryant College felt the impact immediately. Your shoes were hard to fill

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[142] Unknown author, remarks at Retirement of Gertrude Hochberg, May 12, 1977.

[143] William T. O'Hara (President of Bryant College), in a letter to Gertrude Meth Hochberg, June 21, 1977.

[144] Mary P. Lyons (Professor of English), in a letter to Gertrude Meth Hochberg, June 15, 1977.

[145] "Gertrude Hochberg honored by Bryant alumni," *The Observer* (Greenville, Rhode Island) February 23, 1978.

because you put your heart and soul into the job."[146] Following her retirement, Gertrude often returned the College to attend various functions or to fill-in when the public relations department was short of staff. Professor of History Judy Barrett Litoff recalled that Gertrude especially "loved Commencement Weekend activities as this always provided her with the opportunity to showcase what was best about Bryant. And she always made certain that Bryant received top billing in the media. Years after her retirement, she could be found on the Bryant campus, helping to coordinate Commencement activities."[147]

Beyond her continued service to Bryant College during her retirement years, Gertrude Meth Hochberg kept busy by devoting time to various civic and volunteer activities in her communities. In 1981, four years after her retirement from Bryant, Gertrude volunteered her years of public relations experience to help a newly-established hospital, located near her winter residence in Bradenton, Florida, plan its dedication ceremony. Always on the go, it was Gertrude who contacted the hospital to see what assistance she could offer them; given her formidable background, the community relations director could not pass up Gertrude's offer.[148] When the hospital held its dedication ceremony, nearly five thousand people attended the event; it was expected that the audience would barely exceed one thousand people. Once again, this demonstrates Gertrude's uncanny ability to promote effectively a cause in which she believed.[149] Similarly, after seeing that the bookshelves at the local library in Bradenton were only half filled, she took action. "Gertrude, never one to abandon a wrong she feels she can be made right," contacted the library's director and learned that they desperately needed more funds to purchase books. Gertrude enthusiastically took on the task

[146] Citation for Gertrude Meth Hochberg's Honorary Membership in the Bryant College Alumni Association, June 25, 1983.

[147] Judy Barrett Litoff (Professor of History, Bryant College), in discussion with author, March 18, 2011.

[148] Gayle Guthman, "Winter resident raising friends, funds for hospital," *Bradenton Herald* (Bradenton, Florida) December 31, 1981.

[149] Eleanor F. Horvitz, "Gertrude Meth Hochberg – a Study in Dedication," *The Rhode Island Jewish Herald* (Providence, Rhode Island) August 16, 1990.

of raising money for the library "and within three months they had no problem in raising $30,000."[150]

Bryant celebrates lifetime achievements of Gertrude Meth Hochberg

Gertrude Meth Hochberg left a legacy during her years at Bryant College as a women's pioneer, a graceful public relations professional, and a loving person. It was Gertrude who gave the College the tools and resources it needed to stand in the spotlight as a distinguished institution of business in Rhode Island. On June 5, 1992, fifteen years after her retirement, Gertrude Meth Hochberg was once again honored by Bryant College and awarded an Honorary Master of Business Administration Degree. In a letter nominating Gertrude for the honorary degree, Eleanor McMahon of Brown University's Center for Public Policy stated, "In virtually every aspect of her life, Gertrude has been a role model for women of this century. She combined a happy marriage, effective parenthood, a highly successful professional career, and extraordinary community commitment."[151] The year that Gertrude received an honorary degree also marked the twentieth anniversary of Bryant College's move to Smithfield, an event whose success is largely attributed to Gertrude. Recognizing that Gertrude's duties to the College lasted well beyond her twenty-eight years of formal employment, Bryant College President William E. Trueheart stated in her honorary degree citation, "Few have received the lifelong tributes you enjoy; none has deserved them more…you have become an integral part of the College's history and tradition."[152] Through this degree, the College honored a woman who tirelessly worked toward promoting the College in a positive light at the state, regional and national levels.

In 1997, Kati Machtley, first lady of Bryant College, organized the first annual Women's Summit. The first summit "explored the impact that the next century will have on women in the work place….[and focused] on work-related stressors which disproportionately affect

[150] Ibid.

[151] Eleanor McMahon (Brown University) in a letter to William E. Trueheart, nominating Gertrude Meth Hochberg for an honorary degree, October 2, 1991.

[152] William E. Trueheart (President of Bryant College 1989-1996) in the citation for Gertrude Meth Hochberg's Master of Business Administration degree, ad eundem, June 5, 1992.

women."[153] Gertrude Meth Hochberg served as a guest presenter for one of the Summit breakout sessions titled, "Desperately Seeking Mentors." The panel speakers discussed their experience with networking and mentoring, as well as how connecting with others can help a woman succeed in the workplace.[154]

Gertrude's accomplishments continued to inspire and impact many individuals throughout Rhode Island. "Many have called her a pioneer for women, in business and beyond. She has received a multitude of awards," and, at age 87, Gertrude was honored once again for her lifetime of achievements. In 1999, the Newell D. Goff Institute for Ingenuity and Enterprise Studies of the Rhode Island Historical Society[155] awarded Gertrude Meth Hochberg the first Women's Achievement Award. This award was established in order to recognize a Rhode Island woman "who has demonstrated in her life and career characteristics of creativity, ingenuity, and enterprise."[156] The Institute's governing council selected Gertrude unanimously from the group of nominees. Not only did they believe her accomplishments set high standards for future achievements, but they recognized that Gertrude was "universally admired and loved by everyone who knew and worked with her."[157] Kati Machtley invited Gertrude Meth Hochberg to receive the Women's Achievement Award at the Second Annual Women's Summit, "Women at the Helm: Navigating Change Through Effective Leadership." In a letter to Gertrude, Kati Machtley stated that Gertrude was "the perfect choice" for the award and "that [she received] this great award at Bryant College [was] a tribute to [her] work" at the school.[158] The award was presented at the Summit luncheon. The citation recognized Gertrude's long list of achievements, including but not limited to her appointment "as the first woman to hold a position as Vice President…her innovative advocacy for

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[153] Program and Schedule of Events for the 1997 Women's Summit, Bryant College, Smithfield, R.I.

[154] Ibid.

[155] The institute is a research and educational center within the Rhode Island Historical Society that focuses on a history of creativity, entrepreneurship, innovation, and invention in the state.

[156] Marion Davis, "R.I. Feminist 'pioneer' is honored," *The Providence Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island), April 6, 1999.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Kati C. Machtley (First Lady of Bryant College from 1996-present), in a letter to Gertrude Meth Hochberg, March 16, 1999.

business education…her unselfish civic and community contributions…[and] most of all her leadership and lifelong commitment to the advancement of women that is so well remembered and respected."[159]

On Wednesday, March 20, 2002 at the age of 90, Gertrude Meth Hochberg passed away. Friends, family members, and colleagues alike celebrated her long and distinguished career. Many people remembered the personalized, mostly handwritten, letters they received from Gertrude during her long and productive life. These letters, probably numbering in the thousands, are another example of the respect she accorded her colleagues and friends. Her true passion was the people: "Gertrude believed that developing relationships was essential to success…she made connections that lasted a lifetime." Bryant College dropped the campus flag to half mast for several days following Gertrude's death "for we have lost one of our own—one of our best" President Ronald K. Machtley said in his eulogy. He continued, "[Gertrude] was a pioneer for women's rights in the workplace—and made it easier today for every female college graduate, for her daughter, and her granddaughters."[160] In a letter to the Providence Journal, Fraser A. Lang, who worked as Director of Alumni Relations and Development at Bryant College, stated, "I quickly learned that I worked with Gertrude and not for her…She never missed an opportunity to congratulate, to celebrate, and to appreciate those with whom she came in contact. She was always positive in word and deed."[161] Gertrude's passion for the people she worked with, the places she lived, and the issues she fought for were evident in every task she completed.

On March 22, 2011 Bryant University[162] once again paid tribute to Gertrude when the Bryant University Women's Center was officially named "The Gertrude Meth Hochberg Women's

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[159] Citation for Gertrude Meth Hochberg's Women's Achievement Award, delivered at the Second Annual Women's Summit at Bryant College (Smithfield, Rhode Island) March 30, 1999.

[160] Ronald K. Machtley (President of Bryant College, 1996-present), in his eulogy for the memorial service of Gertrude Meth Hochberg, March 24, 2002.

[161] Fraser A. Lang, "The greatness of Gertrude," *The Providence Journal* (Providence, Rhode Island) May 21, 2002.

[162] Bryant College became Bryant University in 2004 with the addition of a Liberal Arts College.

Center." The Women's Center, established in March of 2002, takes an active role in helping Bryant's women students adjust to college life and the world around them.[163] "It is a resource for students, faculty, and staff to gather and celebrate diversity, engage in intellectual discussion, and work toward the full participation of women in the life of the University."[164] The Gertrude Meth Hochberg Women's Center will sponsor programs and activities designed to raise awareness of women's issues on campus. During her tenure at Bryant, Gertrude tirelessly promoted the status of women. It is most fitting that the Bryant Women's Center is now officially named after her.

A WOMAN DECADES AHEAD OF HER TIMES

From the very young age of fifteen, Gertrude Meth championed women pioneers in the business world. In her high school oratory entry, titled "Her Honor Woman," Gertrude stated, "the woman of today is not clamoring to enter the business and political world to usurp the place of men, but your man-made industries have made it impossible to stay only within the home."[165] Indeed, Gertrude embodied these words throughout her professional career.

In 1930, Gertrude entered the world of work and, after only a few years, became an advertising executive at Gimbels in New York City and later at Shepard's in Providence. Even during the hard economic of the 1930s, when women were discouraged from entering the paid labor force, she managed to carve out a successful career in advertising and public relations.

In 1949, Gertrude Meth Hochberg became the Director of Public Relations at Bryant College. During her twenty-eight year tenure at the school, she became one of the most influential women in Bryant's history. She used her advertising background to help bring Bryant College out of Brown University's shadow and establish itself as a premiere business institution for women and men. She began a hometown newspaper campaign that increased publicity for the school at no expense to the College itself. She feverishly advocated on

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[163] Jillian Emberg and Jessica Komoroski, "Women at Bryant," (http://digitalcommons.bryant.edu/library_misc/2/) 2009.

[164] "About the Women's Center," www.bryant.edu, March 10, 2011.

[165] Gertrude Meth, "Her Honor Woman," 1928.

behalf of women at Bryant and was credited with bringing numerous female role models to the campus. One of Gertrude's most remarkable achievements was organizing the 1963 Centennial Celebration Symposium on the Status of Women. The Symposium followed just one month after the final report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women was issued to President John F. Kennedy. The Symposium featured Esther Peterson, Executive Vice Chair of the Commission, as the keynote speaker. This event, acclaimed as one of the most significant events in Bryant's history, showcased Gertrude's passion and devotion to advancing the status of women at Bryant and the wider Rhode Island community.

Gertrude Meth Hochberg's long and distinguished career spanned nearly a half century. In 1975, her career culminated with her landmark appointment to the position of Vice President of Public Affairs at Bryant College. What makes her career exceptionally remarkable is the fact that Gertrude was truly a self-made woman. She had never intended on pursuing a career as an administrator in higher education; in fact, her own college education was cut short by the 1929 stock market crisis and the ensuing Depression. A pioneer in Rhode Island, Gertrude challenged the norms of American society and served as a role model for an untold number of women at Bryant and beyond. More than a decade before Betty Freidan called on women to strike a balance between motherhood and career, Gertrude had successfully combined a distinguished career and a wholesome family life with apparent grace and ease. Even with the pressures of her public relations responsibilities at Bryant, she still found time to provide her children with the tools to become self-reliant and successful individuals in their chosen careers. Long after her retirement, Gertrude Meth Hochberg remained an important figure for Bryant College and the wider Rhode Island community. Without question, she was a woman decades ahead of her time.

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