

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bryant women's summit raises awareness

All of Michael Holtzman's article and photographs that appeared in the Sept. 16 edition of *The Call* ("Women's Summit' hits home") make it strikingly clear that the conference held at Bryant College is an advocate of women "rising to workplace challenges in the next millenium."

From the beginning of the event, registration outside Janikies Auditorium in the Unistructure Rotunda, to the concluding remarks and adjournment, the 500 women who were present certainly felt a renewed focus on their journey in the workplace toward the next millenium.

I am a 1943 alumna of Bryant. In some

ways, it seems as if nothing has changed, but, of course, everything has changed. The world is vastly different than when I entered the women's workplace. Computer and satellite technology unimagined 50 years ago has speeded efforts to raise aid to many areas for businesses worldwide to hold together a constructive network.

When I attended a videoconference for the first time in June at Channel 36, the "1997 Summer Public Health Research Institute on Minority Health," naturally, I became so audient then. It doubled when I attended the Bryant session that focused on the scope of technologies that are available for the entrepreneur, company management and other professionals to use their time more effectively and increase contacts with their customers. This dynamic telecommunications industry had even more advanced interac-

tive videoconferencing by telephone systems.

Sen. John Chafee's opening address, for this great first historic event for women at Bryant College and in our state, injected a new sense of optimism among the conference attendees. Chafee is on solid ground when he speaks. In his opening remarks he said, "We are fortunate to live in an exciting time of great technological and societal change. For American women, this has resulted in a remarkable expansion in the variety of work opportunities. Think of it: two generations ago, with just a few exceptions, women who worked outside the home were concentrated in a handful of occupations: secretary, clerk, housekeeper, teacher or nurse.

"The current generation of adult women were the beneficiaries of a great deal of progress — they did not necessarily grow up believing they were limited to work in a handful of areas. Nevertheless, most women who entered the workforce in the 1960s and 1970s started out in clerical position, even after having graduated from college.

"Many young women still aspire to be teachers or nurses, and that's excellent," Chafee continued. "But they do so by choice and out of a desire to embark of a career of public service. Others choose to be doctors, or biologists, or lawyers, or journalists. Even professional basketball is open to American women!"

All through this talk he made many deep thinking comments to reflect on. One of these is when he mentioned that in the majority of cases, employers are looking simply for the best person for the job. He also added that gender has been greatly diminished as a factor and there is wide acceptance of the view that gender should not be a factor.

I praise Bryant President Ronald K. Machtley and his wife, Kati Machtley, co-chair, and the women on the Planning Committee for this successful first women's conference.

Women, let us be attentive.

Alice A. Brickach
Pawtucket