

Chicago Tribune

Monday, May 12, 1975

Nuns join stewardesses in the quest for equality

By Carol Kleiman

IT'S INTERNATIONAL Women's Year, and now that women know it's okay to be women—at least for 1975—the women's movement is blossoming.

Springing up all over are special interest groups devoted to women's rights. Remember when there was only the National Organization for Women and the Chicago Women's Liberation Union to battle the storms of sex discrimination?

Now, there are so many thimble groups proliferating in Chicago that no one, not even the most devoted feminists, can keep track of them.

There are the Black Feminists Organization and the League of Black Women. There are the Illinois Women's Political Caucus and Church Women United. The Federally Employed Women, Airline Stewardesses Association, Coalition for Labor Union Women, and National Coalition of American Nuns represent specific professions.

Other special interests: Mommas, a group for single women raising children; Chicago Women in Broadcasting; National Assembly of Women Religious; Ecumenical Women's Center; Chicago Lesbian Liberation; Lavender Women Collective; and Off Our Backs, a feminist commune.

UNDER THE IMPETUS of the Equal Rights Amendment, new organizations also have sprung up: Housewives for E. R. A., Men for E. R. A., Peoria Organization for Women for E. R. A., and Catholic Women for E. R. A., to name a few.

"We have more than 100 special interests groups, ourselves," says Carolyn Parmer, codirector of E. R. A.-Central, 53 W. Jackson St.

"But we really have no idea how many are out there. We know there are a lot. Every university, for instance, has new women's groups springing up." Parmer herself belongs to the International

St. Joan's Alliance, a Catholic layperson feminist organization, the League of Women Voters, and the National Women's Political Caucus.

The Y. W. C. A. is no longer only young, Christian, or for members only. It has become a feminist center, organizing, supporting, founding, consulting, or just lending space to such groups as Women Employed, Flexible Careers, Chicago Women Against Rape, Feminist Writers Workshop, Feminist Legal Drop In Clinic, Feminist Crisis Counseling Service, and Illinois Women's Abortion Coalition.

UNDER THE SHAWL of ending discrimination in specific professions have been born A. R. C. Gallery and Artemisa Gallery, devoted to women artists; Chicago Women in Publishing; American Women in Radio and Television Inc.; Women Employed at the Chicago Public Library.

The American Civil Liberties Union has a Women's Rights Committee. So do the Illinois Women's Bar Association, and the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference. Gray Panthers is an activist group of mostly women senior citizens.

One of the newest special interest groups in Chicago is the newly-formed Jewish Feminist Organization. Nationally, the group has about 1,800 members.

According to a member, Hedy M. Ratner, who is also chairperson of the Illinois Women's Political Caucus, the aim of the organization is to bring women into the mainstream of the Jewish religion, rather than being separate and submissive.

WHY ARE so many women reaching out in so many directions?

"There is a need among women that is new," says Ratner. "It's a need to find a way to identify problems in their lives, not as individual problems, but as social and political ones.

"That's why the special interest groups are springing up."

And they'll continue to spring, she predicts.

State Women's Political Caucus

Women zero in on politics, government

Hundreds of women from throughout the state are expected to participate in the first state convention of the Illinois Women's Political Caucus in Macomb, Ill., Oct. 10-12 at the Macomb Holiday Inn, it was announced today by Hedy M. Ratner, chairperson of the Illinois Women's Political Caucus. The theme of the first statewide convention is "A Woman's Place is in the House ... and in the Senate ... and in the City Councils ... and in the Courts..."

Through a series of plenary sessions and workshops, women will seek ways to affect and change the political process and system. Among the specific objectives of the conference are:

1. Escalate the drive to train, nominate and elect more women to office in Illinois.

2. Train women statewide as candidates and as campaign decision makers.

3. Make candidates and elected officials accountable on ERA and other women's issues.

4. Kick off the 1976 elec-

tion and legislative programs.

5. Coalesce women and women's organizations in a drive for more jobs in government.

6. Establish Illinois Women's Political Caucus chapters throughout the state.

7. Elect state IWPC officers.

Locally and nationally known women, such as LaDonna Harris, will play prominent roles in the convention. (Keynote speakers will be announced).

A kick-off reception in honor of elected female and male officials and candidates will be held Friday evening at 8:30 at the Holiday Inn.

Saturday will feature a morning general session.

Afternoon workshops include: passing ERA in Illinois; practical campaign tactics; organizing local caucuses; effective lobbying; fighting sexism in education.

The evening session will have a keynote speaker, the adoption of resolutions and statewide programs, and nominating speeches by those women running for state caucus offices.

The election of IWPC state officers will be held Sunday morning at the general session.

The Illinois Women's Political Caucus, an affiliate of the National Women's Political Caucus, is a multi-partisan group of women dedicated to obtaining an equal voice and place in the political system.

As a political arm of the women's movement, its purposes are to encourage and promote the participation of women at all levels of government and in all areas of the political process, and to organiz-

and assert the vast political power represented by women as a majority of the electorate.

Persons wishing to reg-

ister for the IWPC convention should send \$5 (if a member of IWPC) or \$7.50 payable to Illinois Women's Political Caucus

to 530 W. McDonough, Macomb, Ill. 61455.

For further information about the IWPC convention, call 312/443-6107.



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Chicago Tribune, Friday, March 28, 1986

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Tribune photo by Ovie Carter

A boon for businesswomen

Hedy Ratner [top] and Carol Dougal [center], directors of the Small Business Development Center for Women, stand with Kirschhoffer Truck Service Inc. President Pat Kirschhoffer and one of her five trucks. The center at 230 N. Michigan Ave. has attracted 90

clients since it opened last month and offers advice and counseling to women business owners. Kirschhoffer said the center "helped me get in touch with the proper people for certification" needed to make her eligible for jobs under state and city contracts.

BUSINESS AND CIVIC LEADERS AGREE: THE CHICAGO ENTERTAINMENT AND CASINO PROJECT IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST A ROLL OF THE DICE.



AND HERE'S WHAT THEY'RE SAYING:

"Chicago is already blessed with many fine restaurants, hotels and cultural institutions. However, we need an exciting new means of attracting people to this city and through this additional amenity, we can continue to compete with other cities and stimulate tourist spending."

Richard Melman, President
Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, Inc.

"The idea to bring legalized casino gambling to the Chicagoland area is a bold and courageous move. With so many citizens of our great city unemployed, this venture will generate much needed revenue and benefit the masses. We should give this visionary plan a chance."

Rev. O. C. Morgan, Sr., President
International Christian Fellowship for Mission
Chicago Chapter

"We see this as a legitimate new economic pillar for Chicago. It would create jobs, greatly strengthen Chicago's important convention and tourism industry and provide a fun, state-of-the-art venue for family entertainment. It also provides an interesting and appropriate link to Chicago's major attractions that sparkle along the shoreline from McCormick Place to Navy Pier."

Sara Bode, President
Greater State Street Council

"Here we have three of the most successful and fiscally-sound corporations in the world ready, willing and able to create a major new revenue source for the people of Chicago and Illinois, without spending taxpayers' dollars. At a time when cities across the country, both large and small, are struggling to meet their payrolls, keep schools open and to hold onto their existing business tax base, we are being given a rare opportunity."

Kenneth A. Skopec, President
Mid-Citco, Inc.

"This two-billion dollar complex will enhance the tourism industry in this area during off-season months, and provide a special appeal to the growing meeting and convention business. The wonderful high-tech attractions, which will cover 80 percent of the center's space, will create a destination that will draw families from all over the globe."

Arnold F. Karr, President
Hotel-Motel Association of Illinois

"Putting people to work is a big step toward reducing crime in this city. People who work are less likely to commit crimes. With this entertainment complex, we have a rare opportunity to create 20,000 permanent jobs—jobs we can't possibly ignore. I am confident that the investor companies, along with the Chicago Police Department, have the ability to assure a safe facility here in Chicago."

LeRoy Martin
Chicago Police Superintendent-Retired

"Chicago needs 10,000 new construction jobs and 20,000 new permanent jobs, as well as business development opportunities for our small, minority and women-owned businesses. By utilizing local companies for the proposed facility, there will be significant opportunities for survival, growth and increased stability in our businesses."

Hedy Ratner, Co-director
Women's Business Development Center

"This tremendous proposal would be a major economic boon for Chicago and Illinois. We see few options as appealing as this one that will provide thousands of jobs as well as important opportunities for Hispanic and other minority-owned businesses in Illinois. Bold ideas like this are needed to improve our future economic health."

Alphonse C. Gonzales, Executive Director
Mexican American Chamber of
Commerce of Illinois
Coalition of Hispanic Chambers

"Southwest Airlines supports the family entertainment project because it would provide a major impetus to the tourism and convention industry. Traffic will be greatly increased to the city and state with the millions of visitors this complex could draw, which is a good thing for all the people of Illinois."

Herbert D. Kelleher, Chairman of the Board
President & Chief Executive Officer
Southwest Airlines Co.

**CAESARS WORLD, INC., CIRCUS CIRCUS ENTERPRISES, INC.
AND HILTON HOTELS CORPORATION APPRECIATE THE
SUPPORT OF THESE LEADERS AND THE HUNDREDS OF
OTHERS WHO ENDORSE THIS PROJECT.**

WOMANNEWS™

Section 6 **Chicago Tribune** Sunday, August 29, 1993

A Weekly News Report for and about Women on the Move

New agenda

Groups mean business in joint campaign

By Joyce Kelly

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Business leaders are launching a campaign this week to remove barriers to women's economic progress nationwide.

Women from more than 100 Illinois organizations, including the National Association of Women Business Owners, Women Employed and the office of the treasurer of the state of Illinois, gathered at a summit in Chicago recently to examine issues blocking economic parity as well as recommendations to alleviate such problems.

Since the Illinois Women's Economic Development Summit met in July, women have been refining a list of goals, and beginning Wednesday they will begin assigning priorities and trying to implement the agenda.

The initial issues and recommendations formulated by the summit's workshops include:

- Lobbying lawmakers to change legislation, including local ordinances that restrict home-based businesses, that put women at an economic disadvantage. Some women already have met with members of Chicago's City Council in an effort to begin the process of rescinding or revising the city's ordinance.

- Expanding financing for women's businesses. The group recommended tax incentives for investments in women-owned businesses. It also sought ways to encourage lending from government and from business for women-owned businesses. Also suggested was giving taxpayers an option of donating \$1 to women's businesses when they file their taxes.

- Increasing affirmative-action quotas for contracts to women-owned businesses at all levels of government. The group recommended laws to require contractors doing business with the government to have the same or higher quotas for their subcontractors.

- Educating leaders in such institutions as the banking industry and in politics about the impact of women's businesses. The group also recommended a similar educational campaign for politicians.

- Increasing networking opportunities for women, such as establishing a national database of women-owned businesses and other resources.

- Increasing training opportunities. The group recommended that corporations should provide training to women in so-called "pink collar" positions for higher-paying jobs. Training also should be made available to more women, for example by providing transportation to rural women.

- Enforcing employment rights, which would include the right for all women to be informed of job opportunities and career paths within their companies. They also recommend

Summit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

expanding leaves, flexible schedules and other opportunities for integrating work and family life. The group plans to do this by working through government and labor unions. The group recommended establishing benefits such as basic health care and pensions as rights.

■ Allowing employees to transfer their benefits from one job to another. They also recommended guaranteeing proportional benefits for part-time employees.

Summit members acknowledged the need to address the problems of small businesses, some of whose owners maintain they owe their existence to employing part-time workers to whom they don't pay benefits.

Ida Bialik, publisher of "Women in Business Yellow Pages," one who met Chicago City Council members, said many of the council members seemed receptive to the lobbying.

The Home Occupation Ordinance, which was last revised in 1957, makes it illegal for a person working from home to hire an employee or sell or store products there.

Although the law attempts to protect neighborhoods Bialik said, many say the economy dictates a change in law.

"Large companies are downsizing, putting people out of work. It is small businesses that continue to develop new jobs and the country desperately needs that," Bialik said. "We want to encourage this development, making these businesses legal so owners feel comfortable marketing themselves. They shouldn't have to feel ashamed or fearful about letting people know they have a business from their home."

Bialik said she expects an ordinance to be proposed at the Sept. 15 City Council meeting.

Other women from the summit may already have seen their work pay off. Mary Ann Campbell, the Clinton-appointed chair of the National Women's Business Council, suggested that summit participants contact their legislators in support of a bill that would reauthorize the council, which advises the President and Congress. Some did.

Earlier this month Congress passed the bill extending the council through November 1994.

Campbell also expressed support for the women's plan to lobby for incentives for investing in women's businesses.

"We're going to have to have someone with a lot of clout behind us. We're going to have to really be able to prove the dynamics of the women business owners and the success rate," Campbell said.

In addressing the summit group, Hedy Ratner, director of the Women's Business Development Center in Chicago, reiterated the importance of women joining together to ensure their economic progress.

"Women have made enormous progress in the U.S. in the past 25 years. Just look at the last election and the impact we made," Ratner told the women. "Yet our problems are monstrous. The same issues of 25 years ago are still our issues—equal pay for equal work, choice, equal opportunities, access to good child care, women's health issues, increased violence and concerns about safety for ourselves and our families."

Ratner said women business owners are the fastest-growing segment of the economy. The U.S. Small Business Administration reports women are starting businesses nationally at twice the rate of men.

"We employ more than the Fortune 500 in our over 5 million businesses, yet the opportunities for growth have been limited because of limitations on access to debt and equity capital, the discrimination that still exists in the marketplace, corporate and government's grudging acceptance of affirmative action and legislative barriers. . . . There is much to do and today, we hope to develop strategies for major change," Ratner said.

Highlights

How to succeed in business when the company's yours

By Sharon Honaker

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Being your own boss—owning your own business. It is an intriguing dream that some women have already achieved and that tempts many others.

For established business owners as well as anyone simply wondering what it would be like to run their own company, Thursday's Entrepreneurial Woman's Conference will feature workshops, a forum led by women entrepreneurs and a buyers' mart. The theme of the conference is "Contract with Women: Cultivating New Markets."



Hedy Ratner

With workshops ranging from "Startup Options for Business" to "Marketing on a Shoestring" to "Alternative Financing Options," the conference is designed for successful women business owners who want to expand, new owners who want to build their skills and women who are thinking about owning a business.

"This is an opportunity for new or emerging business owners to be stimulated and for established owners to find new markets," said Hedy Ratner, co-director of the Women's Business Development Center, sponsor of the conference.

The conference will begin with a Hall of Fame Awards Breakfast, followed by a morning of workshops. During the lunch break there will be a Women's Forum moderated by Jane Applegate, president of the Applegate Group. The afternoon workshop, "Megatrends for Women in Business," will highlight legal, marketing, technological and legislative trends.

Throughout the day, the Women's Business and Buyers' Mart will be open for women business owners seeking new markets for their products or services.

"The mart is a 'reverse trade fair,'" said Ratner. "The exhibitors are corporations and government agencies committed to finding new women to do business with."

The conference will be held from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Thursday at Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Ave. Registration is \$155 in advance; \$200 at the door. To register, call 312-853-3477, ext. 45.

State women's panel finds that communications could be the key

By Janice Neumann

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

As part of their third community dialogue about the economic and social hurdles facing women, members of the Governor's Commission on the State of Women in Illinois have discovered one solution may be to create a network of communication among area women's agencies and to improve dissemination of resource information to women about their options.

Gov. Jim Edgar in 1997

appointed 21 professional women to the commission to help evaluate the barriers to equality women still face and the possible solutions to their problems.

The commission is expected to make its final report to the governor and General Assembly in December about suggested legislative changes to benefit women.

"Women need to be empowered to take responsibility for their lives and have the services and resources they need to do that," said Hedy Ratner, one of the commissioners and co-director of the

Women's Business Development Center, who moderated the conference Wednesday at South Suburban College in South Holland. "We need to look at how state, county and municipal agencies can work together to help women use the services that are available to them."

South Suburban College and state Sen. Debbie Halvorson (D-Crete) were co-hosts of the meeting, and Judge Nancy Sidote Salyers, a commissioner and a judge of the child protection division of the Circuit Court of Cook County,

presented topics for discussion.

Other legislators who attended were state Reps. Kevin McCarthy (D-Orland Park), Arline Fantin (D-Calumet City) and Jack McGuire (D-Joliet).

Many of the problems women face stem from financial inequality that the legislature needs to contend with, according to Halvorson, who said women make about 74 cents to every dollar earned by men. When one considers they are often the emotional and financial supporters for their children, problems are com-

pounded, according to the senator and other speakers at the meeting. "Women in divorce do bad, men do good," she added.

But many women do not take advantage of the job training and psychological counseling available from area agencies, like South Suburban Family Shelter, which aids battered women, or the Catholic Charities, according to several members of the audience. Attendees suggested ensuring that every community have a resource guide that would be at the fingertips of these women. Members of

the audience also told the commission that a better networking system among agencies was needed, so that women are not shuffled around because of their varied problems.

The commission is expected to hold other community dialogues Sept. 9 in East St. Louis; Sept. 16 in Carlinville; and Sept. 23 in Arlington Heights, with the locations and times to be announced. Commission members plan to bring their findings before the governor in December.

Chicago Tribune

Sunday, May 23, 1999

As women amass wealth, social causes feel their gain

**By Bonnie Miller Rubin
and Carol Kleiman**

TRIBUNE STAFF WRITERS

Up until two years ago, Lorna Wendt, then the wife of GE Capital Chief Executive Gary Wendt, never thought of herself as a philanthropist.

Oh, she would run the symphony ball and was generous with her church, as befitting a woman of her position in the Manhattan commuter city of Stamford, Conn. But she certainly never thought of giving as a form of activism, of wielding clout herself.

But then in 1997, everything changed. Her 32-year marriage ended and she sued for half of

the \$100 million she estimated her husband was worth. The case ignited a national debate over the role of the corporate wife, and whether she was entitled to a share of his future stock options and retirement benefits. Wendt ended up getting \$22 million—more than the \$8 million her ex-husband offered, but less than the \$50 million she demanded.

Whatever the monetary out-
SEE WOMEN, PAGE 11



Women

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

come, the experience transformed Wendt, 55.

She wound up using some of that money—"a major commitment," she says—to start the Institute for Equality in Marriage, a grass-roots organization to promote marriage "as a partnership of equals" as well as divorce reform.

"Along with the money—which was more than I could possibly spend—comes a responsibility," said Wendt, the daughter of a Lutheran minister. "It empowers us to look into our souls to find the causes that we believe in and touch us . . . to put our money where our mouth is."

Wendt is among the women who are flexing their charitable muscle in unprecedented numbers, giving larger gifts and demanding more influence in how their donations are spent. Such women also are increasingly designating major gifts during their estate planning, creating a legacy with their wealth.

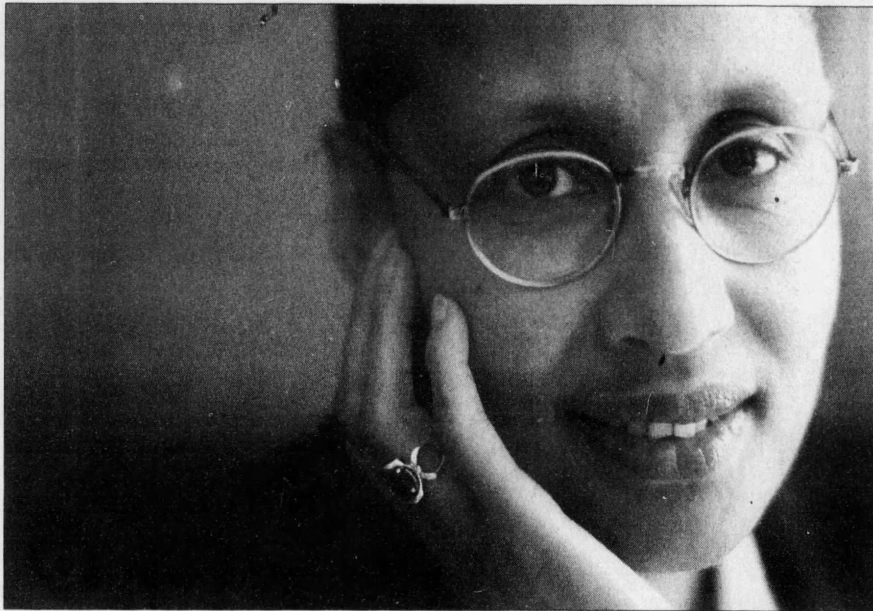
Some, like Wendt, get it through a divorce or inheritance, though women also are getting rich climbing the corporate ladder or being entrepreneurs. But one thing is certain: These "high-net-worth women," as they are called, are poised to change the landscape of philanthropy.

Not only are they increasing the amount of giving but they are doing it for different causes and in different ways from men, the traditional big-bucks philanthropists in America. They are more likely to fund social projects rather than buildings, for example, and are more likely to do it out of idealism than for status or in response to peer pressure, experts say.

The trend also is prompting a new wave of research, including the launch of a study of women's philanthropy by the National Foundation for Women Business Owners, in Silver Spring, Md., in partnership with Merrill Lynch & Co.

Meanwhile, the signs are everywhere. According to the Women's Funding Network, in St. Paul, Minn., women gave \$29.2 million in 1997, up from \$24.2 million in 1994. Twenty years ago, there were only five women's funds; today, there are 95, including the Chicago Foundation for Women.

Last year, its 4,000 donors, including corporations, gave \$2 million. Donations from individuals ranged from \$10 to \$175,000, according to Christine Grumm executive director. In 1999



Tribune photos by Milbert Orlando Brown

Banker Sarah Brown says her financial legacy will continue her work in the labor and civil rights movements—because "improving the quality of life for families is the most critical thing we can do."



Hedy Ratner, who has supported feminist causes for 30 years, says emerging female philanthropists "want to know their money is going to something meaningful."

\$920,000 will go to 150 programs.

Women have long had a tradition of giving what they could. A century ago, Carrie Chapman Catt sold her sapphire jewelry to start the League of Women Voters; about the same time, Jane Addams founded Hull House, helping thousands of immigrants get a toehold in America. But for the most part, female charitable dollars amounted to a mere pittance when compared with those of men. For many, supporting a

'There's a new awareness that women can make great strides, that they can shape society in ways no one could have envisioned before.'

Andrea Kaminski of the Women's Philanthropy Institute

cause meant volunteering for the auction or bake sale.

Today, 25 years after entering the professional work force in significant numbers, women are able to give a lot more than time. They now own 38 percent of all firms in the United States, according to the National Foundation for Women Business Owners. As this group moves into its 50s and 60s, these women are in a unique position to decide how and where that money will be returned to society.

"It's the next frontier," said Andrea Kaminski of the Women's Philanthropy Institute, in Madison, Wis. "There's a new awareness that women can make great strides, that they can shape society in ways no one could have envisioned before."

Indeed, last year, Myra Hart, 58, the founder of Staples Inc. an office supply firm in Boston,

donated several million dollars to fund scholarships for women at her alma mater, Cornell University. Sara Lee Schupf, the baked goods namesake, pitched in \$1.5 million to endow a female science professor's chair at Skidmore College and established a prize for women at the Weizmann Institute for Science in Israel.

In 1997, Joan Kroc, widow of McDonald's founder Ray Kroc, gave \$15 million to the North Dakota Community Foundation to help victims of flooding in Grand Forks, N.D.

Like any frontier, there's no road map, so many women are looking for guidance. The Women's Philanthropy Institute puts on 50 seminars a year on the finer points of giving. In Chicago, Hedy Ratner of the Women's Business Development Center will hold a seminar next month on the subject that addresses "how we can have an impact after our death on the passions of our lives."

On the surface, all this education may seem like it's about tax advantages, but any accountant can offer that, women say. What they want usually has more to do with the heart than the wallet.

For Ratner, the journey began after her mother's death in 1997. Unmarried and with no children, the 57-year-old started thinking about what would happen to her

assets when she was gone. It was a most illuminating exercise, she said.

"I don't have a lot of money, but enough to make a difference, and when I die I want to leave a legacy of my life purpose," said Ratner, who has been active in feminist causes for 30 years and remembers them and her own organization in her will.

Ratner, who has stock, some artwork, a condominium and small investments, says she increasingly hears from women who have made some money and "want to know that their money is going to something meaningful. Our legacy has more to do with principles and ideals than recognition and status."

That's just one of the differences between the sexes, according to experts. Others include: Women like to be in on the ground floor ("philanthropic entrepreneurs") and are more likely to target their gifts to a particular program, whereas men are more apt to give unrestricted funds. Women are also less likely to respond to competitive appeals. "They don't care about topping another donor's gift," Kaminski said.

That applies to Sandra P. Guthman, who understands both sides of the fundraising equation, as a donor and as the president and CEO of Polk Brothers Foundation, which grants between \$12 million and \$13 million a year to Chicago groups that provide services to inner-city families and social and educational causes.

"Women tend to respond to the need," she said. "You have to give them a good reason to buy into how the money will be used, while men are also responsive to who asks them and to peer pressure in the business community."

Her own giving reflects her interests in her alma mater, Wellesley College, the performing arts and in improving the quality of life in Chicago. "I'm finding that more and more women . . . have earned the money themselves and therefore have total discretion over it."

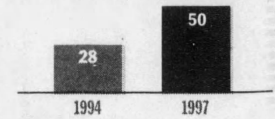
That applies to Sarah Brown, a senior vice president at ABN AMRO North America Inc. Married, with two grown children, she says she makes her own decisions about where her funds will go. The banker recently began estate planning when she reached the half-century mark and firmly asserts that she wants her legacy to reflect her involvement in the civil rights movement and organizations that range from Howard University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in English, to a scholarship fund for women to advance labor union leadership.

To her, making her mark means

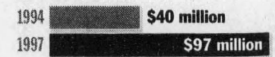
The impact of women in philanthropy

The Women's Funding Network is made up of philanthropic organizations that raise money from women. The network has grown significantly in membership as well as donations.

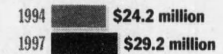
ORGANIZATIONS IN NETWORK



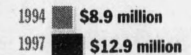
ASSETS



MONEY RAISED



MONEY GRANTED



Source: Women's Funding Network
Chicago Tribune

"ensuring that these groups keep on doing what they do—because education, taking care of children and improving the quality of life for families is the most critical thing we can do."

And just as there are unique patterns to women's giving, there are unique barriers. For one thing, women are not asked to give as frequently as men, even if they're as financially able.

But the most persistent barrier is the bag-lady syndrome, experts say. One 57-year-old lawyer who has hit it big in the stock market in recent years concedes that she has enough money to last several lifetimes. Still, she cannot bring herself to donate more than \$500 to any cause.

"No matter how much I have, I'm afraid I'll end up in a transient hotel eating cat food," she said.

As for Wendt, she has no such qualms, saying of her institute, "I'm giving it five years of my life." In addition, she sits on the national board of Outward Bound, which she also credits with fueling her self-esteem in the post-divorce era.

"The majority of women I know are doing wonderful things with their money, not spending it on cruises and face lifts," she said. "It's a responsibility, but it also gives you a sense of freedom . . . to know that you can make a difference."

Chicago Tribune

MetroChicago

THURSDAY, JULY 1, 1999

After 30 years of helping U.S. females break into business and politics, Hedy Ratner aims to do the same abroad.

Chicago activist brings women's movement to Kuwait

By Evan Osnos
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

In the colorful world of Illinois politics, Chicago activist Hedy Ratner has acquired a reputation as an eminently zesty voice on women's issues.

Now, after 30 years of helping women in the United States break into business and politics, Ratner is wielding her political savvy on behalf of a new constituency.

The co-president of the Women's Business Development Center in Chi-

cago, Ratner has trained her sights on Kuwait, where an emerging movement aims to broaden the role of women in government and business.

Largely on the strength of Ratner's lobbying, U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) this week introduced a bipartisan resolution in Congress supporting women's rights in Kuwait. Co-sponsors hope the effort spurs further reform in the predominantly Sunni Muslim country, where women face traditional Arab social constraints.

For Ratner, who has been outspoken in the U.S. on issues from abortion to support for minority and women business owners, the Kuwaiti women's effort was a logical fit. So when she received an invitation last month from Arab-American activists to join a group of feminist activists traveling to Kuwait to meet with reform-minded women there, she took the chance.

During the three-day trip last month, which she said has evolved into an ongoing commitment that

could include another visit, Ratner found that exporting her brand of political activism to an Islamic state posed certain challenges.

"In order to be effective, I needed to reshape my own attitudes about the culture I was visiting," she said after returning from Kuwait City. "And it wasn't hard because the women were so enthusiastic and responsive."

As a former assistant superintendent
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Ratner

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dent of schools in Cook County and a current member of the Governor's Commission on the State of Women in Illinois, Ratner is no stranger to rancor.

And, in Kuwait, it seems, she has found it again.

Last month, Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir as-Sabah sparked a political and religious torrent when he declared that women would be able to vote and run for office beginning in 2003. The move still faces ratification in parliament, following national elections on July 3.

In anticipation of that vote, a movement has emerged in Kuwait to sponsor pro-reform candidates.

Some say the edict has opened broader opportunities for Kuwait's women.

"It really is a revolution in women's rights in that part of the world," Ratner said. "Here you have these absolutely sophisticated, beautiful and educated women, but they need to empower themselves for the best interests of Kuwait."

In the Arab Gulf world, Kuwait is relatively progressive and democratic, with a vibrant 50-member parliament. There are many prominent women in business and education.

At the same time, Kuwaiti women remain bound by Arab traditions and Sunni conservatism that until now have extinguished all parliamentary efforts to widen the franchise, according to Ghanim Alnajjar, a professor of political science at Kuwait University and currently a visiting professor at the Harvard Law



Tribune photo by Milbert Orlando Brown

Chicago activist Hedy Ratner traveled to Kuwait last month to meet with reform-minded women there.

School.

Last month, when the surprise edict suggested that the government could eventually represent all Kuwaitis, activists mobilized domestically and abroad to begin fashioning a new political force for women.

One of those was Raja Almukaddam, president and founder of the Institute for Arab-American Women, based in New York. She began assembling a team of American women who could travel to Kuwait to meet with reform-minded women.

"We invited Hedy because she has skills to really push hard when it comes to economic empowerment and the political

process," Almukaddam said.

In total, the group that embarked for Kuwait on June 3 included five women, among them Mary Rose Oaker, a former congresswoman from Ohio, and Louise Melling, the associate director of the reproductive rights project at the New York Civil Liberties Union.

"It is important for women in the West to see that these Kuwaiti women—even if they might be veiled—just need information and they can effect change," Almukaddam said.

During the visit, Raja said, the group met with some 300 Kuwaiti women—"lawyers, academics, journalists, teachers, housewives,

ambassador's wives." The agenda veered from domestic abuse to the fate of remaining Kuwaiti prisoners of war in Iraq.

There are plans for similar conferences in the future. Kuwaiti women may also visit the United States as part of the effort.

While the issues were new to her, Ratner said, the political and economic strategies she urged were the same as she has always endorsed.

"I'm very chauvinistic about Chicago," Ratner said. "My great pride is to say that I can be proud enough of my city and my state to take the strategies I've learned here to other places—and they work."

Chicago Tribune

CHICAGOLAND



BILL HOGAN/TRIBUNE PHOTO

Roslyn Group members Ann Armstrong and Barbara Ciurej, front, from left, and Pauline Saliga, Hedy Ratner and Bette Cerf Hill, back, from left, in front of the Franklin Building, where "The Dinner Party" was displayed.

COMMITTEE GETS ITS DUE

Website details effort to bring feminist installation to Chicago in '81

BY BARBARA BROTMAN
Tribune reporter

"That was our bookstore and gift shop," Hedy Ratner said, pointing to Sandmeyer's Bookstore. "Which wasn't a bookstore then."

"It was a warehouse," said Ann Armstrong.

The whole building was, recalled the women standing in front of the Franklin Building, at 720 S. Dearborn St. in Printers Row.

But for five months in 1981, it was something else: the Chicago exhibition space for "The Dinner Party," the iconic feminist artwork by Judy Chicago.

The women were members of the committee that brought it here. It took them two years, cost nearly \$350,000 and involved 1,300 volunteers. They had to find a location, rehab it to house the huge installation, raise money, negotiate contracts, produce exhibition material, deal with labor unions, sell tickets and hire security.

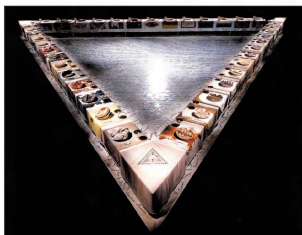
"We had to create it from scratch," said Ratner, 70, co-president of the Women's Business Development Center, who was the project's fundraising chair.

They did it. And made a profit. On Thursday night, at a dinner party of their own in the Franklin Building, they will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the exhibit and Thursday's launch of a website they made to tell how they did it.

"The Dinner Party," now on permanent display at the Brooklyn Museum in New York, is an enormous triangular banquet table with 39 place settings representing women the artist felt had been left out of history. It sits atop a tile floor with the names of another 999 overlooked women.

Thirty years ago, with its strong feminist message and its images based on female genitalia, the artwork was controversial. After its opening exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, it went into storage.

The members of the Roslyn



Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party" has found a home at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Group, a feminist book group in Chicago, read an article in the Tribune about it and decided to bring it to Chicago.

"When I think about it, I wonder how we did it," said Jean Hunt, 80, founder of the Chicago Area Women's History Council, who was the project's director. "I don't know that I would do it again. I don't know how any of us had the nerve, the guts, the willingness to do this. But we did it."

When former members of the steering committee went to the Brooklyn Museum a few years ago to see "The Dinner Party," however, they were dismayed. The exhibition "doesn't mention us," said Bette Cerf Hill, 74, an artist and the founder of the Printers Row Book Fair (now the Chicago Tribune Printers Row Lit Fest), who was the site chair.

"The whole exhibit is about women being written out of history, and here we were being written out of history," Ratner said.

Through her publicist, Judy Chicago said "it is not customary in the art world for people who help with exhibitions to receive public credit," but that she herself did so. The flyleaf of her book "The Dinner Party: From Creation to Preservation" lists people who helped exhibit and preserve the piece, including grass-roots groups in the cities that mobilized to show it. Among those credited are Hunt, Roslyn Group founder Diann DeWeese Smith and Royal Faubion, the developer who donated the site.

The Chicago group decided to save its own history. With a grant from the fund they started at the

Chicago Foundation for Women with the exhibition's \$27,000 in profits, they made a radio segment for the Women's Media Group's "The Feminist Lens" program on WFMT and built a website (DinnerPartyProjectChicago.org).

They tell how members of the Roslyn Group incorporated as the Roslyn Group for Arts and Letters and mounted the exhibit. The committee met every Tuesday night for two years. "They wanted to put women back in history, where they deserve to be," said Zoe Keithley, 76, a steering committee member who is now a writer in California. "It was righting a wrong."

Only a few of the women were paid for their work, and then not much. Their reward came when 70,000 people showed up to see "The Dinner Party," some in below-zero weather — so many that the run was extended five weeks.

"We would have busloads of people coming in from out of town, from Milwaukee, from Iowa," Hunt said.

A male art teacher who was a friend of Hill's chartered a bus from southern Illinois. He told Hill later that he didn't understand why some of the women in the group were crying on the way home.

"This was the absolute height, in a sense, of the women's movement," said Hunt, a retired teacher of history in the City Colleges of Chicago.

After the exhibit closed, the women on the steering committee remained friends. They hope the story of "The Dinner Party" in Chicago will inspire a new generation.

"Young women today, many of them ... don't want to be called feminists," said Ann Armstrong, 69, the project's fundraiser. She hopes the story of the feminists who brought "The Dinner Party" to Chicago encourages them to think otherwise.

The 30th anniversary, said Hunt, "has a sort of poignant aspect to it, in the sense that all of us have real and true concerns about the future of this country."

bbrotman@tribune.com

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BUSINESS



ABEL URIBE/TRIBUNE PHOTO

Carol Dougal, right, and Hedy Ratner, founders and co-presidents of the Women's Business Development Center, say a few words Wednesday at the organization's 25th annual conference at McCormick Place. The group helps women start and operate Chicago-area businesses.

Leaders mix substance, style



MELISSA HARRIS
Chicago Confidential

For 25 years, **Hedy Ratner** and **Carol Dougal** have been co-presidents of Chicago's Women's Business Development Center, a nonprofit that certifies and helps build women-

owned firms.

The group's annual conference Wednesday at McCormick Place drew about 2,000 attendees and pols, including Gov. **Pat Quinn**, Attorney General **Lisa Madigan**, Chicago Mayor **Rahm Emanuel** and Cook County Board President **Toni Preckwinkle**.

Ratner is easily spotted amid the suits. She's the one that, at 70, still looks and acts like a brilliantly colored but-

Women's Business Development Center celebrates its 25th year

terfly. She wears a flowing red-and-orange dress and matching, cascading jacket that appears to give her wings when she stretches out her arms. For most of the morning, the organization's long-time photographer, **Jennifer Girard**, chases after Ratner as she hops from admirer to admirer, giving hugs and accepting accolades and posing

for snapshots.

"That was extraordinary," one guest said of the breakfast panel, which included **Lynn Tilton**, the founder and CEO of Patriarch Partners and one of the wealthiest financiers on Wall Street, and **Maxine Clark**, the founder and chief executive of Build-a-Bear Workshop. "You outdid yourself," said the

next.

"I gotta tell you, I've been doing this for 25 years, and people come up to her all the time and say, 'You started me 10 years ago, 15 years ago, and I'm making millions now thanks to the Women's Business Development Center,'" Girard said. "She says, 'You're welcome,' and then she runs."

Dougal is harder to pick out in a room. Her

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Leaders mix substance, style

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one noticeable eccentricity is her strand of thick, mod-style bracelets, which clink when she moves her arm.

"Would you mind sitting down?" she asked. After Ratner had me running behind her for nearly an hour, I welcomed the break. We found two chairs in a quiet corner of the VIP area.

"She pretends like she doesn't understand money. She's lying," Dougal, 72, said of Ratner. "I pretend that I don't understand networking. I'm lying.

"But we trusted one another. And we didn't have any reason to trust but also didn't have any reason not to trust, and you can choose to trust. And we've had marvelous disagreements, interesting philosophical disagreements, but we always work it out. ...

"I think she is truly an extrovert, and I am truly an introvert, if there are such things," Dougal said. "It doesn't mean as an extrovert you can't be contemplative, or it doesn't mean as an introvert you can't be outgoing. But I replenish my soul — not my soul, that's a little ridiculous — I replenish by being alone. She replenishes by being with other people."

Dougal and Ratner's partnership is one of the longest lasting in Chicago business circles. In 25 years, the WBDC has grown from having to pull people off the street to attend its conference to an annual budget of \$2.2 million and 24 employees and consultants. Earlier this week, Emanuel announced the center would be one of four groups helping Goldman Sachs find qualified small-business owners to share in \$20 million worth of loans the bank will supply through its 10,000 Small Businesses program.

"We caught a wave, and I think we made the wave bigger, and that is the growth of women business owners," Dougal said.

The two have flourished as co-presidents because of their differences but were brought together by a similar passion. They're both proud, ardent feminists who marched at a time when marches mattered. And both were teachers. (Hard to imagine, but Ratner was once a school librarian.) But for all of Ratner's flair, what people don't know is that Dougal is probably the more outspoken of the two.

"I do have a reputation for being direct and blunt," Dougal said.

"I say (the banks) are the problem," she said. "Hedy is much more diplomatic. But they are the problem in

"We've had marvelous disagreements, interesting philosophical disagreements, but we always work it out."

— Carol Dougal

a lot of ways. But, you know, they're regulated. Particularly during the beginning of the recession, it was hard to be friendly to the banks. But not the bankers. They're parts of huge, giant, major corporations. They want to do the right thing. The bankers do."

They hope a banker, **Emilia DiMenco**, an executive vice president at Harris Bank on loan to the group, will succeed them. She is the organization's acting chief operating officer.

"You get sloppy and tired as you've been doing it for years and years. ... Our succession plan is to get more organized, have the right amount of money and go off into the sunset slowly and let Emilia take over," Dougal said.

Dougal and Ratner met shortly after Ratner returned from Washington, where she was a Department of Education political appointee during the Carter administration.

Ratner was beginning a nonprofit and sought out Dougal, then working at City Hall, for grant money. After Dougal left city government soon thereafter, she guesses she called Ratner looking for a job.

From there, they started two nonprofits. One folded and the other evolved into the Women's Business Development Center.

"We broke every rule we tell people to do," Dougal said before the conference, as she sipped coffee at 6 a.m. in her Near North Side loft condo.

Ratner said later, "It works because we're totally different people with totally different interests and a totally different set of skills. We do different things."

She stretched her arms out wide to illustrate the gulf. Then, someone entered the VIP area and diverted her attention. "I have to say hello here." And she was off.

Melissa Harris can be reached at mmharris@tribune.com or 312-222-4582. Twitter @chiconfidential