

Joyce Beaton

The forgotten generation—
women 40 to 60

Part One of a Four-Part Series

Marie-Louise L. Taylor of Burlington, an over-40 woman who has experienced first-hand the discrimination in the work force to women of this age bracket, recently conducted a survey on the subject. For the next couple of weeks I'll share with you some of her findings and her recommendations to the Federal and Provincial Governments, as well as to employers and employees.

In every instance, with the exception of one, the main problem encountered was age. The complaints with regard to age were many. One of the main ones, especially with women age 50 and over, is that there is no point in training or re-training them for any job, as it is said they only have a few years left to work.

Before a prospective employee has an opportunity to obtain an interview or an application form, she is in most cases immediately eliminated for the job as soon as her age becomes known.

Gray hair out

No chance is given for her to show what she is capable of doing. In many cases the fact that the applicant had grey hair was to her disadvantage.

Desperation has prompted many women in this age bracket to lie about their ages in order to improve their chance of being employed. This frequently works to their detriment when the discrepancy is discovered through a medical, birth certificate for a company pension plan, etc.

Old at 35

This does not only apply to the 40 to 60 age bracket, but is now becoming evident among women around 35. The practice which is becoming more and more prevalent, of hiring women on a permanent part-time basis, immediately eliminates the necessity of paying fringe benefits, such as OHIP, company pension plan, holiday pay. This leaves the employee at the beck and call of the employer, to work only when business warrants it.

Statistics garnered from the survey show it is abundantly evident that women in the 50 to 60 age bracket are bearing the brunt of age discrimination.

Further discrimination is felt concerning salary, promotion, grievances and box number.

Box numbers

Replying to a job description through a box number is apparently a major cause of frustration and depression when no reply is forthcoming. Even if an applicant is called for an interview, she is given the stock reply "we will let you know", never to hear any word one way or the other regarding the position applied for. In the meantime the applicant stays at home in case the phone should ring or a letter arrive regarding the position. After a reasonable length of time she realizes she has been passed by again.

Another major complaint is salary. In many cases the minimum wage is offered regardless of experience and inevitably it is paid to the female employee and not the male, even if both are doing similar work. In some cases the mature worker is expected to do several jobs for the one salary. There is also the practice of hiring a new employee, one with no experience, at the same salary or more than the employee presently employed is receiving.

Women are repeatedly passed by for promotion. This is often by men they have trained or are junior to them, many times at double the salary of the woman involved. In many cases, women are asked to train a new employee who then replaces them, leading to the woman's eventual lay-off.

Complaints few

As many women employees are not covered by unions who could represent them, there is no opportunity for the female employee to have her complaints investigated. There appears to be a distinct lack of liaison in many companies between the employer and the employee. Women are told they are over-experienced or under-experienced. Older women are being laid off, only to be replaced by younger women or students. To add insult to injury the older woman is the butt of jokes by younger women, to the effect they will be glad when they are rid of all the "old biddies". Apparently they don't realize that they too, like every living thing, are growing older each day.

Women often receive tactless handling by personnel managers who are not qualified to conduct interviews. Tactlessness is often shown by some employers toward the mature woman employee and frequently inefficient female supervisors. Frequently mature applicants are kept waiting an hour or more past their appointed interview time.

Women in Halton
Seventh
in a series



International
Women's Year
1975



TOASTING THEIR MOTHER on her 80th birthday were Helen Dewar's four daughters. From left are Edith, Kathryn, Helen and Mary. Not long after the picture was taken Helen Dewar retired as court reporter.

Helen Dewar 1875-1968 (Cont'd.)

Court steno until 80 lived life to fullest

By Joyce Beaton

It is amazing to note that Helen Dewar worked as a court reporter until the age of 81. More amazing is the fact that she had never taken shorthand as a school subject. She first became interested in it when as a girl she received a shorthand textbook as a present. Studying the text, she became an expert at it as a hobby.

Finally, she developed her own form of shorthand and although she used many of the regular symbols she admitted to a style "99 percent my own".

She also taught herself to type by "fooling around" with her father's typewriter. To gain speed with her new found shorthand she would practice copying down the minister's sermons at Sunday night church services.

On her own

She was quoted at the time of her retirement in 1956 as saying "I cover inquests, Magistrate's Court, County Court, Division and Surrogate Courts." The only court she didn't cover was the Supreme Court.

She commented at the time on the increased workload in the courts, saying it had increased five-fold. Helen paid tribute to her long service to Halton County as she was guest at a testimonial dinner and presentation of a television set upon her retirement.

The event was held at the home of her daughter, Kathryn Dewar, in Burlington where her four daughters and sons-in-law were head table guests. There were 70 friends from court and law circles in Halton also present.

Crown Attorney of the time Lloyd Dingle said the dinner had been planned to show respect and appreciation of those who had been associated with her in her work during these years.

A poet as well as business and community woman, Helen Dewar wrote this last entry in a scrap book she kept of her news clippings:

Fond memory will paint those by-gone days
With colors that never will fade.
And I know that I'll sigh
As the years go by
For the work I have loved
And the friends I have made.
She died in Milton at age 93 after a full life of service to her career, her family and her community.

More important, she aspired to her full potential as a woman.

—Newlyweds are reminded the deadline for submitting a photo and story on the wedding for publication in The Champion is ONE MONTH after the wedding.

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GO Transit plan

GO Transit is making progress along the path towards providing rail commuter service between Toronto's Union Station and Streetsville, Meadowdale and Milton.

A spokesman says the Toronto Area Transportation Authority will award contracts this month for the construction of as many as 80 double-decker coaches for the GO Transit Lakeshore run. The cost is about \$40 million.

He says that when the new coaches start arriving in the fall of 1977, the equipment now in use on the Lakeshore run will be freed for the new Toronto-Milton GO service.

The spokesman says the new line could start operating in late 1977 or early 1978 if everything goes well.

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MR. AND MRS. WILLY CEELAN
nee Marian Vanderheyden

Wedding

Ceelen - Vanderheyden

Willy Ceelen and Marian Vanderheyden were married July 19 in Holy Rosary Church. The double-ring ceremony was conducted by Father J. J. Murphy with music by the Holy Rosary Folk Choir.

Marian is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Vanderheyden of 7460 Appleby Line, Milton. Willy is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Ceelen of 4266 Henderson Rd., Milton. He is a welder with Great West Steel in Mississauga.

Sharon Gallant was maid of honor with Cora Verkaik, Bianca Vanderheyden and Beverly Ketelaars as bridesmaids. Flower girl was Dianne Van Moorsel.

The best man was Jack Jarvis with ushers Henry Ceelen, Ed Vanderheyden and Joe Vanderheyden. Kevin Vanderheyden was the ring bearer.

Guests from Holland A dinner and dance was held in Holy Rosary Parish Hall following the wedding ceremony. The wedding cake

was made by the groom's mother as were the bridal party dresses. The master of ceremonies was Bill Brouwers, the bride's uncle.

The couple honeymooned in the Thousand Islands and Ottawa. They are living in Milton.

Out-of-town guests included Dr. Branstater from Cedoke Hospital in Hamilton, Willy's grandmother and four cousins from Holland.

Showers were given by Sharon Gallant, Mrs. Tracey, Mrs. Kaks, Corrie Brouwers, Nellie Brouwers, Mrs. Norrington, Mrs. Skrab, Beverly Ketelaars. Stags were held by Jack Jarvis and Dave Bousfield.

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