

Dayna Lynn Fried
Masters Report
November 1985

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF
Arizona Women Journalists

Contents:

Introduction	page 1
Billie Yost	page 6
Ester Clark	page 10
Thelma Heatwole	page 15
Pearl Newmark	page 19
Maggie Wilson	page 22
Joanne Ralson	page 26
Ginger Hutton	page 29
Lois Boyles	page 34
Marsha Sielaff	page 37
Mary Jane Shoun	page 40
Bibliography	page 44

Cranking it out in longhand, from a typewriter or working from a computer terminal, Arizona's women journalists have gotten their messages across.

Throughout the years, they have covered fires, fashion, and even fighting in Vietnam.

"We dealt with reporting and its shortcomings just like the men did," said Esther Clark, who spent 26 years as a military reporter for the Phoenix Gazette.

Clark, like other female reporters, complained of a second class salary, but eventually realized that in her chosen profession, she never was going to get rich. Still, she stuck with it, others longer than she did.

Out in newsrooms 30 years ago -- where high-powered lights blazed on rows of cluttered desks, where the city editor often yelled, phones jangles and tickers clicked, no more than three women could be found at times working among the men.

In 1940, the U.S. Census Bureau showed 54 women employed as full-time journalists in Arizona, compared to 138 men. By the end of the decade that number had doubled to 87 women and 109 men.

World War II opened doors to females in Arizona. With male reporters in the armed forces, they moved into new jobs in the city room, into radio jobs in programming, production and on-the-air spots.

But most women were confined to the women's pages or to feature writing in the 1940s and 50s. Few managed to break into the masculine preserve of "hard news," covering crime, politics, courts, government or general assignments -- or even to gain a seat at the copy or city desk where decisions were made on news content.

One who proved different was Clark. She spent four months in Vietnam as a war correspondent for the Gazette. Another was Lois Boyles, now city editor of the Gazette.

For a time, both were the only females working in the newsroom, but they never gave it much thought.

"Frequently, they sent me to cover murders, and no one -- that is, none of the male cops -- ever blinked an eye because I was a woman, so I didn't either," Boyles said.

The women who went the farthest in journalism were not the ones who cried the loudest about their rights. Peace at any price seemed to be the best philosophy.

"You just tried to stay quiet and do your work," said Maggie Wilson, 59, who worked for 30 years as a reporter for the Arizona Republic, which has the largest circulation in Arizona.

Many made no demands on their city editors. Most were self-taught journalists and did not have any formal education. A few would gladly work for nothing, just to be given the chance to write. They rarely ever fussed about salaries, which averaged between \$25 a week in the 1940s to \$100 a week in the early 1960s. A week often lasted six days, not the usual five.

Arizona's women journalists were seldom lazy. They worked hard and were careful about accuracy. Thelma Heatwole, 73, a reporter now retired from the Republic, summed it up, by saying. "The tradition of sloppy work died hard and quick."

The history of women journalists in Arizona is not well-known. However, some historical communicators stand out. One of them was Angela Hutchinson Hammer, a newspaper publisher who moved here in the 1880's and piloted several newspapers in the territory, including the Wickenburg

Miner and News-Herald, both in Wickenburg, Eagle's Eye in Wendon, News in Salome, Times in Bouse, Swansea Times in Swansea, Casa Grande Dispatch in Casa Grande, and Messenger in Phoenix.

Hammer remained in the newspaper business until her death in 1955.

Anna Moore Shaw, born on the Gila Indian Reservation before the turn of the century, recorded the legends of the Pima Indians. She was a writer and social worker.

Anna Blount Anderson left teaching for a reporting job at the Gazette in 1915, where she put out the newspaper's first women's pages and because the staff was so small, covered federal courts and the water company as part of her daily beat.

Later, she worked for the Tucson Daily Citizen, Miami Bulletin, and helped her husband, T.W.B. Anderson, a reporter, publish the Arizona News, a weekly tabloid that covered the state's political scene.

Billie Williams Yost covered almost every beat on the Coconino Sun in Flagstaff, later to become the Arizona Daily Sun. She worked at the newspaper from 1935 until retiring from full-time work in 1984.

Among managers was Nina Pulliam, publisher of the Arizona Republic and Phoenix Gazette, from 1975 until she retired in 1978.

Mary Lou Bessette was named assistant managing editor of the Republic in 1983. Lois Boyles has been city editor of the Gazette since 1982. She was the first woman honored with the Virg Hill Award in 1975. The award is given annually by the Arizona Press Club for outstanding reporting.

In 1980, Marsha Sielaff was hired as the first woman editorial writer for the Gazette, a job that has been dominated for decades by men.

After World War II, the number of women entering journalism in

Arizona continued to increase, although editors still didn't give them many opportunities to handle the same kinds of stories as the men.

"You covered whatever beat you could get," recalled Wilson, who covered a variety of news and feature beats for the Republic.

It wasn't until the 1980s that the number of women journalists took a giant leap forward toward closing the number gap in the newsroom. The 1980 census showed 978 women reporters and editors in Arizona and 991 males.

In the U.S. populations as a whole that same year, 103,88 women were employed as editors or reporters compared with 106,942 males.

That is a far cry from 1870, the first year the U.S. Census listed journalists by gender and occupation, when only 35 of the reported total of 5,286 were women. By 1880, the number had increased to 288 out of 12,308 and by 1900 to 2,138 out of a total 30,098. These statistics list only those who made their living solely from journalism, omitting many who contributed editorial content on a regular basis, but were not considered full-time employees.

Presently, women have found their way onto both small newspapers and large ones in Arizona, where they hold titles of assistant managing editor, city editor, feature editor, copy desk chief, and assistant city editor. But women haven't gained total equality yet, at least at the state's two largest dailies.

Today, the Republic has 35 female reporters on staff compared with 61 males, according to Samuel L. Perkins, an employee analyst for the Republic and Gazette. The Gazette has 27 female reporters and 40 males. Female copy editors at the Republic total 14, while males number 45. At the Gazette only four females hold the title of copy editor compared with 20 males.

Even the gender of editors is far from equal at the two papers. The Republic has six female editors in a management capacity and 32 males, while the Gazette has nine female editors and 11 males.

"Journalism has always been a male-oriented profession and only recently are women entering the market," Perkins said. "Here, it is a slower moving process, but we are catching up. As males retire and leave their jobs they are being replaced by more women."

Although females in Arizona haven't caught up completely with their male counterparts, they still run newspapers, write editorials, report on politics and foreign affairs, create features, do criticism and sports writing, as well as the old standbys -- compile club calendars and social news.

Women have slowly invaded every branch of the business in Arizona and in greater numbers. They stop only at the political cartoon. They have arrived in a convincing way, have better hours and far better pay. The ten women journalists profiled here are only a fraction of them.

BILLIE YOST

Billie Yost's journalism career began by accident in 1927. But by the time she retired last year, she had chronicled much of the day-to-day history of her time.

"I guess I've been around for quite a while," Yost, 78, said during an interview in the living room of her Flagstaff home. Yost, born Bernetta L. Williams in 1907 and nicknamed Billie by her father, grew up 45 miles northwest of Winslow, on the Navajo Reservation.

She believes she may be best known for her book Bread Upon the Sands, which gives an account of her early life in the broad and unsettled country of northern Arizona. Published in 1958 and now out of print, the book tells of her close family life, a cattle stampede, a 1917 smallpox epidemic and the murder of a neighboring trader by two Indians and of the burning of his trading post to cover the crime.

"I love to write. It's part of me, a part of my life," she said.

She began her newspaper career as the society editor for the Winslow Mail.

"I had never been in a newspaper office in my life," she said. "My brother Roy was in Winslow and heard they were looking for a bookkeeper. I was hired for the job, and before long they taught me how to write. I never had any formal journalism training."

In 1935, Yost moved to Flagstaff to write for the Coconino Sun and its successor the Arizona Daily Sun, until her retirement from full-time work a year ago.

"I covered everything for the newspaper -- hard news, human interest stories, even obituaries," she said. "I wrote everything they asked me to write with a starting salary of \$25 a week. Even in those

days, that wasn't much money."

Her work week lasted six days and because the newspaper staff was small, Yost wrote local news and stories that had a broader scope.

"My first major interview was with Eleanor Roosevelt. I was green as a gourd over the assignment. I didn't want to embarrass myself."

Roosevelt was en route to meet her husband, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in Williams. She "was dressed in an awful black suit, a dowdy hat and worst of all, she had a run in her stocking," Yost recalled.

"My first impression was how homely she looked and how tacky she dressed.

"But she was very nice to me. We talked about the Depression and how the president would try to find a way to bring the country out of it."

Another one of Yost's unforgettable interviews was with actor Clark Gable, who had flown to northern Arizona to meet a friend.

"I recognized him immediately. And yes, he was very handsome. The only disappointment was his height. He was much taller than I."

Yost, with her head of curly, white hair, stands 5-foot-8. During the interview with Gable, she wore high heels, matching his 5-foot-10 stature.

Not all her news gathering experiences were bright ones, though.

"During World War 11, my editor sent me to cover a military jet (experimental) that had crashed in the San Francisco Peaks during a snow storm. The weather was so bad, they couldn't locate the bodies until the mountain thawed out in spring."

Another time, Yost was sent to cover a train crash 15 miles outside of Flagstaff.

"I got this call in the middle of the night. The Sante Fe Chief had crashed. I rushed out to my car to drive over there and soon realized

I had no gas. It was wartime then and everything was rationed.

"I went over to the sheriff's office and got a deputy to give me a lift."

Yost's work with newspapers got her elected state president of Arizona Press Women and she was named Arizona Press Woman of the Year in 1968.

But that wasn't the only title she has held over the years.

In 1927, she won the Miss northern Arizona beauty contest, and in 1928 she was Miss Navajo in the Second Annual Bathing Suit Review.

A later contest in 1967 won her the post of Clerk of the Superior Court. She retired as clerk in 1975.

Yost's early life was filled with adventure.

At age 7, she moved with her family to the Red Lake Trading Post, which at that time could be reached only by wagon roads, "that were no more glorified than cow trails."

Her father, trader William Williams, served both Navajo and Hopi Indians from 1914 to 1929. He hired private teachers to tutor Yost, her two brothers and her sister, until they reached high school age. The sisters attended high school in Winslow and also played on the school's basketball team.

"That was the most education I got, before joining the Winslow Mail, " Yost said.

The Red Lake Trading Post carried an assortment of goods, including sugar, stick candy, coffee, canned food, calico, saddles, wagons, thread, needles and dyes. The Indians traded silver jewelry, wool, rugs, cattle, sheep and goat skins for these items.

"We also offered red soda pop in bottles. You couldn't get it in cans in those days."

Occasionally, the family was asked to supply more than material necessities.

One winter her mother, Gertrude Williams, was called to help an Indian woman in labor. She gave birth to twins.

Another time, the family was sent for to bury an Indian medicine man killed by lightning.

"We fed the Navajos and often buried their dead," Yost said, explaining that the people were superstitious about death.

"The Indian who was struck by lightning had been dead for seven days. None of his people would touch him because they were afraid to go near a dead person. So they came to my father, the Indian trader, and he buried him for free."

Yost married Flagstaff native Ernest J. Yost in the late 1930s. Now deceased, he served for seven years as a Coconino County deputy sheriff. The couple built their home in what was then the outskirts of Flagstaff, which now is near the center of town.

"Things certainly have changed and I guess I've grown along with them."

ESTER CLARK

Ester Clark was a modern-day Nellie Bly who established many daring firsts during her career as a military reporter for the Phoenix Gazette.

Among other things, she was the first newswoman to fly in an Air Force jet, the first to crack the sound barrier, the first to ride a jet along the Iron Curtain and the first to spend a day at sea aboard an nuclear submarine.

In 1966 she became the Gazette's first war correspondent in Vietnam.

"I'm an adventurous woman who has worked in places most females would never dream of," Clark, 74, said. She compared herself to Bly (Elizabeth Cochrane Seaman) who became a legendary figure for her daring exploits as a reporter for the New York World during the 19th century.

In 1953, Clark became the first woman reporter in Arizona to cover the execution of a 28-year-old man convicted of murdering his wife and two children.

"Fundamentally, I'm opposed to capital punishment," she said. "I knew it wouldn't be pleasant, but at the same time I knew I wasn't the fainting type and wouldn't pass out and embarrass the warden."

Clark probably would have undertaken other daring feats and firsts, but her editors said no.

To date, she has flown more than 10,000 miles in her quest for news.

"My job as a reporter has always meant asking questions and taking down notes, but that's not all there is to covering the news," she said.

"A good reporter must have skills to translate what she sees and hears. She should have an interest in people and, most importantly, have compassion.

"Without that, she can't have any self-respect," Clark said. "Compassion implies an understanding for someone else's problem."

Clark retired from the Gazette in 1972 but occasionally free-lances for military journals, because as she explained, "I have this need I must fulfill."

To most people, she is a reporter with a career gilded with glamour, one who has won many writing and military awards, including the U.S. Marine Corps League's Dickey Chapelle Award, presented annually in memory of a journalist who was killed while on patrol with a company of marines in Vietnam.

But there is another side of Clark that is virtually shielded from the public. One that received no headlines or awards.

It is her devotion to journalism and to her family and friends.

"She is a dying breed," Arizona Republic newsman John Dougherty said. "They don't make them like her anymore."

Clark left a teaching career to take her first job as a reporter for the Denver Catholic Register, a small weekly newspaper in Colorado. From there, her byline topped stories ranging from human interest to ones on raging wars.

Clark moved to Phoenix in 1944 with her husband of 35 years. Frank Clark died in 1970. The couple had no children.

"I actually got hired first by the Republic, but worked there only 10 days," she said. "My mother got sick suddenly and I had to quit and go home to take care of her."

Clark left Phoenix and headed home to Denver. But she soon

returned and was hired by the Gazette in 1945. She worked there for 26 years.

"They hired me during wartime," she recalled. "I don't know if they took pity on me because I needed a job or because of the sparse employment in the newsroom. Everyone there was either too old to go to war or too sick."

Clark, who has an associate degree from a small college in Denver, covered courts, city government and military affairs for the Gazette.

"Newspapering in those days was real fun," she said. "There was a camaraderie that just doesn't exist today. I was a greenhorn, but the guys were all real fair and supportive of me."

Of all her exploits, covering the Vietnam War made the most fascinating headlines.

Clark spent four months as a war correspondent, arriving home on Christmas Day 1966.

Her daily dispatches to the Gazette (sent via airmail) ranged from stories of individual heroism to the human side of servicemen's lives and sometimes their deaths. She filed more than 100 stories on the war (all written on a portable typewriter) and gave nearly 200 talks about the trip when she returned.

"I lectured until I got the nerve to say, 'No thanks, no more.' There was only so much I wanted to talk about."

Clark covered the local angle by interviewing many of the hundreds of Arizonans assigned to duty with the Army, Navy and Marines in South Vietnam. Much of her writing also revealed the plight of civilians caught in the war.

"My first impressions were how beautiful the country was and how

kind the people were," she said. "But there was a sad side too. After all, it was a war.

"I'd go out after dark and see entire families sleeping on sidewalks because they had no where else to go."

Clark stayed at a Marine base in Da Nang, but from there she traveled throughout South Vietnam, living for a short time in a hotel.

"My headquarters for the most part were in a former French brothel," she said. "There were four beds in the women's quarters, which were covered with mosquito netting. It mostly kept the cockroaches away, roaches so big you could saddle them. Life there wasn't easy."

It was often depressing too, she said.

"I remember visiting a leper colony operated by a Protestant ministry. Some of the lepers didn't have any hands, noses or ears. The night I visited, it was so cold, one of them put his foot in a fire and said he couldn't feel the heat."

Life during those four months had its share of uncertainty.

"You never knew when you were going to get it over there," Clark said, referring to some close calls she had with the Viet Cong. "But you couldn't think about being killed or you would crack up."

Even her return trip home had its memories.

"I remember being at the airport and seeing all those coffins stacked up, waiting to be shipped home. I got on the aircraft and realized at one end were all those dead bodies, dead soldiers, all wrapped in plastic. As the helicopter shook in the air, so did the bodies. They looked alive."

A series of articles written after Clark's return from Vietnam led to the dismissal of the conviction of Green Beret Capt. John J. McCarthy Jr., who had been charged with murder in the shooting of a

Cambodian double agent. He was court martialed and imprisoned.

"McCarthy came to Phoenix to visit his parents, and I knew I had to interview him," she recalled. "Afterwards, I spent three weeks going through trial transcripts that weighed five pounds on my bathroom scale. I knew he was innocent."

Clark said the series came close to winning a Pulitzer Prize.

"But even more than that it gave me something worthwhile to work for, a career I wouldn't trade for anything else in the world."

THELMA HEATWOLE

Reporting for a daily newspaper as been Thelma Heatwole's job, profession and constant quest for truth for more than 40 years.

"Sometimes I wonder why I still do it and at my age." Heatwole, 73, said.

But then she picks up a current issue of the Arizona Republic, sees her bylined story, meticulously researched and carefully written, and knows why.

"I never wanted to do anything else but write."

Although retired from full-time employment at the Republic since 1978, Heatwole is still writing. She free-lances and is working on her third book, which is about small towns in Arizona.

"I didn't include famous places like the Grand Canyon," she said. "The book is about small, out-of-the-way places and hideaways like Quartzsite; Toroweap, a point over~~l~~ooking the Colorado River, and Honeymoon in eastern Arizona."

Heatwole published her first book, Ghost Towns and Historical Haunts of Arizona, in 1981 and Arizona: Off the Beaten Path a year later.

Her newspaper career began in 1947 after she submitted a story to the Glendale Herald about her son David's fourth birthday party.

"The editor sent me home with a stack of copy paper, and I haven't been without it ever since," she said.

For 10 years she wrote a column, "Around the Square" for the Herald, a newspaper that no longer exists, and also covered local news.

Later she became a correspondent for the Phoenix Gazette, and stringer for the Arizona Republic and covered news in the suburbs of

Glendale, Peoria, Sun City, Youngstown, Avondale, Goodyear, Tolleson and El Mirage, plus Luke Air Force Base, west of Phoenix.

"There were times when I covered three city council or school board meetings in one night, one in person and two by phone."

Knowing the right contacts helped, she said.

"I went out to those places and met all the right people, people I could turn to for information." Her husband, Don, who was Glendale's fire chief for 23 years before retiring 12 years ago, offered a definite advantage in gaining access to the news.

"I got in on a lot of things because of him. Often I had first crack at the news."

It was Glendale's biggest fire in history that helped Heatwole make a mark in journalism.

The Southwest Flour and Feed Co. building, which was a block wide, caught fire in the middle of the night.

"It was terrifying and all you could hear were the rustling of flames."

Heatwole's photographh of that memorable experience won her a national photography award. It pictured a man's unsuccessful attempt to escape the fire by grabbing onto a window ledge.

"The Republic editors argued all night about running it, but finally they did."

By the time the rest of the media arrived, it was daylight and the only thing left to photograph was the steaming skeleton of the building.

"To get the picture," one Glendale fireman commented. "You would have had to be an arsonist or the wife of the fire chief."

Heatwole has been honored with more than 100 journalism awards

from Arizona Press Women, an organization of which she is a charter member, and the Arizona Press Club. One of them was for a story she would rather not have written.

It involved her son David who was lost in the desert on a hunting expedition as a teen-ager.

"The radio kept repeating, 'David Heatwole is still missing,' " she explained, her eyes misting with tears at the memory.

Every available member of the Glendale Police and Fire Departments who were not on duty became an instant volunteer.

Heatwole's prize-winning story was written not from the view of an experienced newspaper reporter but rather that of a grateful mother.

"Reporting is not always nice. It's certainly not any job for a shrinking violet."

Heatwole recalled some of the more traumatic stories she has covered over the years, including one she wrote about seven people who died in a head-on collision near Wittmann. She also wrote about a funeral service for 17 Mexican nationals who died in a flaming bus wreckage on Baseline Road and photographed the body of a young sheriff's deputy and then interviewed the mother of the man accused of killing him.

"You try not to get emotional because you have to get the story and get it right," she said.

There have been upbeat stories too. What about the overprivileged canine in Glendale that had a charge account?

That's right, the springer spaniel named Junior, who parked his floppy paws on the curb each day.

"The driver would give him an ice cream bar, note the account and present the bill at the end of the week to the dog's owner for payment."

There are memories of other articles, she said, "but

unfortunately, the stories that stay with you the most are the tragic, gross and graphic ones."

Heatwole, nominated by Arizona Press Wommen in 1984 for Woman of Achievement, said that the epitaph on her tombstone should read, "She believed in people's right to know."

Heatwole said, "Being a member of the press has been my life; it's a passport to adventure."

PEARL NEWMARK

For 20 years, Pearl Newmark grabbed her share of the publishing market with the Greater Phoenix Jewish News, a prospering religious-oriented press in the Phoenix area.

"It's a community newspaper," said Newmark, who is its senior editor. "Our primary goal is to provide a chronicle of the community."

Newmark and her husband, Cecil, purchased the News in 1961 and published the tabloid for two decades. In 1981, their daughter Florence Eckstein, and her husband Paul, a lawyer, assumed ownership.

The News was founded in 1948 by M.B. Goldman, Jr.

"We bought it basically as a means to support our family," Newmark said. "I wasn't sure it was the kind of business I wanted to be involved in, but I knew the Jewish community in Phoenix well. I grew up here."

Newmark was born in Harrisburg, Pa., but moved to the Valley when she was 6 years old.

She attended grammar and high school in Phoenix and the University of Arizona in Tucson, where she majored in English. She didn't graduate from college. Instead she went to business school in Phoenix and took a job as a legal secretary, prior to getting married.

"I was a woman of the 1980's in the 1950's," she said. "I couldn't wait to get out of the house and back to work again."

In 1961, the paper's circulation was 800. "We built it up and got it going," Newmark said, explaining that Cecil took care of the administrative end and she ran the editorial department.

Newmark said the News now reaches about 7,000 of the Valley's 185,000 Jewish homes. She credits its growth to "hard work and a good

staff" of 20 and to the fact, "this is one of the fastest growing areas in the country."

The News, is one of 200 Jewish community papers in the United States and Canada. It is heavy on the "cradle to grave stuff," blended with local news, features, opinion and social news, in addition to national and international news and analysis supplied by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and World Zionist News Service, two Jewish news services.

"We've always tried to give people in the (Jewish) community a voice, to supply them with information they wouldn't get in a daily newspaper," Newmark said.

The newspaper's speciality is local features about Jewish leaders, religious issues and activities in the community.

One issue led with a feature about a gay Jewish group, whose members assemble to celebrate religious holidays, have potluck dinners and discuss political issues. Another edition included an editorial on interfaith marriages and an article on Phoenix Mayor Terry Goddard's trip to Israel, where he participated in the Jewish Congress.

"We are often the only way to provide a link between people who make up the Jewish community," she said.

"Editorially, I always strive for fact and fairness, and Florence still does. We really try hard to strive for balance."

The News is a vehicle for advertisers and handles all its ads in an in-house advertising department.

"It's a good way for businesses to place their ads where they will be seen by a select group."

Ads featuring kosher delis, retirement communities, religious bookstores and Jewish caterers appear frequently in the paper.

The News moved to a weekly publication schedule in October 1984 after 38 years as a biweekly. The masthead changed years ago, adding the word "greater" to the title.

"We changed it so people in outlying areas would feel more a part of it."

Despite her years of involvement with the paper, Newmark and her husband came to the News with no real journalism experience.

"We were self-taught and had to learn from the ground up," she said. "I started just like everyone else in this field, writing obits. Then I gained a sensitivity for other things.

"I found out that a journalism degree doesn't always mean that much."

When Newmark first took over, she spent most of her time reporting, writing editorials and doing layout.

"I cleaned toilets and desks. Around here, I did just about everything."

Today, she spends most of her time editing local features.

Newmark is also executive director of the Arizona Jewish Historical Society, which has a membership of 200, and a member of Arizona Press Women. The paper is affiliated with the Jewish Newspaper Association and Arizona Newspaper Association.

She and Cecil have two other children; Diane, a social worker, and Steven, a lawyer.

"I'm proud of my life, my kids and my involvement in the Jewish community," she said. "I am an Arizonan and American and a Jew. The issues that are important to everyone else are also important to me."

MAGGIE WILSON

Maggie Wilson, a reporter for the Arizona Republic for more than 30 years, can give only one reason why she chose journalism as her lifelong career.

"I'm not sure, but I suppose genetics had something to do with it," Wilson, 59, said.

Wilson was referring to her brother Martin Houseman, who like herself, is a reporter. He writes for the San Diego Union and spent years covering Latin American affairs for United Press International.

"My brother and I learned to read at 3 and write at 5," said Wilson, who was born in Globe, Ariz. "I guess we were both destined to have bylines."

Wilson retired from the Phoenix daily in 1981 but still free-lances for magazines. Her work has appeared in Arizona Highways, Modern Brides, and America West.

"My best writing has yet to come. I haven't written it yet, but I'm going to," she said. "There is no back to the future for me. The future is dead ahead and full of promise."

At 14, Wilson was studying journalism at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

"My father didn't believe in education for women. He felt we should all get married and have kids. But my mother shut him up. Then she went to fight the registrar's office to get me into school," said Wilson, explaining why she enrolled at an early age.

"I think she was tired of me, a sick kid who demanded all her time."

At 11, Wilson became paralyzed from rheumatic fever. Unable to

move her legs, she remained in bed and read to keep up with her studies. "I guess I got real far ahead."

The paralysis wasn't permanent, and she went on to college. After graduation she returned to Globe and worked for a radio station.

"One day my father came into my bedroom and told me to pack my bags. He said he found me a job at Sunkist (Corp.) in California. He sent me off on the bus, but as soon as it stopped in Phoenix, I knew I was going to get off."

Wilson said she was immediately hired at the Republic.

"It was wartime and women were all they could get. They had to take me."

As one of three women on staff, she was assigned to the women's section and entertainment department. "I was writing 10 columns a week under four different bylines."

Steve Bowman was a name Wilson chose because she thought it sounded weird. Emma Green was her mother's maiden name. "Matilda something or other was the third byline. I used that one for book reviews."

Eugene Pulliam, publisher of the Republic and Phoenix Gazette from 1946 until his death in 1975, did not want anyone to have more than one byline for each edition, Wilson said.

"Since we had a small staff, I had to make them up."

Wilson got married after a few years on the staff and left the Republic to give birth to her two children, Wendy, now 31, and Wyatt, 29. Her marriage ended in divorce in 1975.

Upon returning to work, she was assigned to the Phoenix Gazette. "I started out like everyone else writing obits and stories about water."

Soon after, she was assigned to cover police and legislative

beats.

Wilson quit her job a second time to move with her family to San Diego. When she moved back again, she joined the Republic's staff.

"When I wasn't quitting, it seemed like I was always getting fired. I quit four times, and if that old boy Pulliam had counted them up, he probably would have fired me again just to keep it even."

Wilson was fired the first time after writing a negative review of a play given by a theater group. Pulliam owned stock in the theater company.

"He became unglued over reading my review," she said. "He always fired me for nutty, little stuff like that."

Another time Wilson wrote a column about the reactions of local radio personalities to a tornado prediction given by the U.S. Weather Bureau. The column appeared on the same day as an editorial describing radio broadcasters as entertainers incapable of disseminating news.

Although Wilson and her publisher "got on each other's nerves," she regarded him with respect.

"He was benevolent but stern and demanding. He took care of us like a family.

"When a guy in the sports department got cancer, Pulliam flew him to a Texas hospital for treatment. This was before the days of medical insurance."

Wilson's favorite assignments as a reporter were those that took her to remote corners of Arizona.

"With all that traveling I did, I don't think there is a single town where I couldn't call up someone and say, 'What's happening?' "

She never turned in an expense account for those travels "because I was afraid if management knew what it actually cost to sleep

under an apricot tree at a Hopi ceremonial, they would make me a desk-bound pronto."

Wilson's last assignment before retiring from the Republic was writing a column about the art community in Scottsdale. She is still recognized as an expert in Indian arts and crafts.

Of her years of coverage of state and local news, she said reporting has not changed that much.

"It's all the same. Everything is so immediate, so daily. Tomorrow comes and you're on to something else."

JOANNE RALSTON

After spending two hours in one of Joanne Ralston's two Phoenix offices, you get the feeling she can handle almost anything.

The phone rings not once, but two dozen times. Each call is answered with a cool certainty.

"It never seems to quit," said Ralston of the constant interruptions.

Ralston is head of Joanne Ralston & Associates, Inc., which she said is Arizona's largest independent public relations firm.

"I run this business like a battleship," she said. "We don't have time here for office bickering. We're aggressive, no nonsense and highly professional."

Ralston, 47, originally Joanne Smoot, is from an old Arizona family of farmers and ranchers. A third generation Arizona resident, she said she would never leave Phoenix.

"I've had some super, six figure job offers in New York and Washington, (D.C.), but I'd rather be here. I don't know if I could survive a big city."

What interests Ralston about public relations is the feeling of accomplishment she gets after completing a project.

"In PR you put a campaign together and see it right through to the end. It's a short course MBA. There is an ability to learn and that fascinates me."

In 1960, after graduating from Arizona State University in Tempe, Ralston went to work for the Arizona Republic in Phoenix. She said she was one of two women in the newsroom.

"I covered the whole gamut for two years and then decided I'd

had enough. I was tired of writing a story once and then it was done.

"Also, there was no way I could move up. They just didn't put women in managment positions in those days."

Ralston left the Republic in 1962 after working on a number of reporting beats including government, politics, feature and business writing. She joined the Patton Agency, an advertising agency and added a public relations division to the firm.

Ralston married Ken Patton, who owned the company, but the marriage ended in divorce and she left the agency. A subsequent 10-year marriage to Joe Ralston, a prominent Phoenix lawyer, also ended in divorce.

Ralston opened her firm in 1971, specializing in public relations in its many facets -- corporate image counseling, promotion, publicity and lobbying. She has been a registered Arizona lobbyist for 12 years, serving clients on issues dealing with real estate, auto emission legislation and groundwater codes.

She cites the hours and demands of the job, saying, "It isn't 9 to 5. If a crisis develops you stick around until the problem is over. By the same notion, if you aren't doing anything, you leave.

"I have many days when all hell breaks loose," she said. "It's a lot like working on a city desk."

The company's 42 clients include Del E. Webb Corp., Arizona Highways, Arizona Homeowners Association, Ralston Purina, Bank of Boston and the controversial Camelback Esplanade, a project for which office space is being sought on Camelback Road in Phoenix by developer J. Fife Symington 111.

The firm has also handled 89 political campaigns, "and only lost five of them.

"No two of my accounts are alike. It's real diversified, which makes it fun," she said. "Most of the time public relations is doing what is right and then taking credit for it."

Ralston has 19 employees on the payroll and 37 free-lancers. She usually hires people who have worked in the media before, because, "we don't have time to teach writing here."

"We're all inquisitive and keep probing around, but at the same time you have to be able to know when something isn't there."

Ralson said her production department is headed by a former marine sargeant. "That should tell you we get things done around here."

She said the firm is highly profitable, but declined to say exactly how much money she earns a year. Instead, she simply gestures around her peach colored office, high in a building on North Central Avenue with a full view of downtown, and said, "I make plenty."

GINGER HUTTON

Ginger Hutton, a columnist who explores the problems of ordinary people, started her career earlier than most and has held on to it for nearly 35 years.

"I had three main talents at age 11. I could draw, act and write," Hutton, a columnist for the Arizona Republic said. "I stuck with writing because it seemed the most practical. There's nothing else I'd rather do."

Hutton writes a column that appears four times a week in the Republic .

At 14, she was hired to write a column about teen-age concerns in the Roundup, a weekly newspaper once published in south Phoenix. But the news gathering didn't stop there. At 16, she was named correspondent for the Republic and Phoenix Gazette .

She said these first lessons in reporting taught her how to observe people and ask questions, giving her experience in writing columns today.

Hutton became the first woman president of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, Valley of the Sun Chapter in 1975. She was named outstanding woman by the Phoenix Chapter of American Women in Radio and Television in 1984.

A collection of her personal columns, titled Reflections -- Thoughts on Love and Living was published in 1980 by the Republic. The book is in its third printing and has sold more than 12,000 copies. A second collection of columns, Loving Together, was published by the Republic in 1982.

"There was never any doubt in my mind what I wanted to do, from

those first lines of poetry to the books I wrote."

After two years of college, Hutton's career mushroomed.

"I was working as editor for Bear Tracks ,Phoenix College's student newspaper," she recalled. "One day my adviser got a phone call from UPI. An editor there asked if we had a man about 35 years old who had experience and wanted a job. My adviser said no, but he knew of a 19-year-old woman with no experience."

In 1959 Hutton became the first woman reporter ever hired by United Press International for its Phoenix bureau.

"At the beginning, I was still writing all my stories longhand and then typing them," she said. "One day an editor asked me what I was doing. Before I replied, he grabbed my note pad, tore it up and told me from then on to type everything on the typewriter."

That year Hutton won an award for a feature story she had written for the wire service.

"It was good training," she said of her job with UPI. "I had to learn to write short, clear and concise sentences and stories. Sometimes I had to write the same story with four or five different leads."

In the 1960s she worked for the Glendale News in Glendale, and then the Phoenix Gazette, covering courts, education, economy and features.

"I learned how to write the fiction side of life along with the news."

While home rearing her two children, a daughter Kim, now 24, and Rick, 21, Hutton wrote stories for both national and local markets. She returned to the Republic in 1969 to write "The Pace Makers," a column about the women's movement.

"It was about women who were making it in men's jobs and what

impact that had on society."

In 1970 "At the Capitol," a column that searched the human side of lawmakers and the laws they passed, was born. Hutton wrote it for five years.

"After covering five legislative sessions, I felt that politics really did have a human side to it."

In 1973, she was named assistant editor of the Women's Forum, a feature section in the Republic, and four years later she was promoted to editor of the section. Under her direction, the section name was changed to Forum. "And the typical women's interest stories so popular in the 1950s and 60s, began to give way to an insightful section that analyzed the daily news," Hutton said.

"We tried to give readers information to help them cope with anything from child-rearing and rape to economic problems."

Hutton's personal column, "Reflections," was created in 1975. Later the name "Reflections" was dropped.

"I went back to college for a while to study psychology, and I guess the column developed to satisfy my need to help people," Hutton, 45, explained. "It is the perfect expression for me."

In January 1980, she resigned as editor of Forum to write the column full-time.

"I had to choose between managing and writing, and I realized there was really no choice. Managing was challenging, but writing was a high. I can't imagine doing anything else that gives me more satisfaction."

The column, now 10 years old, has heart, humor and personality. It celebrates people, their successes, failures and joys.

"It's about living and loving," Hutton said. "It is meant to

create a better understanding of people so they have a greater understanding of themselves."

At first, the column wasn't well received. The Republic management felt it, "just wasn't journalism," Hutton recalled.

"My boss at the time said it embarrassed the hell out of him to read about those kinds of feelings in a newspaper," she said. "We had Dear Abby and Erma (Bombeck), but no one had ever written anything that dealt with personal feelings before."

Hutton said that some people today still object to the column, "because it doesn't deal with Mafia stories or city council meetings.

"They call it schmalty and corny. But in defense I feel what I'm writing is about issues everyone can relate to.

"If I'm worried about personal problems, how can I or anyone else be concerned with what is going on at City Hall?" Hutton said in defense of her column.

She said a readership poll a few years ago indicated that people either love or hate the column. And although she can't pinpoint who her readers are, she said, "I know a large number of divorced men read it."

Hutton said she feels the column has been successful because she has shared her personal experiences with her readers.

"I talk in the column like I would to a friend," she said. "I'm not trying to play an expert role. I show vulnerability at times, allowing the reader to see I have some of the same problems as they do."

Hutton's ideas for "Reflections" come strictly from observations.

"I read three or four newspapers a day and, in addition, read a wide variety of magazines and books that deal with topics I'm writing about.

"My antennae are always out looking for ideas. My kids accuse me of being nosy, but that's OK because that's part of my job."

Her ideas don't come between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. "No writer's do. I need time at all hours to think."

Thinking often takes place at unexpected times and places.

"One day, I sat in Fiesta Mall for several hours and came up with four column ideas. I read and watched people and then wrote down everything of interest they said."

Another time, Hutton sat for several hours in a booth in a Jack in the Box and listened to people talk.

"Fast-food restaurants are usually friendly atmospheres. People tend to keep coming back and interacting."

Does she feel guilty about listening in on other's conversations?

"Observing allows me to do what I do best, writing."

LOIS BOYLES

Lois Boyles, whose starting salary 25 years ago was \$100 a week, entered the field of journalism with a desire to write.

"Writing fullfilled a need to express myself," said the city editor of the Phoenix Gazette.

"I'm awfully shy," Boyles added, from behind a desk in an office in which she rarely works.

Instead Boyles, 37, prefers to work in the Gazette's city room, where she manages 25 reporters and four editors. "I feel so much more comfortable among my peers," she said.

In 1982, she became the first woman to be named city editor of the newspaper, which has a circulation of 127,000 and is published six days a week.

She brushes off the achievement, saying, "I am too busy to think about it or try to prove anything for women. I'm not a feminist. I have no time to be anything, just time to do a good job."

Boyles is more interested in discussing the news, which is what she knows best.

"News is anything that is necessary for the public to know," she said. "It is not always attractive and sometimes rubs people the wrong way. But it should be fair and accurate."

The newswoman calls herself a self-taught journalist, "I never had any formal education," she said.

"In fact, I've always been rather shy. But when I was working as a reporter, it was easy to demand control of the interview."

Her first writing experience was gained when she helped her husband write a thesis for his master's degree in journalism. Later, when

he taught in a community college, she wrote press releases for him.

The couple, who are now divorced, have a daughter, age 32, and two sons, ages 26 and 28.

Boyles' first crack at reporting came after being asked to write a special section for the Odessa American, a daily newspaper in Odessa, Tx. It was the only newspaper she ever worked at before being hired by the Gazette.

"I kept pressuring this guy, an editor, (at the Odessa American) to give me a job if they liked the piece. And they did," she said.

Boyles worked for the newspaper for three years prior to moving to Phoenix in 1963 with her three children. Shortly after the move, she was hired by the Gazette as a general assignment reporter, but soon began covering local government, corrections and the Phoenix Symphony.

"I was the only woman in the newsroom, but never really gave it much though," she said, adding, "I wasn't treated any different.

"Frequently, they sent me to cover murders, and no one -- that is, none of the male cops -- ever blinked an eye because I was a woman, so I didn't either."

In 1973, looking for a new challenge, Boyles went to work for Channel 3 (KTVK-TV). She didn't last long there.

"I didn't like it personally. You couldn't dig around because there was no time. To me, it wasn't real reporting."

After six months, she returned to the Gazette and began covering several beats, including the Arizona State Fair.

Her coverage of illegal bribes made to concessionaires by the director of the State Fair gave her in 1975 the honor of being the first woman ever awarded the Arizona Press Club's Virg Hill Award. The award is given annually for outstanding reporting.

"I was told that vendors were having to pay for choice locations at the fair. My suspicions were confirmed by carny operators who told how they were bribed by the director."

From her reports, four individuals, including the fair director, were indicted by a grand jury.

"After that, fair people didn't trust me much. They might respect you for digging into stuff, but they don't have to like you.

"After all, newspaper people don't always make friends."

Boyles spends most of her time managing. "But every now and then, there's a story I feel I've got to do," she said.

What has changed, she said, is the urgency: "There isn't the need to go out and get that big scoop."

MARSHA SIELAFF

Marsha Sielaff has toughened during the past five years as an editorial writer for the Phoenix Gazette's Op-ed page.

"I get my share of negative feedback," Sielaff said. "It comes with the territory. To survive I've had to develop a thick skin."

Sielaff is one of four journalists and the only woman on the Gazette's editorial staff.

"At first, I felt like an interloper because I didn't move up through the newsroom ranks," she said. "I was resented for that and the men talked plenty behind my back.

"In a way, I can understand where they were coming from. I never did move up the ladder. This is my first job ever on a newspaper."

Unlike reporting, editorial writing always has been a male province and a profession slow to open up for women, she said.

"Finally, after five years, the men are healing and I'm getting some respect. I think I've earned that."

Sielaff was hired by the Gazette in 1980 after an editor became familiar with her work.

"He was very much aware of where I stood politically," she said, labeling herself as a Republican and the paper's editorial page leanings as conservative.

Sielaff, 52, has lived in Arizona for 24 years. She was born in Wisconsin and is the daughter of Jewish immigrants who came to the United States from Russia in the early 1900's.

"I'm a first-generation American who grew up without any limitations, thinking I could do anything I wanted to."

Sielaff enrolled at the University of Chicago after skipping her

junior and senior years of high school. She graduated in 1954 with a liberal arts degree.

During college, she met and married Ernest Sielaff, who collects and studies stamps and operates a rental car agency. The couple have three sons, ages 20, 27 and 29, and four grandchildren.

On the difficulties of maintaining a demanding career and being married, Sielaff says, "It helps to have a supportive husband who isn't threatened by what you do."

When her youngest son was in first grade, Sielaff founded Let's Improve Today's Education, a basic education group that supported alternative teaching methods in public schools. She also edited LITE, a publication associated with the group.

Later, she was asked to join the Arizona Tax Association and edit its newsletter. In 1982 and again in 1983, while working for the Gazette she won an editorial writing award from the group.

Sielaff writes six editorials a weeks in addition to a weekly column. Subject matter varies although favorite topics include taxation, education, medicine and foreign affairs.

Her column often contains personal experiences and although it occasionally hits upon women's issues, she doesn't consider herself a feminist, saying, "I don't believe in everything they espouse."

Sielaff said the Gazette's editorial page has changed format over the last five years.

"We're less likely to get involved in real controversial issues," she said. "In some ways, we tend to be a bit more stodgier.

"I don't even think we're that well-read. People turn to comics and sports before the editorial page. We have a real selective audience."

An editorial opposing joint custody brought Sielaff the most

mixed reviews.

"They came out of the woodwork on that one, because I said joint custody victimizes women. Boy, did I get a lot of phone calls from men."

Sielaff's No. 1 rule about writing an editorial, "is to try and be fair about an issue, to present the problem, the facts and not just tell people what to think."

She begins her work at 7:30 a.m. and often continues late into the night. "I tend to be compulsive and bring home great gobs of work.

"With this job you have to love to research and read. That's the only way to keep abreast of the issues."

Sielaff uses her husband to bounce ideas off of and lets him read editorials she writes at home on a personal computer.

"He is a good indicator and his instincts are very accurate. Sure, we argue sometimes, but I realize that often I get so close to a topic I can no longer be objective. I need his feedback."

The most difficult part about her job, she said, "is organizing. My desk is always a disaster because I have an awful time throwing anything away. I always think I might need it some day."

Is she ready for a change after five years of editorial writing?

"No. I love to write and research. If they didn't pay me, I'd pay them. This is therapeutic, and what's more, it's free."

MARY JANE SHOUN

Mary Jane Shoun once told stories for a living, but now represents two weekly newspapers on Phoenix's northwest side.

"I used to tell some of the greatest tales," the executive editor of the Glendale Star and Peoria Times said.

In the 1950s, she was the host of a half-hour talk show for children at the Flagstaff Television and Cable Co., a radio station she owned with former husband, Gene Phillippi.

"In Flagstaff everyone knew me as the "Story Lady" because I spoke of all kinds of fancy fiction and gave out ice cream to the kids."

Shoun said her radio station handled several types of programming, "everything from news, music, fashion and traffic to programs for kids. I even wrote commercials," said Shoun, whose present job responsibilities mirror those she had years ago.

"Working at a small newspaper is similar to the radio stations of years ago. Nothing is very specialized," she said. "Sometimes you are the only one on the news staff.

"You do absolutely everything: write obituaries, do layouts and pasteup. You learn to be adaptable."

A community newspaper is somewhat like a billboard, she said.

"It's a newspaper where anything goes," she said. "You can't refuse to cover a ground-breaking ceremony or a new store opening. You write up all the meetings of the woman's club and cover stuff like the Boy Scouts and Little League."

The readership is made up primarily of local residents -- people involved in the community who have lived there for several years.

"Readers don't care so much about fancy art," she said,

referring the lack of illustrations in a community paper. "What they want to see is a familiar face on the cover. We run a lot of mug shots."

Shoun has covered all aspects of the local news for nearly 35 years.

"I've written the hard stuff and the light stories."

She said she enjoyed radio but has found newspapering to be equally challenging.

"I loved doing all that stuff on the air, but there is something about writing stories and seeing your name in print that makes it worthwhile," she said. "When I see something that is well-written, regardless of whether it is mine or someone else's I know, I feel real good."

Shoun earned a fine arts degree from the University of Iowa in the 1940s, and soon after she found her first job in broadcasting.

"They needed an announcer at a small station in Lake Charles, La."

Later, she and her husband purchased the Flagstaff station, and in 1961, after their divorce, she moved to Phoenix.

"Once in the Valley, I started my own public relations firm," she said. "I began writing because I had to. I couldn't relate to anything else."

One of her first assignments was to write a history of Arizona in celebration of the state's 50th anniversary.

It was called "Arizona Golden Years". The publication was later ammended and expanded into a business magazine called Arizona Today. Shoun became its editor in 1964, gaining a title she has held at small publications throughout the Valley ever since.

A few years later, she was named editor of Arizona News Digest ,

a right-wing weekly paper that covered local government. Within a year, she owned it.

"I used to be a right-wing ultraconservative, and now I'm a left-wing revolutionary."

Her political persuasions shifted to left of center after she married Howard Shoun, a land surveyor, in 1969.

"He made me reason and think," she said. "When you're an ultraconservative, you don't think because you don't like change. You're locked in to your beliefs.

"It's really very hard for someone like that to be an objective news person."

Shoun said that as a journalist, "I'm now able to remain objective, no matter how much thinking I do."

Shoun said she doesn't mind being perceived as a liberal, because, "Liberals push change and work for correcting what is wrong."

For the past two years, she has written a column for the Glendale Star . It is called "Of Many Things," and covers a variety of subject matter.

"It's about non-political things like my cat, bird or the heat. It's written in tongue-in-cheek style."

In the early 1970s, she was named editor of the Westsider, a weekly that covered the communities of Avondale, Goodyear and Litchfield Park. Following that job, she became editor of the Peoria Times and sales director for the Arizona Wildlife Federation. In 1977, she was named lifestyles editor of the Mesa Tribune.

Shoun became executive editor of the Peoria Times and Glendale Star four years ago.

"Even though I'm a manager, my feelings are with the reporter

because I was once there myself."

Bibliography

- Johnson, John W.C., Edward J. Slawski, and William W. Bowman.
The News People. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1976.
- Beasley, Maurine and Sheila Silver.
Women in Media: A Documentary Source Book. Washington, D.C.,
Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 1977.
- Ross, Isabel.
Ladies of the Press. New York, Arno Press, 1974.