Foreword

This issue of *Educational Considerations* focuses on issues surrounding women in school leadership. The collection of articles represents a wide range of perspectives. The contributing authors include women just beginning their academic careers and gaining prominence as well as those with a long history of national recognition and significant contributions to the field. Research from both the qualitative and quantitative approaches appear in addition to reflective pieces about practice. The issues addressed span career stages from high school students entering teaching (the administrative pool), to the principalship, and the superintendency. Finally, the reader will note that this issue affirms the need to report the varying experiences within groups of female administrators rather than concentrating solely on differences between males and females.

The lead article contains the comments of the keynote speaker at the Fifteenth Annual Rural and Small Schools Conference. Schmuck uses this address to answer the question of how rural schools provide equal educational opportunity for their students. What follows is a discussion of how to break down myths surrounding the belief systems of teachers and administrators; the development of a school culture; the patterns of school administration; and, those who are "invisible and silent" in our schools.

The second article highlights conditions affecting career choices of academically gifted female high school students. It points out that the leadership pool in American schools depends on attracting and retaining talented female teachers. Unfortunately, women who have been outstanding students are rarely channeling their leadership abilities into teacher training programs and we are losing their potential contributions.

The next three authors discuss professional development issues and university preparation programs. Scherr looks at alternative ways of teaching to minimize the traditional hierarchy in classrooms, to encourage more participation by students, to create a more inclusive curriculum, and to help students discover their own voice—especially women and minorities. Walker confronts the failure of university programs to address how women develop as leaders and what kinds of structures foster and encourage development. Finally, Grady and Gosmire report on fourteen areas of training needs as identified by women in K–12 and post secondary administration.

The superintendency is the subject of the next two articles written by Brunner and Tallerico and Burstyn. Brunner provides a discussion of the superintendent's power as "power to" get things done with others, something more easily done for women than for men, and "power over" as a form of domination which insures that one person can cause another to do what the dominant person desires. Tallerico and Burstyn document the factors contributing to females who choose to leave chief executive roles.

Duncan and Cooper describe the socialization process of female administrators. Duncan notes that women must be trained not only as an administrator but must also be able to answers the question of how women "fit in" in the male dominated world of administrators. Cooper follows with a study of sixteen women in a single elementary school and describes how to begin critical reflection and possible transformation of the assumptions about leadership and the possible roles of women as organizational leaders.

Finally, the last three articles feature insights as to how both gender and ethnicity impact educational practices. Gonzalez, Glickler, and Risner–Schiller note the importance of Hispanic mothers acting as role models for their daughters. Role models increase academic achievement which is critical to ensuring the availability of minority candidates in the leadership arena. Campbell speaks of the "realities" of principals who are both Mexican–American and female. Finally, Carr points out communication patterns of female principals and how they differ on the basis of ethnicity.

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